

TOWN MEETING PROCEDURES REVIEW COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes from Meeting on April 1, 2010

Wayland Town Building

The Chairman called the Meeting to order at 7:41 PM. Present were Peter Gossels, (Chairman), David Bernstein, Dennis Berry, Steve Correia, Miranda Jones and William Steinberg. The meeting minutes from the Committee's meeting of Thursday, March 25, 2010 were unanimously approved.

Comments from Committee Members not present for the discussion of proposed Articles at prior meetings – The Committee listened to Mr. Correia and Mr. Bernstein, who were not present for the previous discussion, when other Members of the Committee voiced their opinions on the Australian ballot. Both felt that the negative aspects of the Article as written outweigh its benefits. They also provided their opinions regarding the electronic voting Article that was presented on March 25th.

Richard Stack arrived at 7:57 PM.

Discussion of Electronic Voting Article – There was a discussion of the merits of privacy in voting, which could be part of the electronic voting process. The consensus of the Committee was that there should not be a record maintained by the Town of how each person votes and the petitioner assured the Committee that any record of individual voting can be erased from the system at the end of each Town Meeting session. The Committee debated the merits of seeing how other Town Meeting attendees vote, without coming to a consensus on the issue. The cost of implementing Electronic Voting was a unanimous concern of Committee Members. The petitioner was asked to investigate the cost and the feasibility of renting the equipment required for this system.

Discussion of Australian Ballot Article – The primary benefit of this Article was discussed as the likelihood that significantly more registered voters would participate in the process than under the current system. There was Committee consensus that there would be significantly more registered voters participating in the vote on Articles at the ballot; however there was not consensus as to whether that was important. The major concerns with this Article were the following: (a) it might significantly decrease attendance at Town Meeting; (b) if the Town budget were voted upon at the ballot box, and it were not approved, there is no defined method for how the Town will proceed; and (c) there is a concern that the Selectmen will have too much control over which Articles will be voted upon at Town Meeting and which will be voted upon at the ballot box.

The Chairman asked the Committee Members if they would endorse these two Articles. The Australian Ballot Article had two Members in favor and five against, as currently written, with one Member indicating that they would be in favor of it if some of the issues discussed could be better defined. A decision regarding the Electronic Voting Article was deferred until the petitioner provides additional information to the Committee regarding the cost of renting the required equipment.

Finally, the Committee discussed whether the discussion of the Committee should be provided to the Finance Committee for inclusion in the Warrant. It was decided that the Committee is still working on these Articles and therefore it is too soon for its findings to be published. The Committee will present its findings in a report to the Selectmen such that the report can be provided to residents prior to or at Town Meeting.

The Committee will meet next on Thursday, April 8, 2010 at 7:15 PM in the Town Building. There will be a public hearing at 7:30 PM that evening to here a presentation of the Warrant Article Debate Website.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 PM.