

## Contents

Motion: .....	2
Article VII - Meetings of the Business Assembly .....	2
Article XI - Amendments - Section 1 - To the Bylaws.....	2
Intent:.....	2
Implementation .....	3
Cost: .....	3
Rationale: .....	3
Improve Representation of IGs at Assemblies.....	3
Enhance Region 8’s Commitment to our Traditions, Policies and Concepts:.....	3
Concepts of Service:.....	3
Traditions: .....	4
Technology:.....	4
Anonymity:.....	5
Spirit of OA:.....	5

**Bylaws Change**

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	<b>Adopted</b>
	<b>Amended</b>
	<b>Lost</b>

**SOAR-8**

**Motion 1: Define Virtually Present at Region 8 Assemblies**

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**Motion:** *Move that the Region 8 Bylaws change Article VII - Meetings of the Business Assembly, Section 4 – Quorum; and Article XI - Amendments - Section 1 - To the Bylaws, Item D as follows:*

**Article VII - Meetings of the Business Assembly**

**Section 4 – Quorum**

At a Region-8 Business Assembly held upon proper notification, Region-8 Representatives present, *including those virtually present*, shall constitute a quorum, as long as two (2) I.G. in states outside of the state or territory, etc. where the Assembly is being held are represented.

**Article XI - Amendments - Section 1 - To the Bylaws**

D. Those present, *including those virtually present*, at the Region-8 Business Assembly at which the motion will be decided may propose non-substantive editorial changes to the amendment which do not alter the meaning of any Bylaws but clarify the wording or bring these Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation into conformity.

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

**Intent:**

- The Region \*parliamentarian has ruled that Robert’s Rules of Order defines "present" as physically present unless otherwise specified. This motion provides that specific clarification, that people attending virtually/remotely may be considered "present".
- To clarify and expand the definition of “present” to include credentialed representatives attending via virtual technology. “Present” virtual attendees could then be permitted to participate in the business assembly and have both a voice and a vote.
- This motion will allow the assembly to create policies and procedures to permit full participation and voting in assemblies by people attending virtually/remotely, should the assembly choose to do so.
- The motion creates the possibility for fuller participation in Region 8 assemblies by Inter-Groups that currently are not participating.

**Note: there will be a separate motion to create the policies and procedures.**

## Implementation

1. Amend Region 8 Bylaws to permit virtual participation.
2. Pass phased changes to the Region 8 Policies and Procedures Manual Standing Rules to allow total virtual participation in assemblies. (Note: Phase I detailed in a separate motion will permit voting and submission of motions virtually.)

## Cost:

*No additional cost. This motion does not change any existing procedures. This motion simply permits the policies and procedures to be changed. If this motion is adopted and the policy and procedures are not changed nothing will occur that is not happening today.*

*Note: Using technologies, identified in the Nashville assembly demo, no additional costs were incurred. Potential costs will be discussed in the policies and procedures motion, but are not expected to be significant, especially when compared to the cost of sending delegates.*

## 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 IGs 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.

### Enhance 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 who 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.
- Risk of loss of anonymity when doing service work is not a break of OA traditions. We all surrender some anonymity when we give service above the group level so that we may communicate with each other.
- 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.

### **Spirit of OA:**

This motion is 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 does the GAOAIG wish to negate it.
- This motion asks the question of whether one must “attend the dance” to be able to participate in the assembly.
- GAOAIG asks 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?