

District Election Procedures (Task Force LCI)

9. Oktober, 09:00 – 10:30

Room Stadtwerke

Chair: PID Per Christensen

Redner:

- PID Per Christensen
- Amy Pena (LCI, Oakbrook)

SUMMARY

During the June/July 2014 Board Meeting, the International Board of Directors approved the formation of the Election Compliance Task Force (Task Force). The objective of the Task Force is to review standard election rules and develop a strategy for implementing standardized district election procedures across the organization.

The presentation provides a summary of recommendations adopted by the International Board of Directors for instituting standardized election procedures including amendments to the International By-Laws and Standard Form District Constitution and By-Laws. In addition and in consultation with the Leadership Division, the Task Force established educational initiatives intended to distribute standardized election procedures throughout the organization and provide training for district leaders. Finally, the Task Force developed an election observation policy intended to manage the certification and use of neutral observers to oversee district governor, first vice district governor and second vice district governor election.

MINUTES

The Election Compliance Task Force reviewed the nature of election-related complaints filed with the Association and determined that varied election procedures and inconsistent rules contribute to conflict and confusion.

As a means of promoting consistent standards, this Task Force recommended mandatory district election procedures to be implemented across the organization **effective July 1, 2016**. These changes to the Standard Form District Constitution and By-Laws and board policy were recently approved by the International Board of Directors prior to the Hawaii Convention and you are one of the first group of leaders to hear of these changes.

The election compliance task force issued recommendations for instituting standardized election procedures, including subsequent amendments to the International By-Laws and Standard Form District Constitution and By-Laws.

These amendments to the Standard District Constitution and By-Laws includes new “mandatory” and “permissive” sections. Previous to the adoption of the mandatory sections, the Standard District Constitution and By-laws was a recommended form adopted by the International Board of Directors. However, districts could amend the standard form as long as such amendments were not inconsistent with the International Constitution and By-Laws.

This change, makes certain provisions of the standard form mandatory and therefore some districts may have to amend their own district constitution and by-laws to be compliant. An overview of the specific changes will be given. It is recommend that as a first step to review the revised standard district constitution and by-laws found on the association’s website *It is located at the Legal Resource center*

<http://members.lionsclubs.org/EN/resources/publications-forms/legal.php>

The delegates also recently adopted an amendment to the International Constitution and By-Laws related to the timing of payment of delinquent dues. This will be addressed later.

In addition and in consultation with the Leadership Division, the Task Force established educational initiatives intended to distribute standardized election procedures throughout the organization and provide training for district leaders.

Finally, the Task Force developed an election observation policy intended to manage the certification and use of neutral observers to oversee district governor, first vice district governor and second vice district governor election.

All of these changes will go into effect beginning the 2016/17 fiscal year.

By developing new mandatory election procedures, the amount of conflict surrounding district elections should be diminished.

Following are significant changes to the existing election procedures which will be mandatory, effective July 2016. Let’s review the approved standard election procedures.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- Nominating Committee shall consist of no less than three (3) and no more than five (5) members.
- Nominating Committee appointees shall not hold any district cabinet or international office, either by election or appointment, through the duration of their appointment.

OFFICIAL CALL

- A review of past election complaints revealed that receipt of the official call is a commonly contested issue. The Task Force noted the challenge of evidencing receipt of the official call and agreed that demonstrating delivery is a more practical alternative. Therefore, the Task Force recommended amending official call provisions contained in Article VI, Section 2 of the Standard Form By-Laws including electronic means of distribution to all clubs. The district governor shall issue an official call by printed or electronic means to all clubs for the annual district convention not less than sixty (60) days prior to the district convention.

SITE CHANGE

- Notice of a district convention site change shall be furnished in writing to each club in the district no less than thirty (30) days prior to the convening date of the annual convention.
- The district cabinet may choose a venue outside of the district, for good cause, in the event that a site change is necessary. Please note, that if a district wants to limit holding districts outside their district, the district can decide to implement that restriction.

OFFICIAL REPORT

- The cabinet secretary shall transmit one copy of the complete proceedings to the international office within fifteen (15) days following the close of each single and sub-district convention.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

- The Task Force discussed the current makeup of the various district committees involved in the election process. The Task Force agreed that district and international officers' have increased standing within the organization and are able to influence elections. Therefore, it was approved that the Credentials Committee members shall not through the duration of their appointment hold any district or international office either by election or appointment.

DISTRICT CONVENTION – RULES OF PROCEDURE

- Standard Form District Constitution and By-Laws Exhibit A - Rules 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 are mandatory procedures.

ELECTION TIMELINE

- Each district's nominating, credential and election committee(s) must be selected at least sixty **(60) days** prior to the convening date of the district convention.
- Candidate credentials must be submitted to the nominating committee no less than thirty **(30) days** prior to the convening date of the district convention.

- Nominating committee must complete its review of candidate credentials no less than fifteen **(15) days** prior to the convening date of the district convention.

DISTRICT CONVENTION - STANDARD BALLOT

Standard Form District Constitution and By-Laws Exhibit G contains a mandatory ballot structure, whereby the district should indicate the appropriate symbol to use to all voters.

Two Candidates: The ballot must contain both names and place where the voter may place an appropriate symbol to indicate their choice.

One Candidate: The ballot must contain the name of the candidate along with a yes or no box. The voter is then instructed to indicate their vote by placing an appropriate symbol in the box indicating their preference.

Three or more Candidates: There are a few different options when there is more than one candidate. If time permits, you may have the voter indicate their selection next to the candidate they wish to vote for. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, then the candidate with the lowest amount of votes is dropped off the ballot and another vote is taken with the remaining candidates on the ballot. (The ballot would look like Sample #1 above). This process would continue until a candidate receives the required number of votes.

As most districts do not have the time to conduct such a lengthy process, the option of Preferential Voting allows the voter to complete one ballot. Following is an example of a Preferential Voting Ballot):

Rules for Preferential Voting:

1. On the preferential ballot - for each office to be filled the voter is asked to indicate the order in which he prefers all the candidates, placing the numeral 1 beside his first preference, the numeral 2 beside his second preference, and so on for every possible choice.
2. In counting the votes for a given office, the ballots are arranged in piles according to the indicated first preferences – one pile for each candidate.
3. The number of ballots in each pile is then recorded for the tellers' report. These piles remain identified with the names of the same candidates throughout the counting procedure until all but one are eliminated as described below.
4. If more than half of the ballots show one candidate indicated as first choice, that choice has a majority in the ordinary sense and the candidate is elected. But if there is no such majority, candidates are eliminated one by one, beginning with the least popular, until one prevails, as follows:
 - a. The ballots in the thinnest pile – that is, those containing the name designated as first choice by the fewest number of voters – are redistributed into the other piles according to the names marked as second choice on these ballots.

- b. The number of ballots in each remaining pile after this distribution is again recorded.
 - c. If more than half of the ballots are now in one pile, that candidate is elected. If not, the next least popular candidate is similarly eliminated, by taking the thinnest remaining pile and redistributing its ballots according to their second choices into the other piles, except that, if the name eliminated in the last distribution is indicated as second choice on a ballot, that ballot is placed accordingly to its third choice.
 - d. Again the number of ballots in each existing pile is recorded, and if necessary, the process is repeated – by redistributing each time the ballots in the thinnest remaining pile, according to the marked second choice or most-preferred choice among those not yet eliminated – until one pile contains more than half of the ballots, the result being thereby determined.
 - e. The tellers’ report consists of a table listing all candidates, with the number of ballots that were in each pile after each successive distribution.
5. If a ballot having one or more names not marked with any numeral comes up for placement at any stage of the counting and all of its marked names have been eliminated, it should not be placed in any pile, but should be set aside.
 6. If at any point two or more candidates are tied for the least popular position, the ballots in their piles are redistributed in a single step, all of the tied names being treated as eliminated.
 7. In the event of a tie in the winning position – which would imply that the elimination process is continued until the ballots are reduced to two or more equal piles – the election should be resolved in favor of the candidate that was strongest in terms of first choice (by referring to the record of the first distribution).

The Task Force discussions regarding district election procedures included deliberation on the topic of the timing of payment of club dues at a respective district convention. The Task Force agreed that the last minute payment of dues often creates conditions ripe for electoral misconduct and recommended an amendment to the International By-Laws requiring club dues be paid and good standing by acquired no less than fifteen **(15) days** prior to the close of credential certification.

This amendment was passed at the International Convention in Hawaii.

In order to inform everyone of the new procedures, Lions Clubs International will provide webinars and other online training opportunities via the LCI webpage and Online District Resource Center. Additionally, LCI intends to distribute information and materials regarding standardized election procedures to zone, region, and district-level leaders with their team manuals. Finally, election-related seminars will be conducted at regional Forums, New Director Orientation, Advanced Lions Leadership Institutes, District Governor Elect Seminars and the International Convention.

- The Task Force reviewed past election complaints filed with the Association and concluded that oversight is needed to encourage fair elections. The Task Force agreed that neutral election observers would support the conduct of district (single, sub- and multiple) elections, discourage unethical behavior and dismiss meritless claims.
- Therefore, the Task Force developed a proposed neutral observer policy that sets forth provisions concerning purpose, selection, qualifications, responsibilities, fees and requests for neutral observers to oversee district (single, sub- and multiple) elections.

Selection

A pool of qualified neutral election observers shall be selected and appointed by the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, subject to annual review by the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, in consultation with the executive officers of the Association.

Qualifications

The committee fully debated the qualifications of an observer. In selecting an observer, the committee also noted that the selected observers should also be neutral and familiar with the election procedures. Additional training will be provided to those selected as an observer. These qualifications are considered the minimum.

- a. Prior experience serving as a member of the International Board of Directors;
- b. Familiarity with the people, culture and customs of the assigned country or district.

Request for Observer

An election observer may be requested to monitor district governor, first vice district governor and second vice district governor elections under the following conditions:

- a. At the request of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee at any time prior to a district convention.
- b. At the request of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee succeeding a sustained election complaint.
- c. At the request of the district governor, first vice district governor or second vice district governor candidates at least fifteen (15) days prior to a district convention upon a showing of good cause, as determined by the Constitution and By-Laws Committee or its designee.
- d. At the request of the district governor or upon the affirmative vote of three (3) or more district cabinet members at least fifteen (15) days prior to a district convention upon a showing of good cause, as determined by the Constitution and By-Laws Committee or its designee.

Fee

Fees for the use of an election observer shall be assessed under the following conditions:

- a. In the event that a neutral observer is appointed by the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, a non-refundable US\$1000.00 filing fee, or its equivalent in the respective local currency, will be assessed to the district. The fees assessed under this section may be reduced by a showing of good cause as determined by the General Counsel in consultation with the Chairperson of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee.
- b. A request for a neutral observer by a district or candidate must be accompanied by US\$1000.00 filing fee, or its equivalent in the respective national currency. In the event the International Board of Directors or its designee determines there is not sufficient cause to appoint a neutral observer, US\$250.00 shall be retained by the International Office as an administrative fee and US\$750.00 shall be refunded.
- c. In the event a neutral observer is assigned, the fee is non-refundable.
- d. In addition to the fee paid, the **district shall be responsible for the payment of housing and meals for the observer for the duration of the assignment.**

Responsibilities

Once appointed in accordance with this policy, a neutral observer shall be responsible for the following:

- a. Gather accurate and comprehensive information concerning the constitutional requirements, rules of procedure and local customs related to the conduct of elections.
- b. Report observed inaccuracies and conduct deemed impartial, inappropriate or detrimental to the electoral process.
- c. Provide impartial and professional analysis of observations of the election process.
- d. Issue recommendations for improving the integrity and effectiveness of electoral and related processes, while not interfering in and thus hindering such processes.

Reporting

Neutral election observers are required to submit a written report to the Legal Division no more than fifteen days following the conclusion of the district convention. This report should contain accurate and impartial statements presenting findings, conclusions, and appropriate recommendations concerning overall adherence to electoral procedures, including standards for accuracy and impartiality.

Additional election-related information is located on the Legal Division Resource Page via the following link:

<http://members.lionsclubs.org/EN/resources/publications-forms/legal.php>

The LCI Legal Division may also be contacted by e-mail or phone:

- Email: legal@lionsclubs.org
- Phone: (630) 203-3847

Augsburg, October 9, 2015