



Annual Membership Meeting
Sunday, November 12, 2023, 6pm CT
in person - Hyatt Regency, New Orleans

Attendees: 41 attendees in person

[Accompanying powerpoint presentation](#)

1.) Meeting called to order at 6:31pm (Board President Julie Ratekin)

2.) Approval of Agenda

- Agenda shared
- Apology for minutes from last year's annual meeting not being available; were with a former staff member who was traveling at time of meeting, unable to send.
- Immediate motion was made to suspend current rules as minutes showing the change of Bylaws from the 2022 Annual Meeting regarding eligibility of Vice President nominees were not available to membership.
- Motion to suspend agenda items 3 and 8, pertaining to the approval of minutes from the 2022 Annual Meeting and the Election of Officers. (Suggested by Julie Ratekin)
 - Motion moved by Jimiyu Evans and seconded by Cathy Nye
 - Discussion:
 - Do we need a quorum of membership? (Answer: No)
 - Member Michael Abshar challenged the bylaws change, suggesting that the bylaws change is not in effect if the minutes from the past meeting are not approved.
 - Board member Michael Santos requested to know the legal basis for the previous member's claim.
 - Member Mike Hamon (?) said the email for nominations was sent out to all members, contradicting the bylaws change that the Vice President nominee must be a current member of the Board.
 - Member Cathy Nye requested that we move forward with the motion on the table: Strike items 3 and 8 (Approval of minutes and Election of Officers) from the agenda and move forward with the rest of the meeting.

- Member Danielle Jones stated that the bylaws were approved at the last Annual Membership Meeting and have been signed by the previous secretary (Ms. Jones herself) and the Board President (Julie Ratekin) and filed as official, so the approval of the minutes should not hold up the election.
 - Member Nicole La'Mnwah (?) asked if there was even a challenge to the Vice President nominees.
 - It was shared that Michael Abshar, a member who approved the bylaws change at the previous Annual Membership meeting, submitted an application for VP and was now opposing the bylaws change based on the minutes not being available.
 - Member Mike Hamon shared again that the confusion about the election came about because the call for nominations was sent to all members without the caveat that the Vice President nominee be a member of the board.
 - It was shared that even though the email went out to all members without that caveat, only 1 nomination was submitted, that of Michael Abshar.
- Jimiyu Evans removed his motion and suggested an alternative motion: Allow for the review of the officially approved bylaws from the 2022 Annual Meeting and strike the vote on the 2022 Annual Meeting minutes (Agenda item 3) so the election can move forward.
 - Motion by Jimiyu Evans, seconded by Cathy Nye
 - Discussion:
 - Member Michael Abshar opposed the motion, suggesting that the change in the bylaws would not be formalized without the approval of the minutes and requested that legal representation be present at the meeting.
 - Vote (raise of hands) to approve the motion as suggested and amended:
 - 33 Ayes
 - 4 Opposed
 - 4 Abstentions
 - More general discussion occurred in the room, but due to the continuous objections by two members in the room, the motion was suspended.
- Board President Julie Ratekin suggested a motion to suspend the membership meeting until further notice. Legal consultation will be sought and the Annual Membership meeting will be held at a future date to finish the business of the Board.
 - Motion by Julie Ratekin, seconded by Jolanda Burton(?)
 - Vote:
 - 33 Ayes
 - 5 Opposed
 - 2 Abstentions

7.) Adjournment - 7:03 pm CT