CHAPTER 33

PETITION FOR THE DEGREES AND PROCEEDINGS THEREON

THE PETITION

Constitutional Provisions

Every candidate for Initiation should read and approve the By-Laws of the Lodge, and must present his petition in writing vouched for by two members of the Lodge at a Stated Communication, which must lie over at least one month for the Brethren to make due inquiry into the character and standing of the candidate and review a criminal background investigative report of the candidate. And a petition thus presented cannot be withdrawn, but must be acted upon, and if rejected, cannot again be presented within six months. But rejections for Passing and Raising, and for membership, shall not be required to lie over six months, but may be renewed at any subsequent Stated Communication of the Lodge. (2009) (Art. X, Sec. 14)

Regulations

33.01 The word "month" in Article X, Section 14 of the Constitution, means from a Stated Communication of a Lodge to a corresponding Communication in the next succeeding calendar month.

33.02 Particular Lodges which may desire to print their own form of Petition for the Degrees must first submit the prepared form or copy to the Grand Secretary for his approval as to form and wording. In addition to the Petition, a statement of consent by the candidate to have a criminal background investigation ordered by the Lodge in addition to an understanding that the Brethren will be making due inquiry into the character and standing of the candidate. It shall be the responsibility of the Lodge Secretary to order the criminal background investigative report. No copies of the criminal background report shall be made nor shall its contents be revealed by or other than to the members of the Investigation Committee. The complete criminal background investigative report shall be returned to the candidate regardless of whether the candidate is accepted or rejected and a receipt obtained by the Lodge and made a part of the Lodge record. (2009)

33.03 The Secretary shall present to the Lodge at its next Stated Communication all petitions for the Degrees received by him, unless deferred by the Worshipful Master for good cause. After the Lodge receives a petition and the statement consenting to the criminal background investigation report, they become a permanent record of the Lodge and should be filed by the Secretary after the Committee reports. A petition, after being received by the Lodge, cannot be withdrawn, even by unanimous consent of the Lodge, except in case of death or severe accident, that would render the applicant ineligible to receive the Degree in such cases. The Worshipful Master should order abatement of the proceedings in regard to such petitions so received by the Lodge. (2009)

33.04 If a Lodge for any cause refuses to receive a petition for the Degrees, it may be again presented at any Stated Communication of the Lodge. It is not a case of rejection, and a delay for six months is not necessary. (1995)

33.05 When a petition is refused, or a candidate rejected, the fee must be returned. Any fee received for the purposes of a criminal background investigation shall not be required to be returned. (2009)

33.06 If any Lodge in this Grand Jurisdiction receives a petition for the Degrees which shows that the petitioner has been rejected in a Sister Grand Jurisdiction, then such petition must be submitted to the Grand Master for his attention and action before any action can be taken by the Lodge.

33.07 When a candidate for the Degrees removes after his petition is received by the Lodge, said candidate remains the material of and under the jurisdiction of the Lodge that received his petition. The Lodge shall act on the petition in the usual way and if elected, the candidate is entitled to receive the Degrees in or by request of that Lodge.

References

For qualifications of petitioner, see Candidates, Chapter 31

For jurisdiction of Lodge over petitioner, see Chapter 18

A petition may be received and ballot taken thereon short of Constitutional time under Dispensation of the Grand Master. Reg. 6.10(a)

A petition for Degrees may not be received at a Called Communication. Reg. 25.02(a)

Lodge cannot accept petition from a Communist. Reg. 31.17

Rulings and Decisions

A petition for Initiation can not be withdrawn after it is received by the Lodge but must go to ballot. (1942 Proc. 57)

Once a petition is received by a Lodge it cannot be withdrawn even by a unanimous vote of the Lodge. (1949 Proc. 49)

Where petitioner requests permission to withdraw petition because of his wife's religious objection and requests notice given by letter stating the reason, the petition must go to ballot and Lodge is judge of method of notification. (1946 Proc. 36)

A petition for Degrees can not be withdrawn without ballot even though Committee reported petitioner was not mentally capable of being made a Mason. (1944 Proc. 35)

Petition for Degrees should not be referred to Committee before being accepted by the Lodge. (1946 Proc. 35)

The Secretary of the Lodge is the custodian of the records of the Lodge and should retain custody and control of a petition when it is received by the Lodge even during the period of investigation. (1954 Proc. 63)

The petition for the Degrees which does not have the required three references is void and all proceedings in connection therewith should be abated, and the petition and fee, if any, should be returned to the petitioner. (1954 Proc. 68)

Waiting time on ballot on petition for Degrees begins on date petition is received by the Lodge and not date it was handed to Chairman of Petitions Committee. (1965 Proc. 196, 198)

A petition for the Degrees or visitation of an otherwise duly qualified visiting Mason may not be objected to by a member of a Particular Lodge if the objection is based upon the grounds of race, creed, or color. (1993 Proc. 123)

A dark ballot cast based solely on a Candidate's race, creed, or country of origin shall be found CLEAR, and the Candidate shall be Initiated, Passed, and Raised WITHOUT OBJECTION unless a valid objection is forthcoming. (2008 Proc. 107-108)

COMMITTEE
Regulations

33.08 The Worshipful Master of each Particular Lodge shall appoint a committee of not less than three and not more than seven members to be known as the Petitions Committee, the duties of which shall be to cause each applicant for the Degrees before his petition has been received by the Lodge to appear personally before the committee and to be interviewed and give such information to the Committee as may be requested. The Committee shall then make its report to the Worshipful Master after which the petition shall follow the usual Masonic procedure.

33.09 Applications for the Degrees of Freemasonry of applicants, both members of the armed services and civilians, who have moved to this state from a Foreign Grand Jurisdiction and who have been in the state only long enough to come under the terms of the Regulations of this Grand Lodge concerning residential qualifications, shall be investigated by the Particular Lodges by inquiry addressed to the Lodge nearest to the former home of such applicant in such Foreign Jurisdiction; and the petition shall not go to ballot until the investigation is completed and report made to the Lodge.

33.10 A ballot spread, inadvertently or otherwise, upon any petition for Initiation before the Investigating Committee reports, is null and void and proceedings abate. Each member of the Committee should investigate independently, and may submit his report in writing or authorize some Brother to report for him, if unable to be present in person. The Committee may submit a unanimous report, or it may submit a divided report, but whether unanimous or divided, the Committee is automatically discharged when it reports, and the petition reported on must go to ballot, but the time of spreading the ballot is the Worshipful Master's responsibility, and a motion to spread the ballot is out of order. The Committee, or any member thereof shall not, after having made its report, disclose any information which was received by the Lodge concerning the criminal background investigation. (2009)

33.11 The Lodge is the judge of eligibility of a petitioner for the Degrees and of an applicant for affiliation, and the Secretary of the Lodge shall accept for presentation to the Lodge each, every, and all properly completed petitions for the Degrees, and each, every, and all properly completed applications for affiliation without regard to the Secretary's opinion as to eligibility of the petitioner or applicant.

References

Master may attend meeting of Committee and direct the work. Reg. 20.17
Master should discharge member of Committee who neglects duties. Reg. 20.18
As to Background Checks, see Reg. 31.03.1

Rulings and Decisions

It is Master's prerogative to call for ballot on petition when the majority of the Committee reports. (1947 Proc. 33)

When a Committee on petition disagrees and refuses to sign report, the Committee should be discharged and a new Committee appointed. (1947 Proc. 33)

If Lodge is satisfied with investigation, ballot must be spread. (1952 Proc. 31)

When a petition for the Degrees of Freemasonry is presented to the Lodge for ballot, the Secretary should at all times inform the Craft as to whether the Committee report on the candidate is favorable or unfavorable. (1961 Proc. 162, 168, 318)

Where Petitions Committee was not able to interview petitioner but petition was voted on upon receipt of Investigating Committee Report, the Report of Petitions Committee could be waived and proceeding is not irregular. (1965 Proc. 196, 200)

A Mason, whether of a given or sister Lodge, has the duty to disclose to a Petitions or Investigating Committee, whatever pertinent knowledge, other than gossip or hearsay, he has of a petitioning candidate. (1975 Proc. 64)