

2021 Spring NEC Report of National Parliamentarian Heidi Dineen-Serpis

It's hard to believe it's been a year since we have seen each other! This past year has certainly been one that has been filled unexpected challenges. As we come to the end of our year there have been many questions around elections. I know some Auxiliaries have been able to meet, some used Zoom and others were not able to meet. I have been researching to come up with some guidelines to get us through nominations and elections.

If you are able to meet, then you would follow your regular procedures. The same nomination/election procedures can also be done over Zoom.

As you know Robert's Rules of Order does not cover how to handle elections in a pandemic, so the following is my suggestion. If your Auxiliary is unable to meet and you need to have nominations and elections by mail it is important to remember that all members need to be notified. A notice to all members that nomination for offices is open and anyone interested in running should respond with their name and the name of the position they are interested in running for by a specified date to the President. A document with the list of offices and ladies interested in running for those positions should be prepared. The President shall ensure that these nominations are mailed to all members before the annual meeting to allow time for voting by mail and establish a date that these are to be returned by.

According to Robert's Rules "Voting by Mail is used for election of officers, and for amendments to the constitution or by-laws, and for such other important matters as the society may order to be voted on in this way. If an amendment to the by-laws is to be voted on by mail, a printed copy of the proposed amendment is mailed to every member with the words "yes" and "no" printed underneath, or on a separate slip, with directions to cross out one of them, and return in the enclosed envelope, upon which should be printed the words, "Ballot for Amendment to Constitution." This envelope should usually have the signature of the voter on it and be sealed and enclosed in another one addressed to the secretary, or to the chairman of the tellers, so that the inner envelope will not be opened except by the tellers when the votes are counted. If it is desired to present the arguments pro and con, the society can allow the leaders on the two sides to prepare brief statements to be printed and mailed with the proposed amendment to every member. Instead of having the voter's signature on the inner envelope, it may be placed on the ballot, but a place for the signature should be indicated, so that there may be some means of protection against votes being cast by other than legal voters. Voting by mail cannot be a secret ballot, as it is necessary for the tellers to know by whom each vote is cast. By some such method as the above it is practicable to give all the members, however scattered they may be, an opportunity to vote on questions of great importance." If possible, there should be at least two people counting the ballots. They could be opened and counted over zoom. Keep these ballots until after your next in person meeting.

Let's hope we can meet in August! Until then stay healthy, stay safe.

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