

## Special Rules of Procedure

This information sheet will explain the Proposed Special Rules of Procedure for our virtual 2020 Synod Assembly. The Northeastern Ohio Synod has always had Special Rules of Procedure at each synod assembly. Special Rules of Procedure are either changes from, restrictions to, or additional rules that can be used when the standard parliamentary rules in *Robert's Rules of Order* do not meet the needs of the assembly. For our Assembly, these rules seldom change significantly from one year to the next, usually only in minor ways, such as the specific deadlines for submitting budget amendments or resolutions.

This year, because of the virtual assembly, the Synod Executive Committee has recommended several more significant changes to the Rules of Procedure. This video is a general discussion about those changes, and an explanation of why they have been proposed. The Special Rules of Procedure will be voted on at the assembly, and will require a two-thirds vote for adoption.

Please refer to pages 9-11 in the pre-assembly material for a full listing of all the Rules. The pertinent provisions of the governing documents for the Bishop Election continue to page 13. If you have questions about any of them, please send an email to [assembly@neos-elca.org](mailto:assembly@neos-elca.org) and you will be contacted with more information.

The format that has been used for many years divides these special rules into categories. For consistency, this video follows that order – although some of the more important issues arise in later sections, so please be sure to watch this entire video for full information.

The first change is in I.D. This is an extension of the usual ability of the Chair to move items on the agenda around as necessary. With the virtual assembly, it is possible for people to temporarily leave the meeting, and without the ability to hear announcements in the Knight Center, not be aware of when a vote is being held. This rule allows the Chair to announce a specific time for a vote, and to declare that time as a Special Order, a parliamentary process that allows an action to take place at that specific time. This will provide notice to voting members that they should be prepared to vote at that specific time. This can be used, for example, to adjust the time for the votes for bishop, to minimize the chance that someone inadvertently misses a significant vote.

This year, you cannot walk to the nearest microphone to raise an issue, or go to the Assembly office in the lobby for a form to submit a motion. Thus, several of the differences relate to electronic submission of proposals for action. The first of these changes is in Section I.E., which is a simple statement that motions will be submitted electronically according to the instructions provided, instead of the traditional submission of hard copy to the secretary during the meeting.

The Credentials Report will also be different this year. Because we had to finalize the list of voting members well in advance of the assembly to provide it to our technology vendor, the Credentials Committee will simply report the number of members authorized to receive credentials as those in attendance. The final minutes will contain information about the number of voting members who joined the meeting or voted.

Rule II.A. provides a different process for nominations. In previous years, the chair would call for nominations from the floor as each elected position is announced. Instead of following that process, which would be awkward and time-consuming in a virtual format, we are requesting that anyone wishing to make a nomination from the floor for *any* office other than bishop (for which there are other procedures) submit that nomination electronically as soon as possible after the assembly is called to order and before the first general ballot. This will help control the amount of time to organize and process those nominations during the assembly, and allow the process of forming a final slate of candidates to proceed more easily, so that voting can begin promptly. Please review the slate of nominees in the pre-assembly material, and if you wish to make a floor nomination, consult with the potential nominee for their approval, and prepare your submission. Technically, floor nominations are not acceptable before the assembly is called to order, so please have them ready to submit as soon as we are called to order, but do not submit them too early.

Rule III.A. provides for a date before the assembly convenes for submission of budget change proposals. Proposed changes to the budget must be submitted by Noon on Friday, September 4<sup>th</sup>. Since most of the finance committee members will not be present at the Knight Center, this advance date is necessary so that there can be adequate review of suggestions to make a recommendation to the assembly when the vote on the 2021-2022 budget is taken. Please consult the budget proposal in the pre-assembly materials and submit a proposal electronically to [assembly@neos-elca.org](mailto:assembly@neos-elca.org) as soon as you have formulated it (if you have questions before the deadline, please also email them to [assembly@neos-elca.org](mailto:assembly@neos-elca.org)).

Similarly, the new proposed rule, IV.B, results from the virtual assembly schedule. There were no proposed resolutions submitted for the original June assembly before the deadline date, so that date remains in effect, and no general resolutions will be accepted. Normally, resolutions of an *urgent* nature which could not be submitted until after that deadline due to changes in the church or the world would be considered by the Reference and Counsel Committee for possible addition to the agenda. However, again, not all of these people will be at the Knight Center, so to avoid rushed consideration, we are recommending that only items of an *emergency* nature, as determined by that Committee, be eligible for floor consideration. All other submissions will be referred to the synod council. We certainly recognize that there is concern over many issues that have arisen in society since March, on several cultural and

medical fronts, but we simply do not have time in this tightly scheduled assembly to have the full discussion many of these issues merit. The synod will find other methods of dealing with such issues, and your input, whether through a submitted/referred resolution or through direct communication to the synod staff and synod council, will be an important part of that process. There are clearly needs that will need to be discussed in our synod in serious forums.

The new provision V. is enabling actions to allow for the use of the remote polling methods for the ballots. *Robert's Rules* specifically requires that such a motion be enacted by the assembly to allow for remote voting; without this adoption, all remote votes would need to be openly recorded by name, so this allows the secrecy of the ballot to be maintained.

These are a number of significant differences from our usual routines. Please also see some of the other videos, on various other procedural operations. If you have additional questions about any of the Special Rules of Procedure, again please email [assembly@neos-elca.org](mailto:assembly@neos-elca.org) . Thank you for your faithful service as a voting member to this important, and novel, virtual Synod Assembly.