

FORUM

QUESTIONS? Contact Editor Michael Wyner at mwyner@wickedlocal.com or 508-626-4441.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ELVIS has left the building

TO THE EDITOR:

The Electronic Voting Implementation Subcommittee (ELVIS), the small, dedicated group who oversaw the successful implementation of electronic voting in Wayland, has dissolved. The efforts of this subcommittee, originally established by former Moderator Peter Gossels, are a splendid example of what a competent group of volunteers with a clear initial direction and superb leadership can accomplish.

All of us involved in Town Meeting are in their debt.

Annual Town Meeting in April 2010 approved the use of electronic voting for the 2011 annual Town Meeting. The offer was made possible by a cost-free implementation by Florida vendor OTI.

At that time, most voters thought little of it and assumed that only a modicum of effort was needed to simply bring it in, turn it on and vote. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

Sensing the need for a more in-depth review prior to implementation, Peter Gossels appointed a subcommittee consisting of David Bernstein as chairman, Alan Reiss, John Sieber, Blair Davies and Town Clerk Lois Toombs. Mr. Gossels served on the committee in an ex-officio capacity. Former Assistant Moderator Dennis Berry was recruited early on to round out the committee.

Meeting regularly from last August, the subcommittee deeply examined every aspect of the OTI proposal and numerous other questions involved in electronic voting. The software itself was examined by technically qualified members; untold numbers of possible glitches were discussed with procedures developed to respond.

No rocks were left unturned as the subcommittee went through draft after draft of an overall procedures manual that would ultimately be the guide to the full and successful implementation that we all enjoyed at the annual Town Meeting in April. It is not

an exaggeration to say the subcommittee spent hours worrying about issues most voters never even thought about.

I can now speak as moderator to congratulate and thank this subcommittee for all of its efforts. Particular thanks should go to my predecessor Peter Gossels, who recruited and provided initial direction to this committee, and to Chairman David Bernstein, who provided not only vast technical knowledge of the issues, but superb political skills to keep the group focused and working toward the goal.

Congratulations and thanks on a job well done. We can now truly say that ELVIS has left the building, with our gratitude. — Dennis Berry, Moderator