

Guidelines for Chapters That Have Cancelled Meetings

Many of you have found it challenging to do essential chapter business in accordance with our DKG governing documents and your own chapter rules, even though you have had to cancel your chapter meetings. Therefore, at President Cathy Daugherty's request, I offer the following information and some suggestions about how you may abide by all relevant rules and parliamentary procedures in handling your chapter business, especially about how you may enable prospective members to join your chapter, adopt budgets, elect and install new officers.

Some rules in the international, state organization and chapter governing documents may be temporarily null and void.

National, province, state, and local laws; statutes; and orders that have the force of law **always** have greater authority than the governing documents of any organizations within their respective jurisdictions. Thus, if the mayor orders that there be no meetings of more than five people, that ruling has more authority in your community than the DKG *Constitution* or any subordinate international, state organization, or local governing documents. If you have a chapter rule that says you will meet at some time while the order is in effect, your chapter rule is null and void for as long as the mayor's order is in effect.

Chapters may meet electronically and do business by mail.

The DKG *Constitution* gives chapters great leeway in determining how to conduct chapter business. Article IX, Section A.1 says:

- "b. All members being notified, chapter meetings may be face-to-face, through electronic communications, or through a combination of the two, as long as members present may simultaneously hear one another and participate during the meeting.
- c. A quorum for chapter business shall be determined by the chapter.
- d. All members being notified, matters requiring immediate chapter action may be voted upon by mail (postal or electronic) that provides a valid receipt of each responding chapter member's vote. A majority vote of chapter members shall be required for action.
- e. Ratification of all voting by mail (postal or electronic) must be made at the next face-to-face meeting of the chapter."

Note three things: 1) a quorum must be present for electronic meetings, just as for face-to-face meetings; 2) "a majority vote of chapter members" means a majority vote of all chapter members; and 3) these constitutional rules have greater authority than any chapter rules that may be more restrictive.

Prospective members may join chapters at any time.

"An individual becomes a member of the Society when she pays her dues" (DKG *Constitution*, Article III, Section A.2). You may simply collect dues from a prospective member at any time and she will immediately become a member, eligible for all DKG benefits such as scholarships, access to DKG publications, etc. The new member(s) may be inducted later at a face-to-face meeting if the chapter wishes, but induction is not mandatory.

Chapters may elect officers without having a a face-to-face or electronic meeting.

These guidelines, written here in my own words, are based almost entirely on those that were prepared by Ohio State Organization Parliamentarian Joyce Jones Weinkam. Remember that they are guidelines, not directives. They were written without reviewing each chapter's own rules, and chapters may modify the guidelines to best fit their own chapter circumstances.

In many cases, chapters will not have to take a vote to elect their officers.

If a chapter's rules do not require that a ballot vote be taken, the chapter may follow the procedure given in DKG's parliamentary authority *Robert's Rules of Order newly Revised, 11th Edition*, which says

"If only one person is nominated and the bylaws [in this case, the chapter rules] do not do not require that a ballot vote be taken, the chair, after ensuring that, in fact no members present (in this case, no chapter members) wish to make further nominations, simply declares that the nominee is elected, thus effecting the election by unanimous consent or "acclimation" [RONR (11th ed.), p. 443, II.7-12].

To use this procedure, the president or her designee must provide every member with the slate of nominees and state that any member who wishes to nominate an additional candidate for any office should submit the name of the candidate to the president by a certain deadline. If there are no other nominees submitted by the deadline, the president can declare the original nominees elected.

If there is more than one candidate for any office, a vote will be required.

If the chapter rules do not require a secret ballot for elections, the president or her designee may send out a ballot by mail (electronic or postal) with a deadline for when it is to be completed and returned. The president or her designee may count the votes and the president should announce that the winner is elected.

If the chapter rules require a secret ballot for elections, the chapter may follow this process:

- 1) If two or more members are able to meet together, the president should appoint two tellers. The president should mail each member: a paper ballot with instructions on how to fold it, a return envelope addressed to one of the tellers, and a deadline by which the ballot must be returned. The tellers should meet together, open the envelopes, put the folded ballots into a pile or container, shuffle them, and then unfold and count them.
- 2) If no two members (tellers) can meet together, the folded ballots should be returned to the president or her designee. The president or designee should open the envelopes, shuffle the folded ballots, and then unfold and count them.
- 3) The ballot count should be reported to the chapter president, who should announce that the winner is elected.

Further help is available.

If you have questions or concerns about any of the recommendations or if you have other questions that are not addressed here, feel free to contact me at hpopovich@mac.com.

Helén Popovich, Ph.D., PRP, International Parliamentarian