

BALLOTING

Ritual: Pages 13-15

Book of Instruction: Pages 50-56

Law Book: Sections 140-147

General Instructions:

- Balloting **MUST** be done at a **STATED** meeting.
- A Brother **MUST** be present at the meeting.
- All members present at the time of balloting have the privilege to do so.
- To ballot out of time, a Dispensation must be acquired from the Worthy Grand Matron. (Law, Section 165)
- Members may enter the Chapter room during balloting, but no one may leave until balloting is completed except the substitute Sentinel. (Law, Section 145)
- The ballot box should contain enough white balls for all members present to ballot and at least six black cubes.
- A ballot must be taken on all petitions whether the investigating report is favorable or unfavorable.
- A collective ballot may be taken, but if three black cubes appear, the petitions must be balloted upon separately.
- If three black cubes appear on a ballot, it is declared not clear, and the Worthy Matron orders a second ballot to be taken. If three black cubes appear a second time, the Worthy Matron declares the ballot rejected. The 7th and 11th Landmarks must be read (Ritual, p 163) and a portion of the Trial Code (BOI, p 55).
- Three raps are given during balloting:
 - one to **open** the ballot,
 - one to **close** the ballot,
 - and one **after** the Worthy Matron announces the results of the ballot and before she destroys it. (declare, rap, destroy)

Reading and Receiving of a Petition

First Meeting:

The Worthy Matron asks the Secretary if there are any petitions. The Secretary reads the petition. The Worthy Matron asks if there are any objections. If there are none, she appoints an Investigating Committee, of three people, one of whom must be a Brother.

Second Meeting:

The Worthy Matron asks for reports on any petitions. The Secretary reads the report of the Investigating Committee, but she **does not** record if it is favorable or unfavorable in the minutes. *Petitions are balloted upon with either a voice of favorable or unfavorable by the investigating committee*

The Secretary hands the petition to the Marshal who then hands it to the Worthy Matron. The Worthy Matron then directs the Associate Conductress to prepare the ballot box.

Procedure for Balloting:

- The Associate Conductress leaves her station, marches East and goes to the dais. She either stands on the floor or on the dais to pick up the ballot box. She does not stand on the stairs. She carries the ballot box with her RIGHT hand, supporting it on her LEFT arm, and securing the drawer with her body.
- She carries the box to the northeast corner of the marching lines and faces west. She completely examines the box making sure that there are sufficient balls and cubes and that the cubes are not all stuck in one corner of the drawer. She displays her examination to the members. She completely removes the drawer from the Ballot Box and turns it upside down examining that there are no balls or cubes stuck in the drawer.
- She returns to the East and places the box on the podium with the drawer facing the Worthy Matron. She then stands to the front and to the right of the Worthy Matron, leaving space between her and the WM for privacy. The Worthy Matron and Worthy Patron examine the drawer. Only the Worthy Matron touches the box, and the Worthy Patron immediately sits down after the box is examined; the Worthy Matron remains standing.
- The Worthy Matron then says, **“We are about to ballot upon the petition of _____ to become a member of this Chapter. Remember, white balls elect, black cubes reject. I now declare the ballot open.”** She gives one rap of the gavel. **(first rap)**
- The Associate Conductress presents the ballot box (by sliding the box over her left hand and securing the drawer with her left thumb) to the Worthy Matron who is the **first** to ballot. The Worthy Matron is then seated.
- The Conductress **then** extends the ballot box to the Worthy Patron who ballots and then is seated.
- The Associate Conductress then places the ballot box back on the podium, with the drawer facing south, and ballots. (She is the third to ballot.)

- The Associate Conductress then begins her march around the room, facing forward on the line, starting with the Chaplain. She extends the ballot box to each officer and member in the same manner.
- Everyone who is able, comes to the marching line to vote. **The Associate Conductress never leaves the marching line except for those members who are unable to do so.**
- Officers and members should not wait for the Associate Conductress to come to them. Each should be on the marching line waiting when she approaches you. She will extend the box to allow for privacy.
- Chaplain is the fourth to Ballot. Then Treasurer and Organist, if located in the northeast corner of the Chapter Room.
- The Star Points rise, step to the side of their chairs, and then move to the marching line. Esther goes to the South marching line and faces west to ballot.
- Associate Conductress turns to the west on the north marching line and continues to move to officers and members.
- When the Associate Conductress reaches the west corner on the marching line, the Associate Patron and Associate Matron should have descended and be waiting for the Associate Conductress to approach them. The Warder also proceeds to the marching line prior to the arrival of the Associate Conductress.
- Esther proceeds to the south marching line and casts ballot after the Warder has balloted in the west and the Associate Conductress turns to the east on the south marching line and begins her march to the east.
- The Marshal is the last Officer to ballot. (The Secretary has balloted prior to the Marshal. If the Organist is located in the south east corner of the Chapter Room she/he also balloted prior to the Marshal.)
- The Associate Conductress then retraces her steps to the West marching line, turns north and stops slightly to the right (south) of Esther's station facing north.
- While the Associate Conductress is returning to the West, The Worthy Matron instructs the Warder to invite the Sentinel into the Chapter room to vote and assigns a substitute Sentinel. **(BOI, p 53)** The Sentinel and Substitute Sentinel enter and leave in proper form, remembering that the Substitute Sentinel must go out before the Sentinel comes in. The Sentinel's station is never left unattended.
- When the Sentinel is in position behind Esther's station, the Worthy Matron instructs the Sentinel, Ritual, p. 14. The Sentinel ballots, retires in proper form, the Substitute Sentinel enters in form and returns to his/her station.

- **The Associate Conductress turns and faces east.**
 - The Worthy Matron then says, Ritual, p. 14, and the Associate Conductress answers, Ritual p. 14.
 - The Worthy Matron then announces that the ballot is closed and gives one rap of the gavel. **(Second rap)**
 - She then instructs the Associate Conductress to bear the ballot to the West.
 - The Associate Conductress places the ballot box on the pedestal with the drawer facing the Associate Matron and Associate Patron, and then stands to the right and in front of the Associate Matron either on the dais or on the floor facing east allowing for privacy.
 - Both the Associate Matron and Associate Patron inspect the ballot box. Only the Associate Matron handles the box.
 - The Associate Patron is seated; the Associate Matron remains standing. Associate Matron is seated after
 - The Worthy Matron addresses the Associate Matron, p. 14 who responds p. 15. The Worthy Matron then instructs the Associate Conductress p. 15. Associate Matron is seated after the Associate Conductress departs from her station.
- The Associate Conductress goes to the North marching line, proceeds east, places the ballot box on the podium with the drawer facing the Worthy Matron, and then takes a position to the right and in front of the Worthy Matron.
- The Worthy Matron opens the drawer of the ballot box and the Worthy Patron rises to observe. The Worthy Matron speaks p.15. Without touching the box, the Worthy Patron gives his report and sits down. The Worthy Matron then announces the results of the ballot. p.15.
- The Worthy Matron then strikes **the third and final rap** of the gavel and destroys the ballot.
- The Worthy Matron's sequence is:
 - 1) Examine ballot
 - 2) Declares ballot
 - 3) Third rap of the gavel
 - 4) Destroys ballot
- The Associate Conductress then places the ballot box on the floor on the north side of the pedestal with the drawer facing west. She then returns to her seat.
 - The Associate Conductress stands on the top of the dais or on the marching floor. She does not stop on the steps or stand on the steps.
 - **Carrying the Ballot Box:** The Ballot Box rests on the left forearm with the fingers of the left hand securing it on the front edge. The right hand grasps the handle. When the Associate Conductress extends the ballot box to a member, she draws her hand backward and secures the drawer with her thumb. As she walks around the room, she secures the box against her body.