

Guidelines for CWA nominations and elections

APPLICABLE CWA BYLAWS SECTIONS

ARTICLE 5.2 (a) The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees, except the Nomination Committee.

ARTICLE 7: COMMITTEES

7.1 Appointment: The President shall appoint the chairman of all committees.

7.4 Nominating Committee: The Council shall elect a Nominating Committee consisting of at least three (3) members to prepare and submit a slate of Directors for the ensuing year.

(a) The Nominating Committee shall be named before June 1.

(b) The report of the Nominating Committee shall be received in time to be published in the quarterly Fall issue (September) of the newsletter.

(c) Any member in good standing may petition to run for a specified office by delivering to the Secretary, before the Fall MEOW deadline (September 1) a petition signed by ten (10) members in good standing.

(d) On or about October 1, the Secretary will mail a ballot to each member in good standing. If feasible, the Fall Newsletter is preferred to contain the ballot.

(e) All ballots received by the Secretary before November 1 will be delivered unopened to the Annual Meeting where three (3) tellers appointed by the President will count them.

(f) Nominees receiving the highest number of votes will be declared elected.

(g) If an election is uncontested, no ballots need be mailed.

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES

Guideline #1 (Articles 7.1 and 5.2) Appointment of Nominating Chair

The president, with input from the CWA Council, should appoint the chairperson of the Nominating Committee. An existing Council director should be encouraged to volunteer as NomCom chair.

The president must not vote or participate in the Nominating Committee deliberations. However, the president may suggest people he/she feels would be good officers or explain why others would be difficult for the president to work with, as has been done unofficially in the past. (See guideline #3)

Guideline #2 (Articles 7.4a) Selection of Nominating Committee

The NomCom should consist of three or more people,

chosen by the committee chairperson with Council's input. An odd number on the NomCom is also preferable but not required. All decisions must be made by majority rule/vote of the entire Nominating Committee.

Names of committee members should be posted on the CWA website by June 1 and published in the summer MEOW (June/July issue) if not before, along with a notice that members can contact the Nominating Committee if they are interested in running or in suggesting someone else for office.

Guideline #3 (Article 7.4b) How the Nominating Committee Finds Candidates

The committee should seek potential candidates from various sources -- from professional members who volunteer, suggestions from any members, recommendations by NomCom members and the president.

Each committee member should be given one section of the preliminary list of candidates. That way the committee can divide up contacting the potential candidates to explain the job requirements, gauge the person's interest and ability, and report back to the committee. Once the list is narrowed to those who are both "willing and able," the slate can be put together by majority vote.

Guideline #4 (Article 7.4b) How the Committee Selects An Official Slate

All officer candidates must be professional members in good standing -- the only requirement. The following are additional criteria we believe are desirable in the final nominees:

(a) Any candidate should think that he/she will be able to attend the CWA Conference on a reasonable basis while in office. (Having attended at least one previous

conference also benefits a candidate who then knows more about how CWA operates, since the conference is a major focus of this organization.)

(b) The candidate should have volunteered in some capacity with CWA before and must have done a good job.

(c) The candidate must be available/able to reply promptly to email questions.

(d) The candidate must understand and be willing to do that specific job. If that job includes attending the conference, the candidate should commit to attending or to finding a credible replacement to handle that aspect of his/her job. (A written job description is advisable for the committee to have in advance of contacting candidates.)

(e) Additionally, the committee should try to compose a slate with an eye toward having Council reflect a balanced representation of the membership. CWA has such a diverse membership (e.g. shelter workers, breeders, pet company representatives, veterinarians, editors) that each aspect should be represented at some point, to help avoid the appearance of partisanship.

Lastly, Council should never vote or be involved in "approving" the official NomCom slate before it is announced to members.

Guideline #5 (Article 7.4c) Enabling Nominations Petitions from Others

If someone wants to run for office but does not make the official slate, it is that person's responsibility to get 10 signatures on a single Nominations Petition. The signatures can be from professional or associate members, and people can sign more than one petition.

The following procedures should help such people who wish to run for office:

(a) A sample Nominations Petition has already been developed and approved by Council.

(b) This petition can be emailed to each candidate* on or after July 15, after the official NomCom slate has been announced. The sample petition could also be posted on the CWA website so a candidate could download and print it out. A candidate is not required to use the wording of the sample petition, however.

Note In contested elections, ONLY candidates who are not on the official NomCom slate would need Nominations Petitions. This situation would not occur every year.

(c) Anyone not on the official slate who wants to run should declare his/her intentions to the NomCom chair, preferably by July 31.

(d) Such candidates will have from July 15 to August 15 to get their signed Nominations Petitions to the CWA Secretary. The candidates can post their petitions on ProList, or email or snail-mail them directly to people to sign. It should be up to the candidate to figure out how to get his/her signatures from CWA members.

Note At the current time, it would be difficult to enable electronic signatures directly on any Nominations Petitions on the CWA website, but that option could be investigated again should circumstances warrant.

(e) Each candidate's 10 endorsement signatures must be on one, single petition. That candidate's signed Nominations Petition may be sent by email or by snail-mail to the CWA secretary, who should receive it by August 15.

Guideline #6 (Article 7.4d) Delivering Ballots about October 1

If no office is contested, then publication of the official NomCom slate is sufficient, preferably both in

MEOW and on the CWA website. For a contested election, however, a written ballot must be distributed with written (paper) returns. The ballot should be published in the fall MEOW and also posted on the website about October 1, where people could download and print it out.

The NomCom discussed emailing ballots and returns, as was done in the 2007 election, but we decided that this is not a good option. Electronic voting via the website may be investigated in the future, but currently it is the webmaster's opinion that it's extremely difficult to prevent voter fraud. Our conclusion is to strongly recommend Council endorse a paper ballot published in MEOW and then snail-mail reply voting by November 1. The ballot and voting rules must be widely publicized, also. (See guideline #7)

A more costly alternative would be to mail the ballot only to Professional members who are allowed to vote. This might be needed if MEOW is delayed or Council wants the ballots mailed earlier. A "voting" return envelope could be included with the person's name and membership number on the return address label. Professional members would only need to stamp and return that envelope to the CWA secretary by November 1.

Lastly, to let our international members (overseas) receive ballots in time and be able to vote by November 1, the NomCom recommends an exception to allow those ballots to be emailed, preferably in pdf file. If time is tight, due to slow overseas postal services, reply ballots could also be emailed back by deadline. (There are only a few members who would qualify for this.)

Guideline #7 (Article 7.4e) Return of Votes/Ballots by November 1

As per the bylaws, we must ensure that only Professional members vote if the ballot will be distributed to everyone via MEOW. We also want to protect voter privacy. Therefore, the NomCom recommends the following procedures:

(a) We should require that voters include a return address label on their ballot envelope that clearly has that person's name and/or membership number. Then the secretary can validate professional members without opening the ballot returns.

(b) It is suggested that members should be told that any envelopes without a name or number on the outside will be destroyed unopened. (The voting rules, especially putting the Pro-member's name and/or membership number on the return envelope, will have to be announced to members and emphasized.)

(c) The CWA secretary can then mark each validated return envelope and blank out the name of the voter, and thereby prove it's been vetted. With the return address names crossed out, it is now a blind vote; people should not put their names or membership numbers on the paper ballots.

(d) All the ballots should be put in one envelope, then sealed, signed overtop and delivered unopened to the conference.

Guideline #8 (Article 7.4e) Vote Counting

Assuming that the three appointed ballot counters must tally the votes during the membership meeting at the annual conference, the NomCom recommends this process to try to streamline and speed up the count:

(a) Divide the voting envelopes into three batches of roughly equal number.

(b) Teller #1 opens the first batch of envelopes. As each envelope/ballot is opened, Teller #1 recites the vote so that Tellers #2 and #3 keep separate tabs.

(c) When the first batch recital is done, the stack is passed over to Teller #2. Teller #2 reads them off once again, this time for Teller #1 to record and Teller #3 to confirm.

(d) The three counters compare their totals, and if in agreement, move on to the second batch.

(e) The process is repeated until the third and last batch is counted.

Other vote-counting procedures may be devised, as long as the three ballot counters keep independent tallies which are in agreement at the conclusion of the ballot counting.