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

# Minutes of the Meeting of August 31, 2022

## Opening

Location: Groton Electric Light Department Large Conference Room

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 am by Mr. Petropoulos.

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

Guests: Mark Haddad, Groton Town Manager; Mike Chiasson, Groton IT Director

Absent: Robert Anctil

## Public Comment Period

No public comments were made during this period.

## Approval of Minutes

A motion was passed by unanimous vote to accept the Minutes of the EVSC meeting of August 25, 2022 as submitted.

## Review Rental Pricing with Town Manager and IT Director

The Committee reviewed the Draft Rental vs. Purchase comparison document with Mr. Haddad and Mr. Chiasson. Recommended changes were made to this document (attached). All committee members and guests felt that the rental option did not offer significant benefits to offset the increased costs as projected over the ten-year evaluation period. Rental cost was estimated at $99,000 vs. purchase cost of $20,249. The cost estimates were based on rental and purchase cost information received from the lower cost vendor. The third vendor, Turning Technologies, provided a lower rental option, but the services included were not comparable to the other two, so that option was not considered for the estimate. The Committee members noted that additional refinements will be required to improve the accuracy of the purchase estimate.

Turning Technologies, the third vendor, provided the initial rental quote requested, but did not provide the second quote with the specific five-year meeting schedule generated by Mr. Petropoulos.

The Town Meeting attendance information for the last 19 years resulted in four meetings with attendance exceeding 600, and one meeting with attendance exceeding 700 (734). The average number of attendees was 377 and the median was 306. The vendors are able to provide additional clickers if the Town knows in advance that more than 600 voters will be attending. In the event that the number of voters unexpectedly exceeds the number of available clickers, the Committee recommends that the Town revert to manual voting.

A motion was made and seconded that the Committee recommend that the Town purchase rather than rent an Electronic Voting system. The motion passed unanimously.

## Discuss How to Present EV Policies and Procedures to Town Meeting

The Committee and guests reviewed the Draft Recommended Procedure document.

Town Meeting voting procedures are determined by the Town Moderator. ACTION: Mr. Bouchard: Invite Mr. Kauppi, Town Moderator, to the next meeting to ensure that the recommendations are acceptable.

## Review Vendor Hardware

Meridia and Option Technologies provided sample clickers, both standard and braille versions. Turning Technologies did not provide the requested samples. The clickers were very similar. The Committee had questions after seeing the clickers. Both types of clickers included a Send button. The Committee wished to confirm voting was completed by pressing either a Yes or No button only and did not require the additional use of a Send button. It was felt that this could be a source of confusion for a Town Meeting voter. ACTION: Mr. Petropoulos: Ask the vendors who submitted clickers whether the use of the Send button was required. Both systems sent an acknowledgement that a vote was received back to the clicker from the vote-counting computer. The Committee was not clear whether the acknowledgement was a display of the vote received (preferred) or simply an acknowledgement that a vote had been received. ACTION: Mr. Petropoulos: Ask both vendors whether the receiver sent an acknowledgement containing the actual vote (Yes or No) or simply an OK.

ACTION: Mr. Petropoulos: Ask Option Technologies to confirm whether the functionality that repeatedly sends the last selected vote to the clicker is included in their quotes, and, if not, what the cost of including this would be.

## Consider Recommending a Vendor and/or a Not to Exceed Value to Town Meeting

The Town Manager and IT Director were comfortable if the Committee did or did not recommend a particular vendor.

Because of the questions noted above with regard to functionality, the Committee deferred a vote on recommending a particular vendor. Also, because of configuration details discussed in the rent vs. purchase discussion, the Committee will revise the purchase estimate before voting on whether to recommend a not to exceed purchase amount with the warrant article. This will include a second vote receiver component (backup) for both vendors. The Committee will also present the ten-year system maintenance cost for the benefit of voters. The warrant article amount will only include the total first year system costs.

Mr. Haddad recommended that the Committee determine any requested warrant article dollar expenditure prior to the joint Select Board/Finance Committee meeting on September 19, 2022.

The Committee tentatively agreed to hold an informational meeting on October 13, 2022 at 7 pm to present the details of the warrant article and recommendations to voters.

## Closing

The meeting was adjourned at 12:54 pm.

ACTION: Ms. Perkins: Send the agenda to Mr. Bouchard prior to public meeting posting deadline.

The next meeting will be on Thursday September 8, 2022 at 6:30 pm via Zoom, to be posted by Mr. Bouchard on the Town of Groton website with the meeting agenda.

Note that Mr. Petropoulos will not be available until September 18.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Manugian, Clerk