

**R-1a Update Rules to Assure Fairness in Virtual Church Governance Meetings (amended)**

Resolved by the 226<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Virginia that:

1. A ten person task force be created, consisting of five lay members and five members of the clergy, to be appointed by the Bishop by January 15, 2021;
2. The Task Force shall review our diocesan canons and related rules of order to determine what changes, if any, are appropriate to provide clear authorization for the effective virtual conduct of diocesan, regional, and parish meetings, including meetings of the Diocesan Convention, the Executive Board, the Standing Committee, the Regional Councils, and Vestries, as well as Parish Annual and Special Meetings;
3. In order to inform its work, the Task Force shall solicit oral and written comments from clergy, lay leaders, and congregations in the Diocese about experience with virtual meetings and suggestions for improvements;
4. In its review and recommendations, the Task Force shall seek to assure that our canons, ~~and~~ related rules of order, and administrative practices, when applied to virtual meetings, provide for:
  - a. Ample notice of meetings
  - b. Fair opportunities to present oral and written comments before important decisions are made
  - c. Accurate recording of votes and of decisions, and
  - d. Prompt posting of such results and minutes of meetings.

The Task Force shall recommend any appropriate changes to achieve those objectives;

5. In its review and report, the Task Force shall seek to identify problems of virtual access encountered by our people and congregations, including issues such as
  - a. Unavailable or inadequate internet and/or computer access in many areas, both rural and urban;
  - b. Excessive cost for people of limited means;
  - c. Insufficient digital training, particularly for our older members;
  - d. Inadequate measures to allow people who are hearing impaired or visually impaired to participate effectively;
  - e. Needs for interpretation for those whose native language is different than English; and
  - f. Failures to post workable contact information for elected leadership.

In its recommendations, the Task Force shall identify appropriate adjustments in our canons, rules of order, and administrative practices to help address these issues of equitable access for all our people, recognizing that some of these challenges reflect broader structural inequities where we live.

6. In its review and recommendations, in order to increase opportunities for participation by those for good cause prevented from attending in-person, the Task Force shall assess the feasibility of conducting meetings combining virtual and in-person attendance, and report on what adjustments in our canons, rules of order, and administrative practices would be required to make such hybrid meetings work fairly and effectively.

5.7. By September 15, 2021, the Task Force shall prepare and post its report on the Diocesan website, which report shall include the proposed wording of any recommended canonical and

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rule of order changes for consideration by the 227<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Virginia in the fall of 2021, [as well as recommended changes in administrative practices that can be implemented without formal action by Convention.](#)

Respectfully submitted,

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