

**TOWN OF ARLINGTON**  
**TOWN MEETING ELECTRONIC VOTING STUDY COMMITTEE**

*February 20, 2013*

**Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Town Meeting Electronic Voting Study Committee was called to order by Committee Chair Eric Helmuth in the Second Floor Meeting Room of the Town Hall Annex on Wednesday, February 20, 2013, at 7:35 PM.

*Quorum*

A quorum was present: John Leone, Wes Beal, Adam Auster, and Eric Helmuth.

**Approval of Minutes**

MOTION:  
*Approval of  
Minutes*

John Leone moved that the minutes of the February 6, 2013, meeting be approved.

The motion passed.

**Reports**

*Report of the Chair*

Committee Chair Eric Helmuth said that the Finance Committee will hear the proposal to fund an electronic voting system next Monday, February 25, at 7:45 PM.

He reminded the Committee that approval of funds to purchase a system is unlikely this year because a purchase would be subject to the multi-year capital-planning cycle, according to Alan Jones of the Finance Committee.

He said that the Finance Committee will want to know the “not-to-exceed” number, which should be the maximum possible cost of a voting system, including all costs.

**New Business**

DISCUSSION:  
*Finance  
Committee  
Review*

The Committee identified costs beyond the purchase or rental of an electronic-voting system, including staff time, batteries, software subscriptions, and replacement hand-held voting units.

Some members suggested that these costs would not exceed \$2,000 per year.

Some members said that a lease-to-buy arrangement might be preferable.

DISCUSSION:  
*Bylaws*

Mr. Helmuth distributed some flow charts illustrating the process of taking and recording votes at Town Meeting under current rules and under other procedural scenarios that use electronic voting. This document is appended to these minutes.

Mr. Leone distributed the following documents:

- a copy of Title 1 Article 1 Section 10.C of the Bylaws governing votes at Town Meeting,
- Two alternative proposals to amend Section 10.C entitled “Simple Change—One Vote” and “Simple Change—Two Votes.”

These proposals both differ from Mr. Leone’s previous proposal by allowing for an electronic vote as the first instance of voting. They differ from each other over whether an electronic roll call vote called after an electronic tally should require a second vote versus revelation of the voting data of the first (tally) vote.

- Two alternative proposals from Mr. Beal entitled “Wes Revealed Vote,” “Wes Simple,” and two more that are untitled but that are more-specific variations of the first two respectively.

A copy of these documents is appended to these minutes.

The Committee discussed the following issues related to rules and bylaws that were introduced at earlier meetings:

- the amount of detail and level of specificity that would be best to have in the bylaws,

- whether to make public the roll-call results of non-roll-call votes, and if so how.
- whether an appeal of an electronic tally of the yeas and nays to an electronic roll-call should entail a second vote or just the revelation and review of the tally data,
- whether fewer than 30 members rising should be able to request a roll call for electronic votes only.

*Other Issues*

Other issues discussed included whether to allow electronic voting in lieu of voice voting in the first instance, the role of Town Meeting in determining which voting methods would be employed at which points, the opportunity for members to correct roll-call votes, the use of “abstain” to turn every electronic vote into a quorum count (when added to “yes” and “no”), the desirability of knowing which members were present at the time of the motion to adjourn, and other requirements of the Bylaws, Town Meeting Time, and state law related to voting.

The committee made no decisions on these and other issues but reached the following general conclusions.

*Specific vs.  
General*

Committee members generally felt that less detail is preferable for the bylaws, with a level of specificity similar to that of the current bylaw. In the course of the discussion, several points were identified as being best left to the discretion of the meeting and the moderator, or to various Town departments.

*Publish vs.  
Perish*

Committee members favored recommending a proposal that would have the roll-call results of all electronic votes available to the public after the meeting, though not part of the official record of the meeting. Under this formulation, formal roll calls would be subject to review and challenge during the meeting and would be included as part of the record of the meeting.

Mr. Leone said that as moderator he would initially treat all electronic votes as roll-call votes with member review during the meeting, so as to let members get used to the system and have confidence in it. He said that he would continue to use voice votes to resolve some questions.

*Revote vs.  
Reveal*

Committee members agreed to put the question of revote versus reveal to Town Meeting to decide, in the form of alternative proposals or of an amendment.

Mr. Leone agreed to draft a proposal for the next meeting that will reflect this discussion.

MOTION:  
*Adjournment*

Mr. Auster moved that the meeting adjourn.

The motion passed.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Adam Auster, *Secretary*

**APPROVED**

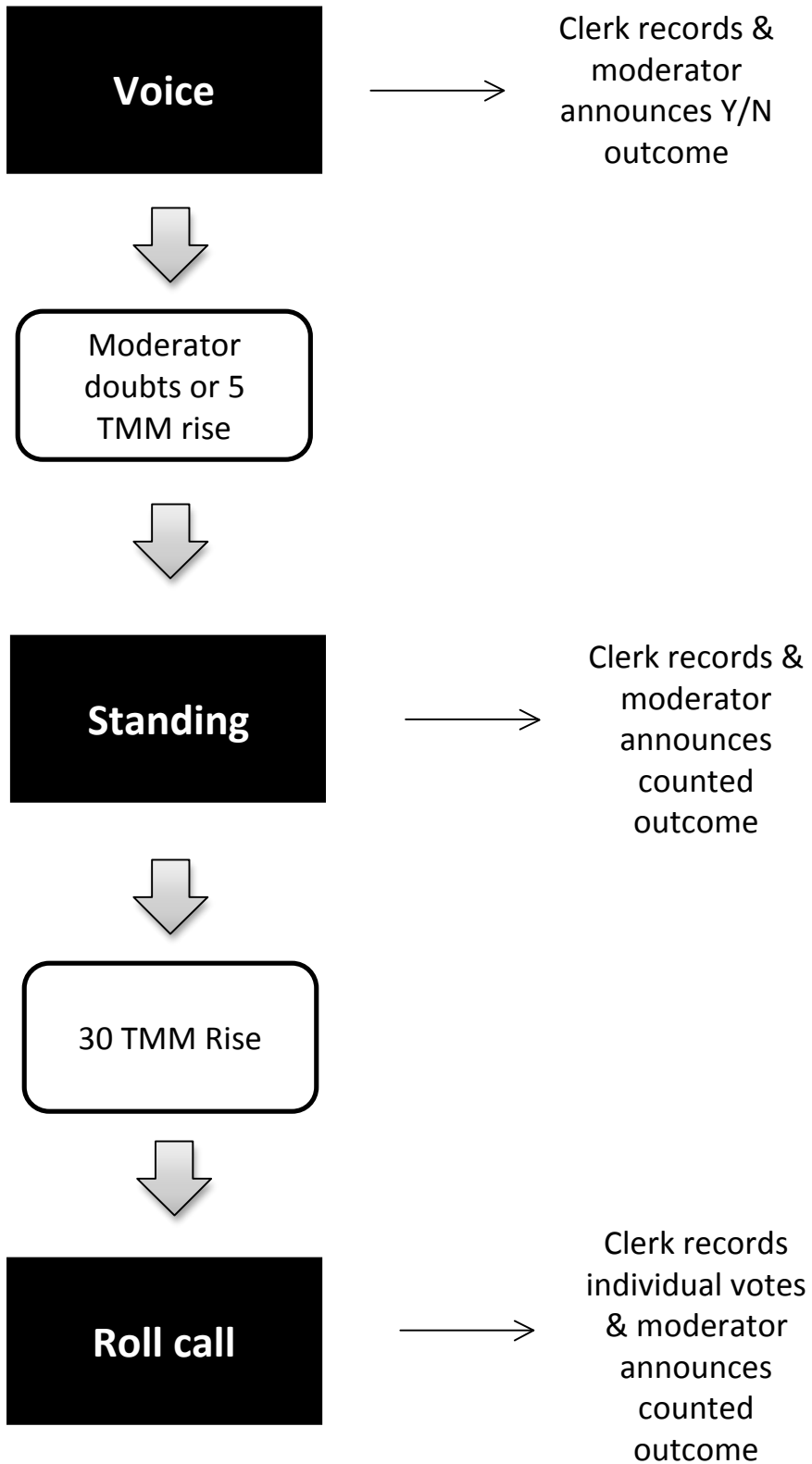
March 6, 2013

Adam Auster, *Secretary*

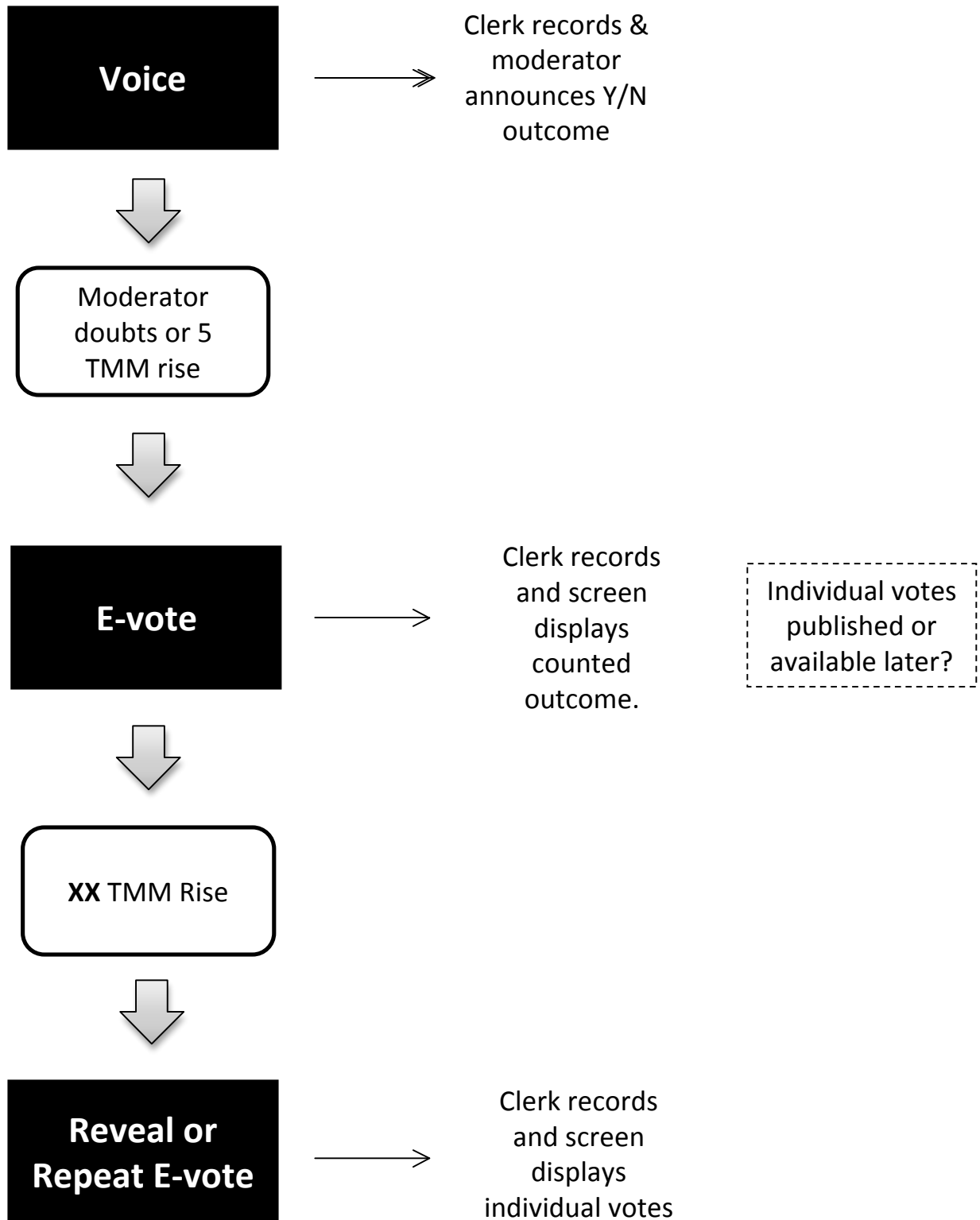
Documents attached to these minutes:

1. Flow charts illustrating present practice and other possibilities
2. Title 1 Article 1 Section 10.C of the Bylaws (“Current Bylaw”)
3. Two proposals to amend the bylaws in the form of marked-up version of Section 10.C of the Bylaws showing proposed changes
4. Four additional proposals to amend the bylaws each in the form of a new Section 10.C.

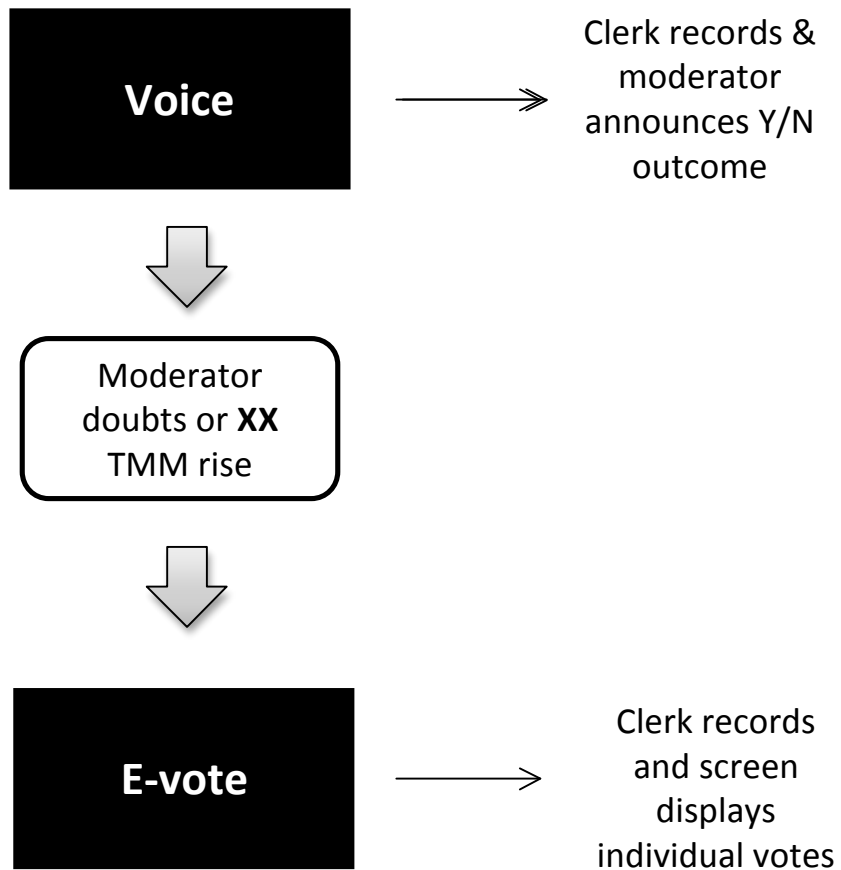
## Present Practice



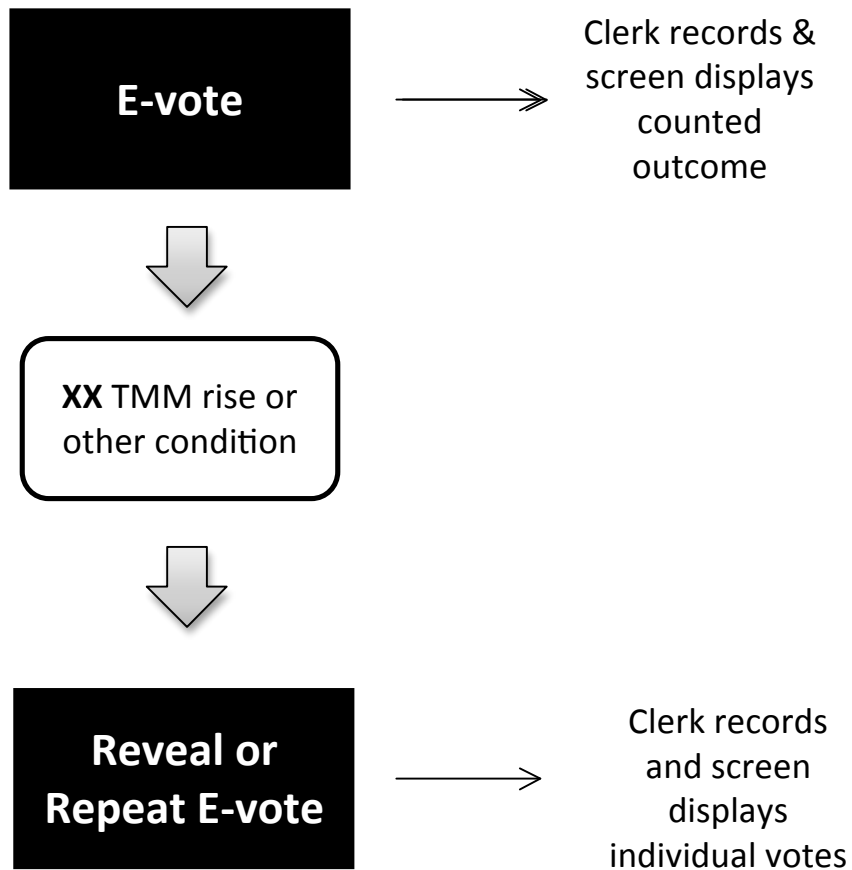
## Scenario 1: Closest parallel to present practice



## Scenario 2: Initial voice > immediate electronic roll call



### Scenario 3: Initial electronic counted vote > electronic roll call





## **Current Bylaw**

### **Title I- General Government**

#### **ARTICLE 1: TOWN MEETINGS,**

##### **Section 10. Procedural Rules, C. Votes:**

(ART. 13, ATM – 04/29/92), (ART. 22, ATM – 05/11/11)

All votes, unless otherwise provided by law, shall be taken in the first instance by a "yes" and "no" voice vote. If the Moderator is in doubt as to the vote he may call for a show of hands or for a standing vote, or if five voters immediately question the vote, the Moderator shall call for a standing vote. On all questions submitted for the consideration of the Town Meeting, there shall be a roll call vote when requested by thirty or more Town Meeting Members present at the meeting. All roll call votes shall be recorded so as to indicate the individual vote of each Town Meeting Member who shall have voted. Said roll call votes shall be available as recorded at the Town Clerk's Office. Whenever a vote of two-thirds of the Town Meeting Members present and voting is required on any matter, the Moderator may declare a motion passed by a voice vote of at least two-thirds in favor and a standing vote need not be taken unless required by law or these Bylaws. The Town Clerk shall record the Moderator's declaration that the motion passed by a two-thirds vote in favor.

**Simple change - one vote**

**Title I- General Government**

**ARTICLE 1: TOWN MEETINGS,**

**Section 10. Procedural Rules, C. Votes:**

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**Simple change - two votes**

**Title I- General Government**

**ARTICLE 1: TOWN MEETINGS,**

**Section 10. Procedural Rules, C. Votes:**

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Title I- General Government (WES REVEALED VOTE)

ARTICLE 1: TOWN MEETINGS,

Section 10. Procedural Rules

C. Votes:

(ART. 13, ATM - 04/29/92), (ART. 22, ATM - 05/11/11)

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Title I- General Government (WES SIMPLE)

ARTICLE 1: TOWN MEETINGS,

Section 10. Procedural Rules

C. Votes:

(ART. 13, ATM - 04/29/92), (ART. 22, ATM - 05/11/11)

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Title I- General Government - ARTICLE 1: TOWN MEETINGS, - Section 10. Procedural Rules - C. Votes:  
(ART. 13, ATM - 04/29/92), (ART. 22, ATM - 05/11/11)

- I. Voting Process.
  - A. If an electronic tally and display system is available, all votes, unless otherwise provided by law, may be taken by an electronic tally.
  - B. Votes in the affirmative shall be cast by a statement or selection of "yes." Votes in the negative shall be cast by a statement or selection of "no." When an electronic tally is used, or in the case of a roll call vote, Town Meeting members may cast a vote of "abstain."
- II. Instances of voting.
  - A. Unless otherwise provided by law, all votes shall occur in the first instance by a voice vote or by an electronic tally.
  - B. If the Moderator is in doubt as to the vote in the first instance, or if five voters immediately question said vote, the Moderator shall call for a standing vote, or if an electronic tally was not used, an electronic tally.
    - i. If the Moderator is in doubt, or if five voters immediately question the accuracy of an electronic tally used for either a vote in the first instance, or for a standing vote, the Moderator shall call for a standing vote, for which an electronic tally may not be used.
  - C. On all questions submitted for the consideration of the Town Meeting, there shall be a roll call vote, either by voice or an electronic tally, when requested by thirty or more Town Meeting members present at the meeting.
    - i. All roll call votes shall be recorded so as to indicate the individual vote of each Town Meeting member who shall have voted.
    - ii. Said roll call votes shall be available as recorded at the Town Clerk's Office.
    - iii. At the conclusion of the display of a roll call vote taken electronically, the Moderator will ask if there are any challenges, which may only be made if
      1. a Town Meeting member's vote was incorrectly recorded, in which event the tally will be corrected, or
      2. any Town Meeting member asserts that a Town Meeting member whose vote was recorded is not present, in which event the Moderator will verify the correctness of the challenge, and if true strike said vote.
      3. After any challenges have been resolved as aforesaid, the Moderator will declare the results of the vote, which may not be doubted or further challenged.
- III. Display of electronic votes, availability of records.
  - A. If an electronic tally is taken for a vote in the first instance, or in lieu of a standing vote, then only the vote totals shall be displayed.
  - B. All roll call votes taken electronically shall be visible to the Town Meeting members and any members of the public present at the meeting. The display shall show each Town Meeting member's name; precinct; vote; and a tally of all votes.
  - C. After a session in which an electronic tally was used a list, organized by precinct, which shall disclose how each Town Meeting member voted, may be made available on the Town's website.
- IV. Whenever a vote of two-thirds of the Town Meeting members present and voting is required on any matter, the Moderator may declare a motion passed by a voice vote of at least two-thirds in favor and a standing vote, or electronic tally, need not be taken unless required by law or these Bylaws.
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  - A. The Town Clerk shall record the Moderator's declaration that the motion passed by a two-thirds vote in favor.