

# Standing Rules for Virtual Meetings

As adopted by the Executive Board on 27 April 2023.

## Preamble

The 34th District Democrats strive for inclusivity, accessibility, and transparency in all of our activities. These Standing Rules have been drafted and approved to establish operating procedures related to virtual meetings of the Organization in order to allow Officers, appointees, and members to coordinate, facilitate, and execute the duties and privileges of their position. Through appropriate and sufficient software, we use virtual meetings as an alternative to in-person meetings to allow full, active participation in meetings and enable and encourage civic engagement through our organization.

## Article I: Purpose and Scope

Section 1: These Standing Rules for Virtual Meetings (“Rules”) are subject to the Bylaws of the 34th District Democrats (“Bylaws”).

Section 2: These rules shall not specify a brand of software or other tool, nor systems to be used. Instead, it shall define the roles and responsibilities of persons involved, outline guidelines for virtual meeting software and systems, and define the procedures for facilitation, participation, and voting pursuant to those guidelines and the Bylaws.

Section 3: These Rules shall be enforced whenever the organization meets virtually and participation or voting by any member is required. A virtual meeting is permitted whenever virtual meeting software is available and the parties involved in facilitating the meeting are knowledgeable in its functions. These Rules do not apply to webinars, candidate events, promotional events, meetings of Committees or Membership Policy Caucuses, or similar events and meetings where participation or voting are not governed by the Bylaws.

## Article II: Roles and Responsibilities

Section 1: The Chair is responsible for coordinating, facilitating, and executing these rules and the processes and systems outlined herein. The Chair may delegate any of these responsibilities to any Officer, Board member, PCO, Precinct Coordinator, or other Voting Member of the Organization. Any person assuming responsibilities included in these Rules must be made familiar with these Rules and the Bylaws.

Section 2: The Membership and Hospitality Committee shall work with the Precinct Leadership Committee to maintain a current member list with the appropriate labels assigned to those who have been elected or appointed as PCOs or Precinct Coordinators, Voting Members, and Non-Voting Members.

Section 3: The Chair shall organize an Ad Hoc Tally Committee in accordance with the Bylaws, which shall have access to and be familiar with the member list as described in Section 2 of this article.

## Article III: Virtual Meetings

Section 1: The Chair, at their discretion, may decide to hold any meeting as a “virtual meeting”. Reasons for doing so include, but are not limited to, in-person meetings becoming cost-prohibitive, impractical, impossible, or unsafe. Virtual meetings shall have no physical meeting location and allow no in-person participation. If virtual meeting software is unavailable, or if the parties involved in facilitating the meeting are not knowledgeable in the necessary functions of remote participation software, the Board may, with a simple majority vote, choose to reschedule a meeting until these conditions are met. If a meeting is rescheduled, notice shall be issued in accordance with the Bylaws.

Section 2: To the extent possible, the rights and privileges of remote participants shall be identical to in-person participants. If ever this is not possible, the limitations of remote participation shall be made clear to the membership in a notice published at least 10 days prior to a meeting at which remote participation is available for use.

## Article IV: General Rules

Section 1: Remote participants shall be considered “present” when they are able to observe meeting activity through the approved virtual meeting software and communicate with other participants directly and in real-time. Direct, real-time communication may be by reading closed captions, sending messages via chat or messenger function, or any form of signed, written, or spoken language provided the method adequately communicates information necessary to the person’s participation.

Section 2: Remote participants considered present shall be counted for the purpose of determining a quorum and shall possess the same rights and privileges as in-person participants.

**Section 3:** If a remote participant can no longer be defined as present in accordance with Section 1 of this article, they shall no longer be considered present and may not participate in the meeting until their presence is resumed. If the participant's presence is interrupted due to an inadvertent or otherwise mistaken action by a person charged with facilitating the meeting, the participant may be allowed to participate in any business missed upon their return provided such business has not concluded and their participation would not have impacted any decision made in their absence. This rule applies to participation and voting as defined in Article VI and Article VII.

**Section 4:** Communication channels within the virtual meeting system shall be considered extensions of the meeting space. Thus, interactions within these channels shall be governed by the Bylaws. Participants shall refrain from using communication channels unless they:

1. Are seeking recognition from the facilitator of the meeting;
2. Have been recognized by the facilitator of the meeting and currently hold the floor;
3. Are making a motion, seconding a motion, or raising a point of order;
4. Responding to a question or prompt at the direction of the facilitator of the meeting; or
5. Are objecting or calling for unanimous consent.

**Section 5:** When possible, remote participants should avoid sharing connections or log-in information for the virtual meeting system. Remote participants who share connections may be prohibited from using certain electronic ballot mechanisms, as some mechanisms may not support the casting of multiple ballots from the same connection.

## **Article V: Facilitation**

**Section 1:** Prior to the meeting, the Chair shall identify the members of the Ad Hoc Tally Committee appointed in accordance with Article II Section 3. The Chair shall move to confirm the appointees and, if seconded, call for a vote to confirm the appointees. If the appointees receive the support of a simple majority of the membership, they shall be considered confirmed. The method of voting in this section shall be selected at the Chair's discretion.

**Section 2:** Any remote participant using a communication channel without meeting the requirements enumerated in Article IV Section 4 may be muted or have their communication otherwise disabled by the Chair or facilitator. If the issue persists, the person may be removed from the meeting.

**Section 3:** The Chair or facilitator may disable any or all communication channels at any time and for any reason.

## **Article VI: Participation**

**Section 1:** Remote participants shall use a non-verbal communication channel or cues to request recognition. The facilitator may recognize remote participants directly or delegate to another the responsibility of notifying the facilitator when a request for recognition has been received.

**Section 2:** Motions shall only be heard from those recognized and occupying the floor. Remote participants may also make motions through written communication channels which will be announced and read aloud to the meeting by the person making the motion, once recognized, or by the facilitator.

**Section 3:** Following a motion, the facilitator will call for a second. Those wishing to second a motion should wait until the call is made and use a non-verbal method to indicate their intention to second. The facilitator will recognize one person for the purpose of confirming their seconding of the motion.

**Section 4:** Remote participants shall be instructed on how to participate throughout the duration of a meeting. The methods of participation may vary depending on the agenda, structure, and formality of the meeting.

## **Article VII: Voting**

**Section 1:** A virtual meeting system may define multiple electronic ballot mechanisms with various tradeoffs between speed, complexity, security, and other factors. Unless otherwise specified, the choice of voting mechanism shall be at the facilitator's discretion. Prior to taking a vote, the facilitator shall indicate the mechanism to be used and summarize directions for using the selected mechanism.

**Section 2:** The Chair shall ensure that the time for remote participants to cast ballots is reasonable for the mechanism and must precede each vote by defining the time limit. If a remote participant is unable to vote via electronic ballot, they must notify the Chair of their circumstance and will be allowed to vote by roll call. If roll call votes are implemented, they shall occur following the closure of the polls for electronic ballots, but prior to the announcement of results from those ballots. Alternative voting methods (e.g. text-to-vote) may be implemented only if it allows the eligible voter to directly communicate their vote to the Chair or a member of the Tally Committee.

**Section 3:** No voting results shall be announced prior to the conclusion of all methods of voting.

## Article VIII: Remote Participation Systems

Section 1: A virtual meeting system shall:

1. Enable direct, real-time communication amongst remote participants;
2. Allow audio, video, and text participation using any major web browser without the installation of additional software or hardware;
3. Allow audio participation via telephone;
4. Include closed captioning;
5. Allow remote participants to control their transmission of audio or video and not allow a facilitator to override this control when the participant has been duly recognized by the facilitator;
6. Allow for the recording of meetings and publishing of recordings to external sources; and
7. Allow facilitators to monitor attendance and participation, selectively disable and enable communication channels, and remove participants from the meeting.

Section 2: A virtual meeting system must not require remote participants to pay a fee, sign up for a subscription or account, or otherwise submit personal information for commercial use.

## Article IX: Electronic Ballot Mechanisms

Section 1: Virtual meetings must include at least one electronic ballot mechanism through which remote participants may cast ballots on votes. At least one electronic ballot mechanism provided must support credential verification. If multiple options are available, the choice of which to use is at the discretion of the Chair or facilitator.

Section 2: Electronic ballot mechanisms must allow access to a durable record of votes cast.

## Article X: Remote Participation Guide

The Board has adopted this [Remote Participation Guide](#) which outlines the requirements and instructions for attending, participating, and voting in meetings of the Organization. The Remote Participation Guide shall be updated whenever a new remote participation system is selected or changes to the current system are deemed by the Chair sufficient to require update.