

REACHING A KNOWLEDGE BASED DECISION ON *POSSIBLE* CHANGES TO OUR VOTING PROCEDURE

BACKGROUND: ATTENDANCE AT OHIO AREA MEETINGS

Looking through what is available on our website for attendance at the Spring and Fall Assemblies, attendance by voting members has declined along with many members holding multiple positions (GR/DR, DR/Coordinator, etc)

Voting Members attendance at Fall Assemblies has gone from a recent max of 82 in 2003 (AMIAS) to a low of 38 on Saturday with 27 on Sunday in 2020. 2019 Fall Assembly wasn't much better with 43/40 on Saturday/Sunday.

While there was hope that the ability to attend the 2020 and 2021 Area meetings electronically would increase attendance, the lure of being able to attend in PJ's and not have to spend time and money traveling apparently did not overcome the reluctance to learn the process or to sit in front of the computer for the equivalent amount of time.

Spring Assembly GR (Voting) attendance dropped from a maximum of 61 in 2003 to 37 in 2020. At the recent 2021 Spring Assembly, a Bylaws amendment could not be voted upon. 52 voting members had registered but only 43 were in attendance at the time of a Bylaws motion which was less than our the 50 required in our Bylaws.

QUESTION 1: What do we know about our current or prospective members' wants, needs, or preferences that is relevant to this discussion?

Those who attended the 2021 Spring Assembly were disappointed to discover that the vote to add a position in our Bylaws was invalid as the quorum of 50 voting members was no longer in the room even though the number of yes votes was 2/3rds of the count which meant that it was tabled until the Fall Assembly along with the Handbook Motion.

The members who have attended during the pandemic zoom meetings have needed guidance to learn how to prepare for the meetings. Finding the best way to cover the agenda has been a learning experience for all. Members would like to have a definite idea of when the voting would take place.

Members need continued guidance and refreshers on what their responsibilities are – and a lack of service sponsors has made that difficult. (Concept 4 – Participation is the key to harmony.) (Concept 10 –Service responsibility...)

QUESTION 2: What do we know about the capacity and strategic position of the organization relative to this issue?

Our program is one of having the *courage to change* and realizing that the only constant in life is changing circumstances. The pandemic with the loss of home group as well as business face-to-face meetings has showed our strength as members have learned to navigate an electronic world but also our weakness as fewer members have been attracted into service at the Area Level.

QUESTION 3: What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics that are relevant to this discussion?

VOTING PROCEDURES

Ohio (Area 44) Article IX – PROCEDURE FOR APPROVAL AND AMENDMENT, B. of the current Ohio Bylaws, states

“Proposed amendments will also require the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of those voting at the Assembly at which the proposals are presented and at which a **quorum of fifty (50)** Group Representatives are present. *(motion 1992/10 - #10)*”

1992 was in the early days of our incorporation. No discussion was found in the 1992 Area minutes. Best guess is that it was deciding to have at least 10% of groups represented.

Other Areas were asked about their voting procedures and if quorums (certain numbers or percent of voting members) were required to pass any motion brought to or created at their business meetings. To pass a motion with substantial unanimity, answers ranged from requiring yes votes from 2/3 of the Area voting members present to a 2/3 yes vote from at least 75% of all the registered groups GR's in that Area.

At the World Service Conference, attendance is taken at the start of the meeting, and the substantial unanimity number is calculated for that day. Substantial unanimity is agreed upon at the start of the meeting to be 2/3 in favor of the motion. Votes are tabulated as yes, no, abstentions, and voids (those not in the room at the time of the vote). Motions pass if the substantial unanimity vote is obtained.

QUESTION 4: What are the ethical implications of our choices (pros and cons)? This includes consideration of how the Legacies apply. Identify both pros and cons.

WHAT DO WE WISH WE KNEW, BUT DON'T?

If we change to a quorum that requires a percentage of voting members present as opposed to a certain number of voting members or groups represented

- will we have even less participation?(Concept 4: Participation is the key to harmony.)
or
- will that inspire more members to come as they will get the benefits of empowerment by being trusted servants? (Concept 3: The right of decision makes effective leadership possible)
- Since voting members may not always be present at the start of the meeting (traffic delays when in person, electronic problems when virtual), should the count to determine percentage needed to pass be taken before the first voting item on the agenda for the day.
- When voting members leave before the vote, it may skew what would have otherwise been the outcome. Harmony is less likely to be found without sufficient participation.

Proposed motion:

On a five (5) year trial basis for voting procedures, a quorum shall be the number of voting members present at the beginning of each Ohio Area Assembly meeting day effective immediately.

Discussion:

1. Questions – answered as needed
2. Comments – 2 minutes at the mike, no repeats

Respectfully submitted, Panel 61 Officers