



# Guidelines for Subordinate Lodge Balloting

The Grand Lodge of North Carolina  
Ancient Free and Accepted Masons

August, 2016

My Brother:

In 2016 Grand Master Bryant D. Webster appointed a special committee to draft guidelines and provide clarifications on balloting in the lodge. Questions concerning the balloting process are often directed to the Board of Custodians, which governs and oversees the ritual work of our grand jurisdiction. Balloting in a lodge, while often covered during Schools of Instruction, is not governed by the duties of this board.

The Code has two primary chapters that describe the process of voting in subordinate lodges. Chapter 63 covers general voting and Chapter 68 covers the secret ballot. Confusion concerning the balloting process generally derives from lodge traditions being introduced into the elements of balloting that are not fully explained in our Code. These traditional processes or procedures may be acceptable unless found to be in direct violation of the Code, but they cannot be considered the only correct way of performing a specific voting task. The same rule that applies to governing our ritual work as adopted in 1944 should also apply to the unwritten areas related to balloting. If work is not clearly defined by our Code, no lodge and no brother is authorized to insist that one way to perform a task is the correct way. A lodge may have a tradition and a brother may have an opinion but none may insist that theirs is the only way to do such work.

The following information and guidelines are intended to aid lodges in making sure that the proper procedures are followed regardless of which type of the three ballots may be required. By following these guidelines mistakes can be avoided and time saved during the process. Members must become thoroughly familiar with Chapters 63 and 68 of The Code (contained in the Appendix section of this document). Lodges should conduct periodic training sessions with members to avoid errors during the process. The Appendices also provide a form that can be used by the master in announcing the required information prior to beginning the balloting process. A summary table describing types of votes, subjects, required number of votes and methods of voting is included to assist in making this process easier to understand.

Do not wait until your next ballot to become familiar with this information.

Fraternally,

Special Committee on Balloting Procedures

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## Types of ballots:

In accordance with REG. 63-1 and 63-3 of The Code, the methods of voting are as follows:

- Voting in a subordinate lodge shall be *first*, by show of hands, *second*, by written paper ballot, *third*, by secret ballot of balls and cubes, and by no other method.
- Voting by *Yea* and *Nay* is not permitted.

## Prior to balloting:

In accordance with Reg. 68-6, explanatory remarks to a very limited extent and in proper terms *before* balloting on a petitioner for the degrees or application for membership are admissible, but would be unmasonic after the ballot has been taken. **No *debate* shall be permitted in open lodge upon the merits or demerits of any candidate at, or before, or after the time of balloting.** The secret vote of each member is the only legal expression of his opinion. [67-4.4].

Concerns or questions about the petitioner should be discussed with the investigating committee or Master prior to their meeting with the petitioner and well before the lodge meeting when the vote will be taken. Members wishing to express concerns about the petitioner should contact the Master or Secretary. In the alternative, a member may obtain the names of committee members if they were not announced at the meeting when the petition was read and express his concerns directly to committee members. (Refer to the Guidelines for Lodge Investigating Committees available from your lodge Secretary or through the Grand Lodge website)

Prior to balloting where a secret ballot process is required, the report of the investigating committee should be filed with the secretary and by him placed before the Master of the lodge in accordance with Reg. 67-5. The character of the report shall not be recorded in the minutes in accordance with Reg. 67-6. (Refer to the Guidelines for Lodge Investigating Committees available from your lodge Secretary or through the Grand Lodge website)

## Secret ballot procedures in accordance with Reg. 68-3:

After the reports of the Grand Secretary and the Committee of Investigation have been received the ballot shall be taken as follows.

1. When a ballot has begun it shall not be suspended or postponed, nor shall it be interrupted by the admission or withdrawal of any brother, *except* the Tyler, to vote, and the brother who relieves the Tyler, but brethren shall be permitted to enter or retire between ballots on *different persons or propositions*.
2. A ballot has begun when the Master announces the name of the person to be balloted on or the proposition to be balloted on, and is not completed until the Master has announced or declared the result. [63-5.4; 63-11; 68-3.18].

3. Not more than one petition or proposition shall be voted on at the same time, and the simultaneous use of different or multiple ballot boxes on different petitions or applications or propositions is hereby prohibited. [44-7 (Art.21E); 45-21.5]. (*This section amended, effective January 1, 2006*)
4. The Master shall order the Senior Deacon to prepare the ballot.
5. The Senior Deacon, after preparing the ballot box, shall pass it in turn to the Junior Warden, to the Senior Warden and then to the Master, that they may see that it is properly prepared.
6. Immediately prior to balloting the Master shall state clearly to the lodge the following: [68-3.1] (**refer to Appendix 3 for a form to assist in performing this process**)
  - A. The full name of the petitioner or applicant,
  - B. His age, occupation, and the address of his residence and his business,
  - C. Names of the brethren who recommend him if recommenders are required by law, and
  - D. The *character* of report made by the Committee of Investigation.
7. The Master shall then announce
  - A. The name of the person whose petition is about to be balloted upon, or the proposition to be balloted upon, and
  - B. State that white *balls* elect and black *cubes* reject, requesting each member who favors the reception of the candidate or the adoption of the proposition to deposit a white *ball* and each one who opposes the same to deposit a black *cube*, cautioning him to be careful and avoid mistakes. [59-2.45].
8. The Master shall then cast his ballot, and the Senior Deacon shall pass the box to the Senior Warden and then to the Junior Warden, each of whom, in turn, shall then cast his ballot.
9. The Master may order the Senior Deacon to pass the ballot box to a member within the lodge who is physically unable otherwise to cast his ballot, and this should be done before the ballot box is placed on the altar for voting. To pass the ballot box to a member in the anteroom is irregular, it not being in the room proper. A brother in the anteroom is absent from the lodge. If the Tyler is qualified to vote, he should be relieved by a brother and should enter the lodge to vote. [63-11; 68-3.9; 63-5.4].
10. The box shall then be placed upon the altar or upon a pedestal near the altar, and the Senior Deacon shall cast his ballot, after which the other officers and members present shall approach and cast their ballots. (**It should be the Master's discretion as to which officer or side of the lodge votes first following the Senior Deacon after casting his ballot**)
11. When all have voted the Senior Deacon shall exhibit the ballot first to the Junior Warden, then to the Senior Warden, and finally to the Master.
12. If the Master finds that the ballot is clear, or that there is more than one black cube, he shall ask the Wardens how they find the ballot and not until then, shall he proclaim the result. (If a lodge has enacted the alternate ballot procedure under special local provision Article 19 of lodge bylaws, pursuant to Chapter 44, that procedure shall be supplemented

after and/or in place of the procedure set forth here.) (*This section amended, effective 1/1/2009*)

13. In case only one black cube appears, the Master shall not then declare the result but immediately at the same communication order a rebalot without discussion on the part of the members or any intervening act or business, the result of the rebalot shall be declared, and it shall be final except as provided in Regulation 68-8. (If a lodge has enacted the alternate ballot procedure under special local provision Article 19 of lodge bylaws, pursuant to Chapter 44, that procedure shall be supplemented after and/or in place of the procedure set forth here.) [63-5.4;68-8.2] (*This section amended, effective 1/1/2009*)

14. If the Wardens disagree in their report, the Master shall examine the ballot box carefully and order it returned to the Warden whose report was in error. When the reports of both Wardens and the Master agree and are correct, the Master shall declare the ballot. [59-2.45].

15. In any secret ballot white balls are affirmative votes and black cubes are negative votes. A unanimously favorable ballot of white balls shall be required to elect a petitioner or an applicant, or to adopt any proposition submitted to the secret ballot. (If a lodge has enacted the alternate ballot procedure under special local provision Article 19 of lodge bylaws, pursuant to Chapter 44, that procedure shall be supplemented after and/or in place of the procedure set forth here.) (*This section amended, effective 1/1/2009*) [42-9; 65-1; 75-11.2; 75-11.3; 75-11.4; 75-11.5].

16. No member of the lodge shall be excused from voting in a secret ballot. [63-4; 68-3.9; 68-3.1; 45-23.17].

17. The Master shall decide and declare the result of a secret ballot at once, and he shall then destroy the ballot to preserve its secrecy. [63-5.4].

18. In the event an error, mistake, or irregularity in connection with a secret ballot comes to the attention of the Master *while the balloting is in progress and before* the ballot has been *announced or declared* by the Master as required in Subdivisions 68-3.13 and 68-3.14 of this regulation, the Master shall *immediately stop the balloting* when the matter comes to his attention. The ballot shall not be examined by anyone, but it shall be destroyed at once and another ballot shall be taken immediately complying fully with Regulations 63-5.4, 68-3.13, 68-3.14, and 68-3.1, *provided* no member has entered or retired from the lodge room, *except* the Tyler and the brother relieving him and that the brother relieving the Tyler has returned to the lodge room.

19. A secret ballot is begun when the Master announces the name of the person, or the proposition, to be balloted on. It is not completed until the Master has *announced or declared* the result. [68-3.14].

20. After the *Master declares the result of a secret ballot, no further balloting on that particular petition or application or specific proposition just balloted on shall take place, except* by order of the Grand Master as provided in Regulations 68-8 and 68-8.2.

## Acceptable questions and responses during the balloting process:

The Code refers to favorable ballots as “clear” but there is no defined terminology for unfavorable ballots. The most common and acceptable terms and responses follow. Others may be used if similar in nature but no specific response can be defined as the only correct response.

### Prior to voting:

In accordance with Reg. 68-3.7. B the Master, after specifying white balls elect and black cubes reject, cautions those voting to be careful and avoid mistakes. Other commonly acceptable responses are:

- “Be careful with your ballot and vote for the good of Masonry.”
- “Look well to your ballot and vote for the good of Masonry.”

### Question and responses commonly asked before inspecting the ballot:

- Master: “Brother Senior Deacon, have all present and eligible voted?”
- Senior Deacon: “All save the Tyler” or “All except the Tyler.”

### Response by the Master before inspecting the ballot:

- “Brother Senior Deacon, pass the ballot for inspection.”
  - *The Master **does not** declare the ballot closed at this point in case an automatic reballot is required. The ballot is considered closed when the results are announced for a secret ballot.*
  - *The Senior Deacon then exhibits the ballot for inspection beginning with the Junior Warden, then Senior Warden and Master (Reg. 68-3.11).*

### Questions upon examination of the ballot by the Master:

- “Brother Junior Warden, how find you the ballot in the south?”
- “Brother Senior Warden, how find you the ballot in the west?”

### Responses for a favorable ballot:

*(The Wardens should stand and salute the Master with the due guard before responding)*

- “Clear in the South,” “Clear in the West,” “And clear in the East.”
- “Fair in the South,” “Fair in the West,” “And fair in the East.”

### Responses for an unfavorable ballot:

*(The Wardens should stand and salute the Master with the due guard before responding)*

- “Cloudy in the South,” “Cloudy in the West,” “And cloudy in the East.”
- “Foul in the South,” “Foul in the West,” “And foul in the East.”

## **After balloting:**

If the ballot is favorable:

### **REG. 69-1 NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION.**

The Secretary of the lodge shall promptly notify the petitioner of his election, and of the time and place when and where he can receive the first degree. [43-3.7; 68-11; Official Form 20].

It is extremely important that the lodge set the date of the degree the night of the election. This information must be included in the notification to the newly elected petitioner. It will also prevent delays in conferring his first degree. Only the Secretary is authorized to notify the newly elected petitioner.

**Note: Do not confer the Entered Apprentice degree immediately after election. This violates Reg. 71-22 of the Code and requires an official Order of the Grand Master to heal this violation.**

If the ballot is unfavorable:

Though not clearly defined in Chapter 70 of our Code, the Secretary would be the proper person to communicate the unfavorable results to the rejected petitioner. (Official Form 21)

In accordance with Reg. 70-4, if the information that a petitioner for the degrees has been rejected is communicated by a Mason to any person not a Mason, except the petitioner, the offender shall be subject to Masonic discipline. [86-2.7].

In accordance with Reg. 67-5, after the Investigating Committee makes its report, it shall be filed with the Secretary and by him placed before the Master of the lodge. Immediately after the ballot has been taken and declared, or the petition or application is otherwise disposed of as provided by law, **the report shall be destroyed if the petitioner or applicant has been rejected.** [59-12.23].

## **Common concerns and misunderstandings:**

- A written ballot is not a secret ballot in accordance with Reg. 63-5.3.
- Reg. 63.4 clearly states that every member must vote. The Master should stress this point prior to declaring the ballot open. For written ballots the Master may excuse a member from voting for valid reasons identified in this section of our Code. Those excused are not counted toward the total number of present and eligible to vote. Blank ballots are not considered votes or ballots and cannot be counted. They have no effect upon the result. In accordance with Reg. 54-3.1 covering election of officers in subordinate lodges, blank



votes are excluded and the required majority for election would be the proper percentage of the valid votes cast, not of those present and eligible to vote. If a member prefers not to cast a specific vote, the preferred option would be to ask to be excused. If not excused his next appropriate option would be to cast a blank ballot. This would not be counted and would not affect the result, thus allowing the lodge to comply with the requirement that all present who are eligible must vote.

- All must vote, unless properly excused or out of the lodge room when the balloting commences.
- If too many written ballots are cast in a written ballot, including blanks, the vote is illegal and shall be declared void in accordance with Reg. 63-7. Note that receiving fewer written ballots than eligible voters does not constitute an illegal ballot because the Code does not address this situation.
- The alternate voting method for the secret ballot only applies if adopted in a lodge's bylaws, Article 19, pursuant to Chapter 44.
- A secret ballot requires all present to vote in accordance with Reg. 63-4. To ensure a valid vote the Master and Wardens should silently assess the number of eligible voters before balloting begins. No member can be excused in secret balloting.
- The Tyler, if a member of the lodge, has to vote in a secret ballot in accordance with Reg. 63-11. If he does not vote in a written or show of hands ballot his failure to vote will not affect the legality of the vote.
- Reg. 68-10 requires the ballot box to be equipped with a sufficient number of white balls and black cubes to enable every brother to express his preference. Lodges often fail to meet this requirement. In the case of an unfavorable recommendation everyone should be entitled to express his desired preference.
- Should the Senior Deacon incorrectly open the ballot box prior to voting (by opening the drawer or compartment containing the votes already cast), he should immediately bring this error to the attention of the Master in accordance with Reg. 68-3.18 which would immediately result in a rebalot.
- Only applications for affiliation in accordance with Reg. 68.19 can be voted on collectively if there is no objection. Any objection requires voting individually on the petitioner. This does not apply to applications for honorary or life memberships which are required to be voted on individually.
- Honorary members cannot vote in accordance with Reg. 81-1.
- Do not declare a secret ballot closed after all have voted. In accordance with Reg. 68-3.2 the ballot begins when the Master announces the name of the person to be balloted on and is not completed until the results are announced. In the case of one black cube as indicated in Reg. 68-3.13 the Master without discussion would order a rebalot. This could not be done without comment or discussion if he had to declare the ballot reopened. For a written ballot the Master declares the ballot closed when all have voted and prior to the tellers collecting the ballots.
- Do not randomly select information from the petition when announcing the petitioner information before balloting. Reg. 68-3.6 and 7 defines what is to be read and stated prior to beginning the balloting process. Appendix 4 includes a form that can assist in this process.

- Do not confer the Entered Apprentice degree immediately after election. This violates Reg. 71-22 of the Code and requires an official Order of the Grand Master to heal this violation.
- Confusion on giving the due guard (salute) to who/what when voting. Though not clearly specified in North Carolina it is common courtesy to give the due guard prior to casting a secret ballot. The due guard should be given to the lodge in general toward the Altar, not the Master, similar to the due guard given when consecrating a new lodge as described in the Ceremonies book. The Master should be saluted with the due guard only when addressing him with a response, comment, or asking him a question.

### **Lodge traditions often practiced but not defined in our Code:**

- Wardens sitting down or remaining seated after examining the ballot box to signal to the Master the results of the vote. Regardless of the practice, the Wardens should stand and salute the Master with the due guard before announcing their findings.
- Master and Wardens giving a tap or knock on the lid of the ballot box after casting their vote. Since some ballot boxes are designed without a lid or cover, this is not a requirement and is strictly a traditional practice.
- Beginning the balloting process with specific officers or sides of the lodge. In accordance with Reg. 68-3.10 the other officers and members begin voting after the Senior Deacon places the ballot box on the Altar and votes. It is at the discretion of the Master to determine who votes next.
- A lodge may adapt traditional practices that are not in violation of our Code but cannot insist that these are requirements for all lodges to follow if not clearly defined.

**Note:** If an action is not clearly defined in the Code, no lodges or brothers may insist that their way is the only way or the correct way to perform a particular task. Specific processes defined in the Code must be followed.

### **Final suggestions to expedite the balloting process:**

- If available, the lodge may choose to fill the Tyler's place with a frequent visitor or honorary member until after the voting process has finished. This would avoid interruptions and prevent the Master from reading the required petitioner or ballot information a second time for the Tyler's benefit.

### **Resources reviewed in compiling this Guideline:**

- The Code of The Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina. (2015)
- Previous versions of The Code as applicable for historical purposes.

## Appendix 1

### Voting in a Lodge:

#### **REG. 63-1 METHODS OF VOTING.**

Voting in a subordinate lodge shall be *first*, by show of hands, *second*, by written paper ballot, *third*, by secret ballot of balls and cubes, and by no other method.

#### **REG. 63-2 WRITTEN BALLOT.**

When a vote by written paper ballot is ordered, the Master shall appoint not more than five tellers, and they shall be provided with ballot slips by the Secretary and shall immediately commence distributing them to the members present who are entitled to vote. The Master shall announce that each member voting shall prepare his ballot by writing clearly thereon the nature of his vote and shall order the tellers to collect the votes. When all have voted, he shall declare the ballot closed and order the tellers to count the ballots and announce the result. Other business may be transacted while the tellers are counting the ballots if the lodge consents. [54-3; 54-3.1; 100-1.4; 100-1.7].

#### **REG. 63-3 SHOW OF HANDS.**

Unless the law requires a vote by ballot, it shall be taken by show of hands, *provided*, when not less than two members concur in a demand or when the Master may order, the vote shall be taken by paper ballot. Voting by *Yea* and *Nay* is not permitted. [59-2.14].

#### **REG. 63-4 EVERY MEMBER PRESENT MUST VOTE.**

Every member present must vote, unless excused by the Master, because of personal interest in the question or because he was not present when the question was first voted on. Blank pieces of paper are neither ballots nor votes and cannot be counted as such, nor can they have any effect upon the result. No member shall be excused in *secret* balloting. Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts are not members of a lodge. Members present and excused from voting on any question shall not be counted as present on that vote or ballot. [19-7; 19-8; 54-3.1; 59-2.28; 63-15; 68-3.16; 74-2; 45-23.17; 100-4].

#### **REG. 63-5 SECRET BALLOT.**

Secret ballot shall be taken as follows. [87-17].

1. Wherever the term *secret ballot* is used in THE CODE, it shall mean the use of white balls and black cubes but not black balls, and with a ballot box so arranged that the character of an individual ballot shall not become known. [Chapter 68].
2. A motion to reconsider a secret ballot is illegal and shall not be entertained.
3. A written ballot is not a secret ballot.
4. A secret ballot when once commenced must be completed without interval or postponement. [68-3.9; 68-3.13; 68-3.17; 68-3.18; 68-3.19].

**REG. 63-6 ELECTION OF OFFICERS.**

All ballots cast at an election of officers on which there does not appear in a legible manner the name of some member of the lodge are blank ballots, these are not votes and shall not be considered in determining the result. [19-8; 54-3.2].

**REG. 63-7 TOO MANY BALLOTS.**

If there are more ballots cast including blanks than there are members present, the vote is illegal and shall be declared void. [19-8].

**REG. 63-8 LATE BALLOT.**

The fact that a ballot was cast by a member after the Master declared the ballot closed, without objection by anyone, shall not invalidate the election after the result has been announced. [19-8].

**REG. 63-9 NO PROXIES.**

A member shall not vote by proxy.

**REG. 63-10 RETIREMENT DURING VOTE.**

If a member retires from the lodge room during a vote and returns before the same is closed, he may be permitted to vote, but this does not apply in a secret ballot.

**REG. 63-11 TYLER.**

The Tyler, if he is qualified to vote in the lodge, shall be subject to the same law as any other member, but his failure to vote will not affect the legality of the voting or the result thereof. He shall not be excused from voting in a secret ballot. [59-2.28; 68-3.9].

**REG. 63-12 CHANGE OF VOTE.**

In all voting, except by secret ballot, a member may change his vote but only before the result has been announced.

**REG. 63-13 MAJORITY VOTE.**

A majority vote shall govern in all cases except as provided in THE CODE. No lodge shall in any manner, through its by-laws or by resolution or otherwise, require more than a majority vote of its members present to transact any financial or other business matter and no lodge shall in any such manner or by any device require the vote of its total membership or of any designated majority of its total membership to transact any matters except as provided in THE CODE. [44-7 (Art.22B,H); 60-10; 63-4; 45-23.18; 45-23.19].

**REG. 63-14 VISITORS.**

No visiting brother shall vote in a lodge on any matter.

**REG. 63-15 PARLIAMENTARY USAGE.**

In voting in a lodge Regulation 36-10 shall govern as far as its several provisions may apply. [Chapter 68].

**REG. 63-16 MASTER'S VOTE.**

The Master may cast the deciding vote in case of a tie, *provided*, he has not already voted. [44-7 (Art.22B); 59-2.25].

## Appendix 2

### The Secret Ballot

#### **REG. 68-1 RESTRICTIONS ON BALLOT.**

No ballot shall be taken on a petition for the degrees, an application for affiliation, or an application for restoration at any other than a stated communication.

1. No ballot shall be taken in less than twenty-eight days from the time the petition or application was received by the lodge.
2. No ballot shall be taken until the report of the Grand Secretary has been received by the lodge.
3. No ballot shall be taken until a Committee of Investigation shall have reported thereon unless otherwise provided by law.
4. A secret ballot on any subject taken in violation of the law of this Grand Lodge is illegal and void.
5. Another secret ballot on the same subject shall not be taken until it has been authorized by the Grand Master, and then only at a stated communication. [43-3.7; 45-3.4; 45-3.4.B; 45-3.4.C; 45-3.4.D; 59-2.12; 65-1; 65-8; 65-9; 68-8; 68-11; 68-8.2; 73-3; 75-11.1; 78-2.2; 78-2.2.D; 78-2.2.E; 81-2; 101-6].

#### **REG. 68-2 BALLOT POSTPONED.**

After the report of the Committee of Investigation on a petition or an application has been received, there shall be a secret ballot unless Regulation 66-2, 67-4, and 67-6 apply. The Master may in his discretion postpone the ballot thereon until the next stated communication unless otherwise provided by law, but there shall be no further postponement except by unanimous consent of the lodge. [59-2.12; 63-4; 68-14; 73-3].

#### **REG. 68-3 PROCEDURE.**

After the reports of the Grand Secretary and the Committee of Investigation have been received the ballot shall be taken as follows.

1. When a ballot has begun it shall not be suspended or postponed, nor shall it be interrupted by the admission or withdrawal of any brother, *except* the Tyler, to vote, and the brother who relieves the Tyler, but brethren shall be permitted to enter or retire between ballots on *different persons or propositions*.
2. A ballot has begun when the Master announces the name of the person to be balloted on or the proposition to be balloted on, and is not completed until the Master has announced or declared the result. [63-5.4; 63-11; 68-3.18].
3. Not more than one petition or proposition shall be voted on at the same time, and the simultaneous use of different or multiple ballot boxes on different petitions or applications or propositions is hereby prohibited. [44-7 (Art.21E); 45-21.5]. (*This section amended, effective January 1, 2006*)

4. The Master shall order the Senior Deacon to prepare the ballot.
5. The Senior Deacon, after preparing the ballot box, shall pass it in turn to the Junior Warden, to the Senior Warden and then to the Master, that they may see that it is properly prepared.
6. Immediately prior to balloting the Master shall state clearly to the lodge the following: [68-3.1]
  - A. The full name of the petitioner or applicant,
  - B. His age, occupation, and the address of his residence and his business,
  - C. Names of the brethren who recommend him if recommenders are required by law, and
  - D. The *character* of report made by the Committee of Investigation.
7. The Master shall then announce
  - A. the name of the person whose petition is about to be balloted upon, or the proposition to be balloted upon, and
  - B. state that white *balls* elect and black *cubes* reject, requesting each member who favors the reception of the candidate or the adoption of the proposition to deposit a white *ball* and each one who opposes the same to deposit a black *cube*, cautioning him to be careful and avoid mistakes. [59-2.45].
8. The Master shall then cast his ballot, and the Senior Deacon shall pass the box to the Senior Warden and then to the Junior Warden, each of whom, in turn, shall then cast his ballot.
9. The Master may order the Senior Deacon to pass the ballot box to a member within the lodge who is physically unable otherwise to cast his ballot, and this should be done before the ballot box is placed on the altar for voting. To pass the ballot box to a member in the anteroom is irregular, it not being in the room proper. A brother in the anteroom is absent from the lodge. If the Tyler is qualified to vote, he should be relieved by a brother and should enter the lodge to vote. [63-11; 68-3.9; 63-5.4].
10. The box shall then be placed upon the altar or upon a pedestal near the altar, and the Senior Deacon shall cast his ballot, after which the other officers and members present shall approach and cast their ballots.
11. When all have voted the Senior Deacon shall exhibit the ballot first to the Junior Warden, then to the Senior Warden, and finally to the Master.
12. If the Master finds that the ballot is clear, or that there is more than one black cube, he shall ask the Wardens how they find the ballot and not until then, shall he proclaim the result. (If a lodge has enacted the alternate ballot procedure under special local provision Article 19 of lodge bylaws, pursuant to Chapter 44, that procedure shall be supplemented after and/or in place of the procedure set forth here.) (*This section amended, effective 1/1/2009*)
13. In case only one black cube appears, the Master shall not then declare the result but immediately at the same communication order a rebalot without discussion on the part of the members or any intervening act or business, the result of the rebalot shall be declared, and it shall be final except as provided in Regulation 68-8. (If a lodge has enacted the alternate ballot procedure under special local provision Article 19 of lodge

bylaws, pursuant to Chapter 44, that procedure shall be supplemented after and/or in place of the procedure set forth here.) [63-5.4;68-8.2 (*This section amended, effective 1/1/2009*)

14. If the Wardens disagree in their report, the Master shall examine the ballot box carefully and order it returned to the Warden whose report was in error. When the reports of both Wardens and the Master agree and are correct, the Master shall declare the ballot. [59-2.45].

15. In any secret ballot white balls are affirmative votes and black cubes are negative votes. A unanimously favorable ballot of white balls shall be required to elect a petitioner or an applicant, or to adopt any proposition submitted to the secret ballot. (If a lodge has enacted the alternate ballot procedure under special local provision Article 19 of lodge bylaws, pursuant to Chapter 44, that procedure shall be supplemented after and/or in place of the procedure set forth here.) (*This section amended, effective 1/1/2009*) [42-9; 65-1; 75-11.2; 75-11.3; 75-11.4; 75-11.5].

16. No member of the lodge shall be excused from voting in a secret ballot. [63-4; 68-3.9; 68-3.1; 45-23.17].

17. The Master shall decide and declare the result of a secret ballot at once, and he shall then destroy the ballot to preserve its secrecy. [63-5.4].

18. In the event an error, mistake, or irregularity in connection with a secret ballot comes to the attention of the Master *while the balloting is in progress and before* the ballot has been *announced or declared* by the Master as required in Subdivisions 68-3.13 and 68-3.14 of this regulation, the Master shall *immediately stop the balloting* when the matter comes to his attention. The ballot shall not be examined by anyone, but it shall be destroyed at once and another ballot shall be taken immediately complying fully with Regulations 63-5.4, 68-3.13, 68-3.14, and 68-3.1 *provided* no member has entered or retired from the lodge room, *except* the Tyler and the brother relieving him and that the brother relieving the Tyler has returned to the lodge room.

19. A secret ballot is begun when the Master announces the name of the person, or the proposition, to be balloted on. It is not completed until the Master has *announced or declared* the result. [68-3.14].

20. After the *Master declares the result of a secret ballot, no further balloting on that particular petition or application or specific proposition just balloted on shall take place, except* by order of the Grand Master as provided in Regulations 68-8 and 68-8.2.

#### **REG. 68-4 NOTICE TO PETITIONER OR APPLICANT.**

The Secretary of the lodge shall notify the petitioner or the applicant of the action by the lodge. [Official Forms 20 and 21].

#### **REG. 68-5 CONFIDENTIALITY.**

In every case of a secret ballot it shall be unmasonic for any brother to make known in any way the character of his vote or purposely seek out the character of another's vote, or if known to him, to reveal it to another, the penalty for which, upon conviction, shall be *expulsion*. The intention of this Regulation is to preserve to the lodge and the Craft the full benefits and results of a secret



ballot. Each member voting is the sole judge of what his vote shall be, and he shall not be questioned therefor or on account thereof. [86-2.6].

1. It is a Masonic offense for a brother, during a secret ballot, to exhibit his ballot, in any way, that it can become known to another, or to seek in any manner, to ascertain the *total number* of ballots cast. If convicted, the penalty shall be *expulsion*. [86-2.6; Chapter 100].
2. No officer or member shall disclose at any time the number of black cubes cast. [86-2.6].

#### **REG. 68-6 EXPLANATORY REMARKS.**

Explanatory remarks to a very limited extent and in proper terms *before* balloting on a petitioner for the degrees or applicant for membership are admissible, but would be unmasonic after the ballot has been taken. No *debate* shall be permitted in open lodge upon the merits or demerits of any candidate at, or before, or after the time of balloting. The secret vote of each member is the only legal expression of his opinion. [67-4.4].

#### **REG. 68-7 JURISDICTION.**

The ballot of a lodge upon a petitioner for the degrees or an applicant for affiliation over whom it has no jurisdiction, or who is not qualified, shall be void and of no effect.

1. If a lodge should discover, after a ballot is had on a petition for degrees and before the Entered Apprentice degree or the Fellow Craft degree or the Degree of Master Mason has been conferred, that does not have jurisdiction, it shall not proceed further until it has been authorized by the Grand Master to act. [42-7.1; 42-9; 42-4].
2. With the Grand Master's authorization the lodge may proceed as provided in Regulation 42-4. [42-5; 75-1; 75-8].

#### **REG. 68-8 GRAND MASTER'S AUTHORITY.**

The Grand Master shall not have the power to grant a dispensation authorizing another ballot on the *same* petition or application after it has been rejected by the lodge and *so declared* by the Master except when it is made to appear to the satisfaction of the Grand Master by *positive and unquestionable evidence* that the ballot was *clearly* and *grossly* illegal, or void, or that the lodge actually balloted on the wrong person, or could have done so through similarity of names, improper announcement by the Master or other cause whereby the actual and correct identification of the petitioner or applicant being balloted on was not made clear.

1. In such cases the Grand Master may authorize a rebalot at a stated communication.
2. The dispensation authorizing the rebalot shall contain a proviso that all members of the lodge shall be given not less than ten days' notice by first-class mail under sealed cover of the rebalot and the time and place therefor.
3. No such rebalot shall be had after two months from the date of rejection. [59-3.6; 68-11].

#### **REG. 68-9 ONE CLEAR BALLOT.**

One clear ballot shall entitle the petitioner to the three degrees except

- when a candidate is in default,

- when objection is made to his initiation,
- when an Entered Apprentice or Fellow Craft of a defunct lodge transfers his membership to another lodge.

In these cases the petitioner or applicant for the degree or degrees must again pass the ordeal of the ballot. [65-1; 65-5; 68-3.15; 69-2; 71-1; Chapter 73].

**REG. 68-10 BALLOT BOX.**

Every lodge shall have a ballot box so constructed as to enable every member to cast his vote secretly and it shall be equipped with a sufficient number of white *balls* and black *cubes* to enable every brother to express his preference freely. A white *ball* shall constitute an affirmative vote, and a black *cube* shall constitute a negative vote.

**REG. 68-11 NO NOTICE OF PETITION.**

A lodge shall not give notice through the mail or otherwise that a ballot will be had on the petition or application of a person named in such notice except a notice shall be given for a rebalot as provided in Regulation 68-8. [43-3.7; 68-1; 68-8.2].

**REG. 68-12 PETITIONER WHO MOVES.**

A lodge has the right to ballot on the petition for the degrees of one who has moved from its jurisdiction after the reception of his petition. [42-5; 42-13; 66-3].

**REG. 68-13 LOST PETITION OR APPLICATION.**

If a petition or application becomes lost after it is received, the lodge may proceed upon a duplicate thereof.

**REG. 68-14 ORDER OF VOTING ON PETITION.**

Petitions or applications need not be balloted on in the order in which they are received. [59-2.12; 68-2].

**REG. 68-15 PROTEST MEMBER OF ANOTHER LODGE.**

A lodge having lawful jurisdiction shall be the sole judge of its petitioner's or applicant's qualifications, subject to the law of this Grand Lodge. Protests from a member of another lodge should receive the fullest consideration, but further than that they cannot prevail. [13-4.4; 41-10.4; 66-2].

**REG. 68-16 NO VOTE EXCEPT BY BALLOT.**

No vote shall be taken nor any means be used to ascertain, directly or indirectly, the sense of the lodge as to whether a petition for the degrees or an application for membership will probably be rejected, accepted, or otherwise disposed of.

**REG. 68-17 NO APPEAL FROM A BALLOT.**

No persons rejected for any purpose by a secret ballot shall have the right to appeal from, or in any manner whatever contest, the result thereof. [Chapter 63].

**REG. 68-18 PETITION VOID - TWELVE MONTHS.**

If a petition for the degrees has been read and received in open lodge and the petitioner is not elected or rejected within a period of twelve months the petition shall be null and void and if the petitioner desires to again petition a lodge, he can do so only by presenting a new petition in regular form which shall take the same procedure governing the original petition for the degrees. [59-2.47; 65-6; 67-2].

**REG. 68-19 BALLOTING ON APPLICATION FOR AFFILIATIONS.**

Applications for affiliations (Form 18) may be voted on collectively. If there is an objection or one or more negative votes are cast, the balloting will commence on each application individually following the procedure in Regulation 68-3.

## Appendix 3

### Suggested Form to be used by the Master when balloting.

**Information required to be read per The Code prior to balloting in accordance with Reg. 68-3.6.**

- Full name of the petitioner or applicant, \_\_\_\_\_
- His age \_\_\_\_\_
- Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
- Address of his residence \_\_\_\_\_
- Address of his business \_\_\_\_\_
- Name of the brother who recommended him \_\_\_\_\_
- Name of the brother who recommended him \_\_\_\_\_
  
- **Report made by the Committee of Investigation** \_\_\_\_\_

**The Master shall then announce in accordance with Reg. 68-3.7:**

A. The name of the person whose petition is about to be balloted upon, or the proposition to be balloted upon, and

B. State that white *balls* elect and black *cubes* reject, requesting each member who favors the reception of the candidate or the adoption of the proposition to deposit a white *ball* and each one who opposes the same to deposit a black *cube*, cautioning him to be careful and avoid mistakes. [59-2.45].

## Appendix 4

**Table of votes in lodges.**

Vote	Subject	Code Reference	Type
<b>Blank ballot</b>	Permitted, but not counted	63-4	Written
<b>Clear ballot</b>	On a petition for the degrees	68-3.15; 68-9; 69-2.1	Secret
	On applications for affiliations	75-7	Secret
	On applications for restoration after exclusion	78-2	Secret
	On a proposal for life membership	79-2.3	Secret
	On a proposal for honorary membership	81-2	Secret
<b>Honorary Member</b>	Cannot vote	81-1	Not applicable
<b>Illegal vote</b>	When more written ballots cast than members present	63-7	Written
<b>Majority vote</b>	To change the name and location of a lodge	41-5.2	Show of hands or as per Reg. 63-3
	To reconsider a vote	44-7 (Art. 22B, H); 63-13; 63-15; 45-23.18; 45-23.19	Show of hands or as per Reg. 63-3
	To elect all required subordinate officers excluding the Master	54-3.1	Written

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Code Reference</b>	<b>Type</b>
<b>Majority vote</b>	In all cases not otherwise provided for	63-13	Show of hands or as per Reg. 63-3
	On applications for advancement	73-6.3	Show of hands or as per Reg. 63-3
	To exclude a member for nonpayment of dues	77-20.7	Show of hands or as per Reg. 63-3
	To convict in proceedings for contempt	100-1.4	Written
	To expel or suspend for contempt	100-1.8; 100-1.11	Written
<b>No vote</b>	To return a petition and fee because of no jurisdiction	65-7	Not applicable
	If petitioner disqualified, when	66-2	Not applicable
	To grant a demit	76-4	Not applicable
<b>Three-fourths vote</b>	To terminate an honorary membership	81-4	Written
<b>Tie vote</b>	Master may break if he has not already voted	44-7 (Art. 22B); 59-2.25; 63-16	Written or show of hands
<b>Twenty votes</b>	Prevents surrender of the charter of a lodge	41-9.8	Written
	Prevents consolidation of a lodge with another	48-1.7; 48.2	Written

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Code Reference</b>	<b>Type</b>
<b>Two-thirds vote</b>	To amend the by-laws	44-7 (Art. 24)	Show of hands or as per Reg. 63-3
	To elect the Master	54-3.1	Written
	To require the Treasurer to deliver books and property to a committee	59-11.8	Show of hands or as per Reg. 63-3
	To remove a trustee	60-4	Show of hands or as per Reg. 63-3
<b>Tyler's vote when required</b>	When required	63-11	As applicable for the subject of vote
	When not required	63-11; 68-3.9	As applicable for the subject of vote
<b>Unanimous</b>	(see Clear ballot above)		Secret
	To withdraw a petition for degrees	65-5	Show of hands or as per Reg. 63-3
	Extend the date for a secret ballot by one additional communication	68-2	Show of hands or as per Reg. 63-3
	To remit dues of one nonaffiliated	77-5	Master may require a written ballot
<b>Visitors</b>	Cannot vote	81-1	Not applicable
<b>Who must vote</b>	Every member present, unless excused by the Master	63-4	As applicable
	Every member must vote in a secret ballot	63-4; 68-3; 45-23.17	As applicable

<b>Vote</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Code Reference</b>	<b>Type</b>
<b>Written ballot</b>	When demanded by two or more members	59-2.14; 63-3	Written
<b>Yea or Nay</b>	Not permitted	63-3	Not applicable