

## Agenda Review Subcommittee Process

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Agenda Review Subcommittee (ARS) is to facilitate the development of well-crafted items for inclusion on the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) Agenda and to facilitate the efficient functioning of the ABM.

### **Submission of Agenda Items:**

Items can be submitted any time of the year. However there are deadlines for inclusion on any one given year's ABM Agenda.

Items can be submitted to the FWS office or directly to the Agenda Editor between ABMs.

For an item to receive ARS consideration, it must be submitted on such submission form developed for this purpose, or provide all the pertinent information identified on such submission form.

The item Submitter must be clearly identified, along with valid contact information as deemed appropriate for this purpose. Each item must be submitted by an S.L.A.A. member, or if not a member of the Fellowship, then a member of the Conference, Lone Groups, Intergroups, Conference Committees or the Board of Trustees. Members of the Conference who are not members of the Fellowship might include FWS office staff, members of the BOT, and/or others as may be determined by future Conferences.

Incomplete submissions will be returned to the Submitter, with a note that it does not meet the criteria for consideration. An item can be modified to satisfy the requirement for ARS consideration and can be resubmitted.

### **Liaison between ARS and the Submitter:**

The ARS will designate a member to serve as ARS Liaison to the Submitter of each item. The ARS Liaison will facilitate communication between the ARS and the respective Submitter throughout the process and will, as applicable, help the Submitter correct incomplete submissions, eliminate reasons that caused the ARS to not further review the item, make revisions to the item and otherwise facilitate the development of well-crafted items for inclusion on the ABM Agenda.

### **Submitters' Key:**

The ABM Agenda does not identify any Submitter, instead assigning a number to each Submitter of an item on the ABM Agenda. The ARS prepares a key that identifies each

## Agenda Review Subcommittee Process

numbered Submitter (using first name and last initial for any individual). This Submitters' Key is not circulated to the Conference until after all items on the ABM Agenda have been addressed at the ABM, in keeping with the Tradition to "place principles before personalities."

### **Preliminary Review:**

Though the emphasis of the ARS Process is designed to facilitate the placement of items onto the ABM Agenda, the ARS will first consider whether or not an item is one or more of the following:

1. Motion or IFD to create, produce, or approve literature where the literature in question has not gone through the Conference Literature Committee review and approval process;
2. Motion or IFD to take an action that is already being taken, including repackaging existing Conference Approved Literature;
3. Motion or IFD containing date-specific information, where the date has passed and was an essential portion of the item;
4. Motion or IFD which cannot be enforced;
5.
  - a. Motion the goal of which is identical to a Motion or portion of a Motion that was defeated or withdrawn after being brought to the floor at the immediately previous ABM (Exception: literature approved and submitted by the Conference Literature Committee may be brought back to the next ABM);
  - b. IFD the subject of which is identical to an IFD or portion of an IFD that was brought to the floor at the two immediately previous ABMs (Exception: draft literature submitted as an IFD may be brought back to subsequent ABMs);
6. Motion or IFD submitted to the Conference that would be more appropriately addressed by another body such as the BOT, a particular Conference Committee, or FWS (not including circumstances relating to Article V, Section 4, of the By-laws where the BOT is seeking input regarding an item that is otherwise within its sole purview).

If the item is one or more of the foregoing, the item will not be placed onto the ABM Agenda and there will be no further review of the item under this ARS Process, subject to the Appeal procedure as described below. This decision is not to be based on committee members' personal opinions or preferences.

The decision that the item will not be placed onto the ABM Agenda and there will be no further review of the item under this ARS Process must have a majority vote of the members of the ARS voting or abstaining on that item. One member may never constitute a majority. A majority vote is unanimity, or 2 out of 3 (whether the third member votes no or abstains), or 3 out of 5 (whether either or both of the others vote no or abstain) or 4 out of 5 (whether the fifth member votes no or abstains). To assure that there is an odd number of possible votes on an item, the ARS may designate one member to sit out a

particular vote.

**Motions and Items for Discussion from the Board of Trustees:**

Motions and IFDs submitted by the Board of Trustees must be placed onto the ABM Agenda by the ARS. However, the ARS may offer the BOT its opinion and make a request for possible revision or withdrawal of a BOT Motion or IFD guided by the ARS Process.

**Further Review for Acceptance or Requests for Revision of Received Items:**

Questions for the ARS to ask regarding each item receiving further review before deciding whether to include the item as is or send it back to the Submitter with a request for revision:

1. Is the item's goal already effectively accomplished by a Motion previously adopted by the Conference;
2. Is the item's goal identical to a Motion or portion of a Motion already included in the ABM Agenda for the current year;
3. Is the item best combined with another item, at which time the ARS can suggest teamwork between multiple Submitters of items;
4. Has the window of time in which an item's goal already passed as of the time of the submission, or will it pass before the item can be voted upon by the Conference;
5. Does the item's goal exceed the scope of authority of the service entity expected to exercise such authority;
6. Does the item contain names of people, places or things; dates; times; or other specifics that are not integral to the effectiveness of the discussion item or execution of the Motion (Integral to means central to and necessary for.);
7. Does the item contain date-specific information, where the date is not an essential portion of the item;
8. Does the item assume previous agreement, action or processes that may not be the case;
9. Is the item unclear, confusing, vague, ambiguous, or in some other way not comprehensible to the ARS as a whole;
10. Does the item fail to clearly identify implementation of the decision, at least at a conceptual level that can be developed by the Conference, the Board of Trustees, and/or the FWS Office as delegated by the Board of Trustees;
11. Does the Motion fail to respect the right of the Board of Trustees to determine the method of execution of Fellowship-wide priorities (nonetheless, priorities can be set by the Fellowship as a whole through the Conference per Traditions Two and Nine.);
12. Is there an insufficient body of supporting or background information included for the Conference to make an adequately informed decision or comment on the item (per Tradition Two.);
13. Is the item longer than necessary and can be trimmed considerably without losing

## Agenda Review Subcommittee Process

effectiveness, scope, or understandability;  
14. Would the item more effectively be combined with other items.

These are subjective elements, which will invariably be interpreted differently by individuals. The ARS members are trusted servants, and should be accorded that trust in accordance with the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts. ARS members may consider other elements in lieu of, or in addition to, these suggested elements, so long as such elements are chosen by group conscience of the entire ARS. The ARS will objectively evaluate items in the form submitted. The ARS shall not research the history and merits of an item.

### **Acceptance of an Item without Change:**

Answers of “No” to those 14 Questions will point toward accepting the item without change onto the ABM Agenda while answers of “Yes” will point toward making a request for revision. Nevertheless, there is no formula for this decision and an item may be accepted without change despite the ARS having answered one or more Questions with a “Yes,” just as the ARS may request a revision based on elements not addressed in the 14 Questions.

For an item to be accepted without change onto the ABM Agenda, the item must have a majority vote of the members of the ARS voting or abstaining on that item. One member may never constitute a majority. A majority vote is unanimity, or 2 out of 3 (whether the third member votes no or abstains) or 3 out of 5 (whether either or both of the others vote no or abstain) or 4 out of 5 (whether the fifth member votes no or abstains). To assure that there is an odd number of possible votes on an item, the ARS may designate one member to sit out a particular vote. A majority vote to accept an item without change will result in 1) adding the item to the ABM Agenda without change, and 2) inclusion of a note on the right side of the ABM Agenda stating: *This item was accepted without change onto the Agenda by a vote of x-x-x.*

When an item does not receive a majority vote of the ARS for inclusion onto the ABM Agenda without change, it will be considered for the revision process as follows:

### **Revision of Received Items:**

For an item to have a request for revision, the request must have a majority vote of the members of the ARS voting or abstaining on that item. One member may never constitute a majority. A majority vote is unanimity, or 2 out of 3 (whether the third member votes no or abstains) or 3 out of 5 (whether either or both of the others vote no or abstain) or 4 out of 5 (whether the fifth member votes no or abstains). To assure that there is an odd number of possible votes on an item, the ARS may designate one member to sit out a particular vote.

## Agenda Review Subcommittee Process

If the Submitter submits a revised item, a majority vote of the ARS (as described above) will be needed to place the revised item onto the ABM Agenda.

If the revised item is placed onto the ABM Agenda, a note on the right side of the ABM Agenda will read: *This item was revised by the submitter and accepted onto the Agenda by a vote of x-x-x.* If there is a minority exception to the vote, that exception may be included as well.

If the Submitter chooses to not accept the committee recommendation to revise, the ARS will continue to work with the Submitter on the requested revision, calendar permitting. If there is insufficient time for further revision or if the Submitter chooses to not accept the recommendation to revise, the ARS will either 1) reject the item or 2) place the item onto the ABM Agenda and a note on the right side of the ABM Agenda will read: *The ARS requested a revision by a vote of x-x-x; however, the item was not revised by the submitter.*

### **Appeal of Items Receiving Only Preliminary Review by the ARS:**

The Submitter may Appeal to the ARS for reconsideration of a decision based on Preliminary Review that the item will not be placed onto the ABM Agenda and there will be no further review of the item.

If the Submitter Appeals, the ARS will prayerfully reconsider its decision taking into account any new information and hold another vote on whether the item will not be placed onto the ABM Agenda (this Appeal is not available for items submitted at the ABM).

If the ARS does not change its decision, the Submitter may choose to Appeal the decision to the CCC. If the item is Appealed, then the ARS will provide the reason (s) for the decision and forward the applicable ARS meeting (s) minutes to the CCC Chair, to be handled at the next CCC meeting.

### **Conference Charter Committee Process for Handling Appeals:**

Any Appeal by a Submitter of an ARS decision based on Preliminary Review that the item will not be placed onto the ABM Agenda shall be handled at the next CCC meeting following the Appeal. Minutes of the ARS discussions (regarding the decision and the Appeal) will be provided to CCC members prior to the CCC meeting at which the item will be addressed. The Submitter may also provide materials that will be provided to CCC members prior to the CCC meeting at which the item will be addressed.

At the CCC meeting, the proposed item, and the reason(s) for the decision will be read. Because of the amount of in-depth discussion at the ARS level, the item will go to an immediate 1st vote, with no preliminary pro and con discussion.

## Agenda Review Subcommittee Process

The normal voting process will be used:

- a 1<sup>st</sup> vote, with an opportunity for minority opinion; then
- a 2<sup>nd</sup> vote, if necessary, with an opportunity for minority opinion; and then
- a 3<sup>rd</sup> and final vote, if necessary.

Group conscience (not simple majority or unanimity) of the CCC will be required for the inclusion of the item onto the ABM Agenda.

If the ARS decision is not reversed by the full CCC, then the ARS Liaison will communicate the appeal results, the reason(s) for the appeal results, and alternative avenues for consideration to the Submitter.

### **Communications Re: ARS Activities:**

These guidelines should be published at least once a year in relevant publications and websites at the same time as the first communication of the ABM Agenda submission deadline. Further, any item not placed onto the ABM Agenda based on Preliminary Review shall be noted in the ARS minutes submitted to the Conference Charter Committee and included in the Conference Charter Committee report to the ABM along with the reasons for the decision.