

Town Meeting Member's Guide to TMMA Recorded Voting

Joe Pato for the TMMA Recorded Voting Committee

At the 2011 Annual Town Meeting, TMMA is continuing the trial of an optional vote recording system allowing Town Meeting Members to have their votes recorded for publication on the TMMA web site. We will only be recording substantive votes on articles, we will not record procedural votes (e.g., calling the question).

The system is optional – no member is required to participate.

We will follow the same procedure used for the 2010 Annual Town Meeting. Based on the experience gained during the trial conducted at the 2009 Fall Special Town Meeting, when we had a 70% participation rate, we have adopted the following recorded voting system:

- 1) We use a paper ballot that will record **all** articles except articles 1, 2 and 3.
- 2) The ballots include an area allowing Town Meeting Members to provide an optional commentary on their votes.
- 3) We will collect the entire ballot at the end of the Annual Town Meeting and post an image of each participating member's ballot on the TMMA web site. This image will include the optional commentary – and any other markings that are made on the ballot.
- 4) We will optionally produce a voting report similar to the one produced for the Fall 2009 Special Town Meeting with a collation of selected "interesting" votes. This report is subject to TMMA Executive Committee approval.

This plan allows all information to be recorded and published while minimizes the work needed to produce the "interesting" report by limiting which articles will be reported on. The Recorded Voting Committee will propose a selection of articles for the report after the conclusion of Town Meeting and ask for TMMA Executive Committee endorsement of the choice.

How the system works

Each Town Meeting Member will receive a pre-printed vote recording ballot. This ballot lists each of the articles on the 2011 warrant and provide places to record the vote: yes, no or abstain.

Those members wishing to participate in the trial mark their votes on the form and at the end of the last session of Town Meeting will return their forms for recording.

The TMMA Vote Recording Committee will collect the marked ballots and verify the results with each participant for the subset of articles that will be included in the recorded voting report.

More details – obtaining a ballot

Each precinct clerk will have preprinted ballots for town meeting members in their precinct. If a member needs a replacement ballot, they can obtain one from the TMMA web site at:

<http://lexingtontmma.org/index.php?n=Main.VotingReports>

Providing permission for publication

The cover page for each ballot includes voting instructions and a publication release. Those members choosing to participate will sign this release granting the TMMA permission to publish images of the ballot and to include their data in the recorded voting report. Note that the cover sheet will not be published on the web and neither will the signature that appears on the publication release.

Publication Release	
X _____	
«first» «last»	
Your signature grants permission for TMMA to publish your voting data on the TMMA web site. This signature will not appear on the web.	

Anatomy of a ballot – the voting fields

Each ballot contains a table listing the articles being considered in the trial. When a vote is taken, the Moderator will identify which article is being considered and which line in the table should be used for recording your vote.

#	Article Name	Yes	No	A
4.	Appropriate FY2011 Operating Budget	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
a.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Appropriate FY2011 Enterprise Funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 1 – a marked ballot voting field

In Figure 1, the sample ballot has been marked with an abstention for article 4. Line 4a is present in case the article is divided or amended. Extra lines are also present near the bottom of the form in case multiple amendments are considered.

Anatomy of a ballot – the header and footer

Precinct: 2

Name: John Q. Public

Lexington 2010 Annual Town Meeting

TMMA Self-Reporting Vote Recording Form

Figure 2 - a ballot header

At the top of the ballot page is a preprinted label. The label contains the precinct number and name for each town meeting member. This information will allow clerks to hand out the forms and allow the Recorded Voting Committee to record your vote after the ballot is submitted.

At the bottom left of the page is an indication of how the Recorded Voting Committee will confirm your vote. If we have an active e-mail address on file, this field will register “e-mail”. If we do not have an e-mail address for you, this field will register “phone” as shown in figure 3.

Verification by: phone

Ballot ID = «id»

Figure 3 - a ballot footer for a TMM without a public e-mail address

If we do have an e-mail address for you, then we will send you an individualized e-mail message with the results we have recorded for you. This e-mail will provide instructions for how to confirm your vote. The e-mail message will also provide information on how to have your recorded vote updated or deleted. If we do not have an e-mail address for you, we will call you by phone to confirm the data we have recorded. If you would prefer to be contacted by mail, you can write in your e-mail address and we will use it exclusively for confirming your recorded votes (figure 4 is an example of a TMM who has provided a hand written e-mail address for this purpose).

Verification by: ~~phone~~ *Jane@Mail.com*

Ballot ID = «id»

Figure 4 - a ballot footer with hand written e-mail address

Submitting your ballot

If you choose to participate in the trial, then please return your ballot to your precinct clerk at the end of the Special Town Meeting. If you are unable to find your clerk, you can leave your ballot in the Ballot Box on the TMMA information table.