

A.B.A.T.E. of PA 2020 Elections

Elections: How do we pull this off in a pandemic?

The Executive Board has been working on how to pull off elections this year. Bottom line is we can't not have them. Our COP's and Robert's Rules have no provisions for natural disasters, so we have to do the best we can.

Every chapter a (and district) is in different circumstances as a result of the pandemic. Some are not holding meetings at all, others are much less affected. For example, my chapter (Blair) meets on private property and is able to hold meetings. There are other chapters who haven't had a meeting since March because the place they hold it at has been closed the entire time. Everyone has a different set of obstacles to overcome. But at the end of the day, there will be elections held. Our job is to do them as best we can. We want to make sure that (to the extent possible) every member has a chance to vote and that the nominations and elections conform to the COP's.

So, what we (the Executive Board) did was to look at the COP's and Roberts to come up with a list of options for the districts and chapters to work with. The resulting document is reproduced here. It has been sent to all the Chapter Coordinators and District Reps.

Pandemic Elections: Getting them Done

1. General Considerations:
 - a. Regardless of the pandemic, we have to figure out how to hold elections.
 - b. This is a basic summary of what the COP's require and how to adapt during the pandemic.
2. Nominations Rules (what has to happen):
 - a. In effect for August, September, October meetings.
 - b. Basic nominating rules of concern:
 - i. Nominations must occur at a "Chapter Meeting." It doesn't have to be a "regular" meeting, and could be a virtual (i.e, Zoom) meeting.
 - ii. No special notifications are required for meetings where nominations are made.
 - iii. Need three out of five Executive Board elected officers in the meeting to have a quorum (Chapter Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator, Treasurer, Secretary, Legislative Coordinator).
 - iv. The member making a nomination must be in the meeting.
 - v. The member being nominated must be in the meeting.
3. Nominations in a pandemic (ways to make it happen):
 - a. If a chapter is holding regular meetings, carry on as before. This applies to physical and virtual meetings.
 - b. If a chapter is not holding regular meetings, consider the following options:
 - i. Hold a physical "nomination meeting" in an outdoor location. Contact members as much as possible to let them know.
 - ii. Hold a video conference (Zoom) meeting for nominations. The COP's don't prohibit this.
 - iii. Minutes should be taken regardless for a written record.
 - c. Nominations for state offices must be sent to the State Office in email form.
 - i. The COP's call for the State Secretary to receive these. Afaik, our State Secretary has resigned and the Office Manager is Acting Secretary. So, we

need to get the word out that if the State Office is not included in the notification, the nomination might not get recorded.

- d. Nominations for district and chapter offices are the responsibility of the district/chapter administration.
4. Elections rules (what has to happen):
 - a. Must be held at a regular chapter meeting unless two months notice in Between The Lines is given for an alternate place/time..
 - b. With two months notice in Between The Lines, the election can be held anywhere. Date, Time, and Place must be given.
 - i. For elections in December, this means that the notice must be sent to the newsletter editor by September 10th at the latest so that the first notice appears in the October BTL issue.
 - ii. For elections in November, the notice must be sent to the State Office by August 10th so the first notice is in the September BTL issue.
 - c. State elections must still be on a paper ballot provided by the State Office. Ballots will be mailed to the Chapter Coordinators by November 1st based on the nominations received. Ballots and sign-in sheets must be returned to the State Office postmarked on or before December 15th.
 - d. District/chapter ballots are the responsibility of the District/Chapter Administration.
 - e. With proper notice, it is practical to have elections without a physical meeting.
 5. Elections in a pandemic (ways to make it happen):
 - a. If the chapter is conducting regular meetings, carry on as before.
 - b. If not, here are some alternatives:
 - i. Have an election “non-meeting” at the chapter’s regularly scheduled meeting place and time.
 1. An actual meeting does not need to be held. It can be two sergeants at arms at a table outside the closed bar where the chapter would normally meet.
 2. Since it occurs at the chapter’s regular meeting place and time the BTL notice requirements do not apply.
 - ii. Have an “election meeting” in an outdoor location.
 1. A quorum and minutes would be required.
 2. Set a place and time where two sergeants at arms are conducting an election. Could be a card table in a Walmart parking lot.
 3. Proper notice in BTL must be given.
 - iii. Have an “election non-meeting” anywhere.
 1. This is the most basic option.
 2. Can be anywhere (the Walmart parking lot, someone’s house), just make sure there are established hours, the BTL notice is given, and two sergeants at arms are there to record the ballots and sign-in sheets.
 - c. As long as BTL notice is given, two sergeants at arms administer the ballots, and the ballots with sign in sheet are sent to the state office postmarked by December 15th, it should work.