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

# Minutes of the Meeting of July 7, 2022

## Opening

Location: via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Mr. Petropoulos. He informed all present that the meeting was being recorded and asked each member of the Committee to introduce themselves, which they did.

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

## Protocol

Documents from one Committee member to all other Committee members should be sent to Mr. Bouchard for distribution and posting on the Town EVSC webpage.

Members should check the EVSC page on the Town website each week for the Zoom invitation.

## Public Comment Period

No comments during this period. Mr. Petropoulos accepted and solicited comments from the public throughout the meeting.

## Comments from Members

Mr. Bouchard forwarded a document containing problems Grafton had which were easily corrected. Mr. Sopka was concerned that Grafton didn’t explain how they determined they were undercounting nor how they diagnosed the problem.

Westford town meeting had a lot of questions about EV similar to what we’re looking at.

Mr. Petropoulos spoke to Carver which raved about support from their provider, Meridia.

Mr. Anctil joined the meeting at 6:41.

Ms. Perkins joined the meeting at 6:42.

## Review of Minutes

Minutes of June 30, 2020 as amended were accepted unanimously by a role call vote.

## Review of DRAFT Milestone Document

Mr. Manugian review the draft project milestone document. This prompted numerous discussions about a number of areas of the project.

Mr. Bouchard noted that the Town Meeting warrant closes 60 days prior to Town Meeting. However, it is acceptable to have a place holder by that date without a complete warrant article.

Mr. Petropoulos stressed the importance of having complete procedures for the way that EV would work in Groton.

Mr. Petropoulos felt that adoption and use of EV is up to the Town moderator.

We reviewed Town purchasing rules:

Over $50,000 requires writing an RFP and sending it out for quotes.

Over $10,000 but under $50,000 requires that we solicit bids, and we must accept the lowest priced bid.

If under $10,000, the Town may select a particular vendor and make the purchase.

Mr. Bouchard noted that Groton did not require anything that other towns didn’t require.

Mr. Petropoulos stated that the Town Manager and Moderator could advise the Committee on the best way to format a warrant article, should this Committee propose one.

Although the Draft Milestone Document has been sent to be distributed to the Committee, due to an oversight it was not distributed as expected prior to the meeting. Therefore, a more substantial review will of an updated version will take place at the next meeting after Committee members have had a chance to review it.

ACTION: Mr. Manugian: Incorporate changes recommended by the Committee into the Draft Milestone document and send out the updated version for additional comments from the Committee.

Mr. Bouchard felt that creating detailed policies and procedures was a lot of work if Town Meeting decided not to go ahead with EV. Ms. Perkins suggested that the procedures be kept simple for Town Meeting.

ACTION: Mr. Petropoulos: Invite Mr. Kauppi, Town Moderator to next week’s meeting.

ACTION: Manugian: Send draft of how EV could work to Mr. Bouchard.

ACTION: Mr. Bouchard: Create a presentation with the possible assistance of the moderator on how EV could work in Groton.

Mr. Petropoulos felt that what happens when things go wrong was not simple. Mr. Sopka also felt audit, diagnosis, and error correction were not simple and not clear on videos from other towns. Mr. Petropoulos stated the Committee would ask each potential vendor how in meeting audits could be done.

## Review of Questions Town Meeting Attendees Might Ask

Mr. Petropoulos reviewed the list of such questions compiled so far. However, only two committee members had submitted questions.

ACTION: Mr. Petropoulos: Send the current list of questions Town Meeting members might ask to the Committee.

ACTION: All who haven’t done so: If they were a Town Meeting Attendee, what would they expect to hear from this Committee? Send these questions to Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Petropoulos felt that all of these questions should be answered in the Committee’s presentation to Town Meeting.

Mr. Petropoulos asked guest, Mr. Sopka, to submit tech questions and guest, Ms. Anderson, to send questions she may have.

ACTION: Mr. Petropoulos: Create an initial draft of a Town Meeting presentation and distribute it to Committee members for review.

Mr. Bouchard pointed out that some people will like the concept of voting privacy offered by EV and some will hate it, feeling that individual votes should be public.

## Should the Presentation Include a Recommendation

Mr. Bouchard and Mr. Petropoulos felt that the Committee should not make a recommendation one way or the other as to whether the Town should pursue EV.

Mr. Anctil, Ms. Perkins and Mr. Manugian felt that the Committee should make a recommendation.

Ms. Perkins suggested that the Committee vote on whether to make a recommendation, that the Committee should tell people how it feels, presenting positives and negatives.

Mr. Petropoulos asked guest attendees how they felt about a Committee recommendation. Mr. Sopka felt that a simple presentation of facts would be ok, but wouldn’t be surprised if the Committee made a recommendation. Ms. Anderson felt there should be presentation of the pros and cons of EV, followed by the result of vote of the Committee on whether the Town should consider EV.

Mr. Petropoulos felt that the important thing was a balanced presentation, and that the Committee could decide whether to include a recommendation later. Ms. Perkins and Mr. Anctil were comfortable waiting.

ACTION: Mr. Petropoulos: Ask moderator to present his thoughts on EV at the next Committee meeting.

## Initial EVSC Public Hearing

The Committee discussed timing and content of the first public hearing to be held by this Committee.

Mr. Bouchard stated that we should post notice of a public hearing two weeks before the meeting, but the Committee is not bound by this.

After a lively discussion of the pros and cons of a Zoom vs. in-person meeting, the majority of the Committee felt that the public would be best served by an in-person meeting. It was proposed to hold the public hearing on August 4, 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Groton Center.

Mr. Anctil and Mr. Bouchard pointed out that they were both unavailable on Aug 4.

The Committee decided to hold the public hearing on August 4, 2022 at 7 pm at the Groton Center, if it is available.

ACTION: Mr. Bouchard: Schedule the Groton Center for 7:00 pm, Aug 4, 2022.

## Communication with Voters

Among other things the Committee would like to solicit issues of concern from the public. Mr. Petropoulos suggested we could communicate to the public via social such as Talk About Groton and the Groton Listserv.

ACTION: Mr. Bouchard: Ask Groton IT Manager to create an email address for the public to use to send comments, issues to this Committee.

ACTION: Mr. Petropoulos: Add an item to the next meeting agenda to present EV interviews with other towns.

Mr. Petropoulos expressed a concern about the productivity of this Committee. ACTION: All: Send Mr. Petropoulos (via Mr. Bouchard) ideas on how we can be more effective in our meetings.

## Closing

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.

The next meeting will be on July 14, 2022 at 6:30 pm 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