

GRAND LODGE OF MASONS IN MASSACHUSETTS

Changing Lodge By-Laws

Process

Due attention to the following process will enable Grand Lodge consideration and approval of by-law changes:

1. Remember that by-law changes cannot be put in effect until they are ratified by Grand Lodge and you receive the official response attested by the Grand Secretary
2. Review the “Rules as to the By-Laws” (Pages 71-72) in the Grand Constitutions before drafting by-law language
3. Make sure the proposed by-law provision is not covered by the Grand Constitution (see section “Rules as to the By-Laws” of the Grand Constitutions)
4. A notice must be given to the Lodge membership that the proposed by-laws changes will be discussed at a Regular Meeting of the Lodge.
5. A notice with the old and the proposed new wording of the by-law must be sent to all members of the Lodge for the Meeting at which they are to be balloted. There can be no further changes made after discussion. If changes are proposed at the meeting for ballot, the vote cannot be taken, and the proposed by-laws with the additional changes must be sent to all members again, with notice to ballot a future regular meeting.
6. After the favorable ballot of the Lodge, the Lodge Secretary must submit a certification on Lodge letterhead signed and dated by the Secretary, affixed with the Lodge seal, attesting that the changes were adopted by the Lodge members by the required vote shown in the Lodge By-Laws.
 - Also submit with the letter requesting Grand Lodge approval of bylaw changes:
 - Include both the old and new language in its entirety for each by-law provision submitted specifying the Article No. and Section No. for each change
 - Meeting notice (2 copies) that includes the notice of by-law changes for consideration by the Lodge

BY-LAW REVISIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY GRAND LODGE TWO (2) WEEKS PRIOR TO GRAND LODGE QUARTERLY COMMUNICATION:

7. Submit the Lodge approved By-law changes so they are received in the Grand Secretary’s office at least two weeks prior to the Quarterly Communication, which is held on the second Wednesday of March, June, September and December. By-law changes are considered at every Grand Lodge Quarter Communication based upon actions taken by the Charters and By-Laws Committee at its quarterly meeting held eight days prior to the Grand Lodge Quarterly Communication. Proposed by-law changes received after the Charters and By-Laws Committee meeting will not be presented to Grand Lodge for ratification until the following Quarterly Communication three months hence.
 - Consider Dues increases early in the Lodge year. Increases in Lodge Dues **MUST** be approved by Grand Lodge prior to any billing by a Lodge using the proposed rates. Increases in Lodge Dues must be approved by Grand Lodge at the June Quarterly Communication to be in effect for the September 1 Dues billing.

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Substance

- ✓ Lodge Dues can only be stated in an amount easily calculated for each Dues classification: (Lodges may charge Dues at various rates based upon membership classification – age, distance from Lodge, student status, etc.)
 - A fixed dollar amount
 - An amount equal to the annual Grand Lodge Dues plus a specified amount.
 - A multiple of Grand Lodge Dues. (Lodges might consider providing for the rounding to the calculated amount to the next full dollar to avoid charging fractional dollars.)

The latter two approaches allow for annual Dues to increase according to the Greater Boston cost-of-living increase.

Lodge use of a Consumer Price Index factor is not allowed.

- ✓ Lodge requests for the removal of by-law provisions relative to the administration of fund accounts established by bequests governed by the terms of a will must be accompanied by documentation of a properly adjudicated release from the terms of the will.
- ✓ Lodges should change By-Law references to “Representative to the Board of Masonic Relief to “Representative to the Masonic Home”.” This Board of Masonic Relief no longer exists.
- ✓ Lodge by-laws cannot alter officer duties set by ritual.
- ✓ Lodge by-laws should provide reasonable and appropriate administrative checks and balances in the control, reporting, audit and disbursement authorization of Lodge funds.
- ✓ Lodge by-law provisions covering the suspension of members for nonpayment of Dues must be consistent with the Grand Lodge guidance issued by letter of 2005.