

SAN FRANCISCO REGIONAL MENSA

PROCEDURES AND RULES FOR 2018 OFFICER ELECTIONS

I. Introduction

The San Francisco Regional Mensa ("SFRM") Bylaws call for the election of officers in even-numbered years.¹ The Bylaws mandate the appointment by the Local Secretary of a three-member Elections Committee ("EC"), which shall in turn publish rules and procedures and enforce the provisions of the Bylaws as they relate to the election of officers.² These rules shall be published in the August newsletter.³

Elections Committee 2018

Tony Mazy, Chair
Doug Stetson
Chris Taylor

II. Nominations

- A. Beginning with the announcement in the August newsletter⁴ and ending on September 1st, inclusive, nominations will be accepted for the offices of:
1. Local Secretary (LocSec) /President,
 2. Assistant Local Secretary (Assistant LocSec) /Vice President,
 3. Treasurer,
 4. Scribe/Secretary,
 5. Three (3) Executive Committee Members-at-Large, and
 6. The Ombudsman.
- B. Any nomination received before publication of the August newsletter or after September 1st shall be invalid.
- C. Only members in good standing may be nominated⁵ and nominees must agree in writing to accept nomination.⁶ Members in good standing may nominate themselves.
- D. No person shall seek or hold more than one elected office in SFRM at a time.⁷ If any person is nominated for more than one office, the EC will require the nominee to select and state in writing the single office for which she/he will run.
- E. Nominations must include the following:
1. The name of the nominee,
 2. The office for which the nomination is being placed, and
 3. The nominee's phone number (preferred) or email address.
- F. Nominations will only be accepted in writing,⁸ delivered by email to elections@sfmensa.org, or delivered by U.S. mail to:
- Nominations, c/o Tony Mazy,
P.O. Box 3318
San Ramon, CA, 94583**
- G. A list of nominees to date shall be available upon request to the Chair of the EC.⁹ Requests shall be made to elections@sfmensa.org. The EC shall also, as often as feasible, send lists of nominees to the SFRM-News listserv throughout the month of August.
- H. If only one person is nominated for any office (or if only three people are nominated for the three positions of Member-at-Large), then that/those person(s) shall be declared elected and that contest will not appear on the ballot.¹⁰

III. Campaign Practices

- A. All nominees are entitled to have a statement or platform published in the October Intelligencer.¹¹ The nominee's statement should not exceed 250 words, and the Intelligencer shall publish only the first 250 words that are submitted, and will not edit in any other way. For the purposes of the word count, all words are included, including articles and pronouns.
- B. All nominees are invited to submit a photograph of himself/herself, suitable for publication, in the Intelligencer (i.e., thumbnail picture to go next to the nominee's statement; the editor of the Intelligencer recommends 300 dpi).
- C. The statement and photograph must be received by the EC by 11:59 pm September 4th; by email to elections@sfmensa.org. Any statements/ photographs not received by this time will not be included in the October newsletter.
- D. All members and nominees shall conduct themselves and their campaigns in good faith, and shall refrain from fraud, harassment, bribery, intimidation, or any other means of improper influence of the elections process or outcomes. In cases of any perceived violation of the election rules, the integrity of the elections process, or of any perceived attempt to improperly influence the election through fraud, harassment, bribery, intimidation, or other means, the EC has the final authority and responsibility to investigate in good faith and, if appropriate, censure any member and/or immediately disqualify any nominee, upon a finding of any credible evidence of violation of these rules. Such action(s) shall be reported in the SFRM newsletter.¹²
- Note:** The term "bribery," as mentioned above, shall not include a nominee's paying for a campaign event (such as a party, refreshments, etc.) so long as it is at a function that is advertised in the Intelligencer or SFRM's listservs for attendance by all SFRM members, and that all SFRM members in attendance are welcome to partake of whatever is being provided by the nominee. In other words, if nominees want to throw a party or pay for drinks at a function, that is acceptable, so long as any SFRM member could attend and enjoy the same provisions as all other members with no "quid pro quo" regarding votes.

IV. Balloting Procedures

- A. Ballots shall be published in the October Intelligencer.¹³ A PDF form of the ballot will be made available at www.sfmensa.org for the month of October. All voters must use one of these ballots or a facsimile of one of these ballots;¹⁴ any handwritten or otherwise improvised ballot shall be invalid.
- B. Marking the ballots:
1. Ballots must be marked in ink.
 2. In any contest in which there are only two nominees, voters may indicate their chosen nominee by putting an "X" or a "check" mark or the numeral "1" in the blank next to the name of their chosen nominee, so long as there is only one mark for only one nominee.
 3. In any contest in which there are more than two nominees, preferential voting shall be used. Members may vote for one or more of the nominees listed, in order of preference, using the numbers 1, 2, 3, etc., with the "1" going in the blank next to the voter's first choice, "2" next to the voter's second choice, "3" next to the voter's third choice, and so on.
 4. Members do not need to indicate a preference for all nominees in order for their ballots to be valid, but will not have any un-indicated preferences counted.
 5. Members may vote with either a single "X" or a single "check" mark, in lieu of marking with "1," for a single nominee in any one contest.

6. Members may not mark their ballots with either an "X" or a "check" mark for two or more nominees, with any combination of numbers and non-numeric symbols, or with any repeated or non-sequential numbers, as this does not establish the order of preference intended by the voter.
7. There shall be no write-in votes.¹⁵
- C. Voters must return their ballots in compliance with the following rules:
 1. Enclose only one ballot per envelope. If there is more than one ballot in an envelope, then all ballots in that envelope shall be invalid, as there will be no way to determine whether any or all ballots were cast by eligible voters.
 2. For security reasons, envelopes must be sealed. Any unsealed envelopes and their contents will be invalid.
 3. The upper left corner of the front of the envelope shall contain:
 - a. The voter's printed name,
 - b. The voter's address,
 - c. The voter's Mensa membership number, and
 - d. The voter's **hand-written** signature, in ink.
Note: All information other than the signature may be done by hand, label, or other mechanical means. The signature must be by hand and in ink.
 4. All ballots must be returned, by U.S. mail, to:
Ballot, c/o Tony Mazy
P.O. Box 3318
San Ramon, CA, 94583
5. The deadline for receipt of ballots is October 31.¹⁶ Any ballot received after the close of business October 31 shall be invalid.

V. Counting of Ballots

- A. The EC shall meet to count ballots as soon as feasible after October 31st, but in no case later than the end of the first full weekend in November;¹⁷ in 2018, this will be no later than Sunday, November 4th. The actual time and place of ballot counting shall be published in the October Intelligencer. All SFRM members are invited to attend and observe the counting, but only Elections Committee members may participate in the counting.
- B. During counting of ballots, at least two members of the EC shall be in the presence of the ballots until all valid ballots are counted and the EC has verified the election results.

VI. Validation of Balloting Envelopes

- A. The EC shall examine every balloting envelope received at the indicated balloting location prior to close of balloting to determine the validity of the envelope.
- B. Valid envelopes must:
 1. Be received at the designated location to receive ballots prior to the close of balloting,
 2. Be sealed,
 3. Include, on the upper left corner of the envelope the voter's printed name, address, membership number, and the member's handwritten signature.
- C. Each balloting envelope that does not meet these requirements will be marked "INVALID," set aside without further evaluation, and retained, unopened.
- D. The EC shall further verify that remaining valid balloting envelopes are:
 1. From an SFRM member in good standing, and
 2. No more than one envelope has been received from any one member.
- E. Each balloting envelope that does not meet these requirements will be marked "INVALID," set aside without further evaluation, and be retained, unopened.

VII. Validation of Ballots

- A. The EC will open and examine the contents of remaining valid balloting envelopes, as follows:
 1. Valid envelopes will be stacked and opened address-side-down to ensure the secrecy of each voter's ballot.
 2. An EC member shall extract the contents of the envelope. At least one other EC member in addition to the member opening the envelope shall be present and observe the extraction of the contents, and both members (opener and observer) shall ensure that the content is exactly one ballot.
 3. The valid balloting envelopes shall be put aside together, remaining address-side-down, separate from invalid balloting envelopes.
 4. If the envelope contains anything other than one ballot, the entire contents of the envelope shall be invalidated and shall be secured together, marked "invalid" with heavy marker, placed aside, and retained, uncounted.
Note: This is due to the eligibility check described above; if more than one ballot is returned in an envelope, there is no way to determine whether either or all ballots were cast by eligible voters.
Note: The envelope itself, however, remains "valid" for purposes of tracking balloting.
 5. For all valid balloting envelopes containing exactly one ballot, that ballot shall be regarded as valid and put in a box separate from the envelope to ensure the anonymity of voting.
- B. When all valid envelopes have been opened and all valid ballots extracted, the box of ballots shall be deemed "valid ballots." The EC shall count the number of valid ballots and will include that number in its report.¹⁸

VIII. Vote Counting Procedure.

- A. The EC will count the ballot votes for each contest separately.
- B. For each contested contest, the EC will evaluate all ballot votes which indicate a member's valid voting choices for that contest, in the following manner:
 1. For all contests:
 - a. At least two EC members shall examine each ballot to determine whether the vote(s) in that contest is/are valid, i.e., the ballot has appropriate mark(s) indicating vote(s) for particular nominee(s) in each contest,
 - b. All marks shall be in ink,
 - c. The marks may be sequential numbers, from "1" up to as many as the total number of nominees for that contest. Except as provided below, any other mark shall render the ballot vote invalid for that contest:
 - (1) In the case of a contest with only two nominees, the preferred nominee may be marked with a "1," a "check" mark, or an "X," so long as only one nominee is indicated.

- (2) Any ballot marked with a single "X" or a single "check" mark for a single nominee will be regarded as marked with a "1" for that nominee and no preference for any other(s).
 - (3) If any ballot is marked in any contest with either an "X" or a "check" mark for two or more nominees, with any combination of numbers and non-numeric symbols, or with any repeated numbers, the EC shall regard such ballot vote(s) as invalid or spoiled, as the EC cannot determine the order of preference intended by the voter for that contest. Similarly, preference votes for nominees marked with non-sequential numbers shall not be counted, although this does not invalidate those preference votes marked with sequential numbers beginning with "1."
2. For contests where only two nominees are running for a contested office, the nominee receiving a majority of the votes cast shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie, the winner shall be decided immediately by a coin toss.¹⁹
 3. For contests where more than two nominees are running for a contested office, the preferential voting system shall be used:²⁰
 - a. For each such contest, the EC shall sort all valid ballots into groups for each nominee based on the numeric first preference on each ballot for that contest.
 - b. When all ballots have been sorted, at least two EC members shall count the ballot votes for each nominee in that contest. The EC members counting the ballot votes must agree on the vote counts or they shall count again.
 - c. If one nominee has a majority of the valid ballot votes cast in that contest, the EC shall declare that nominee the winner.
 - d. If no nominee wins a majority of the valid ballot votes cast for that contest, the EC shall initiate another round of vote counting by eliminating the nominee with the smallest number of ballot votes, and distributing that nominee's ballots among remaining nominees based on the next preference indicated by the voter of each ballot for the disqualified nominee.
 - e. After the redistribution of the ballots originally belonging to the eliminated nominee, the EC shall again count the number of ballot votes for each nominee. If one has a majority of valid ballots, the EC shall declare this nominee the winner. If not, the EC shall again eliminate the nominee with the fewest ballots and distribute that nominee's ballots among the remaining nominees according to the next preference indicated by voter of each ballot for the disqualified nominee. This process shall continue until one nominee has won a majority of the ballot votes.²¹
 - f. In the event that there is a tie among two or more but not all of the viable nominees for the smallest number of ballot votes in any round, the EC shall eliminate all the nominees tied for the smallest number of votes and redistribute all their ballots among remaining viable nominees as described above.
 - g. In the event of a tie involving all viable nominees, the EC shall break the tie by:
 - (1) Determining which nominee had the most "first preference - 1" votes.
 - (2) In the event the tie remains, the EC shall then add the number of "second preference - 2" votes to each nominee's total and so on until the tie is broken and the EC identifies the nominee with the least ballots. The EC shall eliminate that nominee and continue the process into the next round. If, after all preference rounds have been considered, a tie remains, then the winner it shall be decided immediately by a coin toss.
 4. For contests where more than three nominees are competing for the three Member-at-Large seats, the EC will use the following procedure:
 - a. At least two EC members shall examine the ballot to determine whether the ballot votes are valid for that contest and count those ballot votes as above in Section 3, but also according to the following:
 - b. In the event that more than one nominee ties for having the lowest number of ballot votes, the EC shall eliminate all the nominees so tied, and distribute all their ballots among the remaining viable nominees unless doing so would reduce the number of viable nominees below the number of seats in contest.
 - c. In any round of counting where eliminating all nominees tied for having the lowest number of ballot votes reduces the number of viable nominees below the number of seats in contest, ties for nominees with the lowest number of ballot votes shall be broken by counting the number of occurrences that each of the tied nominee is a voter's first choice. If there remains a tie, then it shall be broken by adding the occurrences of second choices for each nominee. If there remains a tie, then it shall be decided immediately by a coin toss.
- C. The EC shall declare the election results, as follows:
1. No later than five (5) business days after the close of the election, the EC shall report the validated results to the Local Secretary and the newsletter Editor in writing.
 2. The report shall include:
 - (a) The names of the winners for each contests, including those won by single-nominee default,
 - (b) The final vote totals for each nominee in each contested election. Preferentially-eliminated nominees shall have their vote totals reported as of the round in which they were eliminated.
 - (c) The count of valid envelopes, invalid envelopes, valid ballots, and invalid ballots.²²

IX. Complaints Regarding Election

- A. The EC shall accept formal written complaints regarding the conduct of campaigns, election processes, or specific ballot validation or counting issues for up to five (5) business days after the vote count.
- B. The EC shall respond to such complaints within five (5) business days after receipt. The EC has final authority and responsibility to arbitrate disagreements between nominees and rule on all challenges.

X. Conclusion of Election

Thirty days after the close of polls (November 30) and once all formal complaints are resolved, whichever is later, the EC shall issue a final certification of election results and destroy all ballots, envelopes, and vote count materials.²³

NOTES

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| 1. SFRM Bylaws, dated January 11, 2010 ("Bylaws"), Art. V., § 2. | 13. Bylaws, Art. V., § 1.B.v. |
| 2. Bylaws, Art. V., § 1.A. | 14. Bylaws, Art. V., § 3.A. |
| 3. Bylaws, Art. V., § 1.B.iv. | 15. Bylaws, Art. V., § 3.B. |
| 4. Bylaws, Art. V., § 2. | 16. Bylaws, Art. V., § 3.A. |
| 5. Bylaws, Art. IV., § 1.D. | 17. Bylaws, Art. V., § 3.E. |
| 6. Bylaws, Art. V., § 1.B.ii. | 18. Bylaws, Art. V., § 1.B.vi. |
| 7. Bylaws, Art. IV., § 1.E. | 19. Bylaws, Art. V., § 3.C. |
| 8. Bylaws, Art. V., § 1.B.ii. | 20. Bylaws, Art. V., § 3.D. |
| 9. Bylaws, Art. V., § 2. | 21. Bylaws, Art. V., § 3.A. |
| 10. Bylaws, Art. V., § 3.B. | 22. Bylaws, Art. V., § 1.B.vi. |
| 11. Bylaws, Art. V., § 1.B.iii. | 23. Bylaws, Art. V., § 3.I. |
| 12. Bylaws, Art. V., § 3.H. | |