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

# Minutes of the Meeting of July 14, 2022

## Opening

Location: via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 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: Michael Bouchard, Michael Manugian, Carolyn Perkins, Jack Petropoulos.

Absent: Robert Anctil

## Public Comment Period

No public comments were made during this period.

## Approval of Minutes

A motion was passed by unanimous role call vote to accept the Minutes of the Meeting of July 7, 2022 as submitted.

## Speak With Moderator And Clerk About Policy And Procedures

The Moderator needs a procedure that people trust.

Mr. Bouchard reviewed his procedures. He agreed to capture changes and additions recommended during the meeting and incorporate them into his draft, as appropriate.

In general, rather than have the Clerk capture comments on presentations, the presenters will capture comments and incorporate appropriate recommendations into their draft.

Mr. Manugian recommended adding the role of EV Clicker Assistant. This person would hand out clickers at check-in so as not to slow down the voter checkers. They would also be available throughout the meeting to collect and return clickers as voters exited and returned to the main hall. They would also keep spare clickers for any voter who had a clicker problem.

Mr. Petropoulos suggested we not record clickers given to each voter. This prevents association of a clicker with a particular voter to maintain anonymity.

The Moderator suggested testing clickers and the EV system by using the actual motion to waive the reading of warrant at the start of Town Meeting.

The Moderator asked to be able see the result of a 2/3 or 4/5 vote ahead of voters to have time to do the math to determine whether the motion passed. It was noted that the software of some vendors allows setting a 2/3 or 4/5 requirement and determines vote passage accordingly.

The Moderator indicated that the Moderator always gets to choose the method of voting for any motion, e.g., electronic or manual.

Ms. Perkins recommended that we identify people with disabilities before the meeting to better assist them with EV.

ACTION: Ms. Perkins: Ask Michelle Collette to list needs for accommodations for handicapped voters.

The committee discussed handling of challenges to an electronic vote. Mr. Kauppi, Town Moderator, stated that once a vote is declared by the Moderator, the vote then stands. He recommended that if a voter is concerned that the electronic vote is not accurate for some reason, Town Meeting should be paused while a test of the system is performed.

Mr. Petropoulos suggested that we could perform a test whereby we display each clicker number with its associate vote for testing. That way each voter could verify that their vote was properly recorded by checking for their clicker number in the display. This would keep the association of clicker to voter private.

Mr. Petropoulos indicated that he was keeping track of requirements for our EV system as they arise as we discuss EV issues.

Ms. Perkins recommended that we have a cleaning process for clickers.

During the discussion of collecting a clicker when a voter temporarily leaves the hall, Ms. Perkins suggested that the EV Clicker volunteer give a Non-voter Card to non-voter at check-in. The non-voter would then be required to turn in their card when we left the hall. This way the EV Clicker volunteer would be able to determine whether an individual was a non-voter who did not need to turn in a clicker, or a voter who did need to turn in a clicker.

As we discussed potential problems with EV, Mr. Petropoulos pointed out that worst case scenarios generally don’t seem to happen.

## Review Contacts With Towns

Mr. Manugian presented what he learned from the town of Dover. From a viewing of the video of their Town Meeting Dover was able to explain EV and test all voter clickers in 2.5 minutes. This included time to replace three suspect clickers and retest. The use EV for all motions and have and EV a voting period of 10 seconds.

Mr. Bouchard suggested that we present and test EV systems to reluctant audiences in advance of Town Meeting. This would allow them to practice and ask questions prior to their first use at Town Meeting.

## Review Draft of the Final Presentation

Mr. Petropoulos presented his first draft of the final committee presentation. Mr. Bouchard and Mr. Manugian recommended that short bullet points be used rather than prose.

The Moderator stated that the main presentation in favor of a Town Meeting warrant article is limited to seven minutes. This would apply to the committee’s final presentation. Time would be available after the end of the presentation from questions from the floor.

Ms. Judy Anderson suggested that the presentation could be sent to voters in advance with the warrant.

ACTION: Mr. Bouchard: Create a one slide explanation of how EV works.

ACTION: Mr. Manugian: Distribute a draft cost estimate. Add Town Clerk and IT Hours from Mr. Bouchard.

ACTION: Mr. Petropoulos: Add an item to the next meeting agenda to review the Milestones document.

Mr. Manugian pointed out that we could do a live demo of EV software as an example at a public hearing or training session. One vendor allows the downloading and installing of the vote countdown and display software. This type of presentation would not include actual voting.

## Determine Presentation Outline For First Public Meeting

Mr. Petropoulos will present a version of his final presentation at the public hearing scheduled for August 4, 2022.

## Role Of The Current And (Potentially) New Town Clerk On The Committee

The are currently two finalists for the Town Clerk position. They will be interviewed by the Select Board in their meeting of July 25, 2022. The expected start date would be late August. Mr. Bouchard is contracted to stay on part time to assist with the transition through November, 2022.

Mr. Kauppi stated that once a temporary or new Town Clerk is in place, they will become a member of this committee, or they could appoint someone else such as Mr. Bouchard as their designee.

Mr. Petropoulos, Mr. Manugian, and Ms. Perkins were comfortable continuing with Mr. Bouchard if this was acceptable to a successor Town Clerk.

Mr. Bouchard says he would be willing to continue on the Committee through August 2022 if the temporary and new Town Clerks are willing.

ACTION: Mr. Bouchard: Ask the temporary Town Clerk if she is willing to have Mr. Bouchard continue to represent the Town Clerk’s office while she is Town Clerk.

Mr. Bouchard stated that he may be late for the next meeting. He also reiterated that he is unavailable for the Public Hearing on the August 4, 2022. Note: Mr. Anctil had previously stated he, also, is not available for the Public Hearing.

Mr. Bouchard note that as of tomorrow, the law which allows public meetings to take place virtually (such as over Zoom) expires tomorrow. The legislature is considering an extension.

ACTION: Mr. Bouchard: Get a live meeting venue in place for next meeting of this Committee in case this is not extended.

The Moderator stated that the Committee needs to be specific about what would be in the Fall Town Meeting warrant article. He stated that if the committee were to ask for an appropriation, they would not need the actual amount until Town Meeting. The Committee would need to submit a draft of the warrant article prior to the close of the warrant.

ACTION: Mr. Petropoulos: Create a draft warrant article.

Mr. Petropoulos stated his goal was to create an RFP, then go into TM with a dollar amount from the response to RFP. However, the Committee would not necessarily make a recommendation or ask for an appropriation.

Mr. Kauppi explained that if you think about the way TM meeting works, if the Committee presents just the facts and no warrant article, then what? Who would pick up the ball at that point?

## Closing

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 pm.

The next meeting will be on July 21, 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