7:07 pm Meeting Convened in Town Hall Conference Room 1

Members Present : Michael Widmer, Maryann Scali, Anne Marie Mahoney, Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Mark Paolillo

Members Not Present: David Petto

Review of the Procedures Working Group Meeting that was held January 24, 2013, notes distributed and discussed. The committee then endorsed the following procedures for Electronic Voting at Belmont Town Meeting:

- Handheld devices, instant tally & display
- Goals: accuracy of the vote, time efficiency, accountability of Town Meeting Members
- Employ for 4 types of electronic vote:
  - Mandated:
    - Moderator doubts vote
    - Challenged vote (by at least 7 Town Meeting Members)
    - Roll Call vote (by at least 35 Town Meeting Members)
  - Recommended Guidelines to the Moderator:
    - In cases of all 2/3 votes (per By-Law 2.7.6.1) which includes zoning, reconsideration, disposition of town property to name several.
- It is most desirable to keep change to the culture of Town Meeting to a minimum; still allowing voice and prescribed roll call. The Moderator must be able to take the tenor of Town Meeting to allow a voice vote instead of using the full electronic voting method.
- The Town's By-Laws must be revised to add electronic voting as an alternative methodology. George Hall, Town Counsel, will draft this amendment given the procedures we decide upon.
- Votes: 1= Yes, 2=No, 3= Abstain
- Display: must have clock showing time remaining/available for voting; continuous scrolling of the individual votes by precinct showing at least 2 precincts at one time as Members vote (time not yet determined but possibly for 5 seconds each); the Belmont total vote tally will NOT show as votes are recorded to allow as "pure" a vote as possible; must scroll through all the precincts twice. Belmont will NOT have Town Meeting Members stand to affirm their votes; only after the close of all voting will the vote totals appear
- Record: the votes taken to ascertain the 2/3 etc will be recorded and saved in aggregate only. An successful request for roll call (35 Town Meeting Members affirming) is the only time that the individual voting records will be attributed and saved for each member present.
- Voting time: 40 seconds total is used in Brookline – We need to determine this (# seconds for voting where change is permitted, then followed by additional # seconds where votes are frozen)
- As votes are recorded and show on the screen, Town Meeting Members check their own votes for accuracy; if the Member believes the vote is incorrectly recorded, the Member calls the attention of the Moderator to switch vote. Self-policing by Town Meeting Members keeps people using devices for Members not present. Is it possible to have the names of all the Town Meeting Members appear and those not present show as "not present" or "not in use"?
- Procedures: Town Clerk pre-assigns the handheld devices in numeric order to Members alphabetically by precinct and checks the batteries; Town Clerk staff is assigned per precinct for sign-in (Town Meeting Members sign in and accept the numerically assigned handheld device with the same signature); Town Clerk staff stays to handle and assign any late arrivers (how would these be "enabled" or are they all automatically "enabled" and only used when given to members); when Members leave they just place the devices in a recycle bin; next morning Town Clerk staff returns the devices to the numeric order and contacts members whose devices were not received. In the event that there is a caucus to elect a new Town Meeting Member just prior to Town Meeting, that device/person must be able to be incorporated into the voting and display.
- Implementation : Similar to Brookline, the Moderator should issue an open invitation to Town Meeting Members for a dry-run to learn to use the devices and to develop confidence in the process and the technology. At the start of each session of Town Meeting, the Moderator will routinely conduct a practice run for a couple of easy/light questions such as "Will the Red Sox win the World Series?" . Members will test the batteries and

accuracy at that time. How will Belmont handle any "technology" issues that arise during Town Meeting session such as a defective remote control ?

- Open issues : full operating cost versus traditional preparations
  - o Need to determine the timing (# seconds for voting where change is permitted, then followed by additional # seconds where votes are frozen)
  - o Is it possible to have the names of all the Town Meeting Members appear (including those not present that show as "not present" or "not in use")?
  - o How would the remotes for late arrivers be "enabled" or are they all automatically "enabled" and only used when given to members
  - o How will Belmont handle any "technology" issues that arise during Town Meeting session such as a defective remote control ?

Committee Activities:
- At the next meeting, to be held March 11th at 9am, we will discuss: report to Town Meeting, Town Meeting presentation, IT criteria for selection – RFPs and technology requirements, criteria for evaluation of vendors/proposals,, By-Law changes required

8:10 pm Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted
Ellen O'Brien Cushman

Committee on Electronic Voting at Town Meeting - Procedures Working Group   January 24, 2013

Anne Marie Mahoney, Maryann Scali, Ellen O'Brien Cushman

Possible uses for Electronic Voting at Town Meeting:
A. Full use
- all votes at Town Meeting, regardless of topic, size, $ value or doubt
- virtually a roll call vote every time

B. Nothing electronic, status quo
- Voice vote, standing vote only on request, roll call only with request of 35 Members
- No display
- Judgment of the Moderator on all voice votes, especially 2/3rds often
- Time approximately 25 minutes for roll call vote; 10 minutes for standing vote; 1 minute for voice vote
- Does voice vote reflect the number of votes or the strength of the voices
- Do only Members vote?

C. Use only for specific votes – some possibilities:
- When voice vote is in doubt
- Only to replace the standing or the roll call vote
- Only when money is involved
- Only when 2/3rd vote or more is required
- Only for zoning
- Only for building projects

Votes Display – Names of Town Meeting Members should appear with vote Yes, No, Abstain
       Display by precinct, alphabetically, precincts first 1-8, with At-Large at the end and cycle to allow
       Members to confirm accuracy of individual votes.

Voting Process – votes are cast, allow for 40 seconds (to be confirmed), display in real time only names
       with votes, no totals appear,
Changes - the votes should be able to be changed electronically without contacting the Moderator, then
       show the frozen votes to all by scrolling.
Corrections - Members who then want to change their votes or believe their votes were inaccurately   recorded may
       do so by motioning the Moderator.
Totals display - only after the conclusion of all three time periods (voting, changes, corrections) to limit
       "influence" of the vote. The Totals display should include #Yes, #No, # Abstain, bar chart?

Capturing the individual votes of Town Meeting Members is different than preserving and attributing them as if a roll call vote was cast.

If use electronic voting on many questions – should capture the individual votes and display for confirmation only and save the vote only in aggregate, just like a voice or standing vote.

If use electronic voting for a roll call vote per the By-Laws, in order to capture, preserve and attribute the votes to each Town Meeting Member we should retain the requirement of 35 Town Meeting Members requesting a roll call vote. Question the exact process – in Belmont there is first a voice vote, then 35 Members can request a roll call vote which means that Members vote twice. Is this necessary since we already have the individual votes captured but not recorded?

Frequency of roll call votes – in Belmont this has been infrequent, only on expected and realized close votes or when the proponents want the names of the Members who support the article.

-    Recorded by Ellen O'Brien Cushman