



TOASTMASTERS

CLUB ELECTION PRIMER

I. CALENDAR

- A. At least **two weeks** prior to the election -- nominating committee is appointed.
- B. At least **one week prior** to the election -- nominating committee presents its report to the club. If it doesn't do this at least one week prior to the election, then the report is null and void and all candidates must run from the floor during the meeting at which the election takes place.¹
- C. **1st meeting in May** -- club election

II. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- A. The President appoints a nominating committee of three active members. One of the three, the committee chair, is the immediate past president, unless the best interests of the club require otherwise.
- B. The nominating committee selects candidates for each of the club offices. The committee members can choose people who have expressed interest in particular offices, or the committee may seek out candidates. All candidates must consent to being nominated. A person can be nominated for more than one office.
- C. The committee presents its report to the club members at least one week prior to the election. The report reflects the nomination of seven people, not one group.

III. QUORUM

In order to conduct a valid election (or any business of the club), more than 50% of the active² membership must be present and voting. No voting by email, proxy, or absentee ballot is allowed.³

IV. PRESIDING OFFICER

The presiding officer of the meeting is the Chair. The Chair is the current club president. In his or her absence, the presiding officer would be the vice president of education. (The nominating committee chair is not the presiding officer and should not conduct the election).

V. ELECTION PROCESS –

- A. At the election meeting, the Chair confirms there is a quorum.
- B. Ballots (slips of paper) are given to each voting member, one for each contested office. Have some extra slips of paper available in case there are nominations from the floor.
- C. The Chair appoints two ballot counters.

D. The Chair starts with the office of president, gives a brief description of the office (see below), and names the candidate(s) nominated by the nominating committee (if applicable).

E. The Chair then asks if there are any nominations from the floor for that office.

YOU DO NOT VOTE ON THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

YOU DO NOT VOTE ON ALL THE OFFICES WITH ONE VOTE

The practice of voting for a "slate" of names takes away fundamental voting rights of the members. You vote for individual people for each office, not a group of people. Members have the right to nominate other people and they have the right to a write in vote, if they want to. Even if candidates are unopposed, the voting process only takes about 5 minutes.

F. After it appears there are no more nominations from the floor, the Chair confirms one more time by saying, "Are there any other nominations for the office of xxx? If not, nominations for the office of xxx are closed."

G. (Optional) The Chair asks for speeches on behalf of each candidate. Speeches are usually two minutes in length (in Toastmasters clubs). Speeches should be given in alphabetical order by the candidate's last name.

H. If there is only one candidate for an office, and there are no nominations from the floor, the Chair can see if there is unanimous consent to dispense with the secret ballot and vote by acclamation.⁵ For example, "If there is no objection, we will dispense with the secret ballot for the office of xxx and declare the winner by acclamation." Then pause. If no one objects, the Chair will say, "There being no objection, Name is elected by acclamation." If even one person objects, the Chair must require a secret ballot. Members have the right to write in candidates.

I. If more than one candidate is nominated, the Chair must require a secret ballot.

J. The Chair asks members to write the name of the person they want to vote for on the ballot designated for that office. The Chair votes with a secret ballot, along with everyone else. Members can vote for anyone they want to – not just the named candidates.

K. The ballots are counted by the ballot counters. The ballot counters hand the vote totals to the Chair, who announces the vote totals and the winner. The announcement goes like this:

There were a total of ___ ballots cast.

A majority is ____.

Name 1 had ___ votes.

Name 2 had ___ votes.

Name 3 had ___ votes.
(Include any write-in names)

Name xxx has a majority and is declared elected.

L. The winner is the candidate who receives a majority⁶ of votes. If there is a tie, you vote again until one candidate gets a majority.⁷

M. The process repeats for each office. A candidate who does not win one office is eligible to run for another office.

NOTES:

The abbreviation TICC, used below, is Toastmasters International Club Constitution and the Standard Bylaws for Clubs of Toastmasters International.

RONR (11th ed.) is Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 11th Edition

¹ This “null and void” verbiage regarding the club nominating committee report is in the Club Leadership Handbook, revised April 2013, p. 58. The “one week prior” verbiage is in TICC, Article VI, Officers, Section 5, Nominations.

² TICC doesn't define “active” member, but does define “inactive” member. See Article II, Membership, Section 4, which states “Inactive individual membership....may be conferred on any individual member requesting an extended absence from club meetings, or who wishes to maintain individual membership without regular attendance at club meetings. An individual member may also be classified as inactive for continued absence without notice.

“Inactive individual members shall have no voting privileges, shall not hold office, shall not be counted toward a quorum of the club membership...”

³ TICC, Article V, Quorum and Voting; also Article VI, Officers, Section 5, Nominations. This also means no voting by e-mail. We checked with TI to confirm. RONR concurs.

⁴ RONR (11th ed.) says, “Although it is not common for the nominating committee to nominate more than one candidate for any office, the committee can do so unless the bylaws prohibit it” (p. 433). TICC does not prohibit the nominating committee from nominating more than one candidate. But, if there is more than one candidate per office, you must vote by ballot .

⁵ According to TICC, Article VI, Officers, Section 5, Nominations, all elections shall be by secret ballot, unless dispensed with by unanimous consent.

[If you really want to be technical, the vote to dispense with the secret ballot should be by secret ballot. A member's vote would not be secret if he objected out loud, and no motion is in order that would force the disclosure of a member's vote or view (RONR, 11th ed., p 413, ll. 1-4). This is rarely used in a Toastmasters environment, though.]

⁶ The majority is more than half of the **votes cast** by persons entitled to vote, excluding blanks or abstentions, at a regular or properly called meeting at which a quorum is present (RONR, 11th ed., p. 400, ll. 7-12). Only a majority of those actually voting is required.

⁷ Repeated balloting verbiage is in RONR, 11th ed., p.441, ll. 1-5.

ADDENDUM

From the Club Constitution... Article VII: Duties of Officers

Club President

Section 1

The club president is the chief executive officer of this club and is responsible for fulfilling the mission of this club. The president presides at meetings of this club and the club executive committee; appoints all committees; and has general supervision of the operation of this club. The president shall be an ex officio member of all Committees of this club except the club Nominating Committee and shall serve as one of this club's representatives on the area and district councils. The president shall transmit to this club for its approval or disapproval all ideas and plans proposed by the area and district councils which may affect this club or its individual members; and shall take no action binding upon this club without either specific prior authorization or subsequent ratification by this club.

Vice President Education

Section 2

The vice president education is the second ranking club officer and is responsible for planning, organizing and directing a club program which meets the educational needs of the individual members. The vice president education chairs the Education Committee. The vice president education also serves as one of this club's representatives on the area and district councils and shall take no action binding upon this club without either specific prior authorization or subsequent ratification by this club.

Vice President Membership

Section 3

The vice president membership is the third ranking club officer and is responsible for planning, organizing and directing a program that ensures individual member retention and growth in club individual membership. The vice president membership chairs the Membership Committee. The vice president membership serves as one of this club's representatives on the area council and shall take no action binding upon this club without either specific prior authorization or subsequent ratification by this club.

Vice President Public Relations

Section 4

The vice president public relations is the fourth ranking club officer and is responsible for developing and directing a publicity program that informs individual members and the general public about Toastmasters International. The vice president public relations chairs the Public Relations Committee.

Club Secretary

Section 5

The club secretary is responsible for club records and correspondence. The club secretary has custody of the club's charter, constitution, and bylaws and all other records and documents of this club; keeps an accurate record of the meetings and activities of this club and of the club executive committee; maintains an accurate and complete roster of individual members of this club, including the address and status of each individual member; and transmits the same to the successor in office. The club secretary provides notices of meetings as required by this constitution, and immediately notifies World Headquarters of Toastmasters International of any change in the roster of individual members.

Club Treasurer

Section 6

The treasurer is responsible for club financial policies, procedures, and controls. The club treasurer receives and disburses, with the approval of this club, all club funds; pays to Toastmasters International all financial obligations of this club as they come due; and keeps an accurate account of all transactions. The club treasurer shall make financial reports to this club and to the club executive committee quarterly and upon request, and shall transmit the accounts and all undistributed funds to the successor in office at the end of the club treasurer's term.

Sergeant at Arms

Section 7

The sergeant at arms is responsible for club property management, meeting room preparation, and hospitality. The sergeant at arms chairs the Social and Reception Committee.