Grand Lodge of Maine Constitution

Interesting Things. (I knew that. I didn’t know that.)

SEC. 85. Should any lodge neglect to make its returns and payments to the Grand Lodge for the space of two years, the Master and Wardens of such lodge shall not be permitted to attend, in their official capacity, any meeting of the Grand Lodge, until such returns and payments are made. And should the delinquency continue for three years, the charter, funds and regalia of such lodge may be declared forfeited to the Grand Lodge.

SEC. 92. No lodge shall "call off" from one day to another; but when the business cannot conveniently be completed at one session, a lodge may close to open on another day without further notice, and so on from time to time until the business is completed; and the subsequent communications shall be held to be a continuance of the first communication, but no business shall be transacted except such as was pending on the first day.

SEC. 98. The Master of any Lodge under this jurisdiction who has faithfully discharged his duties and complied with the laws of the Grand Lodge shall, at the end of his first term, be presented with a Past Master’s diploma similar in style and fitness to the one adopted in 1824.

SEC. 116. A petitioner for the degrees whose application has been rejected by a lodge shall not be initiated in any lodge under this jurisdiction other than the one which rejected him, within five years from the date of such rejection, unless the lodge having jurisdiction recommend him to another lodge by a unanimous secret ballot. A mason knowingly assisting or recommending for initiation, to any lodge whatever, any person rejected aforesaid, shall, if a member of a lodge under this jurisdiction, be suspended or expelled as may be determined after charges and due trial.

SEC. 117. No petition for the degrees shall be received by any lodge from any candidate who has been rejected in that lodge within less than six months after the rejection.

SEC. 119. An applicant whose petition for the degrees has been rejected in any lodge, who shall within five years after such rejection, be initiated in any lodge under this jurisdiction, other than the one to which he first applied, without consent of said lodge, shall be declared an irregularly made Mason and all Masonic intercourse with him is forbidden.

SEC. 124.1. There shall be but one ballot for all the degrees, which must be free and secret; and in balloting for the degrees for membership, if more than one negative vote appear, the balloting shall cease and the candidate be declared rejected. However, if on the first ballot one negative only appears a second balloting shall immediately take place, and if a negative shall appear, the candidate shall be declared rejected. In balloting upon application for degrees or membership, the ballot shall be taken upon each applicant separately.

SEC. 124.2. An objection by any member before the initiation is equivalent to rejection by ballot, and must be so recorded; such objection may be made privately to the Master, or to the lodge, and the reasons therefore cannot be required; and if any mason shall declare the name of the objector, or assist in the initiation of any one against whom he has knowledge or information that objection has been made after the acceptance, he shall be liable to be expelled from the Institution; but if objections are made after initiation, to the advancement of the candidate, they must be made known to the lodge and their sufficiency determined by a two thirds vote.

SEC. 130. No candidate shall receive the Entered Apprentice degree unless at least fourteen days have elapsed since he was accepted. No candidate shall receive the Fellow Craft degree in any lodge in this State unless at least fourteen days have elapsed since his receiving the Entered Apprentice degree; nor shall any Fellow Craft be permitted to receive the Master Mason degree until after fourteen days shall have elapsed from the date of his having received the Fellow Craft degree, except that the Grand Master on being satisfied of the necessity therefore, may issue a dispensation to permit degrees to be conferred in less than the above required time.

Provided further, That the discretion vested in the Grand Master to grant dispensation for the conferring of degrees in less than the required time shall be governed strictly by conditions of extreme necessity or extraordinary emergency, and never to permit a candidate to be raised to the degree of a Master Mason upon the same day on which he has been passed as a Fellow Craft.

**STANDING REGULATIONS**

S.R. 15: Resolved, That the District Deputy Grand Master be seasonably notified in writing, by the secretary of each lodge in his district, of each and every meeting of that lodge to be held.

25. Resolved, That any Master Mason raised in any lodge in this state after May 4, 1999, shall within ninety days after receiving the Master Mason degree (unless time is granted by the Worshipful Master) pass an examination to the satisfaction of the Worshipful Master on the lecture of the first section of that degree, and so much of the second section as relates to the signs, grips, and words, and it shall be the duty of the Worshipful Master, to inform each brother of this requirement and advise him as to how instruction may be obtained, unless for good and sufficient reason a brother may be excused from this requirement by the Worship Master or the Grand Master.

29. Resolved, That this Grand Lodge recognizes no degrees of Masonry except those conferred under the regulations of the Grand Lodges of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of the several states and territories of the United States of America and the governments throughout the world; and, it admits the following named organizations to be regular and duly constituted Masonic Bodies functioning within the jurisdiction of this Grand Lodge; namely.

The Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Maine, the Grand Council of Royal and Select Master of Maine, and the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Maine, and the several bodies under their jurisdiction, also the several bodies of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite in Maine chartered by the Supreme Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite for the Northern Jurisdiction of the United States of America, and the several bodies under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Council of the Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine of North America"

32. Resolved, That it shall be the duty of the Master and Wardens of every lodge to see that a ballot box, when presented for use, shall contain as many white balls as there are members of the lodge present, and in addition at least six black cubes.

37. Resolved, That a Master Mason who has voluntarily remained for more than one year without being affiliated with some regular lodge shall not of right be entitled to any of the benefits or privileges of Masonry, and shall be under the same disabilities as if under suspension for non-payment of dues.

61. Resolved, Masonic Lodges themselves may not conduct enterprises such as raffles, bean-o, bingo, and any game of chance. However, Masons who are members of any club or other organization whose membership is conditioned in whole or in part, upon membership in or affiliation with, the Masonic Craft may conduct the above mentioned enterprises.

These enterprises may be conducted in a Masonic Building but may not be conducted in the lodge room or rooms. The District Deputy Grand Master must inspect each Masonic Building in his District and certify to the Grand Master that he considers a part of the building suitable in which to conduct the above enterprises. No public advertising of the above activities may be made on or about the outside of the Masonic Building or on or about the premises outside the building. [1981, p. 41, 42]

71. Resolved, That any dual member, having been suspended, [non payment of dues], from one of his lodges in this jurisdiction, shall not be issued a dues card in any other lodge in this jurisdiction even though his dues be current in that lodge, until his dues shall be paid up in the lodge from which he has been suspended; and furthermore he shall be prohibited from attending any lodge meeting in this jurisdiction until his outstanding dues obligation has been met. [2004, pg. 880]

**DIGEST of DECISIONS**

**ADVANCEMENT**

See Cons. 115, 120, 124(2), 126, 129, 130, 132.

Advancement denotes the reception of a degree, after the first has been conferred.

It is the right and duty of the Master to determine when a candidate shall be advanced, except when objection has been made. [1915, p. 192]

When objection is made to the advancement of a candidate who has received a part of the degrees, the candidate has no right to appear to defend himself; nor to any information as to the reasons for the failure of the lodge to confer the balance of the degrees. [1915, p. 192]

While it is necessary for a candidate to appear for the E.A. degree within one year of the date of election, there is no limitation of time within which the second or third degree must be taken. [1901, p. 198]

**AFFILIATION**

See Cons. 131, 133(4), 134, S. R. 37.

Affiliation means membership.

See Membership.

Unless the member signs the by-laws within six months, he must apply for membership anew. [1879, p. 11]

Application for membership requires unanimous ballot. [1879, p. 11]

Objection to affiliation can be made prior to the next stated meeting after the election. [1879, p. 11]

A member must sign the by-laws before he can be called a member of the lodge. [1986, p. 205]

The candidate for membership, by affiliation, even though rejected, can apply as often as he wishes to same or any other lodge. [1900, p. 19]

Affiliation is a Masonic duty. [1878, p. 558]

Application for affiliation can be filed with any lodge. [1870, p. 22]

**APPLICATION**

An application must be referred to the Committee of Inquiry at the stated communication at which it was received in order to be acted upon at the next. [1884, p. 625]

After an application has been referred and delivered to the Committee of Inquiry, it may be reported and balloted upon although mislaid and not present at the time. [1871, p. 223]

The application cannot be withdrawn after being referred to the Committee of Inquiry until after the ballot and then only if the ballot is clear and with the consent of the lodge. [1860, p. 104, p. 1878, p. 549]

An applicant for the degrees should be recommended by at least one member of the lodge to which he applies. If no member can recommend the candidate as worthy, his application ought not to be received. [1865, p. 85]

An application should be read in its entirety at the time it is first presented to the lodge. When the application is then presented for balloting the reading of the formal language may be eliminated and the words "an application in the usual form" substituted, but each question and the answer thereto should be read at the time of balloting, together with any additional remarks contained within the application form. [1956, pp. 785, 786]

A decision approved in 1865, page 85, states that "an application should not be accepted until it is recommended by at least one member of the lodge". If there is no by-law of the lodge requiring the application to be signed by two members of the lodge, then, in view of the above decision, only one of the men signing the recommendation need be a mem­ber of the lodge. However, if the by-laws of the lodge require that two members sign the application, then that regulation should be followed. [1955, p. 519]

**BALLOT**

The rejection of an applicant is final when declared and recorded. That only one black ball was cast and a second ballot was not taken cannot affect the issue. [1915, p. 190; 1922, p. 207]

Our regulations require that but two ballots shall be taken on a candidate but this requirement means two ballots the result of, which is plain. If there is any room for doubt the ballot is defective the Master should order a new ballot. [1929, p. 40]

Ballot should not be passed without a report from the Committee of Inquiry. If the committee unreasonably delays its report, the proper course is to discharge the committee from fur­ther consideration of the petition and refer it to a new committee. [1861, p. 149]

After a ballot has been taken and the candidate has been declared rejected, no other ballot can be taken to correct a sup­posed mistake; the only remedy in such a case is by a new appli­cation. A ballot cannot be reconsidered after the Worshipful Master declares the result

A blackball is cast by a member who later goes to the Worshipful Master and confesses a wrong motive and asks for a new ballot to be taken. This cannot be done until six months have elapsed from the time the rejection is announced. [1874, p. 268]

A newly raised member refusing to pass the examination as required by the mandatory language of S.R. 25 is subject to disci­plinary action which should be taken after the preferring of charges by the Junior Warden.

**COMMUNICATION**

A communication held as a stated meeting upon a wrong day is void; and the business done thereat must come up again as if it had never been acted upon. [1875, p.528]

**MASTER**

The powers of the Master of a Lodge are much different from those exercised by the head of any other society. The presiding officer of most societies is chosen by the members of the organization, and can usually be removed by that body. A Master is elected by his Lodge, but can only be removed by the Grand Master or Grand Lodge. The presiding officer of other organizations are usually bound by certain rules of order, and a code of By-laws. A Lodge cannot enact By-laws to alter, amend, or curtail the powers of a Master. While lodges have By-laws they cannot in any way infringe upon the ancient prerogatives and powers of the Master of a Lodge which are derived from the old charges and the ancient uses of the Order. The authority of a Master is absolute, subject only to appeal to the Grand Lodge.

**MINUTES**

When a lodge of Master Masons closes, the minutes of proceedings should be read. If then the lodge is opened on an inferior degree, at its close the minutes of proceedings on that degree only should be read. The proceedings of a Master's lodge cannot be read in a Lodge of Fellow Craft or Entered Apprentices. [1862, p. 233]

**PAST MASTER**

A Brother served his lodge as Junior Warden for a period of nine months in the absence of the duly elected Warden who was absent and not available to fulfill his obligations to that office. The brother who served went on to be elected and installed Worshipful Master of the lodge and served one term. Is he a Past Master and is he entitled to the title of Worshipful never being ELECTED a warden of his lodge? Answer – The Constitutions state that, “to be eligible for the office of Master, a brother must have served as a Warden.” It is not stated that he must be ELECTED and INSTALLED. Service to the lodge as a Warden, although not duly elected, is sufficient in this case and that brother is a Past Master and entitled to the title of Worshipful. [1999, pg. 611]

Under our constitution a Past Master, in the absence of the Master and both Wardens, may open the lodge and preside at the transaction of any business properly before the lodge. If all are absent and no Past Master present, members can fill the chairs according to seniority and merit.

**PROXY**

When a Master or either of the Wardens registers, he is considered present for the whole session, unless excused.

If a proxy has been duly appointed and the Master and Wardens are excused, the proxy has the right and duty to act on their behalf.

The proxy does not have the power to act if the W. M. and Wardens leave the Grand Lodge, but are still in the building, in the corridor, or the men's room.

There is absolutely no reason for all three to be absent at one time. Furthermore, if only one is present it is his duty to represent his lodge. The area extends to the city in which Grand Lodge is held. The W. M. and Wardens know the time and place of the Grand Lodge sessions and should be there during the meeting. If this were not the case it could be that weak-minded officers might always leave controversial issues to a proxy and not accept their rightful duty for which they have been appointed.

If the W. M. and Wardens must leave in case of an emergency, the proxy has the duty to act.

An "emergency" is an illness under a doctor's care or a death. To return to one's occupation cannot be considered an emergen­cy. Grand Lodge session is only one and one-half days and when a W. M. or Warden goes to that session he should have made preparation well in advance. To go one-half day and collect travel mileage is a disgrace to himself as well as his lodge and to go to Grand Lodge only for a "trip" or "excursion" is even worse.

**QUORUM**

We have reference in our ritualistic work that "three made a Master Mason's Lodge." However, Secs. 94 and 132 of the Constitution provide that no ballot shall be taken for initiation or membership, unless there are at least seven members of the lodge present. The Constitution provides that all general business should be done in a Master's lodge and at least seven members must be present A decision passed in 1868, page 200, states that a quorum for a lodge to do business is seven. [1955, p. 519]

**RESTORATION**

No particular form of application is required for restoration to membership, but the request, when presented, should take the same course as an ordinary application for membership and be laid over for action at the next stated meeting. [1922, p. 207]

**REINSTATEMENT**

A petition for reinstatement requires no special form but takes the same procedure. [1922, p. 207]

If the applicant for reinstatement is rejected, he cannot apply again for reinstatement [1931, p. 461]

**RELIEF**

Every Mason is under equal obligation to every worthy brother to relieve his distress according to his necessity and his own ability. The sole claim of a distressed worthy brother for relief grows out of his being a Mason, and not out of his having contributed to the funds of a particular lodge. The association of Masons in a lodge in no manner relieves them from their individual obligations; and when they act as a lodge their duty, and therefore that of the lodge is precisely the same as that of the individual mason. Masonic relief is never purchased or sold and therefore never creates a debt.

**VISITATION**

The right is not absolute or inalienable.

No visitor should be admitted against the objection of a member, although no reasons therefore are given

It is a sufficient reason for refusing to admit a visitor that he had been rejected by the lodge and had never received its consent to be made in another lodge. [1866, p. 156]

A Master may call off his lodge and examine a visitor in presence of the members, for the purpose of instruction, using due care. [1871, p. 224]

The right of objection to a visitor is a personal right, and can be exercised only by one present at the lodge, and before the lodge is opened or before the introduction of the visitor. [1882, p. 16]

A member coming into the lodge after it is opened cannot exclude a visitor who has been already admitted. 1882, p. 16]

Objection to a visitor must be made before the meeting opens or the visitor is introduced. Visitation is a right, subordinate to the right of the member in his own lodge. Objection must be made at each meeting.

**WARDEN**

Can a Warden preside and open a lodge in the presence of the Master? The answer is not as Warden, but the Master may call upon any brother to preside in his presence and under his direction, he being responsible for all that is done in the same manner as if he were actually in the chair.

**WIDOWS AND ORPHANS**

The widows and orphans of a mason are only those who hold these relations legitimately under the laws of the state. [1879, p. 10]

When a Masonic widow remarries and the man she marries is not a Mason, she is no longer entitled to any Masonic benefits. However, when her husband that was a Mason died, she was entitled to receive a Widow’s Pin. Even though one was not presented at that time, she is still entitled to receive one in memory of her then Masonic husband.