

Policies and Procedures of the Carlisle Democratic Town Committee

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Policies and Procedures of the Carlisle Democratic Town Committee

Introduction

Policies and Procedures (P&P) defines how the CDTC handles situations that are flexible or not mentioned in the By-Laws.

A *policy* is a guiding principle. A *procedure* is a set of steps needed to execute actions. The *full/entire membership* or simply *membership* refers to all members serving on the CDTC, including both *elected members* and *lifetime members* who are full voting members. *Members present at the meeting* means all members participating either in person or via conferencing software. *Vote* means doing so either while present at a meeting or subsequently via email.

Policy: Neutrality in Town Elections and Democratic Primaries

Town Elections

- 1) By long-standing tradition candidates for local office in Carlisle run on a non-politically-partisan basis.
- 2) The CDTC has its own long-standing tradition, which it now reaffirms, of not endorsing candidates for local office.
- 3) The Committee adopts no position on, and certainly does not oppose, a member or associate member endorsing a candidate for local office in his or her individual capacity as a private citizen, in keeping with the sacred American tradition of enabling almost exclusively unrestricted free speech.
- 4) A member of the CDTC has the right to endorse a candidate as an individual but is not permitted to endorse a candidate as a member of the CDTC or to commit the CDTC to an endorsement in Town elections.

Democratic Primaries

The Committee does not endorse a candidate until after the candidate has won the primary. (State By-Laws, Article XIII prohibits such an endorsement.)

Procedure: Amending CDTC By-Laws and Policies and Procedures; Candidate Endorsements; and Other Public Communications

Goals for the Proposed Procedure

- 1) Appropriate level of support for approval
- 2) Maximizing members' participation
- 3) Timeliness when important
- 4) By-Laws and P&P cannot contradict each other

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General Comments

Previously, a high bar has been required for: By-Laws and, by extension, P&P amendments, endorsements of candidates, and other public communications. This includes at least 7 days' advanced notice in writing and approval of majority of the membership. While this has worked well for By-Laws amendments, endorsements and public communications need more flexibility.

It is recommended that a proposal for endorsements and public communications be sent to the membership a few days before the meeting at which the proposal will be considered. This gives members time to read, and perhaps discuss via email, and prepare for taking the proposal up at a meeting. If timeliness is a factor, the advance notice can be shortened or by-passed. The CDTC also likes to propose, discuss, edit, and approve a public communication in a single meeting and for the most part this has worked well; it will also be covered in this procedure.

By-Laws Amendment Approval

- 1) The proposal's author must provide at least 7 days' notice (email) to full membership in advance of meeting for their thoughtful consideration or the amendment cannot be approved at that meeting.
- 2) If a majority of the membership is present at the meeting: discuss (minor changes permitted) and vote to approve by a majority of the full membership. If approved, the amendments are adopted. If not approved, the meeting may, at the Chair's discretion, consider an email vote to check with absent members.
- 3) If a majority of membership is not present at the meeting, proceed to email vote if approved by majority of members present. Any votes cast in the meeting will be discarded in favor of the email votes.
- 4) Email votes must approve with at least the majority of the membership in order for the proposal to carry. If this bar is not met, the proposal fails.

Policies and Procedures Amendment Approval

- 1) A few days of advance notice of nature of the amendment is highly recommended
- 2) Adequate discussion and room for changes is allowed prior to voting.
- 3) The amendment may be approved by simple majority of the members present.

Public Communication Approval

Public Communication Definition

Public communication is the top-level category covering endorsement of a candidate, support of a position on a political and/or policy-related matter or any other public communication. It is anything released publicly and signed by the CDTC. Whenever the CDTC does elect to communicate publicly, sending a letter to the editor (LTE) is often the pathway it chooses for doing so. LTEs should be submitted to the outlet only by a committee officer and they should be signed Carlisle Democratic Town Committee.

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Initiating Public Communication Proposals

A proposal for issuing a public communication can be initiated by any member and brought to a meeting by asking to include it on the agenda. Advance written notice to the membership is highly recommended, so members will be prepared. A public communication can also be created at a meeting that can have as few as a bare quorum (1/4 of elected members, rounded up) and as many as the full membership present.

At the meeting, the proposal is discussed with respect to needing to be prompt, whether it is “routine”, and its merit. The discussion should conclude whether the proposal is controversial and might require more time. During the discussion it will often happen that changes are proposed. They may be substantive or simple proof-reading corrections, and are accepted with general agreement among the members present. If major changes are needed on the level of a partial or full rewrite, then the Chair can ask the proposal’s author to withdraw the proposal which may be revised and resubmitted.

Vote to Approve and Select Action on Public Communication

This vote will require at least 1/3 (rounded up) of the full membership to be present. Failure to meet this threshold at the time of the vote will result in sending the proposal to an email vote.

There are four possible vote results to be examined *in the following order* and acted upon:

- 1) If a majority of the full membership approves the proposal, it passes and can be published.
- 2) If the proposal is approved unanimously (no more than one member abstaining or recusing), then it passes and can be published.
- 3) If a majority of members present approve, but the vote is not unanimous, then the question is taken to an email vote.
- 4) If a majority of members present do not approve, the proposal will not be further considered, but it may be improved and resubmitted later.

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Example: All Public Communication Approval Paths with Membership of 18

Numbers are as of [September 20, 2024](#). (Fractional members rounded up)

Membership (Life Members are counted)	18
Majority of Membership	10
Quorum (5 Life Members not counted)	4
1/3 Membership	6

Members at Meeting	Meeting Vote to Approve/Select Action	Action
4-5 members	Does not meet 1/3 requirement.	Go to email vote
6 – 9 (1/3 up to, but not including, Majority of Membership)	Enough to vote at meeting. Hold Vote. Unanimous approval by Members Present (6 - 9)	Publish
	Vote not unanimous, but Majority (4 - 5) of Members Present approve	Go to email vote
	Vote not unanimous and Majority (4 – 5) of Members Present do not approve	Proposal fails
10 - 18, Majority of Membership	Hold vote. Majority of Membership (10-18) approve	Publish
	Majority (6 – 9) of those Present approve.	Go to email vote
	Otherwise....	Proposal fails

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Email Vote Process

This vote exists to include as many members as possible, including those not present at the meeting that sent the proposal to an email vote. No votes from the meeting are carried forward to the email process. Email votes should be completed in about 1 – 6 days. There are two roles in conducting the vote: 1) the author of the proposal to be voted on who will decide on suggestions for changes to the proposal and 2) a vote administrator appointed by the Chair, ordinarily the Secretary.

The steps in the process are:

- 1) The vote administrator sends out the proposal with whatever changes were agreed upon in the Committee meeting discussion to the full membership with instructions including the timeline for initial vote, discussion period if initial vote fails, and final vote.
- 2) The email vote is held seeking approval or not by the majority of the full membership. Irrespective of whether a member has voted during the meeting, he/she must vote via email. If approved, the email vote is done.
- 3) If not approved, the administrator will start a brief discussion and entertain proposals for change. The author of the proposal is responsible for approving or declining changes (with help from others as needed) and making changes. At the end of the discussion/change period, the revised proposal is sent again to the full membership. The vote administrator holds a final vote seeking approval of the majority of the membership. If approved, the proposal, as amended, passes. Otherwise, it fails.

Record-Keeping

This applies to all routes leading to the decision as to whether a proposal is approved and published, or fails.

- Vote results are sent to the webmaster as an addendum to the minutes of the meeting where the proposal was considered.
- If the proposed amendment to By-Laws and or Policies and Procedures passed, then documents changed must be sent to the webmaster to publish.
- For email votes it is best to preserve all email correspondence in the Secretary's records.

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Revision history

V9	20-Sep 2024	Fixed a few errors in the Public Opinion vote example. NK
V8	17-Sep 2024	Members reduced from 19 to 18 (Patel). Published on website. Example needs to be approved.
V7	2-Sep 2024	Members reduced from 20 to 19 (Deery). Published on website. The example needs to be approved.
V6	8-Aug 2024	Published on website. Approved at least 2 meetings ago with changes suggested.
V5	13-Jul 2024	Publication: change running header, discard previous change notation. Set off example in lt grey box
V4	20-Jun 2024	Minor changes suggested at Apr meeting re abstention limits on 4 public opinion vote outcomes and, for clarity, in Example
V3	18-Apr 2024	Add Example of Public Communication Paths table with member counts; make amendment approval simple majority of members present.
V2	Mar2024	Conform to amended CDTC By-Laws particularly wrt public opinion approval - Added email vote process and record-keeping. Added after Neutrality in Town Elections no candidate endorsements pre-Primaries
V1	Mar2024	Major rewrite including all about public communications. Final version to Committee. Reset version numbers.
V17	15-Aug 2019	Original: Neutrality in town elections and P&P “Endorsement Votes” for handling LTEs with $\frac{3}{4}$ of the participants in an email vote.