Moderator's Handbook

Best Practices for Running a Successful Town Meeting with Electronic Voting System

Primary goal of using the electronic voting system is to enhance the speed and accuracy of vote collection while maintaining confidence in the representation and fairness of the voting process.

Electronic voting in its most basic function simply digitizes a classic hand raise and makes voice voting clear, accountable and verifiable.

Consider the following best practices when running a Town Meeting to increase your chances of supporting those goals.

The rules can be applied to open and representative Town Meetings slightly differently, but all are a good advice to follow.

Contents

DO'S

Always do a test before the 'business' (real) voting begins to:

- eliminate any doubt in the system.
- identify any hardware (clicker) issues.
- gauge how long the vote needs to stay open.

With voters getting used to the voting period, you may find yourself shortening the time as the time goes by and everyone votes quickly right from the beginning.

However, if you previously required ALL votes to be counted (e.g., via collecting paper ballots, or counting raised hands, one by one), there's no reason to stop that practice.

Create a Participant Grid topic/item that only serves the purpose of testing. This could be a Yes/No sports trivia or simply a "Test Your Clickers" item.
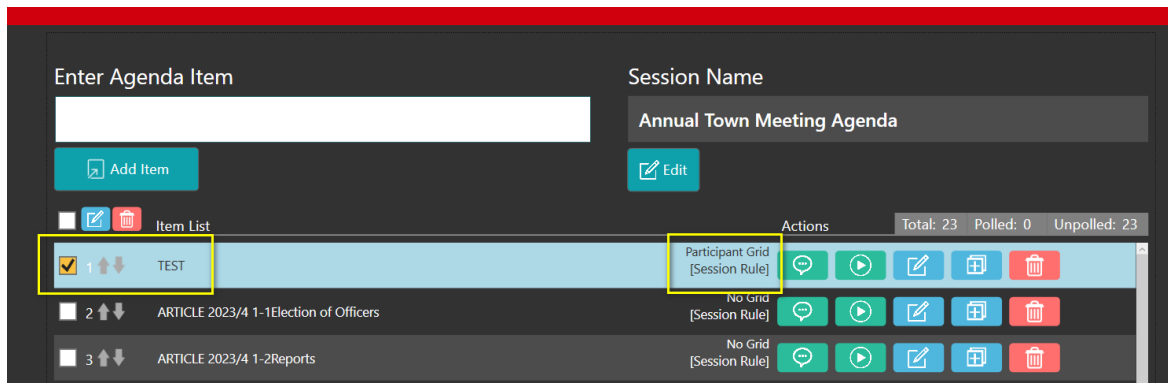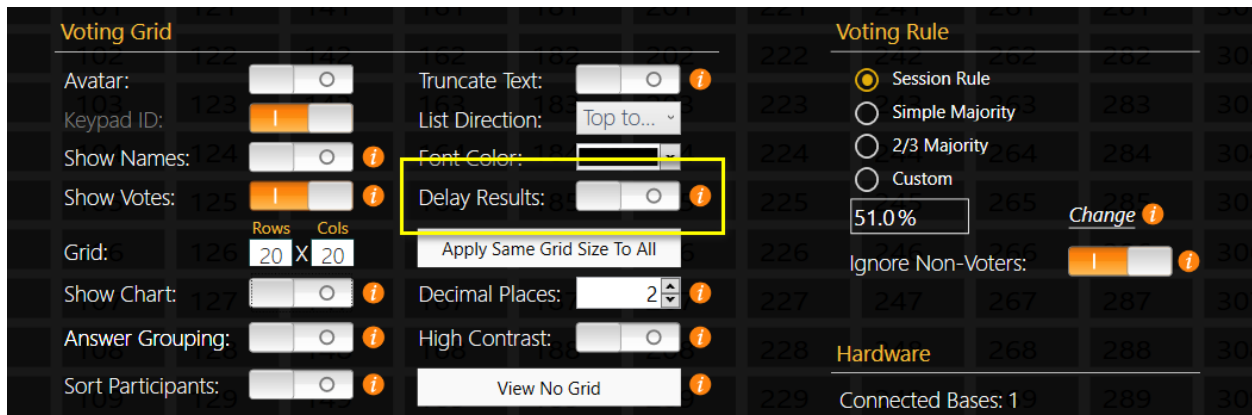

Set the Grid Size to fit all your participants on a single screen, or if that's not possible, make your best effort to find the size that works and scroll through pages by using the right and left arrows on the keyboard.
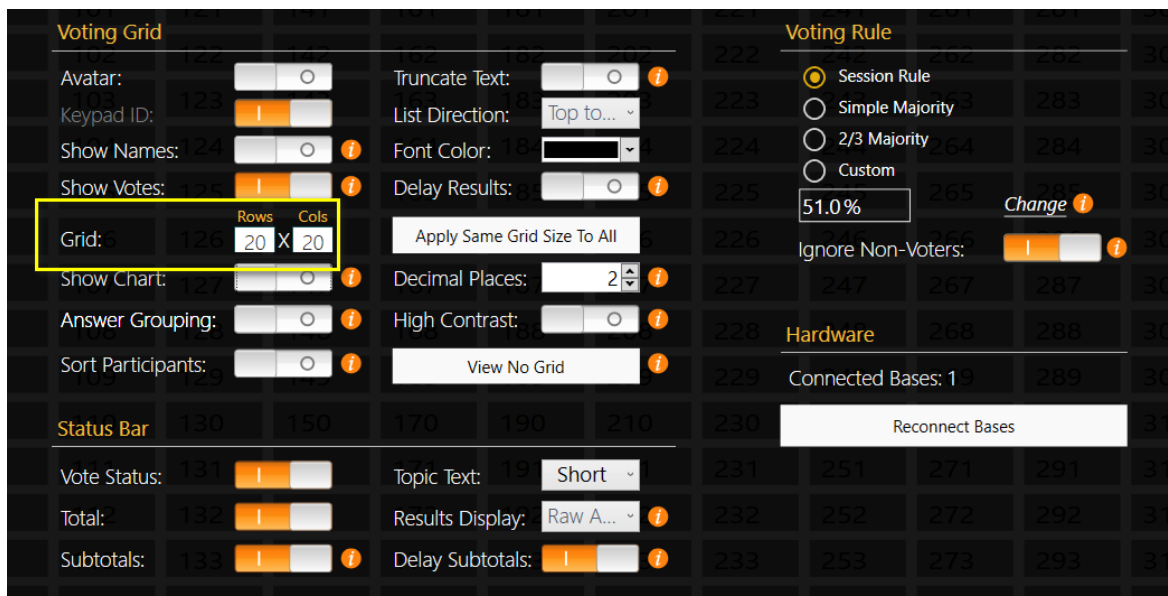
With Delay Results set to ON, you can show the voter IF/THAT they voted, but they would not be able to identify their vote value.

Set Delay Results to OFF, so that each voter can see how they voted in real time. Green means "Yes" and red means "No". If enabled, yellow means "Abstain". Grey means that the vote from that clicker has not been recorded.

Keep the vote open until you see that majority of voters have cast their vote (compare the number to the information from the registration desk).

Call on those who didn't vote and let them know their vote has not been counted yet (either by name or number, depending on whether the participants are associated with the clicker by name, or not)

If needed, turn on the Visual Vote Confirmation feature to allow the voters to review their votes before closing the vote (thus finalizing the results).
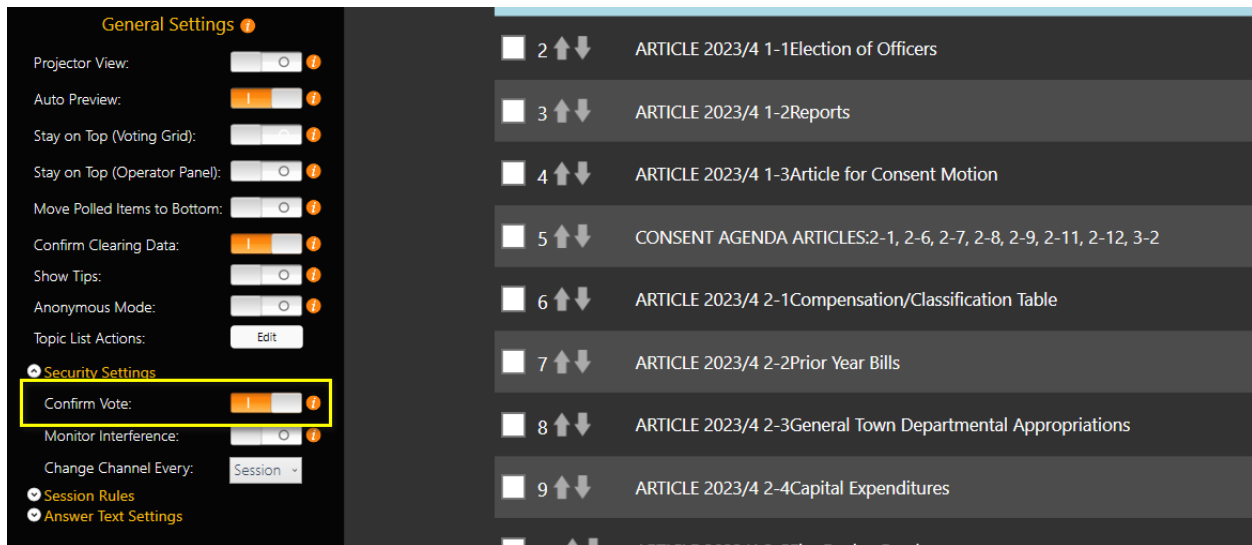
When the vote is ready to be closed, but needs to be visually reviewed by the voting body, Pause the vote and in the next step, either Resume or Close it.
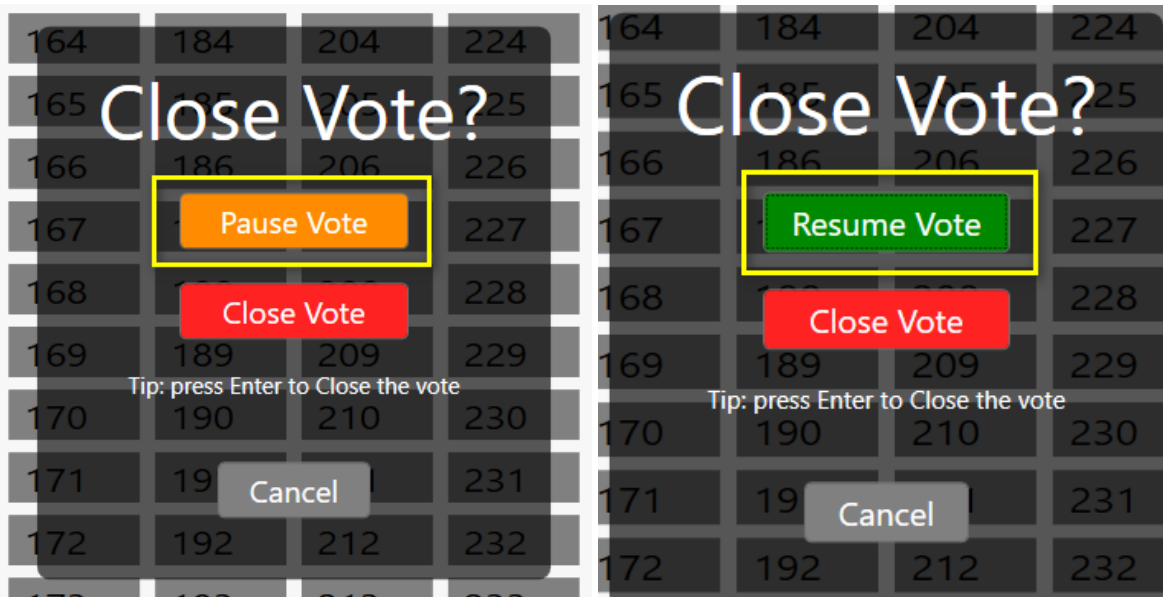
DON'TS

If your previous voting method (e.g., hand, paper or voice) was not limited to a specific period of time, there's no reason to limit the electronic voting period either.

The electronic voting method is inherently faster than hand or paper ballot counting, but if EVERY vote needs to be counted, then the vote needs to stay open until EVERYONE has confirmed their vote is shown on the Voting Grid.

Do not omit the test vote, or deny visually confirming the vote (even anonymously) if that help avoid undermining confidence in the voting system.

Primary goal of using the electronic voting system is to enhance the speed and accuracy of vote collection while maintaining confidence in the voting process and its fairness.