**RI 2016 Council on Legislation**

**April 10 -15, 2016**

**Summary Report**

**2016 Council Grants Clubs Greater Flexibility**

The Council on Legislation is an essential element of Rotary’s governance. It is its legislative body which convenes every three years; in April 2016 it met in Chicago. It is at this time that Rotarians around the world have an opportunity to have input into the way Rotary is organized and functions. The COL is made up of representatives from each of the 538 districts. I was the representative of District 6270. The COL considers proposals from clubs, the districts, RI Board and RI Foundation Board for changes in the organization and enacts some of them as legislation. These changes may affect RI or club Constitution or bylaws. The COL also considers resolutions which express an opinion or make a recommendation to the RI Board.

The 2016 Council on Legislation may well be remembered as one of the most progressive in Rotary history. The tone for this year was set early, when the RI Board put forth two proposals that increase flexibility. The first measure allows clubs to decide to vary their meeting times, whether to meet online or in person, and when to cancel a meeting, as long as they meet at least twice a month. The second allows clubs flexibility in choosing their membership rules and requirements. Both passed. Additionally, the topic of “youth” came into many discussions including Interact and Rotaract… how do we encourage new membership in those organizations, retain membership, transition those members to the next level and eventually into Rotary… and keeping them! Attracting and retaining young members is critical to sustaining Rotary organization.

**Topics dealt with**:

* Club administration
* Avenues of Service and Object of Rotary
* Club meetings
* Attendance
* Membership
* RI
* The Rotary Foundation
* Finances
* Legislative Procedures
* Rotaract and Interact
* Others

**Highlights:**

* **To allow flexibility in club meetings, frequency, format and attendance**:

Clubs can determine when and how often they meet (but at least 2/mo.). They can choose whether to gather in-person, meet online, alternate between online and in-person meetings, or even use both formats at the same time, (i.e. a member could participate in an in-person meeting through video chat.)

Set applicable attendance requirements; count service projects or social events as meetings; modify or eliminate termination policies for non-attendance.

* **To allow for flexibility in ‘type” of membership** but retains classification system:

Regular/active: Types of membership i.e. corporate, associate, etc.

Honorary: New types and requirements would be determined by club.

* **Revise provisions for membership**:

Approved removing six membership criteria from the RI Constitution and replacing them with a simple requirement that a member be a person of good character who has a good reputation in their business or community and is willing to serve the community: “This club should be composed of adult persons who demonstrate good character, integrity, leadership; possess good reputation; and are willing to serve in their community and/or around the world”.

[Clubs don’t need a check list to determine who could or should be a member. Also, employment is no longer a requirement to join Rotary (another proposal was to prohibit those who have never worked from becoming members!).]

Note: The COL did not change the current rules of the Standard Rotary Constitution. Clubs that want to adopt the above changes will need to amend their by-laws. Clubs that wish to continue to adhere to the traditional requirements regarding meetings, attendance, structure, or categories of membership may do so.

* **Deleted Admission Fees:**

The reference to admission fees will be removed from the bylaws. Proponents argued that the mention of admission fees does not advance a modern image of Rotary.

* **Allow Rotaractors to be active members** :

Rotaractors will be allowed to become members of Rotary clubs while they are still in Rotaract. Proponents argued that too few Rotaractors (around 5 percent) join Rotary. Sometimes it’s because they don’t want to leave their Rotaract clubs before they have to, upon reaching age 30. It’s hoped that giving them more options will boost the numbers of qualified young leaders in Rotary.

* **Remove the distinction between clubs and E-clubs** [ones that meets thru electronic communications]:

The distinction between e-clubs and traditional clubs will be eliminated. The Council recognized that clubs have been meeting in a number of ways, and given this flexibility, the distinction was no longer meaningful. Clubs that have “e-club” in their names can keep it, however.

* **Established a Council on Resolutions:**

A Council on Resolutions will meet annually *online* to consider resolutions (where only resolutions will be considered vs. enactments. Council members will be selected for three-year terms. They’ll participate in the Council on Resolutions for three years and the Council on Legislation in their final year only. The Council on Resolutions will free the Council on Legislation to concentrate on enactments — a change to Rotary’s governing documents.

* **Increased per capita RI dues:**

Beginning 2017-18 RI yearly dues will increase $4.00/year for the next three years. [paid thru club dues because as individuals we’re not members of RI].

The $4 per year dues increase was based on a five-year financial forecast that predicted that if Rotary didn’t either raise dues or make drastic cuts, its reserves would dip below mandated levels by 2020. The yearly per capita dues that clubs pay to RI will be $60 in 2017-18, $64 in 2018-19, and $68 in 2019-20. The next council will establish the rate after that. The increase will be used to enhance Rotary’s website, improve online tools, and add programs and services to help clubs increase membership.

* **Established a Standing Committee on Membership:**

A standing Membership Committee at the RI level was established, in recognition that membership is a top priority of the organization.

* **Endorsed and reaffirmed that eradication of polio us goal if highest order**:

Did not endorse additional program areas so as to not take message, time and resources from the polio goal, (Except “Prevention of sexual mutilation”). Some proposals were:

Malaria

Environment

Public Image and awareness

Violence against women

Water quality and sanitation and hygiene

Drug and alcohol prevention

Except “Prevention of sexual mutilation”

Also did not endorse:

Adding to the Six Areas of Focus

Adding numerous Recognition Days or Months for various causes

21st Century District Rotary Museum

Changing age limits for Interact or Rotaractor membership

Many others

Enactments and resolutions will be reconciled for consistent language with current RI and club by-laws and constitutions. Clubs can them review and make changes necessary, or in some cases, keep what they have where allowable. Measures that were adopted take effect July 1, 2016.

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