March 23, 2020

**Taking Care of Business Through Virtual Meetings**

We are all grappling with our new reality of social distancing and working from home. How do PTAs finish their essential business before the end of June if they can’t meet in person? What ARE the “must-dos”?

There are two items of business that PTAs need to accomplish at membership meetings by the end of the fiscal year:

* Approve a budget for the next fiscal year
* Hold officer elections

The good news is PTAs CAN conduct meetings virtually – via conference call or video conferencing. Guidance on using virtual meetings can be found in <https://www.wastatepta.org/washington-state-ptas-and-covid-19/>

For elections, the *WSPTA Uniform Bylaws* require two things: an ability for members to do **self-nomination** (*WSPTA Uniform Bylaws* Article 5, Section 5C) and “The local PTA and council officers shall be elected **by ballot** prior to the end of the fiscal year for a term of one year and until their successors are elected. A majority vote is necessary to elect. The election may be by voice vote**if**only one candidate is nominated for an office.” (*WSPTA Uniform Bylaws* Article 5, Section 6B)

Voting by ballot cannot be done during an audio or video conference but CAN be done by mail, email or other electronic means such as a survey IF your PTAs’ standing rules allow it. If your standing rules do not currently allow that, the standing rules must first be changed to specify the procedure.

Here are the steps to take:

**Meeting 1 – Board**

* Make a recommendation to membership on the budget
* Set dates and methods for open self-nomination period for election
* Decide on electronic or mail voting procedures – or create a subcommittee to create the procedures. Decide on ONE method (don’t do both email and mail, for example.) See *WSPTA Policy Manual*, Appendix M for best practices.
* Make a recommendation to membership on standing rules change for balloting (can be general wording referring to procedures.)

***Example****: Voting for officers or nominating committee positions may take place at a meeting, by mail, or by electronic transmission, as outlined in policy. If voting takes place by mail or electronic transmission, the name of each candidate is to be contained in the notice of the meeting and any vote cast must be received within the timeframe identified in the notice of the meeting.*

* Review standing rules for additional changes that could simplify business, e.g., appointment of delegates to WSPTA Convention and Legislative Assembly

***Example****: XYZ PTA will send as many voting delegates to the WSPTA Convention as the budgeted amount for convention can support. All delegates for the WSPTA Convention shall be selected by the board of directors.*

***Example****: The XYZ PTA will send as many voting delegates to the WSPTA Legislative Assembly as the budgeted amount will sustain. The advocacy chair for XYZ PTA will be one of the voting delegates representing the PTA at the legislative assembly; the rest of the voting delegates will be determined by the board of directors.*

See the Standing Rules Handbook for more details.

The board should send notice of a virtual membership meeting to all members at least 10 days in advance and include the proposed standing rules and proposed budget. The board could also announce the procedures for self-nomination in this notice.

**Meeting 2 – Membership**

* Adopt standing rules
* Adopt budget

The board should send notice of a second virtual membership meeting with the names of all the candidates for election – those on the nominating committee slate and those who self-nominated. The procedure for ballot voting should be described in full in the meeting announcement. If there is only one candidate for each office, voting may be done at the virtual meeting by voice or roll call vote.

**Meeting 3 -Membership**

* Elections

No nominations during the election will be accepted. If voting took place via mail or electronically before the meeting, the results would be announced and recorded in the minutes of this meeting.

If there is an open position (no candidates have been identified by the nominating committee or self-nomination processes) but a member volunteers during the meeting, they cannot be elected at the virtual meeting. However, they CAN be appointed by the new Board of Directors after July 1 and would serve until elected at the next membership meeting.

Celebrate your success at finishing the year strong!

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