

Robert's Rules

Nominations and Elections

Ancient Order of Hibernians



Florida State Board

Nominations and Elections

In every organization, the process of nominating and electing officers and board members is very important, and the bylaws should clearly state the procedure. If the procedure is not stated in the bylaws, a member of the assembly can make a motion explaining the procedure to follow. The assembly then decides by a majority vote whether to follow the proposed procedure.

This chapter explains the nominating and election process from start to finish. It discusses the various ways organizations nominate a candidate and take votes. The chapter also describes the duties of the tellers' committee — those members appointed to count the vote. Likewise, the chapter takes you step by step through the teller's sheet and report.

NOMINATIONS

An organization can nominate candidates in several ways:

- By a nominating committee
- From the floor
- By ballot
- By mail
- By petition



Most often, a nominating committee presents nominations, and the assembly has the opportunity to present additional nominations from the floor. The nominating process should not be confused with the election to office. Robert's Rules of Order states that a person does not have to be nominated to be elected to office. If the vote is taken by ballot, there is always the opportunity to write in a name. In this case, a person can win as a write-in candidate without ever being nominated.

Nominations by Committee

Many organizations have a nominating committee. The bylaws should specify the composition of this committee and how it is selected. The nominating committee is the one committee a president should not be a member of or help to select. If at all possible, the board or the membership should elect the nominating committee.

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Duties of a nominating committee

The duty of a nominating committee is to find the best candidate for each office. The bylaws should not tie the hands of the committee to find more than one person to fill each slot; the committee should find the best candidate for each office. Persons serving on the committee can be nominated for office.

The secretary should give the committee a copy of the membership list, the bylaws, a description of the duties of each office, and the eligibility requirements. The committee must carefully review the eligibility requirements for each office and see that the nominees meet these requirements. If anyone is elected, and it is discovered after the election that the person is not eligible, the election of that officer is null and void. The committee then has to find a new nominee, and the members have to vote again.

The committee should meet, carefully review the membership list, and select the people who they think will do the best job in each office. A member of the committee should then be designated to call each nominee to see if he or she is willing to serve if elected. If someone is not willing to serve, the committee needs to meet again and find another candidate.

If no candidate is found, the committee can leave that slot open for nominations from the floor. Or, they can tell members publicly that they do not have a nominee for a certain office; this allows members to volunteer. No one should be nominated without his or her consent because, if elected, the person may decline to serve and members will have to hold another election.

Report of the nominating committee

The report of the nominating committee is usually given under “special orders.” When called on to give the report, the chairman of the nominating committee states the nominations for each office.

Chairman of Nominating Committee: Mr. President, the nominating committee submits the following nominations: for president, John Smith; for vice president, Dave Jones; for secretary, Ricky Shores; and for treasurer, Bob Thomas. *[hands the nominations written on a sheet of paper to the president and sits down]*

Sometimes there is a split in the nominating committee over who to nominate. If a minority of the committee wishes to nominate someone else, the members in the minority can make the nomination when nominations are taken from the floor.

As soon as the committee reports, it is discharged from its duties. Sometimes the committee is revived to make nominations to fill vacancies. After the committee reports, the chair states:

President: The nominating committee nominates John Smith for president, Dave Jones for vice president, Ricky Shores for secretary, and Bob Thomas for treasurer. Nominations are now open from the floor. Are there any further nominations for president?

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Nominations from the Floor

As soon as the president opens nominations from the floor, any member can bring forth a nomination. However, the rules for a member nominating a candidate are the same as for the nominating committee. A member should know beforehand if the person he or she wishes to nominate is both eligible and willing to serve.

When the nomination is from the floor:

- A member does not have to get recognition, and often in small assemblies, a member can call out a name while still seated.
- A person can nominate himself or herself.
- A nomination does not need a second.
- A member can be nominated for more than one office.
- A member can't nominate more than one person for an office until everyone has had the opportunity to make nominations.
- Nominees do not have to leave the room during the nominations, when the vote is taken, or when the vote is counted.
- The presiding officer can continue presiding, even if he or she is one of the nominees for the office.
- A member can rise and decline the nomination during the nominating process.
- After each nomination, the president repeats the name to the assembly. For example, the president says:
President: John Smith, for president. Are there further nominations for president?
- A motion to close nominations is usually not necessary unless it is apparent that members are nominating people just to honor them, and that the nominees have no intention of serving.
- Usually the president closes nominations when no further nominations come forward from the assembly.

If at any time during the nominating process a member realizes that he will be unable to serve if elected, the member should stand and request that his name be removed from nomination. Removing your name during the nomination process is better than waiting until after you are elected.

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Nominations by Ballot

Instead of taking nominations from the floor, an organization may take nominations by ballot. In this process, each member is given a nominating ballot and writes the name(s) of one or more candidates on it. The tellers' committee counts the ballots and writes a list of the nominees to give to the president to announce. A vote is then taken for election. The nominating ballot should never become the electing ballot.

Nominations by Mail

When members are widely scattered, taking nominations by mail may be helpful. The secretary is responsible for mailing a nominating ballot to each member, with instructions on how to fill it out. After the members mail back the nominations, the secretary composes the ballot from which the members vote.

Nominations by Petition

Sometimes an organization's bylaws provide for nominations by petition. In this case, a nominee must be nominated by a signed petition of members before the nomination is put on the ballot. The nominating petition may be enclosed with a newsletter or mailed to the members.

Other Nominating Procedures

If the bylaws do not state how to conduct nominations, any member can make a motion proposing a nominating process. This motion is an incidental main motion. It needs a second and is not debatable but is amendable. It requires a majority vote to adopt. The best practice, however, is for the bylaws to state the procedure.

Nominations and the Minutes

The secretary places all nominations in the minutes. If the organization uses a nominating committee and then takes nominations from the floor, the secretary records the nominating committee's report first and then lists nominations for each office in the order they are presented as given by the members from the floor.

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MOTIONS RELATING TO NOMINATIONS

When nominations are taken from the floor, usually the president closes the nominations by unanimous consent. However, there may be times when members nominate people just to honor them or to delay the election. In this case, it is appropriate for a member to make a motion to close the nominations. After the nominations are closed, a member can make a motion to reopen them. The following sections discuss these two motions.

Close the Nominations

- Purpose: To close the nominations and take the vote immediately.
- Is not in order when another member has the floor.
- Needs a second.
- Amendable.
- Not debatable.
- Requires a two-thirds vote.
- Can't be reconsidered.
- Result: Nominations are closed and voting begins.

This motion requires a two-thirds vote because it takes away the members' right to nominate. A two-thirds vote also protects the assembly from an abuse of power from a temporary majority who would like to stop the nominating process. A member must make the motion to close the nominations when no one has the floor. A rising vote is always taken on this motion.

Member: Madam President, I move to close the nominations.

Member 2: Second.

President: It is moved and seconded to close the nominations. All those in favor, please rise. Be seated. Those opposed please rise. Be seated.

If the affirmative has the vote, the president states:

President: There is a two-thirds vote in the affirmative. The motion is carried and nominations are now closed. We will now take the vote for . . . [*state the office*].

If the negative has it, the president states:

President: There is less than a two-thirds vote in the affirmative. The motion is lost and nominations are still open. Are there further nominations?

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The president continues with the nominations until members are ready to vote. After progress in the meeting, members can make the motion to close nominations again.

Reopen the Nominations

- Purpose: Reopen the nominations so others can be considered for office.
- Needs a second.
- Amendable.
- Not debatable.
- Requires a majority vote.
- A negative vote can be reconsidered.
- Result: Members can propose more nominees.

The time at which nominations are to be closed or reopened can be stated in the motion or added by amendment.

Because members' rights are not infringed upon by reopening the nominations, this motion requires only a majority vote, and a voice vote is taken. To reopen the nominations, a member can make the motion when no one has the floor. The member states:

Member: Madam President, I move to reopen the nominations.

Member 2: I second it.

President: It is moved and seconded to reopen the nominations. All those in favor say "Aye." Those opposed say "No."

The president then announces the vote. If the ayes have it, the president says:

President: The ayes have it and the motion is carried. We will reopen the floor for nominations. Are there further nominations?

If the noes have it, the president says:

President: The noes have it and the motion is lost. Nominations are closed and we will take the vote.

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UNDEMOCRATIC PRACTICES IN THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION PROCESS

Members should be alert to some undemocratic political practices in organizations. One example occurs if a person is elected and then resigns, the office is considered vacant, and the president or board fills it by appointment instead of having another election. Doing this may allow an unpopular or hand-picked candidate to get the office even though he or she was not elected.

In writing the nomination, election, and vacancy conditions in the bylaws, the organization should make sure that if a vacancy is created early in the term of office, the vacancy is filled by election instead of by appointment, whenever possible. However, in some national organizations that meet yearly or biennially (every two years), this is difficult.

Another problematic practice to watch out for is nominating someone for office who is not eligible. When nominations are taken from the floor or when a nominating ballot is used, a good practice is to provide the members with an eligibility list so that they are not nominating people who will not be able to serve. When the secretary mails the members a notice about the nomination and election meeting, the letter can include a request that members who do not wish to be considered for office notify the secretary in writing. When the secretary prepares the eligibility list for the meeting, only those members who are willing to serve are on the list.

ELECTIONS

After the nominating process is finished, the members must vote on the proposed candidates. If the bylaws do not state how the vote is to be taken, a member can make an incidental motion regarding how to take the vote.

If the bylaws state that the vote must be taken by ballot, even if there is only one candidate for each office, members must nevertheless vote by ballot. A ballot vote allows members to write in a candidate's name. Asking one person (for example, the secretary) to cast the electing ballot for the entire assembly is out of order. Such a motion takes away members' rights to write in a candidate.

Members can take the vote for election by

- Voice
- Ballot
- Roll call
- Cumulative voting

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Election by Voice Vote

When there is only one candidate for office, election by voice vote is a good method to use if the bylaws do not stipulate how the election should take place. However, any time an election occurs by voice vote, members forfeit their right to write in a candidate.

When more than one person has been nominated and the election is by voice vote, the chair takes the vote on the candidates in the order in which they were nominated. Members must remember to vote yes for the candidate that they want and vote no for the other candidates. The first candidate to receive a majority vote wins.

The presiding officer takes the vote this way:

President: All those in favor of Member G for president, say “Aye.” Those opposed say “No.”

The president then announces the vote:

President: The ayes have it, and Member G is elected president.

If Member G loses, the chair announces the result this way:

President: The noes have it, and Member G is not elected. All those in favor of Member X for president say “Aye.” Those opposed say “No.”

The president then announces the results of this vote. The procedure continues until someone receives a majority vote. When electing officers, if there is a tie vote or no one receives a majority vote, members keep voting until someone is elected.

When more than one candidate is nominated, the problem with a voice vote is that those nominated first are more likely to get elected. If there is a motion to make an election by voice vote unanimous, that vote must be by ballot. If there is one “no” vote, the election is not unanimous.

Election by Ballot Vote

Organizations can take a ballot vote two ways:

- A slate of all the officers can appear on one ballot.
- Individual ballots can be provided for each office after nominations for that office are closed.

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Slated ballots

Large organizations, such as conventions, usually prepare a printed ballot listing the names of all the candidates, with room for further nominations or write-ins from the membership.

Members go to the polls once. When no candidate receives a majority vote for a particular office or for several offices, members must continue to vote on those offices until someone is elected. With this kind of ballot, having the election early in the meeting is best. In the event that another vote is needed, members can vote again before the convention or meeting adjourns.

Individual ballots

In the second way of taking a ballot vote, the tellers' committee gives members a blank piece of paper after nominations have been closed for an office. The members write the name of the person they wish to see elected for that office on the blank piece of paper. The tellers then collect the ballots and count them, and the chair of the tellers' committee reads the report. The president declares who is elected and proceeds to take nominations for the next office. After nominations are closed, the tellers again give members blank ballots to write the candidate of their choice. They collect the ballots and count them, and the chairman reads the report. This goes on until the members elect someone to each office.

Individual balloting works well in small organizations where members can pause briefly to count the ballots without taking a recess or proceeding with other business.

Members do not proceed to the next office until they elect someone for the unelected office. For example, if no one receives a majority vote for the office of president, the members keep voting until they elect someone. They proceed to vote on the office of vice president only after they have elected a president.

In cases where members are voting on several directors at one time, those receiving a majority are elected to office. If any positions are not elected on the first ballot, the members keep voting on the rest of the candidates until the positions are filled. If more candidates receive a majority vote than there are positions available, those candidates receiving the highest votes are considered elected. For example, the Soccer Club has an executive board of five people. Seven people are nominated, and the members are instructed to vote for five candidates on the same ballot. There are 20 people present and voting. It takes 11 votes to elect. The following candidates received this number of votes:

Candidate Smith, 14 votes
Candidate Jones, 15 votes
Candidate Baker, 19 votes
Candidate Torry, 16 votes

Candidate Green, 13 votes
Candidate Frank, 12 votes
Candidate Bates, 11 votes

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Although all candidates received a majority, only five can be elected to the board. In this case, the five candidates who received the most votes are the winners:

1. Baker with 19 votes
2. Torry with 16 votes
3. Jones with 15 votes
4. Smith with 14 votes
5. Green with 13 votes
6. Frank with 12 votes
7. Bates with 11 votes

If three candidates had received the same vote — for example, if Smith, Green, and Frank had each received 13 votes — the membership would have to hold another election. Even though Candidate Bates received the lowest vote, his name would remain on the ballot. No one is removed from the ballot unless the bylaws state that the member with the fewest votes should be removed, because that person may end up being the compromise candidate.

Election by Roll Call Vote

If members take the vote by roll call, the organization can follow the same methods used for a ballot vote — either voting for all candidates at once or voting for one at a time. The presiding officer should explain the procedure. Each member states who he or she is voting for as the secretary calls the roll. The secretary records the vote and repeats it to make sure that it is accurate.

Election by Cumulative Voting

When an organization has elections for positions in which more than one candidate is elected (for example, the Soccer Club), the bylaws may provide for cumulative voting. (Note that cumulative voting cannot take place unless it is stated in the bylaws.) Cumulative voting is the ability to cast all your votes for one candidate or to weight your vote in some way. In the earlier example of electing the five board members, the membership voted for five different candidates. In cumulative voting, a member can give two votes to Mr. Smith and three votes to Mrs. Baker. This allows a minority group to get together and elect one of their candidates. However, this practice is not in accord with the parliamentary principle of one person, one vote.

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Guidelines as established by the AOH National Constitution

ARTICLE XIII NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS AND INSTALLATION

Section 1 – NOMINATION:

Candidates for office shall be in attendance at the convention, or meeting, or if not present, shall signify their willingness to accept nomination and election, and shall be nominated from the floor as follows:

1. National Officers - During Biennial National Convention at the time and in the manner specified by said Convention;
2. State, District, and County - During their respective Biennial Conventions at the time and in the manner specified by said Conventions;
3. Divisions - As prescribed by this Constitution and State, District, County and Division By-Laws.

Section 2 – NATIONAL OFFICERS:

President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and six (6) directors after nomination shall be elected during the transaction of the regular order of business of the National Convention. Installation shall be conducted prior to the adjournment of the Convention or at a public function in connection therewith. Tenure of office shall be two (2) years or until their successors have been elected and qualified. No elected National Officer, except the National Secretary, shall be eligible to succeed himself more than once.

Section 3 – QUALIFICATION FOR NATIONAL OFFICE:

No member shall be eligible for election to National Office or appointed unless he has received all the degrees of the Order at least one (1) year prior to his election or appointment.

Section 4 – NATIONAL ELECTION RULES:

Before balloting, each candidate shall name one clerk. The President shall name one judge. The number so named, together with additional election officials as the Convention may determine, shall constitute an election Board. Balloting is to be by roll-call. Provisions for voting booths, ballots and ballot box shall be made by the National Secretary. A plurality of votes cast under the Australian system of balloting shall decide an election. Printed ballots, uniform in size and color, shall be used bearing candidate's name, city and state, office to which he has been nominated and a blank square at right of name for placing X. Ballots shall also be printed with the names of the cities nominated for the next National Convention. In the event any candidates or convention cities receive an equal number of votes, the winner shall be decided by a drawing out of one name from those tied, (under the direction of the Judge of Elections and the respective tellers). The results of the election at the time the Candidate's observers/clerks are dismissed shall be considered final and not subject to further change.

Section 5 – DIVISION:

Elective: President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman of Standing Committee, Marshal and Sentinel.

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Section 5a – VACANCY:

In the case of the death, resignation or removal of any President, the Vice-President shall assume the office of President for the remainder of the term; all other vacancies occurring in the National, State, District, or County Offices shall be filled by the National, State, District, or County Boards respectively. All other vacancies occurring in Division offices, except appointive, shall be filled by an election at the meeting following the vacancy and all members shall be notified, in writing, not less than five (5) days before.

Section 6 – STATE AND DISTRICT OFFICERS:

President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Directors (where provided for by State, or District By-Laws) shall be nominated and elected at the State or District Conventions. Installation shall be conducted prior to the adjournment of the Convention or at a public function in connection therewith. Tenure of office shall be two years or until their successors have been duly elected and qualified.

Section 7 – COUNTY OFFICERS:

President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman of Standing Committee, Marshal, and Sentinel shall be nominated and elected at the County Convention, immediately after the transaction of the regular business. Installation must be conducted before the next State Convention. Where no State Board exists, Installation must be conducted prior to the next National Convention. Tenure of office shall be two years or until their successors have been duly elected and qualified.

Section 8 – DIVISION OFFICERS:

President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman of Standing Committee, Marshal, and Sentinel shall be nominated and elected annually between October 1 and January 1. Installation shall be conducted before January 31. Tenure of office shall be one (1) or two (2) year(s) or until a successor has been duly elected and installed. Division members in good standing must receive written notice at least five (5) and not more than fifteen (15) days of time and place of nominations and election.

Section 9 – INSTALLING OFFICER:

Where there is an organized County Board the installation of division officers will be the duty of the County President unless he delegates this duty to another. In counties where no County Board exists it will be the duty of the State or District President to perform the installation ceremony unless this duty is delegated by him to another. State and District officers will be installed by a member of the National Board, if present, unless this duty is delegated to another by the member of the National Board concerned. Where two or more National Officers are concerned, this duty will fall upon the ranking senior officer.