Preparing for the virtual Annual District Council Meeting

*(The following guidelines supersede Policy and Protocol for the 2020 – 2021 program year.)

District Club Alignment
- Post this at least 14 days in advance of the meeting.
- Recommendation: Ask District Council members to submit questions and concerns to the District Director prior to the meeting for review.

All District Reports
- Post this at least 14 days in advance of the meeting.
- **Recommendation**: Ask District Council members to submit questions and concerns to the District Director prior to the meeting for review.

District Leadership Committee (DLC) Report
- Protests related to the DLC report must be submitted to the District Director at least 14 days before the meeting.
- No protests submitted after the 14-day deadline will be considered.
- Visit the District Campaigns and Elections FAQ page for more information related to the DLC report.
- The posted DLC report can **only** contain the list of nominated candidates.
  - Candidates that were evaluated by the DLC and not nominated are provided to the District Director, however, the names are not part of the DLC report or posted to the District website/publications.

Floor Candidates
- All floor candidates are required to declare their intent to run for election at least one (1) week (7 days) before the meeting for all positions they are considering running for, regardless of the validity of the DLC report.
  - If the report is valid, all eligible candidates must declare their intent to run as a floor candidate seven (7) days before the elections. In this instance, only those candidates that have been interviewed by the DLC and have not been nominated can declare and run as a floor candidate. If a candidate withdraws after the DLC report is published, the report is still valid as the DLC has completed its task. Therefore, only candidates that have gone through the DLC process and were not nominated by the DLC are eligible to run from the floor.
  - If a position is incomplete, all qualified candidates for that position must declare their intent to run as a floor candidate seven (7) days before the election. For example, if the required number of candidate(s) is not nominated, the position in the report is incomplete. Therefore, any qualified candidate may run from the floor.
  - If the entire report is invalid, all qualified candidates must declare their intent to run as a floor candidate seven (7) days before the election. For example, if the DLC does not meet the deadlines or requirements outlined in Protocol 9.0, then the entire report is invalid, and all candidates must run from the floor for all positions.
- Declare their intent to run in writing to the DLC Chair at least seven (7) days before the meeting.
- Submit their District Leader Agreement and Release Statement to the District Director at least seven (7) days before the meeting.

- *Nominations from the District Council may only be made for floor candidates that have met the above requirements.*
- Visit the District Campaigns and Elections FAQ page for more information related to floor candidates.

Candidate Campaign and Showcase
- A campaign communication is any message, in any form unsolicited by the recipient that promotes or publicizes a candidate.
  - Includes backgrounds in the online meeting platform and a reference in the name used for candidates.
- District Candidate's Corner – Online
  - Districts must have an Online Candidate Corner.
  - Districts must provide all candidates an equal opportunity to have a personal statement posted to the District website (or the District's primary communication method if not a website).
    - These statements may not be emailed or posted on District social media. However, a link to the District Online Candidate's Corner may be emailed as a District communication, informing members of the updates to the website.
  - Timing: May begin at any time at the discretion of the District and be available until the day before the District conference to accommodate the Area and Division contests being held online.
  - A special notation should be made for nominated candidates or floor candidates.

Candidate Showcase
- Districts are encouraged to host a Candidate Showcase in one of the following ways:
  - For a live online event, the candidates must be held in a breakout room until they are invited to join the main session room. This way, the candidate will not have the unfair advantage of knowing which questions may be asked.
  - Designate a District representative to remain in the breakout room with candidates.
- Pre-recorded video interviews with each candidate, in which a District representative (for example, the DLC Chair or member) conducts the interviews with all candidates for a given role, asking each candidate the same questions.
  - For pre-recorded interviews, the District representative must be joined by a District-appointed timer to ensure all candidates receive the same amount of time. After all interviews are completed for a given role, the videos must be released simultaneously.
  - The videos may be posted on the District website or an event may be created to share the videos.

Credential Registration Process
- Visit the Virtual Meeting and Vote page for information about the credential process and conducting online meetings.
- Before the meeting, the District Director must appoint a credentials chair to establish the credential registration processes.
  - Recommendation: Select a team that is well experienced in technology that can assist with the online credential registration process, create online ballots, and monitor the voting process during the meeting.

Registering voters

- Create a survey to register voters.
  - Use the District Council Member Report list to determine which District Council members can vote and obtain their email addresses.
  - Use a survey tool, such as *Google Forms* or *Microsoft Forms*, to attain the following information for all eligible voters:
    - Name (first and last/surname)
    - Membership number
    - Club number(s) you are representing?
    - Will you be attending the meeting?
    - What is your preferred email address to receive the link to vote?
  - Distribute the survey to all members of the District Council who are eligible to vote.
    - This includes all paid Club Presidents of paid clubs, paid Vice Presidents of Education of paid clubs, and District Executive Committee members. Please note, members of the District Executive Committee do not count toward a quorum.
  - Establish a deadline for when registration will close.
  - Use the list of registrants to distribute voting ballots.
    - If using Election Buddy or Election Runner (see below), the list of registrants may be copied into the distribution list.

Quorum

- Quorum is determined by adding the Club Presidents and Vice Presidents of Education together who have registered to attend virtually. Please note, District Executive Committee members do not count toward quorum.
- Quorum is one-third of Club Presidents and Vice Presidents of Education registered.

Voting Platform and Process

- Two self-service options for voting are the platforms Election Buddy or Election Runner.
  - Both Election Buddy and Election Runner can be set up with weighted votes. Therefore, you can assign the number of votes to each voting member. However, using the weighted votes feature does not all votes to be split when a voting member has multiple votes.
  - Another option is to use Election Buddy or Election Runner and send out a voting link/ID to cast each of their votes. If you use this process, you may need to extend the amount of time each ballot is opened to ensure voting members have time to complete each vote assigned to them.
- Proxies and number of votes
  - Proxies are not permitted when the voting process is conducted virtually.
  - Each District Council member must cast their own vote.
  - District Executive Committee members are entitled to one (1) vote and may cast up to two (2) additional votes as a Club President and/or Vice President Education.
  - All other District Council members shall be limited to a maximum of two (2) votes.
- Ballot recommendations
  - Create separate ballots for each role's elections and include all floor candidates on the ballots.
    - Add a notation next to the name of floor candidates to differentiate nominated candidates from floor candidates.

- If a floor candidate declares multiple roles, remove them on subsequent roles if they have been elected to a previous position.
- Create separate ballots for all agenda items requiring a vote and for each District officer election.
  - **Recommendation:** Create a few generic ballots for additional items.
- For positions with more than two candidates, create ballots with placeholder names and designations.
  - These ballots may be needed if the election results were inconclusive and updated based on the previous vote results.
- Create Test ballots
  - **Recommendation**: conduct practice voting scenarios before the meeting.
- **Recommendation:** During the meeting, designate a team member to stay logged into the voting platform to send or activate each ballot to vote and modify ballots as needed.
- Please visit the [Virtual Meeting and Vote](#) page for more information about the voting process and voting platforms.

Before the Meeting
- Notify all District Council members and members of the District when the annual meeting will take place and provide the meeting link.
  - **Consideration:** Determine if a registration process is necessary for attendees to register for the meeting or if the meeting will be open to all members who and been provided the link.
  - If all members are invited to the meeting, consider how to manage the discussion as not all attendees are members of the District Council and do not have speaking privileges.
    - For example, if using Zoom, there is a feature to broadcast the meeting live on YouTube and Facebook. This may be used to share the meeting with all District members and only have the District Council members join and participate in the Zoom meeting. It may be more efficient for facilitating discussions, as only the Council members can participate in the meeting.
- Post agenda items that require the District Council to vote at least 14 days in advance of the meeting.

Preparing for the Online Meeting
- Appoint a team experienced with the selected meeting platform to assist with setting up and hosting (running) the meeting.
  - For example, if using Zoom, the meeting host should be experienced with the meeting platform's features, such as breakout rooms, screen sharing, etc.
- The District Director should not be the host of the meeting as they will need to chair the meeting.
- **Recommendation:** During the meeting, have a member of the credentials team log into the voting platform to modify and to send (or activate) each ballot for voting. They should also have access to share their screen with the candidate observers during the vote's launch and tabulation of the results.

During the Meeting
- District business

- o Conduct and complete all District business, including approval of the District club alignment and elections, during the meeting.
  - o If any business is transacted at the meeting at which a quorum is not present, the action shall be deemed as valid as if a quorum were present if it thereafter is expressly approved in writing, personally, by mail, fax, email, electronic transmission, or other reasonable means, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the member clubs in the District based on two (2) votes per club.
- Candidate speeches
  - o Proceed directly to candidate speeches during each election, as all floor candidates will have declared their intent to run a minimum of seven (7) days before the elections. There will not be nominations from the floor during the annual District Council meeting.
  - o Offer each candidate, including floor candidates, two (2) minutes to present their speech.
  - o Instruct the candidates, including floor candidates, to speak alphabetically by last name (surname).
  - o Make sure the candidate who is speaking can see the timer.
    - ▪ Tip: if using Zoom, the speaker may pin the timer to their screen.
    - ▪ Tip: if using Zoom, the timer or host may mute the speaker once the speaking time reaches two minutes.
- Instruct the timer that at two (2) minutes, they may turn on their microphone and begin clapping.

Candidate appointed observers
- Create, and assign appointed observers to breakout rooms for their respective candidates.
  - ▪ For example, before the vote opening for each role, the candidate appointed observers should be in the designated breakout room.
- **Recommendation:** The person conducting the online vote should receive the list of candidate observers ahead of time to confirm the appropriate people are in the breakout room.
- In the breakout room, the designated person conducting the online vote will share their screen so the observers can see the votes as they are tabulated.

Voting
- Before the vote, the District Director must establish and communicate the specified amount of time for each ballot.
- Conduct the election for each role to completion before moving on to the next position.
- **Recommendation:** Inform voters when the ballot is launched.
- **Recommendation:** Remind voters to check their spam and junk/clutter folder for the voting link if they cannot find the ballot in their inbox.
- **Recommendation:** Allow sufficient time for voters to receive the voting link or voting links and cast their votes.
- During the meeting, if there are any uncontested officers, dispense with the secret ballot for the uncontested offices and instruct the Administration Manager to cast a single vote for the candidate for each such office.

Ballot results

- Share (display on the screen) the ballot results, including the number of votes each candidate received, with the meeting participants.

International Officer and Director Campaigning
- At the District Director's discretion, Districts may invite International Director candidates in their region to the annual District Council meeting and provide an equal opportunity to the candidates, or their representatives, to present a two-minute speech. The two-minute speech can be given at the beginning or end of the District's Candidate Showcase, the beginning or end of the annual District Council meeting, or while votes are being counted for the District's election.
- The District may post the following links to the District website (our primary communication method, if not a website), not including email or other District social media.
  - https://www.toastmasters.org/about/board-of-directors/international-officer-candidates
  - https://www.toastmasters.org/about/board-of-directors/international-director-candidates