# Town of Groton, MA Electronic Voting (EV) Study Committee (EVSC)

# Minutes of the Meeting of June 30, 2022

## Opening

Location: via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm by Mr. Petropoulos. He informed all present that the meeting was being recorded and asked each member of the committee to introduce themselves.

Present: Michael Bouchard, Michael Manugian, Carolyn Perkins, Jack Petropoulos.

Absent: Robert Anctil

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| Review Reports from Other Towns’ EV Committees ACTION: Mr. Bouchard: Put data from Westford on the EVSC Website.  ACTION: Mr. Petropoulos will add an item to each agenda for comments from the public. |
| Update on Interviews with Other Towns (if any) |
| Mr. Bouchard: Amherst (Representative TM), Longmeadow (Open TM) Evaluations, criteria were almost identical between these two towns. The only difference was that Longmeadow had a secrecy criterion. Both were in investigative mode. Amherst had been using EV at time of their report for two years.  Ms. Perkins: Brookline (Rep), Upton (Open). This we a large time saver for EV in Brookline since each vote had to be tallied and documented. They had to upgrade all of their Audio/Visual (AV) equipment which added about $20K to the cost of the system. Both went with purchase rather than rental, since rental over time was more expensive. Upton: One issue driving the consideration was the concerns that the voice vote was distorted based on who voted more loudly. Upton addressed disabilities’, including color blindness and blindness. The Town Clerk felt they weren’t really ready. Longmeadow recommended other voters be assigned as assistants to handicapped voters. Upton Minority concerns: It was too costly and would require too much additional staffing. Upton had only two town meeting checkers. They felt money was better spent providing things like child-care, better publicity, process training for townspeople. The Town clerk felt they would have to add new staff to hand out and collect voting devices. There was an additional concern about cleaning and disinfecting.  Mr. Manugian: Sherborn (Open), Arlington (Rep) Sherborn expressed a manual voting concern: manual voting can be slowed if one or more people vote twice (yes and no), and the total votes exceeds total number of checked in voters. Arlington: Each vote had a 60 second window for voting. If the vote had to be displayed by individual Representative town meeting member, that added an addition one to two minutes per vote. They felt strongly that the voting computer should be operated by a member of the Town Clerk staff and not a third party. As with others, no town has found a foolproof method to prevent proxy voting. This is the case where a voter hands their voting device to another person who then proceeds to vote using that device.  Mr. Petropoulos: Upton (Open) Wayland (Open) Upton: Sent a survey to a number of towns about voting with no mention of EV specifically. Responses were generally very positive. 17% of respondents were concerned about privacy and accuracy of voting using voice voting. A minority was concerned that someone might retain a record of individual votes. Wayland: Was the first open TM town in MA to use EV. They perform spot audits throughout the meeting with a selected number of voters. They found a way for voters to do electronic check-in prior to meeting to save time handing out voting devices. We should consider if such an alternative might work for Groton. Wayland has had some EV issues. In 2013 three votes were manual due to EV malfunctions. A failure in 2016 delayed town meeting for 12 minutes. On another occasion a voter complained that one person had two handsets which prompted introduction of new procedures. They have only lost one handset over the years.  Mr. John Sopka, member of the public, was recognized by the Chair. He felt that the report summaries presented in the meeting did not address accounting for devices. How are they collected? He was concerned it would delay people leaving the meeting. He also felt the presentations did not address encryption. It is the intent of this committee to obtain a description of the transmission technology and associated encryption from each vendor who would be seriously considered. Mr. Manugian pointed out that one vendor, Meridia, has already provided a brief description of their communications protocol which did not rely on either Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. Mr. Sopka felt it would be helpful to have a running count of active clickers on the floor as people check in and out. He wanted to know if there was a way to detect devices being carried out of the hall.  ACTION: Mr. Manugian: Produce a draft list of milestones including an October 17,2022 TM deadline.  ACTION: Mr. Bouchard: Send list of two Open Town Meeting towns to each member to interview by July 14.  ACTION: Mr. Petropoulos: Add the review of the milestone list to the next meeting agenda  ACTION: All: If they were a Town Meeting Attendee, what would they expect to hear from this committee? Send these questions to the Chair.  ACTION: Mr. Petropoulos: Ask the Town IT Director to list his issues and concerns with EV for Groton. |
| Review Meeting Minutes from June 23, 2022 It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes from the June 23, 2022 minutes as presented. A role call vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously. Mr. Manugian abstained, since he was not present at that meeting. |

## Closing

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

The next meeting will be on July 7, 2022 via Zoom, to be set up by Mr. Bouchard and posted on the Town of Groton website with the meeting agenda.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Manugian, Clerk