

## THE BRATTLEBORO CHARTER RE: SELECTBOARD AND REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING

Before Representative Town Meeting (RTM) was created, the Selectboard presided over voters at town meeting, as it still does in all other Vermont towns. The office of Moderator was created to take that duty at Representative Town Meeting, but by tradition and ignorance of the law, the Selectboard kept its preferential treatment. Now most Representatives (reps) regard that position as necessary because they need guidance for the proposals. But guidance is exactly what the representatives are supposed to provide. This is required by the Brattleboro Town Charter.

### ARTICLE IV

#### POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SELECTBOARD

##### Section 6. General powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Selectboard.

The Selectboard shall have the general oversight of the affairs and property of the town not committed by law to the care of any particular officer, including, but not limited to, the following powers, duties and responsibilities:

- A. To establish and maintain a police department, including quarters, vehicles, and equipment, and to provide for the appointment of police officers.
- B. To establish and maintain a fire department, including quarters, vehicles, and equipment, and to provide for the appointment of fire fighting officers.
- C. To establish and maintain a rescue service, including quarters, vehicles, and equipment, and to provide for an ambulance service and the appointed emergency medical technicians.

. . . to provide light on bridges and sidewalks, licensing of large dogs, etc.

#### ADDENDUM C DESCRIPTION OF OFFICERS, OFFICIALS, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

Moderator. One 1-year term, nominated by petition and elected by Australian ballot. The moderator presides over all town meetings.

**Guidance, ideas, proposals and comments are not the care of the Selectboard, and they are given by law to the care of other officers of the town, namely the RTM**

##### Section 4. Representative Town Meeting.

###### A. Description:

2: The representative town meeting consists of up to 140 elected voters. It is a **guiding body** for the town and a **source of ideas, proposals and comments**, elected by district, as defined by the board of civil authority. It exercises exclusively all powers vested in the voters of the Town. In addition to the elected members, the following shall be members ex officio: the **members of** the Selectboard, the school directors, the treasurer, the clerk, the moderator, and those state senators and state representatives who reside in Brattleboro. Representative town meeting shall act upon all articles on the town meeting warning except those which relate to the election of officers, referenda, and other matters voted upon by Australian ballot.

**The “members of” the Selectboard implies that they are individuals, not impaneled as the board. Their position at the front of the meeting gives them greater comfort, visibility, access to the Moderator, and disproportionate opportunity to speak than the other members of the body. In short, the architecture of the meeting creates a two-tiered system that turns the great majority into second-class members and mere followers of the Selectboard.**