Preparing for the Online Annual District Council Meeting

*(The following guidelines supersede Policies and Protocols for the 2019-2020 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 District Director at least 14 days prior to 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.

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 any and all positions they are considering running for, regardless of the validity of the DLC report.
  - o If the report is valid, all eligible candidates must declare their intent to run as a floor candidate seven days prior to the election. 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.
  - o If a position is invalid, all qualified candidates for that position must declare their intent to run as a floor candidate seven (7) days prior to the election. For example, if the required number of candidate(s) is not nominated, that position of the report is invalid. Therefore, any qualified candidate may run from the floor.
  - o If the entire report is invalid, all qualified candidates must declare their intent to run as a floor candidate seven (7) days prior to 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 prior to the meeting.
- Submit their District Leader Agreement and Release Statement to the District Director at least seven (7) days) prior to the meeting.
- *No nominations from the floor will be allowed during the meeting.*

- Visit the [District Campaigns and Elections FAQ page](#) for more information related to floor candidates.

Candidate Campaign and Showcase

- District Candidate Campaigns Communications
  - The first candidate communication must be sent no later than March 15.
  - The second candidate communication must be sent after the District Leadership Committee report is posted and no later than 14 days prior to the election.
  - The third candidate communication must be sent no earlier than 14 days prior to the election and no later than the date of the election.
- 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 with the District's primary method of communication 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.
- Candidate Showcase
  - Districts are encouraged to host a Candidate Showcase in one of the following ways:
    - A live online event, held prior to the District Council meeting.
      - 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 of them.
      - Designate a District representative to remain in the breakout room with candidates. Candidates must keep their webcams on in the breakout room so they can be supervised.
    - 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. Also, after all interviews are completed for a given role, the videos must be released simultaneously.

Credential Registration Process

- Visit the [Virtual Meeting and Vote](#) page for information about the credential process and conducting online meetings.
- Prior to 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 are eligible to vote and to 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 Education of paid clubs, and members of the District Executive Committee. However, 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 determine quorum after the credential registration process closes.
- Recommendation: Send reminders to the eligible District Council members, emphasizing the importance of registering to vote.
  - 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.

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 allow votes to be split when voting if the voting member has multiple votes.
  - Another option is to use Election Buddy or Election Runner and send out a voting link/ID for each vote a member is entitled to. This means the voting member will need to use each unique 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 open to ensure voting members have time to complete each vote assigned to them.
- A full service option for the credential process and managing the voting process, including split voting is Mi-Voice. "Mi-Voice provides self-service software as well as *fully managed multi-channel balloting services* to membership organisations, societies, clubs and representative organisations of all sizes. We have been enabling democracy for nearly 15 years and are proud to have given millions of people a voice within their organisations. Mi-Voice will provide Districts with a fully managed bespoke service and as a result we have the ability to meet the voting experience as stipulated by Toastmasters' Governing Documents."
  - Districts can email enquiries@mi-voice.com for more information.
- 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 members of the District Council 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 the floor candidate to differentiate nominated candidates from floor candidates.
    - If a floor candidate declared for multiple roles, remove them on subsequent roles if they have been elected to a previous role.
  - 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 additional ballots with placeholder names and designations.
    - These ballots may be needed if the election results were inconclusive. and would be updated based on the results of the previous vote.
  - Create and 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 for voting during the meeting and to modify ballots, as needed.
- Please visit the [Virtual Meeting and Vote](#) page for more information related to the voting process and voting platforms.

Prior to the Meeting

- Notify all members of the District Council 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 have been provided the link.
  - If all members are invited to the meeting, consider how to manage 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 members of the District and only have members of the District Council join and participate on the Zoom meeting. This may be more efficient for facilitating discussions, as only members of the Council 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 that is 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 someone experienced with the features of the meeting platform, 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 during the meeting. They should also have access to share their screen with the candidate observers during the launch of the vote and tabulation of the results.

During the Meeting

- District business
  - Conduct and complete all District business, including approval of the District club alignment and elections, during the meeting.
  - In the event that 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 on the basis of two (2) votes per club.
- Candidate speeches
  - 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 prior to the elections. There will not be nominations from the floor during the annual District Council meeting.
  - Offer each candidate, including floor candidates, two (2) minutes to present their speech.
  - Instruct the candidates, including floor candidates, to speak in alphabetical order by last name (surname).
  - 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.
    - o Instruct the timer that, at two (2) minutes, they may turn on their microphone and begin clapping.
- Candidate-appointed observers
    - o Create, and assign appointed observers to, breakout rooms for their respective candidates.
        - ▪ For example, prior to the vote opening for each role, the candidate-appointed observers for that role should be in the designated breakout room.
    - o Recommendation: The person conducting the online vote should receive the list of candidate observers ahead of time so they can confirm the appropriate people are in the breakout room.
    - o In the breakout room, the designated person conducting the online vote will share their screen so that the observers can see the votes as they are being tabulated.
- Voting
    - o Prior to the vote, the District Director must establish and communicate the specified amount of time for each vote.
    - o Conduct the election for each role to completion before moving on to the next role.
    - o Recommendation: Inform voters when the ballot is launched.
    - o Recommendation: Remind voters to check their spam and junk/clutter folder for the voting link in the event that they cannot find the ballot in their inbox.
    - o Recommendation: Allow at sufficient time for voters to receive the voting link or voting links and to cast their vote.
    - o During the meeting, if there are any uncontested offices, 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
    - o Share (display on screen) the results of the ballot, 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 (or primary method of communication of the District, if not a website), not including email or other District social media:
    - o https://www.toastmasters.org/international-officer-candidates
    - o https://www.toastmasters.org/international-director-candidates