

-DRAFT-

MINUTES
Town Meeting Electronic Voting Committee

Date: November 10, 2015

Called to Order: The meeting was called to order at 3:10 pm, in the Town Room of Amherst Town Hall

Committee Members in Attendance:

Jim Pistrang, Mandi Jo Hanneke, Sandra Burgess, Alan Powell, Jonathan O'Keeffe, Sean Hannon, Chris Riddle

Others Participating: Michael Olkin, Amherst IT Dept.

Action Items: In Red

[In Brackets]: Item added by Chris Riddle after the meeting.

1) **Agenda:**

- a) Soliciting proposals and selecting a vendor.
- b) Items unanticipated, incl:
 - i) Jim's report on Nonny Burack's departure.
 - ii) Jim's report on a meeting of the Massachusetts Moderators Assn.
 - iii) Status of our missing handsets
 - iv) Congratulations
 - v) Next Meeting

2) **Minutes of October 27, 2015 meeting:** Approved unanimously.

3) **Vendor Selection: Steps before Spring Town Meeting:**

- a) Define criteria for potential vendors – we will work on this tonight, then **Jonathan will refine into a document**, then we'll finalize it at the next meeting. **We will invite TMCC and TM members to attend this meeting.**
- b) Make a list of potential vendors.
- c) Email criteria to vendors.
- d) Select vendor – February.
- e) Install software and train IT staff- early April.
- f) Design the mechanics of the check in and check out procedure. This is mostly Sandra's department. We will need staff for the beginning and end of each meeting, which isn't required now. Will we need someone at the door throughout?
- g) Design the central screen display.
- h) Prepare and distribute training materials for members.

4) **Procurement Method:**

- a) Two options: RFP or three quotes? We can do three quotes since our purchase is under \$35,000. We agreed to go ahead with the three quotes method, since it's simpler.
- b) Procurement will probably be managed by Sean's department. **He will verify.**
- c) We have to seek three quotes, but do not necessarily have to receive three quotes. If we get only one quote, and it meets our criteria, we can accept it.
- d) The quotes do not necessarily have to match perfectly, feature-for-feature.
- e) We do not have to take the lowest price proposal.

5) **Criteria for our System:** (We were helped by referring to models from two other towns, Wayland and Arlington.)

- a) General:
 - i) Must survive any single-point failure
- b) Handsets:
 - i) [At least 260 handsets]

- ii) At least three buttons (Yes, No and Abstain). We will not limit the handsets to these three buttons, however, because that might limit ways the system could be used in the future.
 - iii) We will express a preference for simplicity and ease of use – large screen, large font, large buttons.
 - iv) Must display acknowledgment of the most recent vote actually received (not just an echo of the vote entered), and after the window is closed, the final vote received, until the Moderator declares the vote closed. Must it display the vote recorded with a notice different from the notice while the window is open? (OTI doesn't.)
 - v) Displays error messages. If a voter uses an incorrect button, displays an 'invalid entry' message.
 - vi) Operates for at least 6 hrs. on a fully charged battery.
 - vii) Communicates with a transceiver within a 250' radius (Wayland is 300').
 - viii) Deploys without connection to the internet.
 - ix) Provides a demonstrable means of verifying the integrity of the vote.
 - x) Enables the Moderator to set the duration of the voting window.
 - xi) [Encrypts all messaging back and forth to the handsets.]
- c) Check-In:
- i) Permits voters to check in after the meeting has started.
- d) Voting System:
- i) Able to update the voting roster on the fly, to replace defective handsets, for instance.
 - ii) Creates a secure, permanent electronic record of the details of all voting.
 - iii) During the voting window, tallies and displays on the central screen a running total of number of votes cast.
 - iv) After voting window is closed, tallies and displays on the central screen the voting total, the percentage of 'yes' votes (yes votes divided by the sum of yes and no votes), and the percentage of 'no' votes (no votes divided by the sum of yes and no votes).
 - v) After the voting window is closed, capable of tallying and displaying on the central screen the votes of all the participating handsets, organized by handset number (not by voter name). Purpose: For each voter to see confirmation of his/her votes.
 - vi) During voting, we are not planning to display a running yes/no/abstain total while the voting window is open.
 - vii) During and after the voting window is open, we are not planning to display a table of individual votes by voter name.
- 6) **[Other Arlington RFP Items:** The Arlington RFP contains several items that we may want to include in our criteria but didn't discuss, such as: System Computer, Radio Receiver Base Unit, Batteries (chargeable or non-chargeable, size), storage containers, low-battery indicator, and several items under System Capabilities.]
- 7) **Miscellaneous:**
- a) Adjusting the Vote: We may need a means to adjust the vote after the window is closed. For instance, a member might raise her hand and say: 'Mr. Moderator, my handset stopped working'. In such a case, do we want the clerk to be able to re-open the voting window after it's closed? Or – more likely – will the clerk adjust the result outside of the electronic system? We probably don't want the IT staff to be able to adjust the vote within the electronic system.
 - b) Accessibility for People with Disabilities: **As discussed earlier, we will visit the Disability Access Advisory Committee soon and ask its members to help us craft a system to assist disabled people with voting.**

- c) Reports: Must be capable of outputting to Excel. [Do we want to be able to custom format our own reports?]
- 8) **Jim's Report on Nonny Burack's Departure**: Nonny Burack has resigned from Town Meeting and the TMCC. Jim understands it was at least partly because of the Electronic Voting results. Jim is working on finding a replacement for her on the TMCC. It will involve the write-in votes cast at the last TMCC election.
- 9) **Jim's Report on Recent Meeting of the Mass. Moderator's Assn.** (It was an extremely well-run meeting.) There was a discussion of Electronic Voting:
 - a) Recommendation: The Association is formally recommending that TMs move to electronic voting.
 - b) Results Display: The moderators who use E.V. all reported that they display who voted and how on the screen. Framingham displays the votes by precinct (8 successive screens, 6 sec. each). They organize the display by precinct. Mandi reported feedback from members who would be uncomfortable without a display on the screen about how their vote was recorded. We talked this over, and decided that displaying by handset number is preferable than by name. Why? Because the members need to know that their own vote was recorded properly. They don't need to know what other members voted.
 - c) Failures: There haven't been any system failures. The errors have all turned out to be user-input errors.
 - d) Spare Units: When a failed unit is replaced, the new one always has to be added to the end of the roster.
 - e) Voting Window: Framingham uses a 20 sec. window, which they feel is fine. Brookline uses 40 sec. Maybe we should start at 30 sec., and when people are comfortable, move down from there. We might display the count-down as 20 sec., but actually close the voting at 25 sec.
- 10) **Our Missing Handsets**: Are still missing. We'll probably need to reimburse OTI.
- 11) **Congratulations**: Jim congratulated the committee on a 'perfect' presentation. Reward: Doughnuts from the Glazed Doughnut Shop.
- 12) **Next Meeting**: Dec. 8, 7:00 pm, Town Room
- 13) **Adjourned**: At 4:30 pm.

Submitted by:
Chris Riddle, November 11, 2015