

After the nominating committee is elected, the committee should review the bylaws to verify the date of the election meeting, notice of the election meeting, when the nominating committee report is published and requirements for additional nominations from the floor.

Some common methods of voting are by voice, by show of hands, by roll call, and by secret ballot. Secret ballots are generally preferred in large organizations and many bylaws state if there is more than one nomination for an office, a secret ballot is required.

### **Common rules for secret ballot votes:**

When the bylaws mandate a secret ballot vote, this requirement cannot be suspended, even by a unanimous vote. Of course, bylaws can never be suspended.

In secret ballot votes, the chairman should always vote at the same time that the other members vote. In this case, the chairman loses his tie-breaking vote.

Two common methods of election:

1. *By plurality vote.* The person receiving the largest number of votes is declared elected. For example, if three persons were nominated for a position, the one receiving the largest number would win, even if the number were not a majority of the votes cast.

2. *By majority vote.* A candidate must receive a majority of the total votes for all candidates to be elected. Common rules for election by majority vote:

- Abstentions are never counted. Blank ballots are discarded, and not reported as part of the vote.
- Illegal votes are reported as part of the vote, but may not be credited to any candidate.
- Under normal parliamentary rules, repeated balloting should be done until a candidate obtains a majority. Names of nominees should be kept on the ballot, unless the bylaws provide some method of dropping the nominee receiving the lowest number of votes.

### **Unless otherwise stated in the bylaws, candidates are elected by a majority vote of members present and voting.**

If two or more candidates are nominated for office:

- The chair announces the procedure for election.
- A tellers' committee is appointed by the chair.
- Ballots are cast by qualified members.
- The tellers collect the votes and retire to a private room to count votes.

This procedure is repeated for each contested office. The president re-reads the report and announces the results for each office.

The procedure for collecting ballots should be established before the election begins. Possible methods are:

- Tellers give ballots to members and collect them.
- Tellers give ballots to members, and the voter places the ballot in a box set up for this purpose.

The Chair of the tellers' committee returns with a written report, signed by all of the tellers, which he/she reads and then hands to the presiding officer. The tellers' report should include:

- × Number of votes cast
- × Number needed to elect.
- × List of candidates in order of number of votes received
- × Number of votes received after each name
- × Number of illegal votes
- × This procedure is repeated for each contested office. The president re-reads the report and announces the results for each office.

Remember when voting by ballot:

- × Members are to be advised when and how ballots are to be collected.
- × Candidates are not to be involved in the election procedure (teller, collecting ballots, or counting votes).
- × In a contested election, each candidate may designate a person as an observer at the time ballots are counted.
- × Only members may vote and each person votes only once.

After the vote is taken, counted and announced, the chair can designate how and when the ballots will be destroyed without objection from the membership. If there is an objection, a motion should be made to designate a time to destroy the ballots.

*Adapted from Missouri PTA's Nominations Are In Order*

**Parliamentary Tip of the Month**

Occasionally, after the nominating committee has made its report, some member will call out “Move to vote the slate,” which would mean the member wishes to have the entire slate of officers voted on in its entirety. As presiding officer or as a member, one cannot allow this to happen, as it takes away every member’s right to be nominated from the floor. In this case, the presiding officer could simply state, “That motion is not in order at this time,” and continue with the call for additional nominations from the floor, voting on each office in turn.

*Mary Christiano, Parliamentarian*

[mary\\_christiano@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mary_christiano@sbcglobal.net)