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VIRTUAL MEETINGS & EMAIL VOTING

Greetings Board Members:

As we continue to watch and stay updated on the daily changes pertaining to COVID-19 information from National PTA, Commonwealth of Virginia, Virginia Department of Education and the like, we are attempting to keep you updated as often as pertinent information becomes available.

On Friday, March 20, Attorney General provided an opinion on VA Code § 2.2-3708.2(A)(3) to local governments and other public bodies to ensure services could be provided, make decisions, and address Virginians' needs while remaining open, transparent, and accountable to the public during this unprecedented emergency. Providing this guidance provides more comfort for Virginia PTA to follow [Nonprofit Code § 13.1-844.2. Remote participation in annual and special meetings.](#)

Both board meetings and membership meetings can be held by video or audio conference calls. The key consideration is that members must be able to both hear and respond to each other. Voting and all normal business activities are allowed although voting should be done by roll call.

When planning a virtual meeting, it is important to consider your membership. Video conferences only work if all participants have broadband. Likewise, most conference call services involve calling into a long-distance number.

The only major difference is that virtual meetings can become very chaotic very quickly. The president needs to be prepared for this, requiring attendees speak one at a time and that all discussion be focused on the agenda item at hand.

Other than this, all the regular rules apply. Take attendance, establish a quorum, and prepare minutes. Give plenty of notice - at least 10 days for membership meetings, 5 days for special board meetings. Abide by your bylaws and standing rules.

For more information on this, join our President-elect, Pam Croom for **Workshop Wednesday**, April 1 at [Noon](#) or [7pm](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Implementation of Mail, Email, or Electronic Voting:

While in-person voting and participation in meetings is preferred; to implement mail, email, or electronic voting a PTA or Council must:

- Meet as a Board and vote to hold your general membership meeting either by mail, email or electronic means.
- Review and update your membership list to ensure all members can be contacted via the method selected.

- Amend the association's budget to include any costs associated with mail, email, or electronic voting, including but not limited to: postage, paper and printing, mailing labels, envelopes, and costs of online voting tools.

The board should appoint a tellers committee to count the votes. The tellers committee will need to exercise extra care concerning the confidentiality of electronic votes. Click [here](#) to learn more about a tellers committee.

Electing a Nominating Committee or Officers

It is recommended that PTAs hold a meeting to elect a nominating committee or officers. If elections are held by mail, email, or electronic voting, a two-step process is required.

- Step 1: A notice to self-declare candidacy must go out to all members, with a clear deadline for submission. For an officer election, this notice shall be sent after the nominating committee report is posted, and the report shall be included with this notice.
- Step 2: A ballot is sent to all members that includes the nominating committee report (for officer elections) and the names of all self-declared nominees that meet eligibility requirements.

Adoption of Budget and Motions

For the approval of a budget or amendments to the budget or other motions, the following must be included with the ballot:

1. The full text of a motion must be included with the ballot. This motion should come from the board of directors or the appropriate committee. Example: “The ABC PTA budget committee moves to amend the budget for _____ for \$ _____.”
2. If the motion refers to a document, the full text and content of the document to be approved, with any notes or rationale, should be sent with the ballot. If the ballot is sent electronically, the document must be in a format that is easily accessed from most computers or mobile devices. (PDF is one example.)

There is no opportunity to amend a motion or a document when voting by mail, email, or electronic tools. Voting instructions must be included with the ballot, clearly stating what constitutes a valid vote and what does not. Votes that stipulate changes be made to the motion or document shall be declared invalid, although they may be used to establish quorum.

Voting by Mail

Ballots returned by mail shall utilize a return envelope, provided by the PTA, that is stamped, addressed, and which contains the member identification number on the outside of the envelope, rather than on the ballot. Ballots not returned in the provided envelope are unverifiable and shall be disqualified.

All PTA members in good standing shall be mailed a paper ballot, unless the member opted out. The ballot shall include a stamped, addressed return envelope, and the ballot deadline shall be clearly identified. Only one ballot may be returned per envelope.

When voting by mail (may also include voting at a physical polling place/meeting) click [here](#).

Voting by Email

Email ballot notices shall be delivered to each PTA member in good standing who has consented to electronic voting and provided a unique email address. Members who have not provided written consent shall not be sent an email ballot.

When voting by email (may also include voting at a physical polling place/meeting) click [here](#).

Online Voting Tools

Online voting tools may be used in the same circumstances for which mail and email voting are allowed. There are tools specifically written for voting, and many intended for surveys that are adequate for this purpose.

Ideally, your PTA will select a tool at the time it approves to allow voting by mail, email or electronically. Costs vary, so your PTA will want to choose a tool that best fits its needs and budget.

Online voting tools are managed similarly to email voting. Send your survey link to the email addresses provided by members for voting purposes. If your tool won't show you the email address used to send the response, you can have the survey include the email address of the voter as a required question in the survey.

Examples are [MailChimp](#), [Survey Monkey](#), [Zoom](#), [Constant Contact](#), [Google Forms](#), [MemberHub](#), [Skype](#), [Microsoft Teams](#), [Google Hangout](#), [Google Duo](#), [WhatsApp](#), [Messenger](#), or other platforms your unit may have voted to utilize.

Resource - [Robert's Rule of Order](#)

Our national, state and local pandemic responses are going to be more like running a marathon than a sprint, so we need to make sure we are taking care of ourselves and our families. Please know that your leadership team will continue to do all we reasonably can to support you through this difficult time. If you have specific questions or concerns, please let us know.

Please continue to work with your local public health officials to determine when the outbreak has ended in your local community and when the community is able to safely have meetings and events.

Thank you for your dedication and hard work on behalf of the children of Virginia.

Sincerely,

Donna Colombo
President

[Website](#)
