

Mountain Plains Library Association Nominating Committee Procedures Manual

Guide to the Nomination and Election Process

I. GETTING READY

The Nominating Committee

The President appoints the chair of the committee. Ideally this will be someone with previous experience on the committee. The committee is composed of one representative from each member state, appointed by the President.

Committee Calendar and Schedule

As soon as the committee is appointed, establish the calendar for the committee. Appointments are usually made as soon as the new officers take office. One of the most important steps the chair of the nominating committee can take is to plan the work for the year. This calendar should be based on when the ballots must be loaded into MemberClicks for electronic voting, so the election results are known before the annual conference takes place.

Develop the calendar in consultation with the Newsletter Editor, Executive Secretary, and Webmaster so candidates can be announced in the Newsletter and on the website in advance of the election.

Develop the calendar working back from the date of the next conference, and include:

- Conference date
- Date by which results are announced. **Results must be announced not less than 6 weeks before the conference.**
- Date on which ballots are due to Webmaster and Executive Secretary
- Date of newsletter in which candidates will be profiled
- Date by which nominating committee will have nominations for officers: President-Elect and Recording Secretary

Important note: It is impossible to go a good job if you don't leave enough time for committee input, making calls to potential candidates, and giving members who are asked time to consider if they can run for office. People need time to think about making a commitment, and it can take several weeks if you have to try several people. Set the schedule and deadlines as soon as you can, and begin your work early so you do not run into a crisis while trying to get the ballot out on time.

Electronic Discussion Group

As soon as the nominating committee is appointed, request that the Executive Secretary set up an electronic mailing list. This list will allow you to contact everyone at once with a message, and all members of the committee can see responses posted to the list.

Contact everyone using the electronic list and be sure they are receiving messages.

Distribute the schedule to the committee on the list. Be sure they know how to access the MemberClicks database to pull up lists of MPLA members from their states. They will need this information to do the work of this committee. Use the mailing list to post questions for discussion, and share names of potential candidates.

II. NOMINATING OFFICERS

Nominations for Officers

The Nominating Committee is responsible for identifying candidates for just two offices – President-elect and Recording Secretary.

Two candidates should be identified for the ballot for each office.

The members of the committee should be asked to identify at least one person from their state for each office, President-elect and Recording Secretary. Committee members, especially those from some states with larger memberships, may be able to offer more than one name, and should be encouraged to do so.

All members of the committee should consult the the MemberClicks directory which contains a list of the MPLA members in their state.

A list of potential candidates should be created and passed along from the previous year. It should include members who were recommended for the ballot, but either not contacted, or who were asked to run but were but unable to do so at this time - but would be interested being on the ballot in the future. Share the list with the committee and get feedback to find out if they believe these are still good choices. Solicit new names to add and prioritize the list for making calls.

Contacting potential candidates

The chair should call the candidates and ask them if they would accept the nomination. Be prepared when you call to:

- Explain the duties of the office
- Provide the appropriate pages from the *MPLA Manual of Procedure*, which includes the Bylaws. This can be sent by fax, but the best option is to refer them to the copy of the manual on the MPLA Web site at

<http://www.mpla.us/documents/procedures/index.html> These pages describe the responsibilities of the position, financial implications for travel, timeline for assuming office, and what support will be available from the Association.

- Have available the schedule of future conferences with dates and places for their information.
- Give them a reasonable amount of time to consider, but to keep on schedule, give them a deadline to respond. Some years several people are asked before two agree to be placed on the ballot. Waiting more than a week for an answer may be more than the process can afford.

Candidate Information Form

Provide those who agree to run with a candidate information form.

An updated copy with current deadlines and “return to” information should be posted and available on the MPLA web site for candidates to access and use. The address is <http://www.mpla.us/committees/nominating/index.html>.

ALL INFORMATION SHOULD BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY by EMAIL.

Pictures of Candidates

Ask candidates who agree to run to provide a current portrait photograph. It will be easier to compose the ballot if they can provide a digital photograph; if not, a scanner will be needed to copy and insert the picture.

So that all candidates are presented equally, pictures should be provided for both candidates for President-elect and Recording Secretary.

To prepare the ballot, the Executive Secretary or Nominating Committee Chair will submit the names, candidate information forms, and digital photos of the candidates to the Webmaster. The Webmaster will post the biographical profiles and the photos on the MPLA web site and link them into Memberclicks. The Webmaster will then use MemberClicks to create an electronic poll assigning the dates for the poll to run and noting which membership group(s) are able to vote in the poll.

Use of the Newsletter

In some years, a list of candidates and the offices for which they are running has appeared in the *MPLA Newsletter* before the election. If the newsletter deadline allows candidates to be profiled, each candidate will submit his/her candidate information form to the Executive Secretary to include in the newsletter. Sometimes the schedule of both the newsletter and the committee may not allow for this announcement.

The Election

The Executive Secretary will make the MemberClicks poll results available to the Nominating Chair for a day to verify the results. The Nominating Committee Chair then notifies the candidates, committee and board members of the results, and announces the winners on the MPLA page and in the Newsletter.

IV. WRAPPING UP and PASSING THE TORCH

Report to the President

The chair of the committee prepares a final report for the President, outlining the work of the committee and including the names of those who were asked to run, the members who did run, and the outcome.

Recommendations from the committee

The final report should include any recommendations that the committee may wish to offer to improve the process. These should also be sent to the President-elect, if action would be required in the following year. Copies of the final report and any recommendations that are made should be given to the next chair of the Nominating Committee.

Things to hand to the incoming committee

The list of potential candidates for officers, the forms for the candidate information, and a copy of the procedures (this item) should be sent to the incoming chair. A copy of the outgoing Chair's calendar should be given to the incoming Chair, along with a history of names of nominees and their responses.