

COMPARISON BETWEEN THREE FORMS OF GOVERNMENT FOR BRATTLEBORO

Note: All three forms of government would include Australian (secret) ballot for Selectboard and RTM reps, if required.

	RTM	OTM	AUSTRALIAN BALLOT
WHO			
Who could vote?	Elected representatives present at RTM	Any registered voter present at OTM	Registered voters who vote
How many could potentially vote?	Approximately 150	9,037 (as of 2/5/26)	9,037 (as of 2/5/26)
How are people selected to vote?	Register to vote and be elected	Register to vote	Register to vote
HOW			
Is your vote private?	No	No	Yes
Must vote in-person?	Yes	Yes	No
Absentee or early voting available?	No	No	Yes
Time required to vote?	8 ½ hours in 2025 (including breaks and public deliberation time)	Unknown (similar to RTM?)	10 minutes (not including private deliberation time)
VOTER INPUT and INFORMATION OPPORTUNITIES			
The following are available to all registered voters, regardless of government form: observation and comment at Selectboard meetings, individual communication with Selectboard members and Town staff, review of Town documents, participation at public forums.			
Requires public hearing?	No	No	Yes (17 V.S.A. § 2680 (h))
Informational session? Participant qualification?	May be offered; RTM members given priority to speak	May be offered; all present	May be offered; all present
Can Selectboard and Town officials be questioned immediately before voting?	Yes	Yes	No
Is there structured group deliberation immediately before and as part of the voting process?	Yes, for RTM members	Yes, for all attendees physically at meeting	No
Articles (including budget) can be amended?	Yes	Yes	No
If budget fails, what happens?	Selectboard must prepare a new budget, and RTM must vote again.	Selectboard must prepare a new budget, and OTM must vote again.	Selectboard must prepare a new budget, and the voters must vote again.

Chart prepared by Jill Stahl Tyler (RTM member for District 7). It was reviewed for accuracy and clarity by David Gartenstein (RTM member, Moderator for past four years, supporter of Open Town Meeting during the Commons-sponsored forum) and Tom Franks (RTM member, organizer of the “One Person, One Vote” petition that placed the RTM questions on the ballot).