

ASSOCIATION OF FLIGHT ATTENDANTS-CWA, AFL-CIO
FIFTY FIRST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MAY 20-22, 2024
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

SUBJECT: Direct Membership Election (DME) of International Officers (Article VIII.A.)

STATEMENT OF QUESTION:

Should the various Articles & Sections of the AFA-CWA Constitution and Bylaws be amended so that the members elect International Officers directly?

SOURCE AND DATE SUBMITTED: International President – January 30, 2024

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In our union we have reviewed Direct Membership Elections (DME) for all officers of the union at 21 of the 50 meetings of the AFA Board of Directors. Both members and leaders have brought the issue forward for consideration many times in our union's history. While DME was often a popular idea among members and leaders, after careful review by the voting delegates of the AFA Board of Directors, real concerns over cost and equal access for all candidates to share their platform prevented passage. Delegates ultimately determined in each case that Local Councils should continue to be where DME takes place. But conditions have changed. Technology advancements have made it possible to provide an equal platform for all candidates. Technology coupled with thoughtful provisions for nomination of candidates can mitigate cost concerns. These modern realities make it possible to seriously reconsider DME for passage this year.

Direct membership elections can increase the level of democracy and member participation within AFA-CWA. DME would ensure that every member has an equal say in who leads our union and would help to create a more inclusive and representative organization. It can also solve recent issues with decision-making to ensure our union can act efficiently with membership mandates. For example, directly elected MEC and International Officers would be empowered under the law to break tie votes because they are elected by the members. Further, DME would help to increase member participation and engagement. When members feel that they have a real stake in the direction of our union, they are more likely to get involved in union activities and campaigns. This, in turn, can lead to greater solidarity and better outcomes for Flight Attendants as we build power together. DME can be conducted efficiently and quickly using modern technology, leading to more streamlined decision-making processes in the long run.

The issue of Direct Membership Elections (DME) for International Unions is a current hot topic as the Labor Movement overall is back on attack for working people and unions are at the center of the discussion about making democracy work for the people, not just the corporations and Wall

Street. Without a direct membership election at a union like UAW, we wouldn't have seen the successful Stand Up Strike with big demands and big gains for working people. UAW traditionally set the standard for workers across the country but its 40 year decline along with the rest of the labor movement hurt all of us. The only way that changed was introducing DME for international and regional representatives so their members had the vote in who their leadership would be at every level of the union. Across the country, DME is considered an attribute of a truly democratic and fighting union. AFA has a proud history as a democratic, fighting union. Our policies and procedures should reflect that and ensure we continue to build power to win with our democracy in the hands of the rank and file at every turn.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS, at 21 of the 50 AFA-CWA Board of Directors Meetings there has been discussion of Direct Membership Election (DME) of International Officers; and,

WHEREAS, there is leader and membership interest in a process whereby members elect their International officers through direct membership election; and,

WHEREAS, the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) has undertaken an extensive review of implementation concerns as identified by Board Members at previous BOD meetings;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the following information and prospective changes to the C&B be presented to the 2024 AFA Board of Directors for their review and consideration.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Article VIII be amended as follows:

ARTICLE VIII – NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A. International Officers

- ~~1. The nomination and election of the International Officers, when required, shall be held at 10:00 a.m. on the second day of the regular meeting of the Board of Directors.~~
- ~~2. Candidates for International Office are encouraged to announce their candidacy sixty (60) days prior to the election.~~
- ~~3. At all meetings of the Board of Directors at which International Officers are to be elected, the Election Committee appointed pursuant to Article V.K.1.d. shall nominate candidates for the offices to be filled. Nothing in this Section shall prevent any members of the Board of Directors from making additional nominations from the floor.~~
- ~~4. During the nomination and election of International Officers, the Chairperson of the Election Committee shall act as Chairperson of the session.~~
- ~~5. When required, representatives in attendance at a Board of Directors meeting shall nominate and shall elect the International President.~~
- ~~6. Election
 - ~~a. A simple majority of the total votes cast shall determine the outcome of the election.~~
 - ~~b. In the event that no one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast on the first roll call ballot, a runoff roll call ballot will be conducted between the two (2) candidates receiving the highest number of votes.~~
 - ~~c. In the event that there is a tie for second place in the ballot, a runoff election shall be conducted between the two (2) candidates who are tied to determine which candidate will be on the next roll call ballot.~~
 - ~~d. Should there be only one candidate nominated for any office, the Election Committee Chair will entertain a motion that the candidate be declared by acclamation of the Board. When the motion is made and seconded, this motion will be put to a voice vote.~~~~
- ~~7. Delegates will be provided with ballots, and once a vote is cast and recorded, it may not be changed.~~

Regular International Officer Elections shall be accomplished by a direct membership vote.

1. Nomination Procedures

- a. No later than two hundred ten (210) days prior to the new term for International Offices, a notification of open positions including instructions for nominations, shall be mailed to all members and posted on the Union's website.**
- b. All nomination petitions must be submitted to the Ballot Certification Committee no later than one hundred fifty (150) days prior to the start of the term of office.**
- c. The Ballot Certification Committee shall certify the properly nominated candidates as soon as practicable and no later than one hundred thirty (130) days prior to the start of the term of office.**
- d. In order to appear on the ballot, a candidate must be nominated by at least ten percent (10%) of the Local Council Presidents. Alternatively, a member may be placed on the ballot after properly registering a petition and obtaining signatures from five percent (5%) of the active members in good standing (pursuant to Article III.D.10.)**
- e. In the event there is only one candidate nominated for a position, the nominee shall be deemed elected.**

2. Regular Election Procedures

- a. For regular International Officer Elections, no later than one hundred twenty (120) days before the start of the term of office, the International Secretary-Treasurer of the Union shall cause election ballots to be mailed to all active members. The election mailing shall list the names of the nominees for each office in alphabetical order and instructions for how the member may cast their vote. Each active member in good standing may vote for one (1) candidate for each office and the successful candidate for each office shall be the eligible candidate receiving the greatest number of election votes. The election shall be conducted by secret ballot.**
- b. International Officer election ballots executed by the active members in good standing shall be returned to the International Office no later than seventy-five (75) days before the start of a term of office. Ballots shall be validated and tallied under the supervision of the Ballot Certification Committee. It shall certify the election results and notify the International Secretary-Treasurer of the Union, who shall promptly telephone and e-mail, if available, a copy of such certification to the successful candidates and post this certification on a page of the International Office website. Additionally, the International Secretary-Treasurer will arrange for an e-mail to be sent to all members with an email on file with the union. All nomination and election materials shall be retained at the International Office for at least one (1) year.**

c. In cases where top vote getters receive a tie vote, the two (2) or more candidates who are tied shall participate in a runoff election by a mail or electronic ballot that will be held as soon as practicable after the initial balloting is completed, and with a balloting timeframe that is concluded prior to the new term of office.

3. Elections Due to Vacancies (Renumbered/Lettered)

As soon as a vacancy exists, all positions, including job descriptions, shall be posted on the Union's website.

a. Vacancies are filled by the AFA-CWA Board of Directors pursuant to Article IV.G. When required, representatives in attendance at a Board of Directors meeting shall nominate and shall elect the International Officer(s).

b. At all special meetings of the Board of Directors at which International Officers are to be elected to fill the remainder of a term of office, the Election Committee appointed pursuant to Article V.K.1.d. shall nominate candidates for the offices to be filled. Nothing in this Section shall prevent any members of the Board of Directors from making additional nominations from the floor.

c. During the nomination and election of International Officers, the Chairperson of the Election Committee shall act as Chairperson of the session.

d. A simple majority of the total votes cast shall determine the outcome of the election.

e. In the event that no one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast on the first roll call ballot, a runoff roll call ballot will be conducted between the two (2) candidates receiving the highest number of votes.

f. In the event that there is a tie for second place in the ballot, a runoff election shall be conducted between the two (2) candidates who are tied to determine which candidate will be on the next roll call ballot.

g. Should there be only one candidate nominated for any office, the Election Committee Chair will entertain a motion that the candidate be declared by acclamation of the Board. When the motion is made and seconded, this motion will be put to a voice vote.

h. Delegates will be provided with ballots, and once a vote is cast and recorded, it may not be changed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Article IX.A. be amended as follows:

ARTICLE IX - RECALL OF OFFICERS

A. International Officers

~~1. Any Officer of the Union, either with or without cause, may be recalled and removed from office by action of the Board of Directors.~~

~~a. For the purpose of recall, Members of the Board of Directors representing seventy-five percent (75%) of the members in good standing shall constitute a quorum.~~

~~b. Recall shall require the affirmative vote of the members of the Board of Directors representing a majority of the members in good standing who are represented by the Directors voting.~~

~~c. Such recalled Officers upon recall shall be divested immediately of all authority, prestige, rights and responsibilities pertaining to that office. A recalled Officer shall be entitled to thirty (30) days pay provided the recall is not for federal or criminal violations.~~

2. **1.** Recall of any Officer may also be accomplished in the following manner:

If twenty-five (25%) of the active members in good standing petition the International Secretary-Treasurer of the Union requesting a recall **ballot** of any said Officers, it shall be the duty of the International Secretary-Treasurer to circulate such a recall ballot to all active members. If the International Secretary-Treasurer is the Officer whose recall is being requested, it shall be the duty of the International President to circulate such a recall ballot. Such ballots shall be returned to the Ballot Certification Committee within ~~twenty-eight (28)~~ **twenty-one (21)** days and a count date shall be specified thereon. Recall shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all active members in good standing voting in such recall election. The Ballot Certification Committee shall certify the results of such election to the Officers, the Board of Directors, and the membership. When such recall is accomplished, such recalled Officer shall immediately be divested of all authority, prestige and rights commensurate with that office. A recalled Officer shall be entitled to thirty (30) days pay provided the recall is not for federal or criminal violations.