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USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Election Operating Guidelines is to list and maintain in one place all of the election policies and procedures currently in existence in U.S. Masters Swimming, Inc. ("USMS"). The guidelines will be updated by the USMS Board of Directors. Copies will be made available to any USMS member through the National Office upon request.

II. Definitions

- A. Annual Meeting – Annual Meeting of the HOD held pursuant to Part 5 Article 504.3.
- B. BOD—USMS Board of Directors.
- C. Candidate—A person who has been slated by the Committee.
- D. Chair—Chair of the Election Committee.
- E. Committee—The Election Committee responsible for running the Election defined in 506.7.6.
- F. Delegate—A member of the HOD who has been certified at the Annual Meeting.
- G. Director(s)—Members of the BOD, elected pursuant to Part 5 Article 506.2
- H. Election—Held at the Annual Meeting of USMS where the HOD USMS elects Officers or Directors.
- I. EOG—Election Operating Guidelines. The guidelines, policies, and procedures that govern Elections.
- J. HOD—USMS House of Delegates.
- K. HOD Packet—Packet of information, which is prepared for Delegates prior to the Annual Meeting of the HOD.
- L. Nominee—A person who has submitted a nomination, but has not yet been slated by the Committee.
- M. Officer(s)—Officer(s) of USMS, elected pursuant to Part 5 Article 505.2.
- N. Part 5—Organization and Bylaws. Part 5 of the USMS Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition.
- O. Slate—The Candidates who have met all qualifications and put forth by the Committee.
- P. USMS—U.S. Masters Swimming, Inc.

III. Web Site—Election Section of the USMS Web Site. Election Policies

- A. Parts One and Two of EOG contain the policies that govern Elections.
- B. If situations occur during an Election year in which compliance with these policies would not be in the best interest of USMS, the BOD may suspend policies provided 2/3 of the BOD members approve.
- C. Election policies may be amended by a 2/3s majority vote of the BOD.

IV. Election Procedures

- A. The EOG Appendices contain the procedures that implement the election policies.
- B. If situations occur during an election year in which compliance with these procedures would not be in the best interest of USMS, the Committee may adjust these procedures provided such adjustment is in compliance with the governing policies. The Committee shall inform the BOD of all such adjustments.
- C. Election procedures may be amended by a simple majority vote of the BOD.

PART TWO: ELECTION POLICIES

I. General Information

- A. Pursuant to Part 5, USMS shall hold an Election of Officers in odd-numbered years and Directors in even-numbered years (See Articles 505: OFFICERS and 506: BOARD OF DIRECTORS).
- B. The Elections Committee shall be formed per Article 506.7 and 506.7.6 and shall:
 - 1. Be appointed by the president, confirmed by the BOD and be comprised of Delegates neither seeking election, nor with relatives seeking election.
 - 2. Be responsible for running the Election according to rules set out in Part 5 as well as the EOG.
 - 3. Be augmented by Delegates during the Annual Meeting, should the need arise. Any additional support personnel will not be considered as Election Committee members.
- C. All communications between the Committee and the Candidates shall be handled by the Chair or by designated Committee members.
- D. Election Committee Members may not nominate or endorse any candidate.
- E. All Election related dates are located in Appendix A.

II. Publications

- A. Information on the Election shall be published and regularly updated using appropriate USMS communication media.
- B. The announcements containing the request for nominations for the Officers and Directors shall include the candidate qualification criteria.
- C. Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-To-Run Form, letter of nomination and letters of reference will be published without the specific permission of the author.
- D. Information on the Election and Candidates shall be published in the HOD Packet and on the Web Site, and shall conform to the USMS Privacy Policy.
- E. All information gathered by the Committee shall be considered confidential. Any disclosure of this information shall be in accordance with the EOG or by specific direction of the BOD.

III. Campaign Policies

- A. Publicity shall be provided for the Candidates prior to and during the Annual Meeting.
- B. The Committee shall provide opportunities for Delegates to meet and question Candidates during the Annual Meeting.
- C. Mailings shall not be sent on behalf of a Candidate in order to encourage a Delegate's vote.
- D. Handouts, signs, stickers, pins or other promotional items shall not be used or given at the Annual Meeting on behalf of any Candidate.

IV. Nomination Policies

- A. The Committee shall develop a nomination packet prior to the nomination period.
- B. Nomination of Candidates
 - 1. Unless otherwise specified, nominations for Officers and Directors shall follow the same process.
 - 2. Any USMS member, except for an Elections Committee member, may nominate a Candidate for an Officer position.
 - 3. Any USMS member, except for an Elections Committee member, may nominate a Candidate for a Director position. The nominee must be from the same zone as that USMS member submitting the nomination.

4. The Committee may extend the nomination period for any office that has no Nominees after the nomination period expires. The time for any extension shall be determined by the Committee and announced at the time of the extension.
5. Each Candidate seeking election shall submit a completed nomination packet and a completed Conflict of-Interest form by the indicated deadline.

C. Nomination of Current Officers and Directors

1. Current Officers and Directors eligible for a second term and who are seeking re-election shall submit a completed nomination packet but are exempt from nomination and reference letters.
2. Officers and Directors eligible for re-election to their current position shall be queried by the Chair to determine if they will run again.
3. An office whose incumbent does not run or fails to respond to the Chair by February 28 will be shown as an office that has no incumbent.
4. An individual may be nominated for more than one position, however, if nominated for more than one position, must choose only one position prior to the nomination deadline.

D. Floor Nominations

1. Floor nominations shall be accepted at an early session of the HOD. Each nomination from the floor requires one Delegate to nominate and one Delegate to second the nomination.
2. The Nominee shall confirm his or her willingness to run as a Candidate for the nominated position.
3. Following a nomination and second, the floor Candidate(s) shall submit to the Secretary an electronic copy of the completed nomination packet. The nomination packet of a floor nominee must be in the hands of the Election Committee Chair within one hour following the nomination.
4. Each floor nominee's paperwork will be reviewed by the Committee to verify compliance with the elections operating guidelines. If in compliance, they will be added to the slate of candidates with their packet distributed to review prior to the Election.
5. Candidates nominated from the floor of the HOD shall otherwise meet the qualifications set forth in Article V below.

- E. Each Candidate shall have three (3) minutes to speak after the close of nominations. A designated member of the Committee shall monitor and enforce the three-minute time limit. This will occur immediately following the nomination only if there is no Meet-the-Candidate session scheduled during a future HOD.

V. Candidate Qualification Criteria

- A. Each Candidate shall be a member in good standing of USMS for the year when the Election is held.
- B. Each Candidate shall have attended one or more Annual Meetings in the preceding five (5) years.
- C. Each Candidate shall plan to attend the Annual Meeting for the Election in which they are standing for election, and shall plan to attend all Annual Meetings during their tenure.
- D. Each Candidate must sign an attestation of truthfulness when they submit a consent to run form.

VI. Slating Policies

- A. The Committee shall validate that all candidate qualification criteria have been met.
- B. Officer and Director Candidates shall be slated by the Committee.
 1. The Chair shall not vote unless there is a tie vote on a Candidate.
 2. All Candidates who meet the stated qualifications shall be placed on the Slate.

3. The Committee shall not slate a Candidate for more than one position.

VII. Zone Endorsements

- A. Zones shall endorse one or more or no Candidates for the At-Large Director position from that Zone.
- B. Endorsement of Director Candidates shall proceed as follows:
 1. Only Zone member Delegates shall be eligible to vote.
 2. The Zone member running the election ("Zone Election Chair") shall present the list of Nominees compiled by the Committee.
 3. After nominations are closed, at the discretion of the Zone, each Director Candidate shall be given time during which the nominator and/or Candidate may speak.
 4. Following nominations:
 - a. Votes shall be taken by secret ballot if there is more than one candidate.
 - b. Each Zone member Delegate may cast a vote for or against endorsement of each Candidate.
 - c. Each Candidate receiving a majority of votes for endorsement shall be forwarded to the Committee for announcement during the Election. More than 1 candidate may be endorsed.
 5. Following the announcement of the endorsement(s), there shall be a motion to destroy the ballots.

VIII. HOD Voting

- A. For years in which the At-Large Directors are elected, the Election shall be conducted during the first HOD session after the Zone meetings and Meet-the-Candidate sessions.
- B. Only Delegates present and certified shall be eligible to vote.
- C. For At-Large Director positions, the Committee shall announce the endorsements as reported from the Zone meetings.
- D. Any Candidate running unopposed, after floor nominations have been closed, shall be elected by acclamation immediately following the nomination process. For the At-Large Directors, this will take place at the conclusion of the meet-the-candidate session, but before voting.
- E. If voting is to proceed, the Committee shall conduct the Election, as follows:
 1. Votes shall be taken by secret ballot.
 2. The initial vote shall be taken simultaneously for all positions.
 3. For each contested position, the Candidate receiving a majority of the valid votes cast shall be the winner.
 4. If no Candidate receives a majority (more than 50%) of the valid votes cast, a run-off vote shall be held between the two Candidates receiving the most votes.
 5. Once the tabulation of the votes is completed, the names of the persons elected to each position (or the Candidates for a run-off vote, if necessary), shall be announced to the HOD.

Initial approval by the Board of Directors prior to 2011.
Reviewed and amended by the Board of Directors on 7/14/2018.

PART THREE: ELECTION PROCEDURES

APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE

I. In the Year Prior to the Election	
Committee reviews and may propose amendments to guidelines.	BOD Meeting
Announce the opening of the Election year and request for nominations.	HOD Meeting
II. Pre-HOD Actions During the Election Year	
Submit information about nominations to Winter National Office Newsletter. Request republication in successive newsletters.	Refer to Streamlines deadlines
Form the Committee after the Annual Meeting.	No later than 1/1.
Last day for current BOD members eligible for a second term to inform the Chair of their intention to run for re-election.	Feb 28
Deadline to post election information on the Web Site.	Mar 1
To be considered for slating, nominees must submit a completed nomination packet. The Chair must acknowledge receipt of the nomination packet for each nominee.	Mar 1 thru Apr 30
Committee reviews applications, slates Candidates, notifies Candidates, and publishes Candidate information.	May 1 thru May 15
Accept nominations for any positions without candidates	Early May thru May 31
Continuous publication of Candidate information to the HOD through email newsletters and Web Site postings.	June 1 thru September
Submit Election information to National Office for inclusion in the HOD Packet.	No later than Aug 1
III. HOD Meeting Process	
HOD nominations and floor nominations for all positions.	TBD
Zones meet to nominate and endorse Director candidates.	TBD
Meet the Candidates opportunities.	TBD
Elections	TBD

APPENDIX B: INSTRUCTIONS TO NOMINEES

March 1, 2021

Dear Nominee,

Congratulations on your decision to run for an elected USMS Board of Directors position. In this packet you will find all the information you need to get through the nomination process. A copy of the USMS Election Operating Guidelines ("EOG") has been included to inform you of how the process works from the time nominations open until the election at the USMS Annual House of Delegates Meeting. If you have any difficulty complying with the requirements of this packet, notify the Election Chair. Please note that the relevant submission dates can be found in the EOG schedule.

The nomination period occurs in the year when the election is held and applies to all elected Board of Director positions (Officers and Directors). To complete your nomination, fill out the Nominee Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run form with appropriate attachments and return them by email to the Chair of the Election Committee. Please review the qualification criteria in the EOG before submitting your nomination.

If you do not go through this nomination process, you may still be nominated through the floor nomination process. There will be floor nominations during zone meetings for Directors and in the House of Delegates for all positions. Immediately after your floor nomination, you must submit the Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run form with appropriate attachments to the Chair of the Election Committee. Your documents will be distributed to Delegates to allow time for review prior to the election. The photograph may be placed on a display board containing the other members of the slate.

Thank you for considering running for an elected USMS Board of Directors position. The nomination process and enclosed guidelines are intended to make the election process fair and consistent for all nominees. If you have any problems, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Erin Sullivan
Chair of the Election Committee
elections@usmastersswimming.org

APPENDIX C: NOMINEE QUESTIONNAIRE/CONSENT-TO-RUN FORM

All nominees must complete the entire questionnaire. You may use as much space as you choose in answering your questions. Candidates should return this form **by email** with your other attachments to the Chair of the Election Committee (<insert name of Election Chair>, <insert email address>), by **April 30**, <insert election year>. Candidates nominated from the floor must return this form with attachments immediately after nomination.

Section One: Consent-to-Run

Name: <Insert name here>

LMSC: <Insert LMSC here>

Consent-to-Run: I, <insert name here>, am interested in running for (**check one**):

Officer Positions

- President
- Vice President of Administration
- Vice President of Community Services
- Vice President of Local Operations
- Vice President of Programs
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Director Positions

- BOD member from Breadbasket Zone
- BOD member from Colonies Zone
- BOD member from Dixie Zone
- BOD member from Great Lakes Zone
- BOD member from Northwest Zone
- BOD member from Oceana Zone
- BOD member from South Central Zone
- BOD member from Southwest Zone

Section Two: Candidate Qualifications

I am a member in good standing of USMS in this election year: Yes No

I have attended one or more Annual Meetings in the preceding five (5) years: Yes No

I am planning to attend the HOD Meeting for this election year: Yes No

I am Planning to attend all HOD Meetings during my tenure in office: Yes No

Please list the USMS National HOD Meetings you have attended, including the dates of attendance:

<Insert answer here>

Section Three: Questions

Why are you interested in this position and why do you believe you would be a good candidate?

<Insert answer here>

What do you consider to be the major issues facing USMS now and in the future? As a person holding an elected position within USMS, how would you address these issues?

<Insert answer here>

Please list USMS committees on which you have served. Include the dates you were on the committees and the names of the committee chairs under whom you served:

<Insert answer here>

Please list any other experience that relates to your qualifications for the position.

<Insert answer here>

Please list any other information you would like included.

<Insert answer here>

Please write a short summary statement that will be posted on the display board with your photograph at the HOD Meeting

<Insert answer here>

Attestation: I hereby attest to the best of my knowledge all information submitted is true. I realize that failure to answer truthfully may disqualify me as a candidate.

Section Four: Attachments

A. **All** nominees must submit the following attachment:

1. A **photograph in jpg format**. For slated candidates, this must be in digital format and will be published on the USMS web site, in the HOD Packet, and posted on a board at the Annual Meeting. Floor Nominees must furnish a print. All documentation other than pictures should be in Wordformat.
2. A completed Conflict of Interest form (see attached.)

B. New Candidates (i.e., those not running for re-election) must also submit the following attachments:

1. A **Letter of Nomination** from any USMS member (for Officer Candidates) or any Zone Member (for Director Candidates). This should be a simple declarative nomination without elaboration unless the nominator is also writing a letter of reference (see point #2 below). The nomination statement shall be published in the HOD Packet.
2. Two (2) one page personal **Letters of Reference**. These letters may be from persons inside or outside of USMS. One of the Letters of Reference may be written by your nominator. In that case, include the nomination statement as the first sentence of the Letter of Reference. The Letters of Reference will be published in the HOD Packet. Please see the attached letter template.

APPENDIX D: PROCEDURES FOR PREPARING AND COUNTING BALLOTS

Procedures for counting votes shall vary depending on how many simultaneous offices are elected and how many Candidates have been nominated. Below are a variety of methods for counting. Decisions on how to proceed shall be made as the election takes shape.

I. Ballots

A. Ballots shall be prepared ahead of time and distributed as follows:

1. All offices and candidates being voted on during a HOD session shall appear on the same ballot.
2. Officers shall appear in the following order: President, VP of Administration, VP of Community Services, VP of Local Operations, VP of Programs, Secretary, and Treasurer.
3. Directors shall appear in the following order: Breadbasket, Colonies, Dixie, Great Lakes, Northwest, Oceana, South Central, and Southwest.
4. Candidates within each office category shall appear in alphabetical order by last name.
5. Ballots shall be distributed to all Delegates.
6. Any Delegate without a ballot should obtain one from the Corporate Secretary.
7. If paper, ballots shall be collected during a roll-call vote of the HOD.

B. Personnel Required

1. The minimum personnel needed to count the ballots are:
2. Vote Caller
3. 2 Vote Recorders
4. 2 Observer/Proof Readers
5. Vote Counters
6. Other members of the Committee or HOD may participate in the counting or observing in any fashion the Chair requires.
7. The Committee members may be augmented by HOD members should the need arise.

C. Counting Process shall proceed as follows:

1. Count one office at a time.
2. Divide the ballots into piles of ten (10) ballots each.
3. The vote caller calls out the vote for each ballot.
4. The recorders record the count on separate tally sheets (SEE Appendix G for a sample tally sheet).
 - a. If a ballot does not have any Candidate selected for an office, the "no vote cast" block shall be marked.
 - b. If a ballot has more than one Candidate selected for the same position—the block stating "invalid ballot" for that position only shall be marked.
 - c. If a ballot has an indeterminate marking for any or all elected positions, the block stating "invalid ballot" for each such affected position shall be marked.
 - d. If a ballot has a write-in for a Candidate, the vote shall be recorded on a separate line on the tally sheet for that position.
5. After each set of ten ballots, the recorders will make sure they have recorded ten total votes.
6. After all ballots are recorded, the vote counters will count the votes for each Candidate and compare the totals from each tally sheet.

7. If the counts are the same, then the results are determined. If the counts are different, repeat steps three (3) through seven (7) for that position.
8. Repeat steps three (3) through seven (7) until votes are counted and verified for all positions.

D. Run-Offs

1. If a position does not have a majority winner (more than 50% of valid votes cast), a run-off vote will be held between the top two Candidates from the first vote, and the recount will be done using the counting process specified above.
2. New ballots shall be prepared for the run-off election(s) and will show only the run-off Candidates.

APPENDIX E: PUBLICITY AND CAMPAIGN PROCEDURES

Procedures for publicity and campaigning may vary depending on how many simultaneous offices are elected and how many Candidates have been nominated. Below are a variety of methods for publicity and campaigns. Some are mandated in policy and shall be executed regardless of the complexity of the election. Decisions on how to proceed with optional activities shall be made as the election takes shape.

I. Nomination Announcements

- A. Announcement of the opening of nominations shall first be made during the HOD meeting in the year prior to the election.
- B. Announcements shall also be placed in the fall issue of the National Office Newsletter, the January/February issue of the national publication, and on the Web Site home page.
- C. Content of the announcement shall be as follows:

"U.S. Masters Swimming will hold an election during the <insert election year> Annual Meeting of the House of Delegates ("HOD"). All officer and director positions on the Board of Directors ("BOD") are up for election. The nomination period shall be from <insert start of nomination period> through <insert end of nomination period>.

Nominations will be accepted in odd years for the following officer positions on the BOD: President, Vice President for Member Services, Vice President for Community Services, Vice President for National Operations, Vice President for Local Operations, Secretary, and Treasurer. Nominations will be accepted in even years for at-large director positions from each Zone. Nominations for Officers and Directors shall follow the same process. Explanation of the duties of these BOD members can be found in the <insert year> USMS Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition (Articles 505: OFFICERS and 506: BOARD OF DIRECTORS) and on the Election Section of the USMS Web Site.

To be eligible for nomination, candidates shall: 1) be members in good standing of U.S. Masters Swimming for the year when the Election is held; 2) have attended two or more Annual Meetings in the preceding five (5) years; 3) plan to attend the Annual Meeting for the Election in which they are standing for election; and 6) plan to attend all Annual Meetings during their tenure of that office. Candidates for Director shall be a member of the Zone from which they are seeking election.

Nomination packets may be obtained from the Election Section of the USMS Web Site (<insert Election Site URL>) or by contacting the Election Chair, <insert Election Chair name>, <insert Election Chair email address>."

II. USMS Web Site

- A. The Web Site shall contain information on the Election. The quantity and detail will depend on the complexity of the Election. The Web Site will be continuously updated during the Election year and will contain:
 1. Announcement of the opening of nominations.
 2. Nomination Packet containing the Instructions to Candidates and Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run form.
 3. Election schedule.
 4. Description of Officers and Directors duties.
 5. Candidate Information (questionnaires, photographs, nomination letters).
 6. Description of HOD election activities.
 7. Election Results.
- B. Announcements shall be posted on the USMS home page for major election activities.
- C. Candidates may choose and/or the Election Committee may ask for opinions on significant issues facing USMS to be used as addendums to their questionnaires and be posted on the Web Site.

III. National Office Newsletter

- A. The nomination announcement shall be placed in appropriate issues of the National Office Newsletter
- B. Additional email announcements of the nomination deadline shall be made to appropriate audiences.

IV. Email Newsletter

The Committee may choose to distribute information to the HOD through an email newsletter.

V. HOD Packet

- A. The HOD Packet will contain the report of the Committee.
- B. The report shall contain:
 - 1. A report on the election process.
 - 2. Schedule of HOD Election activities.
 - 3. Candidate information for all BOD members being elected during the HOD. That information shall include where available:
 - a. Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form
 - b. Addendum to questionnaire
 - c. Letter of nomination
 - d. 2 Letters of reference
 - e. Photograph
 - 4. Posters with candidate's pictures.
 - 5. Content of the report may be adjusted in the case of uncontested elections.

VI. HOD Meeting Publicity

- A. The Election Committee may place posters at USMS check-in, the hospitality suite, and HOD meeting rooms. The posters may contain a photograph of all Candidates along with a short statement from their questionnaire.

APPENDIX F: MEET THE CANDIDATES PROCEDURES

A Meet the Candidates Forum will be held prior to the election. The format for the Forum will be dependent upon the number of candidates and the number of contested offices. The format may vary from year to year. Listed below are samples of Meet the Candidates Forums. The actual Forum may vary and/or may combine more than one of the listed formats.

I. Uncontested Elections

In cases of uncontested races, the Committee may choose to limit "meet the Candidate" opportunities. Delegates will learn about the Candidates through the Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form, addendums to the questionnaire, and other pre-HOD publicity.

II. Formal Meet the Candidates Forum

- A. The Election Committee is the host for the formal Meet the Candidates Forum held at the Annual Meeting. Such forums will be held after HOD nominations and prior to voting. Candidates should attend.
- B. Questions for the Meet the Candidates Forum may be submitted by credentialed delegates. The questions shall be directed to a particular office, not to a specific candidate.
- C. For the office of President, there shall be at least one formal Meet the Candidates Forum.

III. Informal Meet the Candidates Opportunities

When there are a significant number of Candidates running for office, the formal Forum often does not allow for ample time for each of the Candidate to speak. In the event of such an occurrence, other opportunities may be made available for delegates to meet the Candidates. The following should be considered when planning such opportunities:

- A. Sufficient periods of unopposed time during the Annual Meeting may be allocated for these informal meetings, including meal periods and evenings.
- B. Questioning shall include pre-submitted questions as well as follow-up questions.
- C. Groupings of offices may be employed for expediency.

The Committee may consult with the Candidates during the planning, but shall reserve the right to make the final decisions.