

Nominations and Elections

Must a member be nominated before he or she can be elected?

No. Nominations simply serve the practical purpose of informing members of which individuals are interested in running and thus expedite the business of the assembly (422).

Who decides nomination and election procedures?

As with voting procedures, unless specified in the bylaws, the assembly decides the procedures for nominations and elections (422–23 and 430).

Most organizations that conduct elections at conventions do specify election procedures in their bylaws or convention rules. If not, the chair should not use the assembly's right as an excuse not to lead. The more complete answer is that the chair, guided by the organization's rules and customs, shall establish and present, subject to the assembly's approval, the procedures for nominations and elections.

Do nominations require a second?

No. In many organizations it is customary to allow members to second a nomination to indicate endorsement (423–24).

Is it necessary to move to close nominations?

No, in fact, it is a waste of time. The chair should give ample time for nominations; ask, "Are there further nominations?"; and there being none, declare that nominations are closed (428).

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What is the vote required to close nominations?

Two-thirds (428).

What is the vote required to reopen nominations?

Majority (428).

May members of the nominating committee be nominated?

Yes. If not, election to the nominating committee could be used to prevent a member from becoming a nominee (425). If the president has the authority to appoint the members, the problem can be avoided by appointing members to the committee who have expressed no interest in running for office.

May the nominating ballot be the electing ballot?

No. If the organization's bylaws require elections to be held by ballot, the vote must be by ballot (429). (See Voting, page 127.)

May a member serve in more than one office at the same time?

Yes, but *Robert* does not encourage the practice. "Although, strictly speaking, there is no prohibition against a person's holding more than one office, it is understood in most societies that a member can serve in only one such capacity at a time, and sometimes the bylaws so provide" (432).

If there is only one nominee for an office, may the chair declare the nominee the winner?

No, not if the bylaws require that the vote be taken by ballot. On this point, it is not at all unusual for organizations to ignore their bylaws, but to do so deprives members of the privilege of voting for write-in candidates (433-34 and 568). Demeter is music to the ears of those who ignore the rule.

If the bylaws specify that election shall be by roll call or secret ballot, and a vote on one or more unopposed candidates is taken by unanimous acclamation and

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thunderous applause instead, such an election is legal if no one objects [*Manual*, 248].

For an explanation of why the rule should not be ignored, see *Suspend the Rules*, page 82, and *Voting*, page 127.

When the first vote does not result in the number of votes necessary to elect a candidate, are the names of the nominees receiving the lowest number of votes removed from the ballot?

No. It is common practice to do so, but the nominee receiving the lowest number of votes is "never removed from the next ballot unless the bylaws so require, or unless he withdraws—which, in the absence of such a bylaw, he is not obligated to do. The nominee in lowest place may turn out to be a 'dark horse' on whom all factions may prefer to agree" (433). Most organizations that conduct elections at conventions have in their bylaws or convention rules a procedure for runoff elections.

Is an election null and void if there are illegal votes?

Under *Robert* an illegal vote cast by a legal voter is included in the number of votes cast. The illegal vote may affect the outcome; it does not nullify the election. For example, one hundred votes are cast for the office of president. Candidate Adams receives fifty votes; candidate Nelson receives forty-nine votes; one vote is illegal. Candidate Adams is not elected. Fifty votes out of one hundred votes cast is not more than half of the votes cast. (See *Voting*, page 122.)

A situation can arise where votes cast by persons who are not entitled to vote can nullify an election.

If there is evidence that any unidentifiable ballots were cast by persons not entitled to vote, and if there is any possibility that such ballots might affect the result, the entire ballot is null and void and a new ballot must be taken. The principle is that a choice has no mandate from the voting body unless approval is expressed by more than half of those entitled to vote and registering any evidence of having some opinion [410].