Contents

Policy and Procedure Change

	Adopted
	Amended
	Lost

SOAR-8

Motion 2: Allowing Remote Voting and Remote Presentation of Motions

Motion:

Move that Region 8 Policy & Procedure manual modify the following:

- Section XIII Standing Rules, Item 1 plus Voting Procedures adding a new Item 2.
- Section XI Assembly Procedures Basic Principles, Item 13 be changed and add Item 17.
- Section XXVI Technology/Web Site Committees Purpose, add Item 4 and add Duties Items 4a through 4g.

XIII. Standing Rules

1. Voting member must wear appropriate identification badge/ribbon denoting Rep, funded committee chair, or Board Member. *Authorized virtual attendees will access voting software via secure access – this will act as identification of a Virtual Representative (VR). The software will have the capability of ensuring each voting member votes only once.*

Voting Procedures

2. Voting by the Virtual Representative (VR)
1. *Terminology:*
   a. *Virtual Representatives (person deemed accredited as regional representative) or Virtual Attendees are persons in a remote location attending assemblies via either an internet or phone link using audio and/or video communication tools (PCs, phones, smart phones, tablets, etc.).*
   b. *The Virtual Moderator is the Technology/Web Site person who is physically present at the assembly and is interacting with the VR.*
   c. *All references to "Present", shall include both those physically present at the assembly and virtually present.*
   d. *All online votes will be considered equivalent to a secret ballot (there is no link between the vote and person voting - only tallies are done) and can be used as part of any regular voting process. Tallies will be available in a timely manner for the chairperson to include in his/her determination of the outcome of any type of vote.*
   e. *All references to "microphone", shall be interpreted to mean "microphone or a recognized virtual attendee audio/video feed".*
2. *Hardware and Software:*
   a. *Technology (hardware and software) is the responsibility of the Tech Web committee and will be selected and implemented by them. (see TechWeb Definition)*
   b. *Online technology (two way audio and video) will allow representatives in remote attendance to hear motions and listen to debate, and obtain sufficient information*

of the quality necessary to exercise informed, sound and thoughtful judgment that is part of the voting process.

    c. *The process for acknowledging VRs to be recognized by the chair will be consistent with current Standing Rules.*

    d. *Meeting software*

        i. *Software will have secure access and ensure anonymity. .*

        ii. *Sufficient functionality will exist such as chat and voice to enable the person moderating the meeting software to inform the chair of requests from VRs should the need arise.*

    e. *Voting software*

        i. *Software will permit only secure access to voting.*

        ii. *All remote voting will be anonymous and ensure only one ballet per VR.*

        iii. *After results are announced all remote ballots will be destroyed.*

3. *Speaking at Assembly*

    a. *VRs may present the first Pro and answer questions for any motion their IG has submitted.*

    b. *VRs will not be able to ask questions or speak Pro/Con other than as stated in 3.a at this Phase of implementation during the assembly.*

    c. *VRs may submit questions prior to the assembly on motions via email to the Region 8 Secretary. They may or may not be read at the discretion of The Chairman. The Virtual Moderator will read them from the center microphone.*

4. *Education/Training/Written Procedures*

    a. *The Tech-Web committee will document and post to the website instructions for use of all software tools prior to each assembly.*

5. *The Chairman will have full discretion to suspend remote voting and or access if it becomes overly disruptive to the assembly (i.e. recovery from a technology problem cannot be implemented in a reasonable time period).*

~~2.~~ *3.* A voting member may request a more accurate vote count by simply calling out "Division." The Chairman may then use a voting method which assures an exact count.

~~3.~~ *4.* The Chairman may also call for division by stating, "The Chairman is in doubt."

~~4.~~ *5.* Ballot vote will be used for elections. Ballots will be distributed, collected, and tallied by non-voting members appointed by the Chairman. After announcement of results, motion is in order to destroy ballots.

XI. Assembly Procedures Basic Principles

13. Video/audio recording ~~devices are~~ is not allowed in the Assembly at any time other than as defined elsewhere for the Region 8 Secretary. (Devices such as PCs and Smart Phones with recording devices are permitted but may not be used to record.)

17. The Ways and Means committee will determine how fees will be accessed at assemblies for VRs to cover the cost of remote access. Fees will not exceed $50/assembly per VR participating. Fees may or may not be charged for virtual attendance by authorized members of the fellowship who are not IG representatives at the committee's discretion.

1~~7~~8. For further procedures see Standing Rules, beginning on page 14.

XXVI. Technology/Web Site Committee

Purpose

1. To promote the use of the Region 8 and OA World Service web sites for OA members and for all people seeking information about OA.
2. To facilitate the continued development of the Region 8 web site.
3. To provide information technology and support for Region 8.
4. Support Remote Access and Voting by Virtual Representatives during assemblies

Duties

1. Keep the Region 8 web site vibrant and up to date.
2. Keep the following up to date:
   a. web domain registration and payments.
   b. web pages
   c. email subscription list.
   d. event calendar.
3. Webmaster will also:
   a. create graphic "ads" for upcoming events.
   b. create PDF files for upcoming event registration brochures and the Region 8 newsletter.
   c. electronically publish Region 8 newsletter as submitted from Region 8 Bylaws/Electronic Documents chair.
   d. send email notice to newsletter "subscribers".
   e. upload modified Region 8 publications as provided.
   f. provide printer for Region 8 meetings.

   4. Supporting Remote Access
      a. Technology (hardware and software) used by Region 8 is the responsibility of and will be selected by the Tech Web committee:
      b. Voting software

> *i. Will permit only secure access to voting.*
> *c. Meeting software*
>> *i. Best practices(currently in place) will be used to ensure anonymity using online software transmissions*
>> *ii. Create and support the processes ensuring that acknowledging of VRs to be recognized by the chair is consistent with current Standing Rules. (The meeting software should have sufficient functionality such as chat and voice to enable the person moderating the meeting software to inform the chair of requests from VRs)*
> *d. Online audio, email, chat and video will ensure that VRs can:*
>> *i.   Hear motions and listen to debate.*
>> *ii. View documents being shown at the assembly.*
>> *iii. Obtain sufficient information of the quality necessary to exercise informed, sound and thoughtful judgment that is part of the voting process.*
> *e. Procedures/Education/Training*
>> *i. Create and distribute instructions for use of meeting and voting software prior to the assembly.*
> *f. Remote Access Costs/Registration Fees:*
>> *i. The Tech-Web committee will be responsible for determining the annual budget for remote voting access. The committee will estimate the costs per person attending remotely and provide them to the Ways and Means Committee.*

Submitted Jointly By: Greater Atlanta OA Intergroup and The Technology and Website Committee

Intent:

1. To clarify and expand the definition of "present" to include credential representatives attending via virtual technology. "Present"

2. Define the responsibilities necessary to support remote attendance.

3. Provide implementation guidelines to ensure anonymity and secure remote access and voting.

3. Permit Virtual Representatives (VRs) to participate in the business assembly and have both a voice and a vote. (This is the motion that makes the intent in the bylaws alive in the fellowship).

Implementation

1. Tests run at Nashville and New Orleans to validate hardware and software.
2. Amend Region 8 Bylaws (to state that present also means virtually present)
3. Adopt the Region 8 Policies and Procedures Manual Standing Rules motion Phase I to allow virtual participation in assemblies for voting and submitting motions (first Pro speaker).
4. Start Phase I in Atlanta assembly in March 2016.
5. Run tests at assemblies of procedures to allow:

       a. Center microphone remote access
       b. Pro/Con access (either via microphone, video or chat).
       c. Backup Procedures to be in place should the meeting software or internet links fail allowing VRs to vote based on informed information

6. After successful testing of remote access to center microphone, revise P&P as required and implement.
7. After successful testing of remote access to Pro/Con microphone, revise P&P as required and implement.
8. After successful testing of Backup Procedures, revise P&P as required and implement.

Cost:

Summary: Estimates vary from no cost to high end estimates of under $1500/year (less than the travel costs associated with paying for two or three people to attend a Region 8 Assembly).

Computer Software Costs:
1. No additional costs above the current ooVoo costs are required. All meeting software and voting/polling software have free options available.
2. High-end of estimates for top of the line meeting software can be purchased for under $1000/year for up to 100 participants
3. High-end estimates for top of the line polling and voting software should they be selected by the TechWeb are under $300/year

Computer hardware:
1. No additional costs above the current hardware running ooVoo are required.
2. Microphones;
       a. Based on testing in Nashville and New Orleans, a new microphone was purchased for remote viewers to better hear the assemblies. Cost $150
       b. Options using different equipment may be investigated.

Meeting Rooms
1. If attendance at the Region 8 Business Assemblies was negatively impacted dramatically there might be fees incurred for renting the meeting space.
       a. There has never been any significant number of remote viewers, so it is unlikely that this would occur.
       b. Meeting room fees are in the hundreds not thousands of dollars should this actually occur.
       c. This is a risk at very assembly today as the number of attendees has shrunk.

Rationale:

Improve Representation of IGs at Assemblies

- Currently on average less than 45% of the Intergroups are represented at assemblies. Only about 30% of reps that could be in attendance are present.
- This motion will permit Region 8 to have fuller participation on its assemblies by IG's that cannot afford to be fully represented due to travel expenses. It will allow all Intergroups to actively participate in region assemblies without requiring the financial burden of physical attendance.

Better Align Region 8's commitment to our Traditions, Policies and Concepts:

- This motion will permit policies and procedures to be created that will allow us to better meet the ideals in our traditions, policy of diversity and concepts of service.

Concepts of Service:

- **Concept One:** The ultimate responsibility and authority for OA world services reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.
  - Do our current procedures ever allow Region 8 to get the collective conscience? Do both cost and travel times make this impossible, with our current practices?
- **Concept Four:** The right of participation ensures equality of opportunity for all in the decision-making process.
  - Only a 30-40 % of Intergroups are fully represented at every assembly.
  - Should apply to all participants that maybe too remote to attend or that come from very small Intergroups.
- **Concept Twelve:** The spiritual foundation for OA service ensures that:
  - d) All important decisions shall be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity
  - (f) No OA service committee or service board shall ever perform any acts of government, and each shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

Traditions:

- **#1:**….personal recovery depends upon O.A. unity.
  - We enhance OA Unity when we allow all IG to participate and feel like their voice is being heard.
- **#3:** The only requirement for O.A. membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively
  - Service is a core of recovery. Virtual participation will provide many members' service opportunities. This will support their recoveries and their experience of full membership in the fellowship.
- **#4:** Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or O.A. as a whole.
  - When ALL IGs are affected in our Region, ALL IGs ought to be able to fully participate and be represented in making decisions. These proposed policies, procedures and use of technology support this.
- **#7:** Every O.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions...
  - More IGs can be fully self-supporting and meet their obligations to participate in Region 8 assemblies if they are allowed to participate remotely.

Technology:

- The virtual attendance technology currently offered by Region 8 has the capability to allow remote interaction via video and text chat and has been in use by IGs to view assemblies for six years.
- Technological solutions demonstrated at the Nashville assembly showed:
  - Current online technology can allow representatives in remote attendance to hear motions and debate, and obtain sufficient information of the quality necessary to exercise the informed, sound and thoughtful judgment that is part of the voting process.
  - Remote attendees can participate in the debate by speaking to the assembly.
  - Secure voting via free voting/polling software.
    - Note: Since there is no requirement that physically present credentialed reps be in attendance at the sessions, a technology failure should not prohibit virtual attendees from voting, unless the failure occurs during the voting process.
  - Online meeting access (Both Pay for service and Ad Supported Options exist)
    - Audio for up to 100 participants.
    - Up to 6-12 participants can be displayed via video on the screen in the assembly room depending on software. (Note: no reason that more than one would need to be displayed has been identified. Normal procedure would be to have a remote PC cameras turned off.)
    - Voice only phone access option (can be used as backup access if PC links fail).
    - Two options have been tested successfully (GoToMeeting used in demo and ooVoo).
  - "The Secretary shall make a credentials check of virtual attendees at the beginning of each session, and prior to any important vote, as deemed necessary by the Chairman". The TechWeb member present at the assembly does this now.
  - Security
    - Anonymity considerations can be managed.
    - Password protected secure access.
    - Security layers in the meeting and voting software.
- The IRS, banks, corporations and society as a whole have accepted the validity of digital signatures and virtual/digital interaction.
- Attending meetings remotely and fully participating in them has been a reality for decades.

Anonymity:

- Virtual participation offers no additional anonymity risks.
  - Anonymity risks already exist, since current technology viewers and smart phones have the capability to record the sessions. We trust that each attendee will honor our traditions. The security risks of an open hotel conference room are actually significantly higher than the risk associated with secure computer links that are being monitored by our Tech Web committee.
- Accepting the risk (real or perceived) of a potential loss of anonymity for the benefit of allowing virtual participation in region assemblies would be an agreed upon and reasonable trade off.

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Spirit of OA:

This motion defines the actions that can make real the change to the bylaws that reflected the "heart" of accepting the idea of allowing participation by those who cannot attend an assembly in person.

- Clearly the experience that anyone who has every attended an assembly has had cannot be captured when you attend remotely. The value of face to face should not be minimized nor do we wish to negate it.
- What we are losing when we do not allow fuller participation, geographically and demographically?
- How many more members of the fellowship will be able to be reps and members of Region 8 standing committees? What is the value versus cost of providing service opportunities at the IG and Region level for COEs?