



Practical Considerations for Conducting a Successful Optional Annual Meeting Under HB 1129

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Virtual Sessions of the Remote Annual Meeting

- The process that will be used for the Optional Annual Meeting must be clearly set forth and widely available to the public. The process must be clear, understandable and followed.
- At least seven (7) days prior to the informational session, notice shall be mailed to all registered voters describing the process to be used for the Option Annual Meeting.
- The information session of the Optional Annual Meeting is conducted virtually and should be live streamed and accessible by phone and/or electronically. The information session should be dedicated to thoroughly discussing the process and the warrant articles contained on the posted warrant.
- Between the information session and the virtual meeting, the public should be given as many means as possible to communicate their thoughts with the governing body on the articles posted on the warrant. Email, text, regular mail and telephone. The virtual meeting must be held within seven (7) days of the informational session.
- The public should be told that their names and the content of the communications will be shared publically at the virtual meeting. The public should be encouraged to be brief and to the point.
- The public should be told that in the interest of time the Board reserves the right to summarize communications if they are longer than 100 words.
- At the virtual meeting, all communications should be read publically including the sender's name. Supervisors of the Check List should confirm eligibility.
- After all the communications are read at the virtual meeting, the governing body should take up each article one by one with either a motion to move the article to the alternative ballot as printed or to amend the article as deemed appropriate.
- Articles that are on the posted warrant cannot be withdrawn but any amount of money to be appropriated can be amended to zero.
- The governing body should understand that the success in getting the public to approve the Option Annual Meeting process is directly proportional to the extent that the governing body's actions at the virtual meeting represent the sentiments and expectations of the community.

- Large ticket items and building projects overall have not supported in past Optional Annual Meetings. Consider putting off such projects until traditional in-person voting can occur
- Once the warrant is in its final form it should be posted on the website and made widely available to the public. Consider another public mailing with the final warrant and specific instructions for drive-through voting including staggered arrival times.

Alternative Ballot

- The alternative ballot is a separate and distinct document from the warrant or the official ballot.
- If there is a bond on the warrant in excess of \$100,000 it must appear first on the warrant as required by RSA 33:8-a.
- Since the alternative ballot is different than the warrant, the first question on the alternative ballot asks the voters if they approve of the Option Annual Meeting process as required by HB 1129.
- Numbering the articles should track the warrant to avoid confusion. Thus, the first question on the alternative ballot asking the voters to approve the process either should not be numbered or should be numbered 1-a.
- The warrant should not include the question asking the voters to approve the process.
- At a minimum, the questions on the ballot should ask the voters if they approve of the specific warrant article as set forth on the final warrant and should include any amount of money to be appropriated.
- The alternative ballot can be posted on the website but voters should be told they will be given a formal ballot at the polling location. The formal ballot should be easily distinguishable from anything being brought from home. Consider blue or yellow paper.
- Voters are not allowed to cast ballots filled out at home.

Drive Through Voting

- Expect heavier turnout than have historically been experienced at a conventional meeting.
- Pick a location that can safely allow for a long line of cars.
- Depending on the number of anticipated voters, multiple check-in lines and ballot boxes may be necessary.
- Voters should be encouraged to arrive at the polling place at designated time periods that have been assigned alphabetically. Nobody should be turned away.

- As voters arrive at the polling location they are instructed to push their identification against the window glass. A poll worker reads off the name and a supervisor of the checklist acknowledges eligibility and a small sheet of paper with the number of voters in the car is put under the windshield wiper. This can also be done verbally if there is a single line used to check in the voters.
- A poll worker that is located 15-20 feet forward of where the voters are checked in reads the number on the slip of paper under the windshield and places the requisite number of ballots on a table where they are retrieved by the driver. Handing the ballots is acceptable with proper PPE.
- A copy of the final warrant should also be provided with the ballot.
- The voter(s) moves forward to where the ballot box is and fills out the ballot(s). A poll worker should be stationed at the ballot box to ensure only the formal ballots are put into the ballot box.