



Patrick J. Ward, Town Clerk

Town of Brookline

Massachusetts

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MODERATOR'S AD HOC COMMITTEE ON ELECTRONIC VOTING

**FEBRUARY 13, 2012
MINUTES**

The meeting of the Moderator's Ad Hoc Committee on Electronic Voting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Denny Room of the Brookline Health Center. Present were Chairman Robert Stein, Joel Shoner, IT Director Kevin Stokes, Neil Wishinsky, and ex officio member Moderator Edward (Sandy) Gadsby.

The first order of business was a teleconference with Meridia Company, a vendor of E-voting handheld equipment and software. Mr. Dickman explained Meridia's Audience Response product line, discussed various cost options and answered a variety of members questions regarding equipment and operational details.

The discussion then turned to establishing the committee's final position on E-voting in general, the procedure that the committee felt the Moderator should initially use when and if Town Meeting adopted E-voting, the equipment the committee would recommend to be purchased to enable E-voting at Town Meeting, the committee's recommendation on the High School Auditorium A/V upgrades required to enable E-voting and an estimate of what the committee anticipated as the cost associated with the above.

Before taking votes on the various issues highlighted above, the Chairman passed to all of the members a note member Stanley Spiegel had sent in outlining his position and rationale for requiring the hand held devices to provide confirming feedback to their users. The Chairman next proceeded to take votes on each of the issues outlined above. The final positions of the committee are listed below, all of which were adopted by unanimous vote of those present.

Overall Position on E-Voting: Committee recommends that Brookline adopt the use of E-voting at Town Meeting and upgrade the AV equipment in the HS auditorium to facilitate the use of E-voting.

When should E-voting be used: Initially under three conditions

1. If 35 or more TMMs ask for a roll call vote
2. If the Moderator is in doubt of the count on either a vote or a quorum count
3. If seven or more TMMs challenge the Moderator's count – can apply to a quorum count as well as a vote

When should a record of TMMs votes be kept: Only under condition 1. At all other times an E-vote is taken, the record shall not be maintained.

Summary of Process for E-voting at Town Meeting:

- Sometime shortly before the first evening of TM, Town staff will be responsible for ensuring that all hand held devices are working properly
- At TM, TMMs will check in at four places, according to precinct, and receive their assigned hand held voting device
- When an e-Vote is to be taken, the moderator will call for Yea votes, those voting yea will stand for 20 seconds and push the “1” button on their handheld device. They may push it anytime and as often as they wish, whether standing or sitting, until the moderator announces that all voting is closed – it will be their final push that will record their vote. After the 20 second period they will sit down. The moderator will then call for the Nay votes and the same process will be followed, except that the Nay voters will push button “2.” Those abstaining may push button #3 at any time during the two voting periods. The purpose of the standing vote simulation is merely to provide visual feedback to TMMs in the existing tradition of Town Meeting and is not the official and binding vote.
- Following the 40 seconds of voting, the moderator calls the voting closed and the precinct by precinct TMM recorded votes will be displayed on the screen at the front of the auditorium. Four precincts at a time will be displayed per screen, each screen for about five seconds. A final fifth screen will display the votes of the at-large members, as well as the final tallies.
- The moderator will then call for any TMM who feels that his/her vote was recorded in error to stand and ask that their vote be changed. The moderator will tell the IT assistant to make the change, who in turn will acknowledge the change. The moderator will also ask any TMM who believes that a vote was cast by a member who was not present to make that challenge and the member who was challenged will rise to acknowledge his/her presence. Failure of the member to stand will result in the vote being removed from the tally. If there are no changes or challenges requested, the results will become final.
- If any changes or challenges were requested, the results, as amended, will be displayed on the screen a 2nd time in the same manner in which they were originally displayed. The only challenges that will be permitted this 2nd time will be ones that were requested after the first screen but that were not properly corrected. After this final screen, with corrections if required, the results will become final.

E-voting equipment recommendation: There are basically two types of E-voting hand helds – a less expensive option (about \$10K – \$15K) that simply allows its user to record his/her vote on a

remote computer, and a more expensive option (up to \$34K) that provides feedback to each user as to what vote (yea, nay, abstain) was received and recorded. The more expensive option also contains some security enhancements as well that, depending upon ones concern about jamming or hackers, may add some functionality. There are mixed feelings on the committee about the added value of the more expensive option. Some members believe that the less expensive option is adequate, given the review process for validating TMM votes highlighted above, and some believe that the individual feedback is worth the added expense because of the added surety it provides as well as its potential to eliminate the need for the review process outlined above, thereby reducing voting time. After considerable discussion the committee voted unanimously to recommend the feedback option, with the proviso that its cost to the Town was no higher than 50% above the non-feedback option

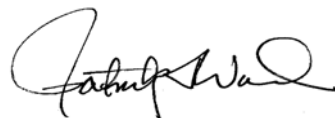
AV recommendation: The Committee recommends that the Town and School Department upgrade the AV equipment in the HS auditorium. Without such an upgrade, the E-voting process described above will not work, because the screens will not be legible to all TMMs. In terms of E-voting needs, the minimum upgrade should include a new projector of at least a 7000 lumens intensity (for reasonable contrast at an auditorium ambient light level of about 65 lux), a minimum resolution of 1280 x 800, a zoom lens capable of filling a 16 x 10 foot image from the existing projection booth at about 75 feet from the existing screen position, electronic distortion correction (keystoning, etc.) and provision for wireless remote operation. Since this will benefit both the High School auditorium users as well as Town Meeting, the committee felt that some kind of school/municipal sharing of this cost might be appropriate.

Lastly, the Committee reviewed the approximate costs associated its recommended position above (assuming the 50% ceiling for the feedback option):

- E-voting Equipment: \$15K (no feedback) \$25K (with feedback)
- A/V Upgrade to enable E-voting: \$14K
 - Projector (7000 lumens): \$10K (incl. lens)
 - Linkage for remote ops: \$2K
 - New lectern and audio tie: \$1.5K
- Overall Approximate Total: \$30K - \$40K

All of the Committee positions having been established, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:50 PM and thanked the members for having worked so diligently and cooperatively throughout the process of the last three months.

ATTEST:



Patrick J. Ward
Secretary