

Voting Electronically at Town Meeting

By Alan Wilson, Town Moderator



As we have at other recent town meetings, we will vote electronically this time. Since some voters who will attend may not have been there before, this article will explain how electronic voting works.

We will use electronic handsets to register votes quickly and accurately. Voting electronically will reduce the time required when a vote must be counted, and every vote will be a secret ballot.

These voting keypads (pictured) look similar to a TV remote control, but instead of pushing buttons to change channels, voters will push buttons to enter yes, no or abstain. Each voter's selection will be wirelessly transmitted to a computer that will record all votes and tabulate the final results. The moderator will then declare the outcome.

Each voter will receive a keypad when checking in for the meeting. The keypad will not have an identification number associated with the voter's name; therefore, every vote counted electronically will be a secret ballot.

We will use electronic voting for all votes, unless the moderator determines that calling for a voice vote may save time. Each time, voters will have 15 seconds, or a longer period at the discretion of the moderator, to register their votes. Press 1 for yes, press 2 for no or 3 to abstain. Pressing 3 will clear the previous choice as well as counting as an abstention. The computer records only the last number pressed.

We all know that technology sometimes fails – or a cable is inadvertently unplugged, as it was last fall. The Town Clerk will have tellers appointed to count votes manually, should the need arise, and paper ballots on hand in the event a secret vote must be conducted the old fashioned way.