

BOW SCHOOL DISTRICT
Bow, New Hampshire

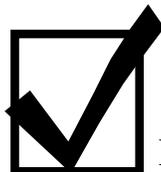
**ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
REPORT**

November, 2001

Members of the ASGC:

Mark Lefebvre, Chair
Pansy Bloomfield, School Board
Brian Bennett, Alternate
Blaine Flores
Ian Hecker
Betsey Cox Stebbins, Alternate
Bruce Treat
Karen Vacaliuc

The New Hampshire State Statutes may
be found at
<http://sudoc.nhsl.lib.nh.us/rsa>



EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

Executive Summary

The Alternative School Government Committee was formed in May of 2001 pursuant to Article 15 of the March 2001 School District Meeting. School Board members Mark Lefebvre and Pansy Bloomfield acted as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively for this committee. After soliciting and reviewing applications of interested parties from the community, the School Board appointed the following members: Blaine Flores; Ian Hecker; Bruce Treat; Karen Vacaliuc; Brian Bennett, Alternate; and Betsey Cox Stebbins, Alternate.

The ASGC held its first meeting on May 22, 2001 and met generally bi-weekly through November 28, 2001. The activities of the committee are summarized as follows:

The committee held its first meeting on May 22, 2001. The first few meetings were spent evaluating the current form of government (the traditional Annual School District Meeting) and other forms of government currently allowed under New Hampshire statutes. Presentations were given by Rick Minard of the NH Center for Public Policy Studies and Ralph Minichiello, Superintendent of Bow Schools about various forms of government and issues specific to school government.

After examining the different forms of government available, the committee determined that it needed to have some feedback from the townspeople about their preferences. It was decided that a survey would be formulated and distributed by August 8, 2001 to facilitate a return due date for the survey of August 31, 2001, later extended to September 7. A facsimile of the survey and the results of the survey can be found on pages 2 and 3 of this report.

The results indicated that the town is no longer completely satisfied with the current form of school government. The results showed fairly clearly that the voters of Bow are not interested in representative forms of government, preferring individual participation. Those forms of government related to “non-direct participation” were eliminated from the committee’s consideration. The results were inconclusive, but showed interest in making modifications to the Annual School District Meeting and allowing for some ballot voting on budgets, bonds, and other matters similar to the provisions currently outlined in SB2 and modifications of SB2.

The committee then conducted telephone research with school officials in districts that have adopted SB2 and also with school districts still operating under Annual School District Meeting. The essential results of that research are presented in the “Positives and Negatives” of these two forms on pages 5 and 6 of this report.

The committee began to formulate possible scenarios for “hybrid” forms of school government, allowed under the Official Ballot School Meeting. This form of government may be created through a Special Bill passed by the NH Legislature, or by a Charter Commission elected at large from the town. After consultation with School District legal counsel and our State Representatives, the committee determined that the Charter Commission is the more prudent procedure to follow because it insures that Bow voters retain greater control over the process. The committee planned to go back to the town once again with specific suggestions as to various ways a “hybrid” could be formed. School District legal counsel advised against the committee providing specific suggestions, as such decisions would be the jurisdiction of an elected Charter Commission as currently outlined in NH RSA’s and not this committee. However, the committee believes that a form of government *can* be created that will keep the positive aspects of both Annual School District Meeting and SB2 and address the negatives of both.

The committee concludes that the Bow School District should seek to create a form of government that incorporates the best of both Annual School District Meeting and SB2 and address the negatives of both. As a result, the committee has voted unanimously to recommend to the School Board the formation of a Charter Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Blaine Flores

Brian Bennett, Alternate

Ian Hecker

Betsey Cox Stebbins, Alternate

Bruce Treat

Mark Lefebvre, Chair

Karen Vacaliuc

Pansy Bloomfield, Vice Chair

Government by the People

As voters in a New Hampshire town, we are at a crossroads. The School Board has been asked by the voters of the Town of Bow to consider new ways that voters may participate in local school government. As our town grows, the traditional form of local school government, the “Annual School District Meeting,” could fail to include as many voters as would like to participate.

The Alternative School Government Committee (ASGC) was appointed by the Bow School Board in May of 2001. This committee was formed to carry out the charge approved in Article 15 of the March 2001 School District Meeting:

“TO SEE if the School District will authorize the creation of a study committee, the purpose of which will be: (i) to investigate alternatives to the current School Meeting form of government; (ii) to make a formal report and recommendation to the School District on the preferred alternative, if any, to the current School Meeting form of government; and (iii) to recommend revisions to the Bow Town Charter and any other authorizing document, law or regulation, that would be necessary or advisable in order to best implement the recommended alternative.”

The ASGC invited Rick Minard of the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies to outline the different forms of government available to the Bow School District. Mr. Minard’s material may be found in the ASGC Minutes book at the Baker Free Library. In evaluating the different forms of government presented, the committee realized that it would need to communicate with the voting public to try to get a sense of the residents’ preferences.

Toward that end, a survey was developed and distributed to each registered voter in Bow. The results of the survey can be found on Page 3. The survey has been criticized as being difficult to understand in some respects. This may be true in that it sought to derive information on complex and often confusing issues. The results were somewhat inconclusive regarding the traditional School District Meeting, SB2 and their possible variations. However, it was fairly clear that survey respondents were not interested in representative forms of government. Bow has a history of individual voter participation, and it is clear that survey respondents want each voter to continue to have a direct vote. As a result of this feedback, the following forms of government were eliminated from further consideration:

1) City Council:

Franklin model: A city council or board of alderman has budgetary authority for both town and school. The School Board recommends a budget to the city council, the council then votes on all school appropriations. Taxpayers do not vote directly on school spending matters, including the budget and bonds. They vote for the city councilors who will in turn vote on such matters.

Concord model: The School Board formulates the budget and bonds and votes on all school spending matters. Taxpayers do not vote directly on school spending matters. They vote for the School Board members who will in turn vote on all such matters.

2) Representative School District Meeting: The town is divided into “wards.” Each ward then elects representatives to attend a traditional school district meeting. Taxpayers do not vote directly on any issues. They will vote for representatives from their wards, and the representatives vote on behalf of their wards at the school district meeting.

Based on this feedback, the ASGC was left with the following three direct school government choices:

1. Annual School District Meeting (This is the form of government that we currently use);
2. Official Ballot Referendum (commonly known as SB2);
3. Official Ballot School Meeting (This form of government allows Bow to set its own requirements for the ballot and the annual meeting, without having to strictly comply with all requirements of SB2 or the annual meeting statutes. Under New Hampshire law the adoption of Official Ballot School Meeting can be accomplished through either a special bill in the legislature or through a Charter Commission.)

The following pages show the ASGC survey and the results of the survey. There are also detailed descriptions of how each form of government works, and what one will typically experience as a voter.

BOW SCHOOL DISTRICT VOTER PREFERENCES SURVEY

Dear Registered Voter:

Your completion of the survey below will assist the Alternative **School** Government Committee appointed by the Bow School Board in evaluating alternative forms of **school** government. **Please read the entire survey before answering any questions, because it contains a broad range of options for your consideration.** If you have any questions about the survey, please call Mark Lefebvre at 848-3226 and leave a message.

Thank you in advance for your completion and prompt return of the survey in the enclosed stamped self-address envelope. The due date for the survey is August 31, 2001.

Directions: The statements below are designed to convey to the committee your preferences for **school** government in Bow. Please read each one carefully and check the box which most applies to your position. **Please answer ALL of the questions. Use the back of the page for comments and ideas.**

For each question below, please check "Yes", "No" or "Not Sure", and follow any supplemental instructions.	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. I am satisfied with the present School District Meeting form of government.			
2. I would prefer to vote for the following by ballot on election day , with all other articles to be decided separately at School District Meeting . If yes, check all that apply: Budget _____ Bond _____ Non-Budget and Non-Bond articles _____			
3. I would prefer to not have to go to a meeting to vote at all.			
4. I would prefer to elect a representative body that would vote on those school articles that are not on the ballot. If yes, the size of the representative body I prefer would be: Up to 15 persons _____ 100 persons (currently 1 for every 70 residents) _____			
5. I would prefer to vote for the following by ballot on election day , with all other articles to be decided separately by elected representatives. If yes, check all that apply: Budget _____ Bond _____ Non-Budget and Non-Bond articles _____			
6. I would prefer that elected representatives vote on all school district articles.			
7. I would prefer to elect representatives (up to 15 persons) who would make the final decisions on all aspects of town and school government. The School Board would develop a budget and warrant articles to be presented to this governing body who would then decide on all articles.			
8. I would support a ballot form of government as outlined in Senate Bill 2 (SB2).			
9. I would support a ballot vote system (similar to SB2) where changes in individual articles could not be made at a public hearing (or debate) meeting.			
10. I would support a ballot vote system (similar to SB2) where changes could be made at a public hearing (or debate) meeting only if a required minimum percentage of the total registered voters in town (a quorum) were present.			
11. I would prefer that the school district and the town have the same form of government.			
12. I would prefer that the school district seek to coordinate its budget/bonding process with the town, so that total tax impacts on residents could be better coordinated and managed.			
13. I would prefer to have a government revision committee incorporated into the school district and/or town charter to examine on a periodic basis the effectiveness of our government and recommend any changes that need to be made.			
14. If the annual school meeting were eliminated, do you have any suggestions on how to maintain Bow's sense of community either within or outside of its form of government? (Please answer on back.)			

PLEASE SHARE YOUR COMMENTS AND IDEAS ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE

ASGC SURVEY RESULTS

September 25, 2001

Total Surveys	1044
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RAW COUNT

	Satisfied with Current System	Open Meeting with Some Ballot Articles	No Open Meeting At All	Size of Representative Body	Rep. Meeting w/Some Ballot Articles	Representative Government	Rep. Govt. for both Town and School	SB2	SB2 No Changes Allowed	SB2 with Quorum for Changes	Town & School Same Form	Coordinate Budget/Bond with Town	Standing Revision Committee	Comments
Survey #/Question#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Total Yes	293		505			85	78	463	401	361	599	868	510	
Total No	581	350	395	687	607	830	843	393	459	504	115	70	278	
Total Not Sure	132	1	64	50	1	54	54	121	108	119	250	60	184	
Total no response	35		79	67		75	69	67	74	60	80	46	69	
Total Misc. Variations		677*		221**	427*									
Total Comments														274

PERCENTAGE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Survey #/Question#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Total Yes	28%		48%			8%	7%	44%	38%	35%	57%	83%	49%	
Total No	56%	34%	38%	66%	58%	80%	81%	38%	44%	48%	11%	7%	27%	
Total Not Sure	13%		6%	5%		5%	5%	12%	10%	11%	24%	6%	18%	
Total no response	3%		8%	6%		7%	7%	6%	7%	6%	8%	4%	7%	
Total Misc. Variations		64%*		21%**	40%*									
Total Comments														26%

* These numbers represent the total of voters interested in traditional or representative school district meeting with ballots on some combination of budget, bonds, or non-budget and non-bond items.

** This number represents the total of voters interested in some form of representative school district meeting with a body of either 15 or 100.

The ASGC interprets the results of the September 2001 survey in the following way.

- Question 1. The majority of respondents are dissatisfied with the current system.
- Question 2. The majority of respondents would consider a school district meeting in combination with some ballot voting. This merits further exploration.
- Question 3. Nearly half of the respondents would prefer not to go to a meeting to vote.
- Question 4. The majority of respondents would not consider a representative school district meeting.
- Question 5. The majority of respondents would not consider a representative school district meeting.
- Question 6. The majority of respondents would not consider a representative school government.
- Question 7. The majority of respondents would not consider a representative school government.
- Question 8. Almost half of respondents are in favor of SB2.
- Question 9. More than a third of respondents would favor a variation of SB2 that would not allow amendments.
- Question 10. More than a third of respondents would favor a variation of SB2 requiring a quorum at the deliberative session.
- Question 11. More than half of respondents would like the Town and the School District to have the same form of government.
- Question 12. The majority of respondents favor the coordination of budget/bond planning with the Town.
- Question 13. Almost half of respondents favor a standing revision committee to review the effectiveness of local government.
- Question 14. About one fourth of respondents offered comments. These may be read in their original form at the Superintendent's office.

It seems that there is little interest in representative forms of government.

It appears that there is interest in variations of traditional meeting and also in SB2 and its variations.

Annual School District Meeting

The main functions of school governance are to select School Board members, appropriate funds through property taxes for the operation and maintenance of schools including capital reserves, approve the issuance of bonds and also to approve other miscellaneous non-financial articles related to the maintenance and operation of schools.

Currently our form of school government voting has two events: Elections for School Officials and warrant articles which are required to be on a ballot, and an open meeting.

- **Election Day** is held on the 2nd Tuesday of March, jointly with the town election of Selectpersons, Town Moderator, School District Moderator and other balloted articles. The Bow School Board is composed of five members elected at large to serve a three-year term. School Board member elections are staggered in a three year rotation: two are elected one year, two are elected the following year, and one is elected in the last year of the rotation. The Moderator of the School District Meeting is also elected for a three year term, and is independent of the School Board. Other elected School officials are School District Clerk, and School District Treasurer.

- **The school district meeting** is an open meeting. Voters of the school district gather on the Friday following elections to vote on all other matters, including the budget, bonds, capital improvements and other matters presented by the School Board or

petitioned by residents. The School Board does not have the authority to appropriate money from the taxpayers. It can only formulate recommendations to the taxpayers through warrant articles which are presented at School District Meeting for a vote. Information and explanations of warrant articles are presented by the School Board. Once a motion is made to accept a warrant article, amendments may be made from the floor. There is open debate until the warrant article is approved or disapproved by the voters in attendance.

- **The vote** may be a voice vote, it may be a show of hands, it may be a secret ballot vote by those present at the meeting, or it may be by any other method deemed appropriate by the Moderator of the meeting. The Moderator sets the rules of the meeting, which may be overturned by a majority of the voters present. Under current NH law, a secret ballot vote may be requested by a petition signed by five registered voters. To cast a secret ballot, voters must check in with the Supervisor of the (voter) Checklist before casting a vote.

- **Non-bond warrant articles** and long term leases with an escape clause pass with a majority vote (50% +1). Bond issues and long term leases with no escape clause are the exception to the majority rule. If the School District wishes to issue bonds for the purpose of capital projects, the warrant article to issue bonds

must pass by a supermajority of two-thirds.

- **The Town of Bow functions under the Municipal Budget Act.** This means that the School Board must submit its recommended budgets and bond issues to the Town Budget Committee for review before they can be brought before the district meeting for a vote. There are also required public hearings on warrant articles that must be held prior to the School District Meeting. The School Board has a representative on the Bow Budget Committee.

- **The School District Annual Report** is published together with the Town of Bow's Annual Report and is distributed about two weeks before election day. This report includes the minutes of the previous year's annual meetings, and the proposed warrant articles to be considered at the upcoming meetings. It also includes the financial reports of both the town and the school district, as well as reports of other town and school organizations.

- **Currently, no money appropriations** are addressed on the ballot at elections.

In summary, all the voters in the school district form the legislative body, which meets annually to conduct all business of the school district which requires the approval of voters.

Annual School District Meeting

Positives:

- This form of government has existed and functioned for over 200 years, and most residents are very familiar with how it functions.

- As currently structured, all money appropriations and therefore the property tax rates are determined by the legislative body in attendance at an open meeting. Because the meeting directly affects personal pocketbooks, usually a representative cross section of voters attend to discuss, understand, and finally vote on money issues facing the school district.

- Amendments may be made during the meeting to change warrant articles. Compromises may be reached through the presentation of information and subsequent discussion. If the proposed operating budget were to be reduced at the meeting, then the School Board would have the opportunity to explain to the voters present where cuts in services would take place prior to the budget being voted.

- The structure of the meeting is flexible at the will of the voters in attendance. The ability to use voice, a show of hands, a standing vote or other variation can be a very efficient way of expressing the town's will with no ballots to count yet secret ballots may be requested.

Negatives:

- Time and length of meetings. The meetings are long, traditionally on weeknights, and can be difficult for both the elderly and parents of young children to attend.

- In the event that a majority of registered voters choose to attend, there is no facility in Bow large enough to accommodate them.

- The meetings can be large and at large meetings not everyone has the opportunity to voice an opinion.

- Moderators, who are elected – not appointed, have the power to set the rules of the meeting, although these rules may be overturned by a majority vote by those in attendance. As a result, inconsistencies from one moderator to the next makes it difficult for voters to know what to expect.

- Secret ballot procedures for open meetings as currently handled result in long lines and long meetings. Secret ballots may not be requested as often as desired because of time and space limitations.

- Some people are uncomfortable about casting a public vote.

- There is currently no way to handle absentee votes at open meeting.

- Although legal, motions to reconsider are disruptive and divisive.

How do I participate as a voter?

The budget process for the fiscal year beginning in the following July starts in mid-September with meetings of the various departments of the school district. By February, they have presented their budgets to the Superintendent, who has presented them to the School Board, who has presented them to the Budget Committee. At each of these steps, components of the budget are reviewed and

adjusted. A public hearing is held on the budget and other warrant articles no less than 25 days before the School District meeting. This the first official opportunity for the voter to consider the budgets and warrant articles. This opportunity is for comment only, although the Budget Committee may alter the budget proposal in response to the comments.

In March, our current schedule of events is as follows.

1) Elections of town and school officials are held on the

2nd Tuesday. Zoning amendments are also on the ballot.

2) Wednesday evening is Town Meeting, where voters assemble to discuss and vote on all town warrant articles not balloted on election day. These include the town budget, any town bond articles, and other town matters.

3) Friday evening is School District meeting, which functions exactly like Town Meeting but deals with school issues.

Official Ballot-Referendum (Senate Bill 2)

RSA 40:13 is the statute that contains the legal provisions commonly known as “SB2”, “Senate Bill 2”, or the “Official Ballot Law”. The full text of this law may be found on the web at <http://sudoc.nhsl.lib.nh.us/rsa/40-13.htm> or through the public library. SB2 requires that all articles to be voted on the Official Ballot presented including:

- All articles petitioned by residents and those presented by the School Board;
- Bonds for capital expenditures such as building construction or renovations;
- Capital Improvement Plan Warrant Articles (monies set aside or removed to pay for specific future needs);

• Any other items whether or not they involve the expenditure of funds.

• SB2 requires that ALL articles be presented at a public “deliberative session” prior to being placed on the Official Ballot. Some of the rules of the deliberative session are:

- Any article can be amended by simple majority vote of those present at the public deliberative session;
- There is no minimum number of attendees required to amend any article;
- If any amendments are made to an article, then only the amended article will appear on the official ballot.

Positives:

- Greater voter turnout (as experienced by school districts that have adopted SB2).
- Ballot Day is more convenient than the open meeting because it is open all day long, usually from 7AM to 7PM.
- Voters can vote by absentee ballot.
- The statutes allow Ballot Day to be held in March, April, or May.
- Voters can vote in private.
- The rules for the deliberative session are the same as traditional school district meeting, allowing amendments and motions to reconsider.

Negatives:

- The deliberative session, as experienced and documented by SB2 school districts, is generally sparsely attended. The low attendance at the deliberative session eliminates the historical discussion and “give and take” and consensus common at the school district meeting
- Only amended warrant articles appear on the ballot, so that voters do not have the opportunity to vote on the original unchanged warrant article.
- The rules for the deliberative session are the same as school district meeting allowing for only those voters in attendance to make amendments and motions to reconsider.
- The number of school articles to be voted on varies, but in recent years our number of articles has

been 10-15 items at School District Meeting. If we continue to share a ballot with the Town at March elections, the total number of elections and articles each voter will be asked to evaluate will be significantly higher.

- Voters need additional time in the voting booth to decide the larger number of articles. Currently, under NH law, voters are limited to 5 minutes in the voting booth when there is a waiting line.
- The current polling facilities could be inadequate to support SB2 balloting.
- There would be the following additional costs:
 - (1) equipping and operating additional voting facilities;
 - (2) annual expense in printing and processing of longer ballots; and
 - (3) annual expense of communicating details of each article to voters not present at the deliberative session.
- The possibility exists that no appropriations are approved by vote, and the school district will be subject to a “default” budget. A default budget is the previous year’s budget adding only those increases attributable to debt service, some (not all) contracts, and other obligations previously incurred or mandated by law, and reduced by onetime expenditures contained in the operating budget. There is a provision to call one special school district meeting to consider a revised budget.
- The 60% bond approval threshold is currently the subject of unresolved litigation, and there is currently no way of knowing how that litigation will effect districts that have adopted SB2.

How do I participate as a voter with SB2?

1. The Budget Committee public hearing on the budget will be held 7 weeks prior to ballot day – this meeting is informational and no action is taken.

2. The “first session” of the annual meeting will be held 5 weeks prior to the “second session.” The first session is known as the “deliberative” session. The voter attends to discuss and amend warrant articles at the “first” session.

3. The voter goes to the polls at the “second” session to vote

on the amended warrant articles.

4. Simple majority (50%+1) approves warrant articles with the exception of bonds. A 60% majority is required to approve a bond issue. (This is a variance from the two-thirds needed under Annual School District Meeting).

Special Bill Passed By the New Hampshire Legislature

One way of creating a form of government not currently provided for in the RSA’s is to have our State Representatives sponsor a bill in the State Legislature. While there is potential for a bill to be passed quickly, there is also potential that it could be stopped anywhere in the process. It could be not accepted for discussion, it could be tabled indefinitely in committee, etc. It is also possible for it to be *amended* anywhere in the process *without* the approval of Bow voters, and become a different proposal than intended. Due to the riskiness of this process, the ASGC does not recommend pursuing a Special Bill at this time.

Charter Commission:

the procedure to adopt

Official Ballot School Meeting

We have reviewed two established forms of governing our schools. However, the possibility exists of creating a “hybrid” system, something that would incorporate some of the positive aspects as well as improving on the difficulties of both systems. The ASGC has voted unanimously in favor of recommending the Official Ballot School Meeting form of government. Under NH law, the next step in the process to establish this is the formation of a Charter Commission.

•On Election Day, we would ask the voters to establish a nine-member charter commission to look into the Official Ballot School Meeting for the district. This article would be on the ballot and would be approved by a simple majority.

•After the vote to create a commission, an election would take place to elect the members. These individuals can be anyone from the community, with no restrictions. Any resident may run for this commission. There are no automatic or assumed

positions; they are all elected from the general population.

•This commission must make a preliminary report to the School District within 180 days and a final report within 225 days. The commission itself would establish a chair, vice chair and secretary.

•When the commission has formulated a proposal, legal counsel would need to determine that the new charter does not conflict with any other laws in the state of New Hampshire. Additionally, the Secretary of State would need to approve it. When the charter is put before the school district the following year, it would need a simple majority to pass.

Currently, we do not have a school district charter. A Charter Commission may devise variations on SB2. Some variations may favor a closer resemblance to traditional school district meeting, and others may “feel” more like SB2. Four possible variations are discussed on Page 8.

Charter Commission Variations

Following are two models adopted by other towns/school districts, and two models which the ASGC has considered, which are designed to address the weaknesses of the annual meeting and SB2.

The Kearsarge Model

The Kearsarge School District formed a Charter Commission and subsequently approved a charter for an Official Ballot School District Meeting with a variation on the provisions of SB2. The variation is with respect to the default budget.

The School Board presents a recommended budget to the Budget Committee (in a Municipal Budget Act town such as Bow). The Budget Committee adjusts the budget as it deems necessary. This adjusted budget is presented at a deliberative session. The budget is then adjusted by any approved amendments and presented for vote on the Official Ballot. If the town were operating under SB2, if this budget is defeated, the school district is limited to appropriating the same amount of money as the previous year's budget adjusted by certain contracts. This can be problematic because it can cause cuts in existing staffing and programs.

Kearsarge allows all three budgets to appear on the ballot – the School Board recommended budget, the Budget Committee recommended budget, and any amended budget resulting from the deliberative session. The budget with the highest number of votes wins.

**This variation from SB2 effectively eliminates the possibility of a default budget.*

Ballot Voting for Budget, Bonds, and Collective Bargaining Agreements

1. School District open meeting would be held before Election Day for the purposes of discussing all articles with only non-budget and non-bond articles to be voted on at the meeting.

2. All articles would be subject to amendment at the assembly. Bonds, budgets, and collective bargaining agreements along with any amendments would be voted on in the voting booth on the Official Ballot.

** This variation attempts to address some of the negatives of traditional Annual School District Meeting by voting for budgets, bonds and collective bargaining agreements on the Official Ballot. These items would not be subject to a reconsideration vote at the open meeting. Because there are items to be voted on at the open meeting, the incentive to attend is greater than it would be for a meeting where no voting takes place. However, the issue of a failed budget vote would need to be addressed.*

The Seabrook Model

The town of Seabrook adopted a town charter in 1983. The charter requires a quorum of 125 voters to do business at town meeting. Since then, the town has adopted SB2. It has carried forward this quorum requirement to the deliberative session of SB2. Since Seabrook adopted SB2, the quorum has never been met. The small number of voters that have attended the deliberative sessions have not been able to make any changes to the warrant articles, either to amend them or to table them.

**This variation attempts to address the possibility that a very small group of voters may amend warrant articles which are then presented on the ballot without giving voters the opportunity to vote on the original article. In contrast, under SB2, even a tiny number of voters can amend – or even zero out -- any article.*

Open Meeting With Extended/Next Day Ballot Voting for Bonds and Collective Bargaining Agreements

1. Under this model, an open meeting will be held on Friday night as in our traditional meeting.

2. Secret ballot votes for bonds and collective bargaining agreements will be held open from the time the warrant article is discussed at the meeting through the following day (voting to be open Saturday from 7am-7pm).

3. All other voting will be done at the meeting on Friday night in the traditional manner as determined by the Moderator. Secret ballots for other warrant articles may still be requested for vote at the assembly on Friday night only.

4. Since the meeting will be recessed for ballot vote only on the following day, there will be no opportunity for reconsideration of the items to be voted by ballot.

** This variation attempts to address some the negatives of traditional school district meeting by providing a ballot day for bonds and personnel contracts in addition to the assembly. Because there are items to be voted on at the assembly, the incentive to attend is greater than it would be for a meeting where no voting takes place.*