RSA 659:49-b Opening Absentee Ballot Outer Envelopes. The moderator or the moderator's designee may authorize the opening of absentee ballot outer envelopes on election day *or the Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or Monday* prior to the time established for processing absentee ballots in RSA 659:49, *but after the corrected checklist has been posted* provided that the opening of the outer envelopes occurs in public with notice of the time and place. *After the outer envelope has been opened, the affidavit on the inner envelope shall be examined, the voter's name shall be announced, an opportunity for a challenge of the ballot shall be given, and a notation may be made on the checklist to help facilitate processing of the ballot on election day. Notwithstanding RSA 659:51, if absentee ballots are partially processed before election day a challenge may not be made after the notation has been made on the checklist. The ballot shall remain secure in the unopened affidavit envelope until final processing on election day. (Chapter 14, 2020 HB 1266 Effective 7.17.21)*

RSA 659:55-a Partial Processing of Absentee Ballots Prior to an Election. I. The moderator, or his or her designee, may begin the processing of absentee ballots prior to the opening of the polls provided that the clerk shall post, in an appropriate public place and prior to election day, notice of the time and place of the processing. If the moderator chooses to do so it shall be posted in 2 appropriate public places, one of which shall be the public body's Internet website, if such exists, or shall be printed in a newspaper of general circulation in the city or town least 48 hours, excluding Sundays and legal holidays, prior to such meeting. A copy of the notice shall be provided to the secretary of state. The partial processing of absentee ballots prior to an election shall occur on the Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or Monday prior to the date of the election after the posting of the checklist. The moderator shall be assisted by at least 3 other election officers as defined under RSA 652:14. Members of the general public may observe this process. Under no circumstances shall absentee ballots be counted prior to the opening of the polls.
II. Once notice of the processing has been posted, all absentee ballots received by the end of the day preceding the posted time for the meeting shall be partially processed. Only one session for the partial processing of absentee ballots may be scheduled prior to an election.
III. Except as otherwise provided, the moderator, or his or her designee, shall adhere to the procedures detailed in RSA 659:49-b, RSA 659:50, RSA 659:51, RSA 659:52, RSA 659:53, RSA 659:54, RSA 659:54-a, RSA 666:4, and RSA 666:5. (Chapter 14, 2020 HB 1266 Effective 7.17.20)