

Title: Special Rules of Order For Virtual Conventions

Proposer: Mr. David Powell, Chancellor of the Diocese

Resolved: That The Diocese of West Missouri adopt the following Special Rules of Order for Virtual Conventions (see Attachment 1), and be it further,

Resolved: That the Special Rules of Order be in force only when a Special or Annual Convention of the diocese, due to an exigency, cannot meet in person but must meet virtually, using online technologies to conduct, gather, debate, resolve, and vote, and be it further,

Resolved: That these Special Rules of Order be incorporated as an Appendix of the Constitution and Canons of The Diocese of West Missouri.

Explanation:

The Diocese, along with the rest of the United States and the world, is caught up in a National Emergency concerning the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (SARS-CoV-2, aka COVID-19), which has resulted in the public being ordered or advised by national, state, and local governments to practice social distancing and other personal protective means to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. This situation makes meeting as the Convention of The Diocese of West Missouri, whether for a Special Convention or an Annual Convention, dangerous to the health of individuals and the membership of the Diocese. This situation calls for the creation of rules that will allow the diocese to conduct a Special or Annual Convention of the Diocese without violating the best recommendations of public health officials. Therefore, the Special Rules of Order for Virtual Conventions (see attachment) are presented to permit convention members to have seat, voice, and vote at safe and convenient virtual conventions when such extraordinary proceedings are deemed necessary by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese.

ATTACHMENT 1

**SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER FOR
VIRTUAL CONVENTIONS
OF THE DIOCESE OF WEST MISSOURI**

To facilitate the ability of The Diocese of West Missouri to hold a virtual annual convention in 2020 and to hold future virtual conventions when deemed necessary by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, the following Special Rules of Order are adopted.

The Annual Meeting, or other meeting of the Convention of The Diocese of West Missouri, may be conducted in a virtual format through use of internet-based and other meeting services designated by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese that support anonymous voting by orders and visible displays: (i) identifying those participating, (ii) identifying those seeking recognition to speak, (iii) showing (or permitting the retrieval of) the text of pending motions, and (iv) showing the results of votes. An electronic meeting of the Convention shall otherwise be subject to all rules adopted by the Convention to govern its annual meeting, which may include any reasonable limitations on, and requirements for, members' participation. These Special Rules of Order for Virtual Annual Conventions shall apply to any virtual convention called by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese and shall supersede any conflicting rules previously adopted by the Convention or stated in Robert's Rules of Order, but only during a convention conducted virtually. At a regular, face-to-face convention, the Diocese's regular Rules of Order will be in force.

In addition, the following procedures shall apply to any virtual convention, whether designated as Annual or Special:

A. Interpretation of Rules

For purposes of conventions governed by these Rules, these terms shall have the following interpretation:

- "Convention": The meeting of clergy and laity of The Diocese of West Missouri conducted wholly or in part via remote electronic participation by its members.
- "Seat": The ability to participate in the Convention via electronic connection.
- "Voice": The right to make oral statements during the Convention.
- "Vote": The right to cast a vote by voice, via electronic polling, or by filing an electronic ballot during the Convention.

B. Worship Service

Notwithstanding Article IX, Section 3 of the Constitution of the Diocese, a service of Holy Eucharist, or another form of prayer or divine service in lieu of communion, as determined by the Ecclesiastical Authority shall take place during a virtual Convention.

C. Communication Information and Login Instructions

1. **Members to Furnish Communication Information.** No later than three (3) weeks before any such virtual meeting, every member of the clergy entitled to seat, voice, or vote in Convention must notify the Ecclesiastical Authority of his or her email address in order to receive the ability to participate in a Convention held electronically. The Ecclesiastical Authority shall choose the method by which email addresses will be submitted to it. Not later than such date, every rector, vicar, or a warden of any parish or congregation entitled to representation in Convention and the person(s) responsible for the selection of Youth Delegates to the Convention must notify the Ecclesiastical Authority of the email address of (a) every Lay Delegate of such parish or congregation or Youth Delegate or (b) any Alternate who will replace an elected Lay Delegate or Youth Delegate who will be unable to attend the Convention.
2. **Secretary to Send Login Information.** No later than three (3) days before such meeting, the Secretary of Convention or his or her designee shall send an email to every member of Convention setting forth (a) the time of the meeting, (b) the URL and codes necessary to connect to the internet meeting service, and, as an alternative and backup to the audio connection included within the Internet service, the phone number and access codes that members need to participate aurally by telephone, and (c) if applicable, a Voter ID code.

D. Opening of Meeting and Quorum

1. **Login Time.** The Secretary shall schedule Internet meeting service availability to begin at least 30 minutes before the start of each meeting.
2. **Signing in and out.** Members shall identify themselves as required in order to sign into the internet meeting service and shall maintain internet and audio access throughout the meeting whenever present, but shall sign out upon any departure before adjournment.
3. **Quorum.** The Secretary shall determine and report the presence of a quorum as required by the Constitution based on a count of the participating members' login information online at the start of the meeting. The members present may continue

to do business until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough members to leave a remainder that is less than the attendance needed to establish a quorum. Less than a quorum can approve adjournment.

E. Attending to Business of Convention

1. When in business session, members who wish to speak will address the chair.
2. The President shall appoint such committees as are, in his or her opinion, necessary, and the committee members shall be notified as early as possible before Convention opens.
3. All committees shall be appointed by the Ecclesiastical Authority, unless otherwise ordered.
4. No later than three (3) days before a virtual convention, any committee assigned resolutions or matters by the Ecclesiastical Authority shall conduct an open virtual meeting. Committees shall report orally at the convention when their resolutions are considered or at such time as the President may direct.
5. The reports of all committees shall be received for acceptance without motion, unless recommended by vote of the House.
6. All reports recommending or requiring any action by the House shall be accompanied by a resolution for action or for an expression of opinion by the House.
7. The names of movers of resolutions shall appear upon the minutes of the convention.
8. A contemporaneous broadcast of the proceedings of the Convention may be made available to members of the Diocese and the proceedings may be recorded as well.

F. Business before the Convention

1. No resolution shall be considered as before the House unless it has been submitted in writing (including electronic submission in a manner approved by the Ecclesiastical Authority and the Secretary) and been received by the Ecclesiastical Authority and Secretary four weeks before the opening of Convention to allow distribution to all members and introduction by title at Convention.
2. Any resolution which has not been presented to the Ecclesiastical Authority and to the Secretary four weeks prior to the convention date will not be considered as before the House unless copies of such resolution are made available to every member and, at Convention, two-thirds of said members agree to consider such resolution.

G. Debate

1. When any member is about to speak, or deliver any matter to the House, the member shall state his or her name and the congregation he or she attends, and then, with due respect, address the President, confining his or her remarks strictly to the point in the debate.
2. A member, other than the chair of a committee whose report is under consideration, shall not speak more than twice in the same debate, nor longer than ten minutes at a time, without leave of the House.
3. When a question is under consideration, a motion shall not be received, except to lay it on the table, to postpone it until a certain time, to postpone it indefinitely, to commit it, to divide it, or to amend it; motions for any of these purposes shall have precedence in the order herein named.
4. If a motion to lay an amendment on the table be carried, the matter before the House shall be proceeded with as if no such amendment had been offered.
5. Motions to lay on the table and to adjourn shall be decided without debate.
6. The motion to adjourn shall always be in order.
7. Debate shall not be allowed upon a resolution to refer any motion to a committee, or a motion to recommit any subject which has been before a committee, but the member who offers such resolution or motion may speak for five minutes for the purpose of explaining its object.
8. All amendments shall be considered in the reverse order in which they are moved. When a proposed amendment is under consideration a motion to amend the same may be made. An after amendment to such second amendment shall not be in order, but when an amendment to an amendment is under consideration, a substitute for the whole may be received. A proposition, different from the one under consideration, shall not be received under color of an amendment or substitute.
9. All questions of order shall be decided in the first instance by the President, without debate; an appeal, however, may be made from his or her decision to the Convention by any member of the same.

H. Special Aspects of Conducting a Virtual Meeting

1. Each member is responsible for his or her audio and Internet connections; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual connection prevented participation in the meeting.
2. The President may cause or direct the disconnection or muting of a member's connection if it is causing undue interference with the meeting. The President's

decision to do so, which is subject to an undebatable appeal that can be made by any member, shall be announced during the meeting and recorded in the minutes.

3. In addition to display of pending motions or results of votes, video of the President and any member currently recognized to speak or report shall be displayed whenever possible throughout the meeting, as well as such other video displays as the President designates at his or her discretion.
4. Assignment of the floor. To seek recognition by the President, a member shall use the "raise hand" request feature or similar process approved by the Secretary of the Convention to request and await recognition. Once the pending action is completed, the online queue shall be cleared. To preserve the orderly conduct of debate, Members' connections will be muted until they are recognized to speak.

I. Voting Methods

1. The Secretary of the Convention shall arrange for anonymous and public voting systems that permit voting and reporting of votes by orders. The Committee on Dispatch of Business shall evaluate whether the technology available to the Convention can accommodate multiple rounds of virtual balloting, and the Committee may, if necessary, evaluate and recommend the adoption of rules for first-past-the-post virtual voting.
2. An anonymous vote conducted through the designated virtual voting system shall be deemed a written ballot vote, fulfilling any requirement in the Constitution and Canons or rules that a vote be conducted by written ballot. Votes shall be deemed anonymous so long as votes cast by an individual are available only to the administrator of the voting system.
3. Where voting is allowed to be conducted in person using visual show of voting cards, voting may be conducted using a virtual voting system approved by the Secretary of the Convention. Votes cast using the virtual voting system shall be deemed the equivalent of votes cast in person.
4. After the first ballot of any election has been announced, the nominee (clergy and/or lay) with the least number of votes shall be dropped from the list of nominees. This process shall continue after each ballot until there remains one more nominee than the number to be elected. This shall not apply to a vote by orders.

J. Procedures following Decisions of Convention

When a question has once been determined, it shall stand as the judgment of the

Convention, and shall not again be drawn into debate, except on motion for reconsideration, which can only be entertained if made by a member who had previously voted in the majority.

K. Rules of Order in Force

1. In all matters of parliamentary procedure, Robert's Rules of Order shall be the standard book of reference, excepting that these Rules of Order for the Convention shall supersede in cases of disagreement.
2. The Rules of Order shall not be suspended except by a two-thirds vote of the members present.

L. Order of Business

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer
2. Organizational Matters
 - a. Report of the Credentials Committee as to seating of members.
 - b. Announcement by Secretary as to whether a quorum is present.
 - c. Appointment of Parliamentarian.
3. Elections of Secretary of the Diocese, Treasurer of the Diocese, Assistant Treasurer of the Diocese (if any), and Chancellor of the Diocese, and other officers of the Diocese.
4. Announcements.
5. Report of Committee on Dispatch of Business.
6. Introduction of all resolutions.
7. Nominations and first ballot for Diocesan Council, Standing Committee, and General Convention deputies (when applicable). Additional ballots (if any) will be taken and related motions will be considered at times determined by the chair.
8. Consideration of the Plan for Ministry and any resolutions related to financial matters.
9. Reports of all officers and committees.
10. Consideration of all remaining resolutions.
11. Other elections, appointments, and nominations.
12. Fixing the time and place of the next Convention.
13. Closing Prayer and Adjournment.