

Changing April Vote to March:

Background:

Prior to 1996 the Town meeting date was May. The official ballot vote (SB2) was adopted in 1996. At the time of adoption, the only Election date per State statute was the second Tuesday in March. Later, the State statute changed to allow Town's to choose an alternative date. Article 5 of the 2000 special election held on August 1, 2000 asked voters to change from the second Tuesday in March to the second Tuesday in April (see attached article language). While the total number of ballots cast were not overwhelming, it still passed by 69% (374-168). The meeting minutes did not contain much in the way of discussion on the matter, however; the minutes do say that 1996 vote has moved the "already extensive budget process" up by two months. Prior to 2007 the Town, School and MVD all had a two-step budget process. The first step was a review by the Board and the second step was review by the Budget Committee. The Charter changed the process for the Town and MVD, but the school voted to retain the budget committee.

How to make the change:

If the Town does want to move forward with the change, the only option is for the second Tuesday in March per RSA 669:1 II. The soonest it can take effect is March 2025. Charter Article 8-4 (attached) under Final adoption of budget, (C) & (F) spell out when the Town will hold its deliberative session (1st session) and Town vote (2nd session), in addition Charter Article 3-4 (attached) under Conduct of Elections "A". We would have to place a warrant article to change the Charter on the ballot in April of 2024. The school would have to place a warrant article on their ballot as well since we are two separate governmental entities.

Effect of change on Town's budget:

If the Town's vote (second session) is held in March, the budget cycle would be moved up by 1 to 2 months. That means that the CIP would be presented in September/October to the Town Council and the budget would be presented in early November with department reviews beginning in December. With the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year holidays, this would leave a very condensed budget schedule. Below is a daft example of how the schedule may look. Currently, the Town projects revenue and expenditures between 18 to 20 months out. This adjustment if made would make those same projections about 22 to 24 months out. The Town is not bound by the School's decision to pursue an earlier voting date. The School can choose to have a March meeting date and the Town can continue to keep an April meeting. This was the case in 2000. The school had a separate voting date than the Town when that change occurred.

Budget Process:

Town Manager goes before the Town Council to present projections of the following years budget and get Council Feed back

Current	Draft Proposed
August	October

Departments working on Budget

Current	Draft Proposed
October/November	September/October

Town Manager’s review of Department Budgets

Current	Draft Proposed
November	October

Town Manager’s presentation of the budget to Town Council

Current	Draft Proposed
December	November

Town Council review of Department Budgets

Current	Draft Proposed
January	December

Collective Bargaining Agreements

Current	Draft Proposed
February 2 nd Tuesday of month	January 2 nd Thursday of month

Public Hearing

Current	Draft Proposed
February 2 nd Thursday of month	January 2 nd Thursday of month

Deliberative Session (1st Session)

Current	Draft Proposed
March (2 nd Tuesday and following Saturday)	February (unknown due to change in charter. Could be 1 st Saturday and the following Saturday [current State Law] or 2 nd Tuesday and following Saturday [current Charter])

Annual Meeting (2nd session)

Current	Draft Proposed
April (2 nd Tuesday)	March (2 nd Tuesday)