

2024 Nebraska FFA Parliamentary Procedure Team Problem

Election Confusion – Who shall lead us?

Scenario: The RealDeal FFA Chapter was preparing for their Chapter FFA Officer Election. Their parliamentary authority is the newest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* and the only other guidance for elections from their governing documents is found in their bylaws which have the following related sections in Article IV – Officers.

- Section 1: Officers of the Chapter. Officers of the organization will be President, Vice-President, Secretary, Reporter, Treasurer, and Sentinel.
- Section 2: Terms of Offices: Officers will serve one year or until their successors are elected.
- Section 3: Nominations and Elections. A nominating committee will be formed of six-chapter members with two representatives from grades 10, 11, and 12. The nominating committee's task is to present nominees for each office to the membership in the April meeting. Any chapter FFA member is eligible for chapter FFA office. Elections will occur at the annual meeting in April and elections should be conducted with voting by ballot.
- Section 4: Vacancies in office. If a vacancy occurs, the executive committee has the authority to appoint a replacement to fill the vacancy until an election can occur. The election to fill the vacancy must occur within three months.

At the March FFA Meeting the following members are appointed to the Nominating Committee:

- Emma Patel (Senior)
- Carlos Rodriguez (Senior)
- Aisha Nguyen (Junior)
- Malik Johnson (Junior)
- Sofia Hernandez (Sophomore)
- Jamal Kim (Sophomore)

At the April Meeting, The Nominating Committee Chair, Emma Patel, presents the following Nominating Committee Report to the Members:

The Nominating Committee nominates the following members for the following offices:

- President: Elijah White, Isabella Kim
- Vice President: Caleb Jackson, John Haddad
- Secretary: Bobby Foor, Maria Chavez
- Treasurer: Steve Balschweid
- Reporter: Priya Sharma, Susie Quay
- Sentinel: Grace O'Malley

The Chapter President proceeds to conduct the election. For each office, she calls for nominations from the floor followed by passing out a ballot for each individual office that the Teller's collect from the 20 members present; however, some situations occur during the election where the chair is unsure.

Please review the following five questions and provide your expert parliamentary guidance to the Chapter President.

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Five Questions

Note: Please provide a response as well as a citation to RONR 12th for each answer.

- 1) For the Office of President, the Nominating Committee nominated Elijah White and Isabella Kim. A member was recognized and nominated Jackson Liu, a RealDeal FFA member. On the first ballot, the teller's report indicated that no member achieved a majority of votes cast and that Jackson received the least number of votes. On the second ballot, the chair informed the assembly that due to no candidate receiving a majority of votes cast, a re-balloting needs to occur and that the two candidates receiving the most votes in the first round of the election, Elijah and Isabella, are the candidates eligible in the runoff.

Is the Chair correct? Why or why not?

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2) For the office of Vice-President, the Nominating Committee nominated Caleb Jackson and John Haddad. There were no other nominees from the floor. The Teller's Committee Report provided the following report to the Chair that included "write-in" votes for Jackson Liu to be the vice president. The Chair declared John as the elected Vice President.

Did the Chair interpret the Teller's Report correctly?

2024 Teller's Report for Chapter Vice President

Number of Votes Cast:	18
Necessary for Election (majority):	10
Caleb Jackson received:	3
John Haddad received:	5
Jackson Liu received:	10
Illegal Votes Cast:	0

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- 3) Bobby Foor was nominated by the committee to be chapter secretary. Bobby was present at the meeting and did not decline the nomination. Bobby was elected at the April Meeting for the office of Secretary and did not decline the office; however, Bobby resigned immediately after the meeting.

What should the Chapter do for a Chapter Secretary?

Should the Secretary who was in office up to the annual meeting in April continue in office until their successor is elected?

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- 4) For the office of Sentinel, Sofia Hernandez (who also was a sophomore serving on the Nominating Committee) gains recognition and nominates herself. Another member immediately calls a “Point of Order” regarding Sofia’s eligibility for nomination since as a member of the Nominating Committee she had signed the nominating committee report presented early in the meeting nominating Grace O’Malley, “thus agreeing to support the names of the committee’s list of nominees.”

Was the Point of Order well taken?

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- 5) After the election of the Sentinel, a member gains recognition from the chair and moves to elect Diego Ramirez, a chapter member, as Historian because Diego loves history, and the chapter has a need to update its scrapbook and records. The Chair allows the motion, and it is adopted by a majority vote of the members present.

Is this a valid officer election? Why or why not?

2024 Nebraska FFA Parliamentary Procedure Team Problem Key for Questions

- 1) For the Office of President, the Nominating Committee nominated Elijah White and Isabella Kim. A member was recognized and nominated Jackson Liu, a RealDeal FFA member. On the first ballot, the teller's report indicated that no member achieved a majority of votes cast and that Jackson received the least number of votes. On the second ballot, the chair informed the assembly that due to no candidate receiving a majority of votes cast, a re-balloting needs to occur and that the two candidates receiving the most votes in the first round of the election, Elijah and Isabella, are the candidates eligible in the runoff. **Is the Chair correct? Why or why not?**

No, balloting should be conducted as many times as necessary for a candidate to receive a majority of votes and individuals should never be removed from candidacy unless they voluntarily withdraw.

RONR 46:32

Whichever one of the preceding methods of election is used, if any office remains unfilled after the first ballot, the balloting is repeated for that office as many times as necessary to obtain a majority vote for a single candidate. When repeated balloting for an office is necessary, individuals are never removed from candidacy on the next ballot unless they voluntarily withdraw-which they are not obligated to do. 1 The candidate in lowest place may turn out to be a "dark horse" on whom all factions may prefer to agree.

- 2) For the office of Vice-President, the Nominating Committee nominated Caleb Jackson and John Haddad. There were no other nominees from the floor. The Teller's Committee Report provided the following report to the Chair that included "write-in" votes for Jackson Liu to be the vice president. The Chair declared John as the elected Vice President. **Did the Chair interpret the Teller's Report correctly?**

2024 Teller's Report for Chapter Vice President

Number of Votes Cast:	18
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No, Nominations are not necessary when an election is by ballot since each member is free to vote for any eligible person. Jackson is a RealDeal Chapter FFA member and received a majority of votes cast for Vice-President via Write-in.

RONR 46:2

Strictly speaking, nominations are not necessary when an election is by ballot or roll call, since each member is free to vote for any eligible person, whether he has been nominated or not. In most societies, however, it is impractical to proceed to an election without first making nominations. While members are always free to "write in," on a ballot, the name of an eligible person who has not been nominated, or to vote for an eligible non-nominee during a roll-call vote, under normal conditions it is likely that most members will confine their choice to the nominees. Without nominations, voting might have to be repeated many times before a candidate achieved the required majority.

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- 3) Bobby Foor was nominated by the committee to be chapter secretary. Bobby was present at the meeting and did not decline the nomination. Bobby was elected at the April Meeting for the office of Secretary and did not decline the office; however, Bobby resigned immediately after the meeting. **What should the Chapter do for a Chapter Secretary? Should the Secretary who was in office up to the annual meeting in April continue in office until their successor is elected?**

Elections to office become final immediately if the officer elected does not decline. Therefore, the Secretary who was in office up to the annual does not automatically continue. The Chapter Executive Committee would convene to appoint a replacement until an election to fill the vacancy occurs. The election would need to occur before August.

RONR 46:46

***Time at Which an Election Takes Effect.** An election to an office becomes final immediately if the candidate is present and does not decline, or if he is absent but has consented to his candidacy. If he is absent and has not consented to his candidacy, the election becomes final when he is notified of his election, provided that he does not immediately decline. If he does decline, the election is incomplete, and another vote can be taken immediately or at the next meeting without further notice. After an election has become final as stated in this paragraph, it is too late to reconsider (37) the vote on the election.*

- 4) For the office of Sentinel, Sofia Hernandez (who also was a sophomore serving on the Nominating Committee) gains recognition and nominates herself. Another member immediately calls a “Point of Order” regarding Sofia’s eligibility for nomination since as a member of the Nominating Committee she had signed the nominating committee report presented early in the meeting nominating Grace O’Malley, “thus agreeing to support the names of the committee’s list of nominees.” **Was the Point of Order well taken?**

No, the point of order was not well taken unless a special rule of order or policy had been adopted by the organization. Members of the nominating committee are not barred from becoming nominees themselves by the parliamentary authority of RONR 12th.

RONR 46:12

Members of the nominating committee are not barred from becoming nominees for office themselves. To make such a requirement would mean, first, that service on the nominating committee carried a penalty by depriving its members of one of their privileges; and second, that appointment or election to the nominating committee could be used to prevent a member from becoming a nominee.

- 5) After the election of the Sentinel, a member gains recognition from the chair and moves to elect Diego Ramirez, a chapter member, as Historian because Diego loves history, and the chapter has a need to update its scrapbook and records. The Chair allows the motion, and it is adopted by a majority vote of the members present. **Is this a valid officer election? Why or why not?**

No, the election is not valid. Article IV, Section 1 lists the six officers of the chapter and does not include Historian. The parliamentary authority provides principles of interpretation for bylaws and one is that if the bylaws authorize certain things specifically, other things of the same class are thereby prohibited.

RONR 56:68 (4)

4) If the bylaws authorize certain things specifically, other things of the same class are thereby prohibited. There is a presumption that nothing has been placed in the bylaws without some reason for it. There can be no valid reason for authorizing certain things to be done that can clearly be done without the authorization of the bylaws, unless the intent is to specify the things of the same class that may be done, all others being prohibited. Thus, where Article IV, Section 1 of the Sample Bylaws (56:62) lists certain officers, the election of other officers not named, such as a sergeant-at-arms, is prohibited.