

Election of Local Council Officers - Electronically or by Email/Mail

(Assemblies should follow the same guidelines)

Background

On March 13, 2020, in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council issued guidance strongly recommending that local councils temporarily cease in-person events and continue operations **without** face-to-face contact. With these emergency restrictions in place, the Supreme Council temporarily authorizes councils to conduct necessary business by holding **electronic meetings** and conducting **voting** using any number of tools (e.g., Skype, Google Groups, other teleconference services, or mail).¹ Local councils are in the best position to determine what options work best for their members.

Overview of the Laws and Rules

The election of specified Knights of Columbus council officers is outlined in the Laws of the Knights of Columbus. Additional rules and procedures governing officer elections are found in each council's By-Laws and in the parliamentary procedures set forth in *Robert's Rules of Order*. As in any election, it is critical to establish procedures that will ensure secret balloting and an accurate vote count.

Best Practices for Conducting Council Officer Elections Online

There is a necessity to conduct officer elections in an alternative manner as a result of the current public health emergency. As in any election, it is critical to establish procedures that will preserve secret balloting and ensure an accurate vote count. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that Councils elect officers by selecting Option 1 below, which calls for an electronic meeting. This option is preferred. However, if a Council is unable to hold an electronic meeting, Options 2 and 3 are suggested alternatives.

OPTION 1 (Preferred) – Electronic Meeting

Councils are permitted to hold electronic business meetings to elect officers using an online meeting platform. Examples include Skype, GoToMeeting, WebEx, or Google Hangouts. Make sure the electronic meeting provides the opportunity for simultaneous communication among all participants in the same manner as an in-person meeting held in an actual room. The rules and procedures of the meeting must be the same as a regular, in-person council meeting, which generally include the following steps:

1. A Nominating Committee should prepare and present a slate of candidates as prescribed by council by-laws or parliamentary rules.
2. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.
3. Voting takes place during the meeting. (An online voting tool should be used, such as Google Forms or Survey Monkey).

¹ Pursuant to Charter Constitution and Laws Sec. 9, the Board of Directors "shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Order, shall cause the laws of the Order to be faithfully executed and administered, shall exercise all executive authority through itself or committee over the state and subordinate councils, chapters and members of the Order, shall have full control and management of all matters as to and of ... all other concerns of the Order, ... and shall have full power and authority to interpret the laws of the Order of the Knights of Columbus, consistent with the spirit thereof, and the well-being of the Order...."

OPTION 2 – Email/Mail – With Consensus on Nominating Committee Slate

This option would be used when there is no possibility of an electronic meeting being held, and it is well known that there is complete consensus on the slate of officers presented by the Nominating Committee.

1. The Grand Knight appoints a Nominating Committee of three members.
 - a. The Nominating Committee selects a candidate for each officer position, except Financial Secretary and Chaplain.
 - b. The Nominating Committee receives acceptance of the nomination from each nominee.
 - c. The Nominating Committee delivers the slate of candidates to the Grand Knight.
2. One month prior to the scheduled council election, the Grand Knight forwards the Nominating Committee’s report to all members, asking them to notify him and the Financial Secretary, by a specified due date, of any objections to the slate of candidates.
 - a. If there are no objections, when the council’s election occurs, the Grand Knight should make a motion to accept the slate of candidates presented by the Nominating Committee. (Refer to *Electronic Business Meetings: Voting on Necessary Motions* for additional guidance).
 - b. If there are objections, additional candidates will need to be considered, and Option 1 (see above) or Option 3 (see below) must be used.

Option 3 – Email/Mail – Multiple candidates nominated for individual positions

This option would be used when there is no possibility of an electronic meeting being held. The reason for using this option is that multiple members will be nominated to individual positions, and a vote will be needed to determine the new officer.

1. No later than May 1, 2020, the Grand Knight emails and mails all council members requesting nominations for council officer positions and setting a response deadline of May 15, 2020.
 - a. Members email or mail their nomination(s) to the Grand Knight, making sure to notify the member(s) they are nominating.
 - b. Each member nominated shall email, mail, or phone in his acceptance of the nomination to the Grand Knight no later than May 15, 2020.
 - c. The Grand Knight forwards the nominations and acceptances he receives to the Deputy Grand Knight and to the Warden.
 - d. Nominations shall close at 11:59 pm local time on May 15, 2020.
2. By June 1, 2020, at the direction of the Grand Knight, the Warden sends the list of nominees to all members of the council via email or postal mail. It is recommended that the Grand Knight and assigned Tellers use an online tool such as Google Forms or Survey Monkey to create an electronic

ballot showing each officer position and all candidates for that position. This ballot must be included in the June 1 communication with instructions that it be completed and submitted either online or, where an online ballot may be printed as a paper ballot, by postal mail. All ballots must be submitted no later than June 10. The Grand Knight receives the ballots and immediately forwards copies to the Deputy Grand Knight and the Tellers.

3. The Deputy Grand Knight and the Tellers tally the ballots and report the voting results to the Grand Knight by June 14, 2020, sharing the voting results among all those who have counted the vote.
4. When there is agreement among the vote counters regarding the results of the vote tally, the Grand Knight announces the election results to all council members by email or postal mail no later than June 15, 2020.
5. Any objections contesting the vote are to be emailed, mailed, or phoned into the Grand Knight by June 22, 2020.
6. On June 23, 2020, the Grand Knight instructs the Recorder to formally record the newly elected council officers in the minutes, unless there is a legitimate objection.

