

Electronic Voting Implementation Subcommittee ("ELVIS")
Minutes of the Meeting of 2021-09-23

The **bold** items below are meeting agenda items.

Call to order: Dave Bernstein called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. This meeting was held via Zoom teleconferencing.

The ELVIS committee members in attendance, in addition to Chairman Dave Bernstein, were Larry Krakauer, Town Clerk Anna Ludwig, Don Schuler, and Jon Sieber.

Also attending as invited participants: Wayland Moderator Dennis Berry, and Wayland Selectman Dave Watkins (joined 7:47pm).

Appoint Secretary pro tem: Larry Krakauer was appointed secretary pro tem.

Invite public comment: None appeared at this point.

Approve Minutes from our 2021-04-22 and 2021-07-19 meetings:

Moved (Sieber), Seconded (Krakauer): *Approve minutes of our 2021-04-22 meeting.*
Passed unanimously.

Moved (Sieber), Seconded (Ludwig): *Approve the minutes of the 2021-07-19 meeting.*
Passed unanimously.

In accordance with our procedures for virtual (Zoom) meetings, all votes were conducted by rollcall of the ELVIS committee members.

Complete and approve our FY2021 Annual Report, due 2021-09-30:

Dave Bernstein asked for any corrections to the Annual Report.

Don Schuler: Under the heading **Town Meetings**: in the 2020 Annual Town Meeting, there was a maximum of 380 voters participating, not 392.

Moved (Sieber), Seconded (Krakauer): Approve the Annual Report with the above change.
Passed unanimously.

Review progress towards "Remote participation":

Dave Bernstein presented slides outlining how the system might work to five Town Meeting Moderators of other towns, for comments. He showed some of the slides at this meeting. These slides are available as a public document as version 2.8 of Dave Bernstein's "Remote Participation" presentation.

Two moderators, Wayne Davis of Carlisle, and John Fallon of Boxborough, both liked the possibility of remote participation, even though on-site electronic voting is not, for these small towns, worth the cost. John Arnold of Westborough expressed an interest in being a technical advisor.

Dennis Berry: Could these towns combine remote participation as proposed with traditional (voice) voting on-site? Most votes are not close.

Jon Sieber: We should be clear that we in Wayland are not supporting that mixed model – on-site voters will use handsets. If other towns want to try this, it's up to them to work out any issues. We haven't done so, and don't plan to.

Dave Bernstein: OTI might want to be aware of this issue, though, in the interest of increasing their customer base.

(Wayland Selectman Dave Watkins joined the meeting at this point, 7:47pm)

Dave Bernstein also spoke with the Moderators of Concord (Carmin Reiss) and Weston (Rip Hastings). Mr. Hastings thought the quality of deliberation might suffer if participation is increased, resulting in more questions and more speakers. Ms. Reiss disagreed, thinking the number of speakers at a meeting is more proportional to number of issues, not the number of total participants. She noted that once "the Australian Ballot" (ranked choice voting) was introduced in New Hampshire, participation in Town Meeting decreased.

Concord has a public hearing for each article before Town Meeting, and doing it on Zoom doubled their attendance compared to in-person review meetings. Some participants expressed dislike for the webinar format because they could only see the panelists, and thus could not see the reactions of the other participants (Reiss).

Dennis Berry: People wanting to participate remotely probably feel very strongly about one or two articles. Most don't participate just out of civic duty.

Dave Bernstein: We have a 3,600-member Facebook forum – I think we can get quite a bit of civic participation.

Dave Bernstein asked Dave Watkins for input on the legislative process.

Dave Watkins: Wayland Town Counsel is involved, and there will be a meeting on Wednesday to determine the exact form of the submission to the Massachusetts General Court.

Review ELVIS' responsibilities during the Special Town Meeting to be held on October 3:

Dave Bernstein: The Town Meeting will be October 3 starting at 12:30pm, on the High School Football Field. Setup will be the day before, Saturday. If there's a postponement due to weather, Dave Bernstein will let the committee know. Any postponement would be decided by the Moderator, after consultation with the police and fire department.

Don Schuler: We had good survey participation – well over 600 responses. The numbers didn't change much week to week. We've ordered 650 handsets, and 5 check-in stations. There will be four color-coded seating zones, as at the last meeting. Each zone will have 168 chairs.

Anna Ludwig: I thought there would be 6 check-in stations – I'll double-check tomorrow.

Dave Bernstein: We'll stop seating in a zone before it's full. If we run out of handsets, we'll seat voters in the home stands, and issue paper ballots.

The Town Administrator will line up ushers, and Dave Bernstein will train them.

Anna Ludwig: I have 13 people lined up, having planned for eight check-in stations initially.

Dennis Berry: Ben Keefe can't be at the meeting at all, and Allesandra Kingsford will arrive late. But time-keeping is vital – someone needs to be trained by Ben.

Dave Bernstein: The ELVIS committee's first responsibility at the meeting, as usual, will be dealing with any handset failures. We will again wave a red flag if a paper ballot is needed. We need to keep tabs on the unissued handsets as usual, since they are all live (perhaps one usher will do that). If a thunderstorm approaches, everyone will go under cover near or in the field house, with their handsets.

Dennis Berry: The selectmen were a bit nervous about people keeping their handsets in that situation.

Larry Krakauer: There are logistical issues with the time needed to collect and re-issue handsets

Anna Ludwig: Indeed, that would probably take an hour or so.

Dave Bernstein: We can let people keep their handsets if we just create a handset-collection perimeter around the playing field and the field house

Our consensus was that if a weather interruption occurs, people will keep their handsets as long as they are within a perimeter that includes the Field House. If they leave (directly from the playing field or from the Field House area), they'll turn in their handsets at that point.

Larry Krakauer: If they return from the Field House area after the meeting is restarted, an announcement will be needed to have them turn their handsets back on (after being out of radio range for a specified time, the handsets turn themselves off).

Dennis Berry agreed with this approach. He also noted that there are only four articles, so this should be a short meeting, and this weather-interruption scenario is not that likely. If it occurs, we'll have to deal with it on the fly.

Dave Bernstein: Monday night is the specified fallback if there's bad weather on Sunday. There will be no public ELVIS meeting at the Special Town Meeting site. I will visit the ELVIS Committee members to get everyone's signature on the annual report.

Invite public comment: There was no public comment.

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn: Moved (Dave Bernstein), Seconded (Larry Krakauer). Passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.