Preparing for the hybrid Annual District Council Meeting

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

Each in-person District Conference should accommodate each event with virtual attendance.
- The District should have a computer, screen projector, microphone, and audio to accommodate virtual attendees and candidates during the meeting.
- All report presentations and speakers should be in front of a camera so virtual attendees may participate.

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 before the meeting for review.

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

Registering Voters
- Create a survey to identify members of the District Council that will be attending in-person or virtually. The survey should request the following information:

- o Name (first and last/surname)
- o Membership number
- o Clubs you are representing
- o Will you be attending in-person or virtually?
- o If attending virtually, provide the email address to receive the vote link
- Establish a deadline when registration will close.
- Send the survey to all members of the District Council who are eligible to vote
  - o This includes all paid Club Presidents of paid clubs, paid Vice Presidents of Education of paid clubs, and District Executive Committee members.

Quorum
- Quorum is determined by adding the Club Presidents and Vice Presidents of Education together who have registered to attend virtually or picked up their in-person ballots from the Credentials registration desk. Please note, District Executive Committee members do not count toward quorum.
- Quorum is one-third of Club Presidents and Vice Presidents of Education who have registered to attend or registered in person with the Credentials registration desk.

Voting and Platform Process
- In-person voting will be conducted as outlined in Protocol 9.0. Except; proxies will not be permitted for in-person attendees.
- Virtual attendees will vote using the District identified voting platforms such as Election Buddy or Election Runner.
  - o 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.
  - o Another option is to use Election Buddy or Election Runner and send out a voting link/ID for each vote the member is entitled. This means the voting number will need to use a unique link/ID to 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 are **NOT** permitted for in-person or virtual attendees.
  - o The Credentials Committee should take special care to ensure ballots are either sent to the virtual attendee or given to the in-person attendee and are not duplicated.
  - o Each District Council member must cast their own vote.
  - o 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.
  - o Other members of the District Council shall be limited to a maximum of two (2) votes.

During the Meeting
- District business
  - o Conduct and complete all District business, including approval of the District club alignment and elections during the meeting.
- Candidate speeches
  - o Offer each candidate, including floor candidates, two (2) minutes to present their speech

Candidate-appointed observers
- In-person candidates will follow Protocol 9.0 (11).

- Virtual candidates
  - 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 for that role 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 that the observers can see the votes as they are being tabulated.

Voting
- Please understand the challenges of hybrid voting to ensure the accuracy of the vote.
  - Ensure the virtual votes and in-person votes are combined and succinct
- Before the vote, the District Director should 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 to cast their vote.
- During the meeting, if there are uncontested offices, dispense with the secret ballot for the uncontested officers and instruction 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.
- Online votes and in-person votes will need to be combined for the final results.

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