

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Voting Mechanism for Executive Board Election

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

To approve an electronic voting system for the Executive Board Election

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

Julius C. Jefferson, Jr. ALA President-elect jjefferson@ala.org

CONTACT PERSON:

Julius C. Jefferson, Jr. ALA President-elect jjefferson@ala.org

DRAFT OF MOTION:

To approve an electronic voting system for the Executive Board Election

DATE: November 8, 2019

BACKGROUND:

Traditionally, Executive Board elections are held during Midwinter via paper ballots. ALA President-elect Jefferson is requesting board approval to move forward with changing the voting mechanism from paper to electronic for the Executive Board Election.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.

Currently, the process is that immediately following the Executive Board Candidate Forum at Midwinter, paper ballots are available for pick up and Councilors are given approximately 5 hours (1:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.) to pick up and submit their paper ballots. Results are then announced the next day at Council III.

There are two proposals for consideration:

Option A: Transition the mechanism to vote from paper to electronic during Midwinter.

Option B: Follow the same procedure as the President-elect, Treasurer (if applicable) and Councilors-at-Large election. We would place the Executive Board candidates on the electronic spring ballot for Councilors to vote.

Table 1 outlines the process flow for each of these options.

The proposed options address:

- 1) **Accessibility.** This would allow *all* Councilors to participate in the election, rather than only Councilors who are able to physically attend Midwinter. Virtual councilors will have access to candidate biographical information and the Executive Board Candidate Forum.
- 2) **Alleviate staff resources and volunteer time.**
 - a. We would no longer need Tellers to count and manually tally the paper ballots.
 - b. There would no longer be the need for Councilors to stand in long lines to receive paper ballots nor to return to the Council room to pick up or cast their paper ballot.
 - c. Mitigates errors on ballot and re-voting.
- 3) **Sustainability.** In support of ALA's commitment to sustainability, we are continuously looking for new ways to decrease our carbon footprint.
- 4) **Transition.** As we transition to a more digitized environment, we are slowly introducing Councilors to this environment.

In addition, option B address:

- 5) **Review period.** This would allow the same amount of time to consider Executive Board candidates as President-elect, Treasurer (if applicable) and Councilors-at-Large candidates. Currently, at Midwinter, Councilors have approximately 5 hours to read the bios (while attending sessions) to consider and vote. If we placed the Executive Board candidates on the spring ballot, then Councilors will have a 3-week period to consider and vote.
- 6) **Consistency.** This process will be consistent with the President-elect, Treasurer, and Councilors-at-Large election process.

There was some discussion that this needed to be addressed by a membership group, specifically the Task Force on Online Deliberation and Voting. Please note the charge of this task force:

Resolved, that the American Library Association, on behalf of its members:

1. *directs the ALA President to appoint a task force that includes, among others, the ALA Parliamentarian in an advisory capacity and a member of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, with the following charge:*
 - a. *Explore options and develop a procedure to facilitate online deliberation and voting for Council outside of the ALA Annual Conferences or Midwinter Meetings; and*
 - b. *Review the ALA Constitution and Bylaws to determine if the current guidelines meet the complexities of online deliberation and voting; and*

- c. *Report findings and recommendations to Council at the 2019 ALA Annual conference in Washington, DC.*

As Option A concerns a vote during Annual or Midwinter Council meetings, and based on the charge of the task force, this proposal is not within the scope of this task force. Therefore, board approval is sufficient to make this procedural change. In the effort to be a modern association, more inclusive, and this is a change the Governance Office can implement at this upcoming Midwinter, then this proposal can move forward. There are no bylaw implications for this procedural change.

ALA President-elect Jefferson is requesting to move forward with Option A: Transition the mechanism to vote from paper to electronic during Midwinter.

Table 1: Step by Step Process for Option A and Option B

Current Process	Proposed Process	
	Option A <i>(same process as the paper ballot at Midwinter, but done electronically)</i>	Option B <i>(same election process as the President-elect, Treasurer-if applicable and Councilor-at-Large)</i>
Executive Board Forum at Midwinter	Executive Board Forum at Midwinter	Executive Board Forum at Midwinter
Immediately following the candidate forum, paper ballots are available for pick up for vote in the Council room between 1:15-6:00 p.m.	Immediately following the candidate forum, the Governance/Executive Office will open the election to vote electronically. This would allow all Councilors to participate, including virtually.	The Executive Board candidates will be placed on the spring ballot along with the President-elect, Treasurer (if applicable), and Councilor-at-Large.
Councilors must vote and submit/return their paper ballot by 6:00 p.m. in the Council room that same day	Councilors will receive an e-mail with a link to vote between 1:15-6:00 p.m.	Councilors will receive an e-mail with a link to vote and will be given a 3-week period to review and vote.
Tellers will gather the ballots and tally the votes after the 6:00 p.m. deadline	The Governance/Executive Office will close the election. A report is generated and will be certified by the Tellers.	The Governance/Executive Office will close the election. A report is generated and will be certified by the Election Committee
The Governance/Executive Office will call each candidate and share the results that evening	The Governance/Executive Office will call each candidate and share the results that evening	The Governance/Executive Office will call each candidate and share results
Executive Board Election results are announced the next day at the Council III Meeting	Executive Board Election results are announced at the Council III Meeting	Executive Board Election results are announced via press release - similar to President-elect, Treasurer (if applicable) and Councilors at Large