

2026 TOWN MEETING

TOWN WARRANT ARTICLES

Saturday, March 14, 2026

Article 26: (submitted by petition) **Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB 2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the Town of Brookline on the second Tuesday of March?**

VOTE NO (Not recommended by the Selectboard 0-4) (Majority Vote Required)

EXPLANATION: This article, submitted annually and very similar to Article 03 on the ballot, proposes adopting SB 2, also known as the “official ballot” form of town meeting.

Under SB 2, the traditional open Town Meeting, where residents gather to discuss, amend, and vote on warrant articles, is replaced with a two-part process. A deliberative session is held where articles may be discussed and amended, followed by a later ballot vote on Election Day.

Supporters say SB 2 allows residents who cannot attend Town Meeting to participate by voting at the polls.

Key concerns:

Less meaningful deliberation. Discussion and amendments occur at a single deliberative session that often draws limited participation.

Reduced community engagement. Fewer opportunities exist for residents to hear different viewpoints and work together to improve warrant articles.

Greater influence by smaller groups. A small number of participants at the deliberative session may shape articles before they go to ballot vote.

Less informed voters. Many voters who cast ballots on Election Day do not attend the deliberative session where the background and implications of warrant articles are discussed. Petition warrant articles can also be written in ways that are confusing — sometimes using double negatives — which may make it harder for voters to clearly understand what a “yes” or “no” vote means if they have not heard the full discussion.

Budget complications. If voters reject a proposed budget, a “default budget” based largely on the prior year automatically takes effect.

Brookline currently operates under the traditional Town Meeting system, where residents gather to discuss, amend, and vote on town issues together.

A NO vote keeps Brookline’s current Town Meeting form of government and preserves the opportunity for residents to discuss issues, hear different viewpoints, and work together before decisions are made.

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Article 27: (submitted by petition) Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:g, and implement a budget cap whereby the select board (or budget committee) shall not submit a recommended budget that is higher than 1,493 dollars per resident expenditure times the current town population plus and annual increase for inflation using index CPI-U for the Boston-Cambridge-Newton MA-NH area published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as of October 1. **VOTE NO** Requires a 3/5 majority of the vote. (Not recommended by the selectboard 0-4)

EXPLANATION: This article proposes adopting a municipal budget cap under RSA 32:5-g. The cap would limit the town's recommended budget to \$1,493 per resident multiplied by Brookline's population, adjusted annually for inflation using the Boston-area CPI-U.

Supporters say a budget cap helps control spending, encourages fiscal discipline, and provides a predictable limit on future budget growth.

Key concerns:

Reduced flexibility. A fixed spending formula may limit the town's ability to respond to emergencies or major needs.

Costs may rise faster than inflation. Municipal costs such as health insurance, construction, and special education often increase faster than CPI.

Population formula may not reflect needs. Town expenses can grow even when population remains stable.

Limits Town Meeting discretion. Budget decisions may become constrained by the formula rather than determined each year by voters.

Deferred maintenance risk. Spending limits could delay repairs or capital projects, potentially increasing long-term costs.

Unneeded: Town Meeting voters currently review, debate, and approve the town budget each year.

A budget cap may sound like a simple way to control spending, but Town Meeting already gives voters that authority. Instead of strengthening fiscal discipline, a rigid formula risks **reducing flexibility, limiting local decision-making, and forcing cuts even when the community supports needed investments.**

Trust Town Meeting voters to make the right decisions each year.

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Article 28: (submitted by petition) **Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:5-b. and implement a tax cap whereby the governing body (or budget committee) shall not submit a recommended budget that increases the amount to be raised by local taxes (this year's base), that is higher than the prior fiscal year's actual amount of local taxes raised (last year's base), adjusted for inflation using index CPI-U for the Boston-Cambridge-Newton MA-NH area published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the change in population, in accordance with RSA 32:5-b, l-b. VOTE NO**
(Not recommended by the Selectboard 0-4) (Majority Vote Required)

SEE Article 27 EXPLANATION above.

Article 29: (submitted by petition) **New Hampshire thrives when state funding fairly supports local communities. Therefore, the residents of Brookline are asked: Do we call on the New Hampshire Legislature to protect local taxpayers by ensuring adequate state revenues for essential services, and by avoiding policies that shift costs onto local property taxpayers? VOTE YES**
(Recommended by the Selectboard 3-1) (Majority Vote Required)

EXPLANATION: This article asks the New Hampshire Legislature to restore municipal revenue sharing and address state policies that shift costs to towns and counties, increasing reliance on local property taxes.

When state revenue sources are reduced or eliminated, the cost of services often shifts to municipalities and counties, which then rely more heavily on local property taxes to fund essential services.

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW:

Reduced state revenue sources. Recent state budgets have reduced or eliminated several revenue sources, including the Interest & Dividends Tax, changes to Business Profits Tax revenues, and adjustments to Meals & Rooms Tax distributions.

Costs shifted to local governments. As state funding declines, towns and counties often absorb additional costs for services such as education, courts, nursing homes, public safety, roads, and infrastructure maintenance.

Impact on property taxpayers. Supporters argue these state-level cost shifts increase pressure on local budgets and lead to higher property taxes for residents.

WHAT YOUR VOTE MEANS:

A YES vote urges the Legislature to restore municipal revenue sharing and reduce the shifting of state costs to local governments, helping ease the burden on local property taxpayers and strengthen communities statewide.

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Article 30: (submitted by petition) **To ensure election outcomes reflect the will of voters, voting districts must be fair and transparent. Therefore, the residents of Brookline are asked: Do we, the residents of Brookline, support asking the New Hampshire General Court to establish an Independent Redistricting Commission to ensure fair and transparent voting districts that represent all voters equally and without favor to any political party? VOTE YES**
(recommended by the Selectboard 2-1-1 abstain) (Majority Vote Required)

EXPLANATION: This article asks the New Hampshire Legislature to adopt a redistricting process designed to produce fair voting districts and strengthen public confidence in elections.

New Hampshire redraws its voting districts every ten years after the U.S. Census. These maps determine the boundaries for legislative and congressional districts.

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW:

Fair outcomes. Many voters support a redistricting process that produces fair and balanced district maps.

Equal voice. Fair districts help ensure every voter has an equal voice in elections.

Public trust. Transparent map-drawing build confidence that districts reflect communities rather than political advantage.

Partisan influence. Future voting maps could favor partisan interests rather than voters and communities.

WHAT YOUR VOTE MEANS:

A YES vote urges the Legislature to adopt a transparent redistricting process that keeps communities together, protects fair representation for all voters, and reduces partisan influence in how voting maps are drawn.

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Article 31 (submitted by petition) **New Hampshire communities value strong public schools and responsible use of public funds for education. Therefore, the voters of Brookline, New Hampshire, are asked: Shall we call on our legislators to protect taxpayers by requiring the Education Freedom Account program to provide fiscal and educational performance reports comparable to those required of public schools, and by limiting eligibility to families with demonstrated financial need?**
VOTE YES (Recommended by the Selectboard 2-1-1 abstention) (Majority Vote Required)

EXPLANATION: This article asks the New Hampshire Legislature to restore income limits, stronger oversight, and fiscal safeguards to the state's Education Freedom Account (EFA) voucher program.

This article asks the New Hampshire Legislature to restore income limits, stronger oversight, and fiscal safeguards to the state's **Education Freedom Account (EFA)** voucher program.

WHAT THIS DOES:

Education Freedom Accounts allow public funds to be used for private school tuition, homeschooling expenses, and other education costs outside the public school system.

WHY SUPPORTERS SAY THIS MATTERS NOW:

Income limits removed. State legislators recently removed income limits from the EFA program, expanding eligibility beyond its original purpose.

Rising program costs. The program is projected to cost about \$110 million over the next two years, with no new revenue sources identified.

Limited transparency and accountability. Reporting requirements for how funds are used is less than those required for public schools, even though funded by public tax dollars.

Impact on taxpayers. Expanding the program without limits increases pressure on state and local education funding.

A YES vote urges the Legislature to restore income limits, strengthen transparency and accountability, and ensure the program prioritizes families with genuine financial need while protecting public education funding.