



**Department of  
Agriculture**

# MEMBERSHIPS, ELECTIONS, AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

## RULES THAT WE'RE GOING TO LEARN

- Membership Requirements
- Election Notice Requirements
- Responsibilities of Board Directors and Staff
- Election Day Procedures
- Constitutional Amendment Requirements
- How to fill a vacant seat

# MEMBERSHIPS, ELECTIONS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

## BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- How to Prepare for Election Day
- How to Communicate with Society Members
- Transparency and Compliance

# MEMBERSHIPS

## HOW CAN I BECOME A MEMBER OF THE AG SOCIETY?

- Residency
- Payment of Membership fee
- Provide Proof of Identification
- Sign Membership Certificate

# MEMBERSHIPS

## SOCIETY REQUIREMENTS

- Issue each membership certificate in the name of the individual who paid the required annual membership fee and presents proof of identification .
- Vote to approve the dates, times, and locations where memberships may be purchased.
- Post in the annual premium book and/or on the fair's website the dates, times, and locations where memberships may be purchased as approved by the board.
- Verify the purchaser has met the membership requirements upon issuance of the membership certificate.

# ELECTION DAY – BEST PRACTICES

## **AT LEAST TWO MONTHS BEFORE THEIR ELECTION EVERY FAIR SHOULD:**

- Review Election and Constitutional Amendment Rules
- Review Roles and Responsibilities
- Communicate Timelines and Procedures
- Compare Current Practices with Constitution

# ELECTION NOTICE

## **EACH FAIR MUST ANNOUNCE AN ELECTION DATE AND CANDIDATE FILING REQUIREMENTS**

- Minimum notice of three weeks prior to election
- Newspaper – or – Society Website
- Petition Particulars!

# ELECTION NOTICE – BEST PRACTICES

## **COMMUNICATE! ALL MEMBERS SHOULD KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING**

- Minimum Requirement: Post on website
- Best Practice: Website, Social Media, Email, and Postcard

# ELECTION NOTICE – BEST PRACTICES

## **PREPARE! ALL STAFF/DIRECTORS SHOULD KNOW THEIR ROLE**

- Review your policies and procedures to address problems that have not yet happened.
- Establish your timelines to give yourself ample time to review amendments and election petitions.

# ELECTION DAY

## PREPARE! ALL STAFF/DIRECTORS SHOULD KNOW THEIR ROLE

- 4 – 3 – 2 Rule
  - Four Hours Open
  - Three Judges
  - Two Clerks
- Review for Conflicts of Interest



# CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

## WHAT IS A CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Public officials and employees violate the conflicts of interest provision of the Ohio Ethics Law when they take official action or make decisions in matters that definitely and directly affect:
  - Themselves,
  - Their family members; or
  - Their business associates.

# ELECTION JUDGE

## ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND NEEDS

- Election Judges:
  - Verify the right of each member to vote before they issue ballots
  - Verify the voter's identity
  - Prohibit proxy or absentee ballots
- What does an Election Judge need on Election Day?
  - Membership list
  - A copy of the Fair's rules and regulations

# ELECTION JUDGE

## CAN I VOTE?

- Only the following persons may vote in an election held in accordance with this section:

Those who hold membership certificates at the close of the annual county fair, or at least fifteen calendar days before the date of election, as may be fixed by the board;

**OR**

Those who hold membership certificates on the date and hour of the election if the election is held on the fairground during the fair. When the election is to be held during the fair, notice of the election also shall be prominently mentioned in the premium list.

# ELECTION JUDGE

## VOTER VERIFICATION



**NOTICE: An unexpired Ohio Driver's License, State ID Card, or Interim Documentation with your former address IS an **ACCEPTABLE** form of ID when your current address is in the Poll Book.\***

**1 Former Address is on UNEXPIRED Ohio Driver's License, State ID Card, or Interim Documentation**



STATE IDENTIFICATION CARD



INTERIM DOCUMENTATION



**2 Address Is Current In Poll Book**

**Cast Your Ballot**



\*You may cast a regular ballot unless otherwise marked in the Poll Book.

# ELECTION CLERK

## ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND NEEDS

- Election Clerks:
  - Register the name of each person who votes;
  - Tally the count on poll books and tally sheets supplied by the department;
  - Place one copy of said poll book and tally sheet on file with the secretary of the society; and
  - Mail or submit electronically one copy to the department within ten days after said election
- What does an Election Judge need on Election Day?
  - Poll Book
  - A copy of the Fair's rules and regulations

# VACANCIES IN OFFICE

## HOW TO HANDLE

- The Agricultural Society **MAY** choose to fill a vacancy on the board by appointment.
- The vacant seat **MUST** be up for election at the next annual election to fill the remainder of the vacant seat.

# CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

## WHO, WHAT, WHERE

- WHO: Amendments to the constitution or by-laws may be proposed by **EITHER**:
  - Majority of the board
  - A petition filed with the Secretary
- WHAT: Any such petition shall:
  - Set forth the proposed amendment; and
  - Bear the signatures and addresses of not less than twenty-five ACTIVE members of the society
- WHEN:
  - Must be filed at least fourteen days prior to the annual election of the board of directors or to the annual meeting of the membership of the society, whichever is specified in the constitution of the society

# AMENDMENT PROCESS – BEST PRACTICES

## **PREPARE! ALL STAFF/DIRECTORS SHOULD KNOW THEIR ROLE**

- Review your policies and procedures to address problems that have not yet happened.
- Establish your timelines to give yourself ample time to review amendments.

# AMENDMENT PROCESS – BEST PRACTICES

## COMMUNICATE! ALL MEMBERS SHOULD KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING

- Minimum Requirement: Post on website.
- Best Practice: Website, Social Media, Email, and Postcard.
- Do you have a template that you can provide interested parties to help them in the amendment process?

# AMENDMENT VOTING

## WHO, WHAT, WHERE

- WHO: The SOCIETY by ELECTION
  - A fair board may **NOT** vote to approve on their own.
- WHEN:
  - Annual Meeting; or
  - Annual Election of Board of Directors.



# TIE?

## WHO WINS

- Board of Directors Seat:
  - In the case of a tie vote in an election for a director, the winner shall be determined by a flip of a coin.
- Amendment:
  - In the case of a tie vote on a referendum for a constitutional amendment, provision, by-law or other issue, the referendum shall be deemed defeated.

# TRANSPARENCY AND COMPLIANCE

## EVERYONE WINS

- Builds Trust and Credibility:
  - Transparency with local boards fosters confidence among stakeholders and the community.
- Ensures Legal and Ethical Compliance:
  - Adhering to regulations minimizes risks of penalties and reputational harm.
- Promotes Accountability:
  - Clear communication and compliance strengthen governance and decision-making processes.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- Prepare early:
  - Review rules, communicate timelines, and train staff.
- Election Notice:
  - Minimum 3 weeks; use multiple communication channels.
- Election Day:
  - Follow 4-3-2 rule (4 hours, 3 judges, 2 clerks); verify voters.
- Constitutional Amendments:
  - Require majority vote; petitions need 25 active members.
- Transparency & Compliance:
  - Builds trust, ensures legal compliance, and promotes accountability.

# QUESTIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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# THANK YOU

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# QUESTIONS?

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