Town Meeting Procedures Committee

Date: Monday, November 18, 2024
Time: 7:30 - 9:00 PM
In-person location: Town Hall Annex 2nd Floor Conference Room
Remote access: Zoom

Agenda

1. Public comment
2. Approval of past minutes (from April 18 and June 17)
3. Discuss RFP for Electronic Participation System
4. Town Meeting Member Oath
5. Procedures for Resolutions and Negative Substitute Motions
6. Update from Hybrid Town Meeting Study Committee
7. Speaker queue management
8. New Business

This will be a hybrid meeting with remote participation via Zoom. Registration information for Zoom will be posted.

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Town of Arlington
Town Meeting Procedures Committee
April 18, 2024

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DRAFT MINUTES

Call to order: The meeting of the Town Meeting Procedures Committee was called to order by Town Moderator, Greg Christiana, at 7:01pm

Quorum: A quorum was present: Adam Auster, Greg Christiana, Rebecca Gruber, Christopher Moore, and John L. Worden III. All attended remotely.

Mr. Christiana said that remote participation was authorized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Public Comments:
- Elizabeth Dray and Andrew Fischer from the public in attendance.
- Mr. Fischer asked that the guidance regarding papers being place on chairs be modified to allow if pertinent to that specific night's matters of business.

Minutes of Prior Meeting:
April 10, 2024:
　　　Moved approval: Ms. Gruber
　　　Seconded: Mr. Auster
　　　Vote: unanimous with the addition of Ms. Kelleher's handout

Old Business:

Warrant Articles 8 and 9:
Discussion of draft memo for the Select Board. Recommended changes were voted on and accepted for the final memo.

Mr. Worden made a motion that the Town Meeting Procedures Committee recommend that the start time not be changed. The motion was not seconded.

Motion to approve the revised report:
　　　Moved approval: Mr. Moore
　　　Seconded: Mr. Auster
　　　Vote: Mr. Auster, Mr. Christiana, Ms. Gruber, and Mr. Moore voted in the affirmative.
Mr. Worden voted in the negative. Motion approved 4-1.

There was a brief discussion on how the Moderator might present to the Meeting their options regarding the handling of Articles 8 and 9.

New Business:

- Mr. Worden raised as an issue the number of articles placed on the Consent Agenda.
- Mr. Christiana has been receiving questions about how resolutions will be handled. Mr. Christiana will share an explanatory memo with the TMM email list.
- Mr. Christiana has been asked by the Town Clerk if it's possible to dispose of Article 3 on the first night. Mr. Christiana will discuss the matter with Town Counsel.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 8:21pm.
      Moved: Mr. Moore
      Seconded: Mr. Auster
      Vote: unanimous

                                            Rebecca Gruber

Town of Arlington
Town Meeting Procedures Committee
June 17, 2024

DRAFT MINUTES

Call to order: The meeting of the Town Meeting Procedures Committee was called to order by Town Moderator, Greg Christiana, at 8:03pm

Quorum: A quorum was present: Greg Christiana, Rebecca Gruber, Christopher Moore, and John Worden. Town Clerk Juli Brazile was also present.

Public Comments:
- There was no public comment.

Minutes of Prior Meetings:
- No minutes were presented for approval

Old Business:

Reports of Committees at Town Meeting:
- The Committee discussed the scope of recommended votes and what do to in the absence of a valid and in-scope recommended vote (e.g. if a reporting Committee declines to provide a recommended vote).
- The Committee recommended that we do away with the presentation of paper reports by those who move their acceptance and develop appropriate language to indicate where the text of the report may be found (for example, "…contents published by the Clerk").
- The Committee discussed the speaking time for presentations of reports (recommending four minutes) and moving the procedural vote that puts recommended motions contained in reports before the meeting out of Article 3 and grouping it with other procedural votes.

Submission of Materials:
- The Committee suggested that we require presentations be submitted at the latest by noon the day of the meeting and that written materials be submitted at the latest by 5pm the business day before the meeting.

Scope of Presentations for Subsidiary Motions:
- The Committee discussed whether speakers introducing subsidiary motions should be held to the topic of their motion(s) or if they may speak to the Article as a whole and any other subsidiary motions.
- A majority of the Committee was in favor of strictly limiting the scope to the subsidiary motion(s) being introduced and making it clear that the mover is eligible to be in the speaking queue as well (but limited to five minutes since they would be speaking for the second time). The Moderator will take this under advisement.

New Business:

- Mr. Worden requested further discussion of management of the speaking queue.
- The committee discussed the procedure and effect of separate consideration.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 10:08pm.
      Vote: unanimous

Christopher Moore

DRAFT: RFP rubric for Electronic Participation System – Arlington Town Meeting

Greg Christiana, Arlington Town Moderator – October 25, 2024

Criteria	Highly Advantageous	Advantageous	Not Advantageous	Unacceptable
Electronic voting	Publicly visible source of truth about when voting is open, e.g. a green light at the Moderator's desk or podium, automatically synchronized to participants' devices which echo the same status.	Displays raw vote totals and indicates whether the vote threshold (majority or two-thirds) has been reached for an affirmative vote. (This requires prior configuration of the quantum of vote for each motion.) Capable of accommodating unexpected motions that arise during the meeting, with titles that are entered in real time during the meeting. Participants' devices indicate whether voting is open and the status of their vote.	Displays raw vote totals but does not indicate whether the vote threshold (majority or two-thirds) has been reached for an affirmative vote. Capable of accommodating unexpected motions that arise during the meeting in a generic way, e.g. voting slides for generic majority and two-thirds votes. Participants can modify their vote while voting remains open. No indication on participants' devices about whether voting is open or the status of their vote.	Involves multiple systems that need to be tallied manually during the meeting. Unable to accommodate unexpected motions that arise during the meeting. Participants cannot modify their vote once it is cast.
Speaker management	Publicly visible source of truth about when the speaker queue is open, e.g. a green light at the Moderator's desk or podium, automatically synchronized to participants' devices which echo the same status. Removing oneself from the speaker queue requires user confirmation. Participants optionally can indicate their intention when requesting to speak; intentions include: speaking in favor of the motion, speaking against the motion, asking questions, and terminating debate.	Distinct user inputs for a participant to join and leave the speaker queue. Speaker queue can be saved and restored, e.g. when the meeting adjourns during debate, or if a second-degree motion requires a distinct speaker queue before returning to the speaker queue of the first-degree motion. Participants' devices indicate whether they can request to speak and the status of their request.	Pressing the same physical or virtual button toggles a participant's presence in the speaker queue, losing their place in the queue in the process. Speaker queue cannot be saved and restored, e.g. when the meeting adjourns during debate, or if a second-degree motion requires a distinct speaker queue before returning to the speaker queue of the first-degree motion. No indication on participants' devices about whether they can request to speak or the status of their request.	No functionality for participants to request to speak.

Criteria	Highly Advantageous	Advantageous	Not Advantageous	Unacceptable
Display and visibility of meeting status, e.g. active vote with countdown, tally after closing voting, and speaker queue	Meeting status is visible ubiquitously in real time, including large displays around the auditorium and participants' personal devices: phones, tablets, or laptops.	Meeting status is visible on multiple displays around the Town Hall auditorium: the large display above the stage, display(s) in the balcony, and multiple displays around the auditorium floor.	Meeting status is visible on the large display above the stage in the Town Hall auditorium.	Meeting status is not available in a visible digital form to participants during the meeting.
Hybrid capability, in the event that we permit hybrid participation in the future	Seamless support for participants to switch between remote and in-person participation without prior notice or administrative effort.	Can manually switch between in-person and remote for TMMs easily without prior notice. Single unified system with equitable functionality available to in-person and remote participants.	Requires prior notice and non-trivial administrative effort to switch participants between in person and remote from one meeting to the next. One system for in-person participation and a different system for remote participation, requiring integration of the two systems.	Lacks support for simultaneous in-person and remote participation. Requires registration of in-person vs remote participation prior to the start of the first night of Town Meeting, and participant location cannot be changed between meetings.

Criteria are listed in order from highest priority to lowest priority. Specifically, the advantage offered by higher-priority criteria carries greater weight than the advantage offered by lower-priority criteria. However, there is no specific function or algorithm that relates the weights across criteria. E.g. a solution that meets the highest-priority criterion in a highly advantageous way and other criteria in unacceptable ways is not necessarily superior to a solution that meets all criteria in a merely advantageous way.