

From the RVC:

Several years ago, I promised in this column that I would not hesitate to seek your advice if something came up on the national level that did not seem to have an obvious right or wrong side. In keeping with that promise, I must now ask for your guidance on a matter that is currently scheduled to come before your Board of Directors at our summer Board meeting in Boston. The posted agenda for this meeting contains proposals for some rather extensive modifications to our current procedures, and I am faced with some very difficult decisions on a few of the proposed changes.

The first change that is causing me some heartburn is a proposal that would solve the problem of filling mid-term vacancies in the office of Regional Vice Chair. New York law provides that an office which was elected by fewer than all of the voters cannot be filled by appointment, as we would do for a vacancy in any of the other Board positions. In order to avoid the expense of special elections, the Board has established a system whereby the local groups in a region which loses their RVC mid-term for any reason will be divided up among the neighboring regions until the next regular election. This process has not yet had to be used. Now it is proposed that the problem be solved in a different way: by having the RVCs elected nationwide, so that vacancies in that office can be filled by appointment just like the other offices. The obvious drawback is that the majority of voters would be voting to choose between people they had never heard of, for an office which would supposedly represent someone else.

The second proposal I am unhappy with comes from the Finance Committee. They want to avoid the necessity of periodic large dues increases by indexing dues for inflation. This proposal calls for automatic annual increases of 2.5%, beginning in 2015. I understand the need to offset inflation, but this idea seems to encourage financial irresponsibility. It also seems to assume no membership growth.

I would like to support our national leadership in these reforms, but I have some serious reservations about the wisdom of making some of these changes. If you have strong feelings about these issues, either pro or con, I would really like to hear your views before I vote on the proposals. Some of them, of course, require changes to the national by-laws, which would have to be ratified by the membership in the next election, but I don't want to vote for measures which I'm fairly sure the members will not approve.

You can read the exact wording of the proposed changes on the national website in the posted Agenda for the summer 2014 Board meeting. Please take a minute right now to look over these changes, as well as the rest of the revisions, and let me know if, on balance, you favor or oppose the proposals. I need to hear from you before I leave for Boston on July 2, so please don't delay. You can reach me either by email, at RVC6@us.mensa.org, or by letter at 9920 Ridgehaven Drive, Dallas, TX 75238.

Roger Durham