

Electronic Voting at Town Meeting

May 8, 2023

We are pleased to introduce electronic voting to Carlisle’s Town Meeting. This system will enable us to record vote totals quickly and accurately.

Below are the basic instructions for use, followed by additional information that may be of interest to citizens.

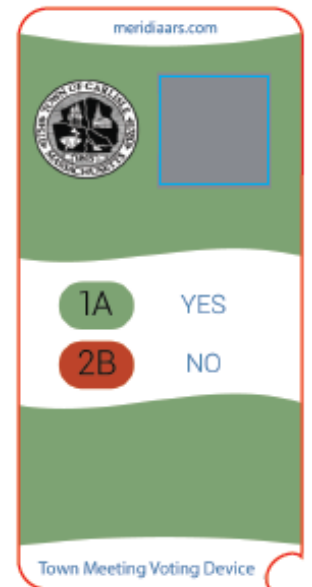
ELECTRONIC VOTING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Your Voting Device

- a. When you check-in to the meeting, you will be handed a voting device or “clicker,” enclosed in a plastic bag and attached to a lanyard. Included in the bag will be a colored piece of paper to be used for voting by hand if the electronic system fails.
- b. Please remove the clicker from the plastic bag and use the lanyard to put it around your neck. Keep the clicker with you at all times.
- c. If you need to use the restroom, take it with you. (Now you know why we gave you the lanyard!)
- d. Do not give it to anyone else to hold or leave it on a seat.

2. Voting

- a. To vote: When the Moderator announces that “voting is open” you will have 15 – 30 seconds to vote:
 - i. To vote YES, press Button 1A, the GREEN button
 - ii. To vote NO, press Button 2B, the RED button.
- b. If you change your mind, you can make another choice while the voting is open. The last button you press will be how your vote is recorded.
- c. The screen at the top shows the vote (YES or NO).
- d. If you have a problem, raise your hand immediately.
We will have volunteers in the aisles available to assist you.



3. **Leaving.** At the conclusion of the meeting, or if you need to leave the school building, please place the clicker and lanyard back in the plastic bag and leave it in one of the marked bins by the exit doors.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we using electronic voting?

Electronic voting is fast and accurate. A hand-counted vote on a contentious issue can take up to 15 minutes, compared to 30 seconds for electronic voting. If several vote counts are needed in a single meeting, we may need to extend the meeting into a second night. That costs everyone time, and the town money.

What experience do other Towns have with electronic voting at Town Meeting?

Wayland was the first town to use electronic voting, more than 12 years ago. By now, more than 60 towns in Massachusetts have done so, along with others in neighboring New England states. Moderators in those towns report that the response is almost universally positive. Most voters welcome the speed, as well as the anonymity of electronic voting compared to a standing hand-count.

Is the voting secure?

Yes. The devices use a reliable radio frequency. **No internet is used to operate the system.** For more information, see the Wireless Protocol Security Statement at <https://www.meridiaars.com/audience-response-downloads/>. This is the same system in use at the U.S. House of Representatives.

Is my vote truly anonymous?

Yes. The system is programmed so as NOT to tie a YES or NO vote to a particular individual's name.

How can I tell if my vote has been recorded accurately?

When you press either the YES or NO button, the clicker will send a signal to the receiver. The receiver then sends a return signal to the device, at which point your YES or NO vote will appear in the window of your clicker. This usually happens instantaneously. If you change your mind, you can vote again. The system will record the last vote received from your clicker before voting is closed.

What if I forget to return my clicker before leaving the school?

We do ask you to be sure to return the clicker, so that the town does not need to purchase a replacement. Each clicker is numbered, and those numbers will be recorded when you are given a clicker at the sign-in. If your clicker is not returned, we'll follow up with a phone call to ask you to return it to the Town Clerk. The clicker will not work outside the school and wouldn't be usable at another town meeting in Carlisle or anywhere else.