

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 if the person he or she wishes to nominate is eligible to serve and if the person is willing to serve.

When the nomination is from the floor:

1. A member does not have to get recognition, and often in small assemblies a member can call out a name while still seated.
2. A nomination does not need a second.
3. A member can be nominated for more than one office.
4. A member can't nominate more than one person for an office until everyone has had the opportunity to make nominations.
5. After each nomination, the president repeats the name to the assembly. For example, the president would say:

President: Denise Harman, for president. Are there further nominations for president?

6. A motion to close nominations is usually not necessary unless it becomes apparent that members are nominating people just to honor them, and that the nominees have no intention of serving.

7. Usually the president closes nominations when no further nominations are coming forward from the assembly.

If at anytime during the nominating process a member realizes that he or she will be unable to serve if elected, the member should stand and request that his or her name be removed from nomination. It is better to remove your name during the nomination process than after you are elected.

Nominations by Ballot

Instead of nominations from the floor, the nominations can be by ballot. Each member is given a nominating ballot and writes the names of a candidate(s) on it. Then the tellers' committee counts the ballots and writes a list of the nominees to give to the president to announce. Then a vote is taken for election. Care should be taken that the nominating ballot does not become the electing ballot.

Nominations by Mail

When members are widely scattered, it may be helpful to take nominations by mail. The secretary is responsible for mailing the nominating ballots 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 then vote.

Nominations by Petition

Sometimes the 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 nominations are to be conducted, any member can make a motion proposing a nominating process. This is an incidental main motion. It needs a second and is not debatable but is amendable. The best practice, however, is for the bylaws to state the procedure.

UNDEMOCRATIC PRACTICES IN THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION PROCESS

Members should be alert to some undemocratic political practices in organizations. For instance, 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. 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. In some national organizations that meet yearly or biennially (every 2 years), this would be difficult.

When nominations are being taken from the floor or when a nominating ballot is being 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, the vote must nevertheless be taken by ballot. A ballot vote still allows the members to write in a candidate's name. If the bylaws require a ballot vote, the members must vote by ballot even if all candidates are running unopposed. It is out of order to ask one person (for example, the secretary) to cast the election ballot for the entire assembly. Such a motion is wrong because it takes away members' rights to write in a candidate.

The vote for election can be taken by

1. Voice
2. Ballot
3. Roll call
4. Cumulative voting

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, anytime an election is 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, 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 they want and vote no for the other candidates as they are voted on. 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."

Then the president announces the vote:

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

If Member G loses, the chair announces it 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."

Then the president announces the results of this vote. This procedure continues until someone receives a majority vote.

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

There are two ways a ballot vote can be taken:

1. As a slate of all the officers on one ballot
2. As an individual ballot after nominations are closed for each office

Slate Ballots

In large organizations, such as conventions, it is usual to have a prepared, printed ballot listing all the names of the candidates, with room for further nominations or write-ins from the membership.

Members go to the polls once. When there is no election 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, it is best to have the election early in the meeting. In the event that another vote is needed, it can be accomplished before the convention or meeting adjourns.

Individual Ballots

In the second way of taking a ballot vote, members are given a blank piece of paper by the tellers' committee after nominations have been closed for an office. The members write on the blank piece of paper the name of the person they wish to see elected for that office. The tellers then collect the ballots, 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, count them, and the chairman reads the report. This goes on until the members elect someone to each office.

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

When electing officers, if there is a tie vote or no one receives a majority vote, then the members keep voting until someone is elected. The members do not

proceed to the next office until they have elected 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 the members are voting on several officers 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 twenty people present and voting. It takes eleven 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

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

top 5 candidates

If three candidates had received the same vote—for example, if Smith, Green and Frank had each received 13 votes—then 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.

The actual counting and recording of the ballots is accomplished by the tellers' committee, members who are appointed to count the vote during a meeting. For information on this aspect of the voting process, see "Counting and Recording the Ballots by Tellers' Committee" later in this chapter.

Election by Roll Call Vote

If the members take the vote by roll call, the same methods used for a ballot vote can be followed: either voting for all candidates at once or voting for one at a time. The presiding officer should explain the procedure. As the secretary calls the roll, each member states for whom he or she is voting. The secretary records the vote and repeats it to make sure it is accurate.

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

(In accordance with Robert's Rules of Order)

THE NOMINATION PROCESS:

1. Prior to beginning the nomination process, a motion to "open nominations" is necessary. Any member of the council can offer such a motion. The motion should contain the title of the office that is open for nomination such as: "I move that we open nominations for the office of _____."

The motion must be seconded, discussion held and a vote taken. A majority vote is necessary to open nominations.

2. If the motion is approved, the mayor then calls for nominations for that particular office by saying: "Nominations are now in order for the office of _____."

3. Any council member, including the mayor, may place a name in nomination.

4. It is not necessary to second a nomination.

5. If an objection is made by a member of the council, then no member can nominate more than one person for a given office until every member wishing to nominate someone has had an opportunity to do so.

This rule applies even where more than one person is to be elected to an office or position.

6. If a council member has raised an objection as indicated in Step 5, then the nominations for that particular position must be closed prior to taking nominations for any remaining positions.

CLOSING NOMINATIONS:

1. Upon receiving the nominations for the particular position, the mayor should then ask if there are any further nominations for the office of _____. This question calling for any additional nominations should be repeated twice for a total of three calls for additional nominations for the office of _____.

Once it appears that there are no additional nominations for the particular office, the mayor should declare that the nominations are closed and call for a motion to close nominations.

The motion to close nominations should be: "I move that nominations for the office of _____ be closed." Again the motion must be seconded, discussion held and a vote taken. A two-thirds vote is needed to close nominations.

After the nominations are closed, voting for the particular office can take place, or nominations for the next office called for by the mayor.

The council may complete the nominations for every office before any voting takes place or complete the nominations for the first office and vote on that office before proceeding to the nominations for the next office.

2. A motion to close nominations cannot be reconsidered.
3. A motion to reopen nominations can only be reconsidered in instances of a negative vote.

THE VOTING PROCESS:

1. Depending on the council's decision on how the actual vote will be conducted, you will be voting either immediately after the nominations are closed for the first office only or after nominations are closed for all available offices. In either case, the process is the same.

The mayor will need to announce the names in the order in which they were nominated and the actual vote held in the same order. For example, if Mr. McDuck was nominated first and Mrs. Pluto nominated second, then the vote on their nomination for the office must be considered in the same order.

2. An individual is considered to be elected to the office upon receiving a majority vote. Once someone receives a majority, it is no longer necessary to proceed with a roll call vote on any remaining candidates.

DECLARING THE RESULTS:

1. After the voting process is concluded, the mayor or city clerk should declare the tally of each vote publicly.
2. Following the completion of the voting process, the mayor should announce the successful nominees and have their name entered into the official record.