

General Assembly Policies and Procedures

General Overview:

The Constitution of the IWW calls for the union to hold a General Assembly each year. The date of the Assembly has traditionally been over the US/Canadian Labor Day weekend at the first of September for the last several years, with a few exceptions. The location of Assembly sites is usually chosen through referenda ballot each fall. However, the Constitution does allow the Assembly itself to set the date and venue of the next Assembly to be set by the Assembly in session before its adjournment.

The General Assembly of the IWW is generally a two day affair, and may not remain in session over 10 days according to the Constitution. Prior to the General Assembly the General Executive Board is tasked with issuing an agenda to the delegates to the General Assembly specifying the time limit on each question.

Resolutions

Formal resolutions for the General Assembly may be submitted by any branch or body of the union, or by the General Executive Board. Each resolution shall be on a separate sheet of paper and duplicated. No resolution sent in by an individual shall be considered by the General Assembly.

All formal resolutions, wherever possible, shall be in the hands of the General Headquarters at least 60 days before the opening of the General Assembly and headquarters shall publish these resolutions in the GOB as well as furnish copies of these resolutions, along with the proposed agenda to all chartered branches, ROCs and delegates. This should allow time for branch discussions and the gathering of proxy votes on said measures.

The Assembly's enactments are of legal force, provided they are approved by general referendum. Referenda to approve assembly motions shall be issued according to the provisions of Article IX, sec. 2 of the Constitution.

Representation and Delegates

Representation at the General Assembly of the IWW shall be mass membership and delegate on the basis of one member one vote.

Although the Constitution does make allowances for delegates representing various branches and bodies of the union, there is currently no Constitutional language allowing for true delegate representation at Assembly. Individual delegates may carry proxy votes to the Assembly from individual members or bodies of the union, but these proxies must be in writing and clearly indicate the proposal and the vote that is intended.

Delegates to the General Assembly from the Industrial Unions must be members of the IWW for 1 year and in continuous good standing for 60 days immediately prior to nomination. A Credentials Committee will be established at the start of each Assembly to go over the records of each delegate in attendance, and determine their eligibility to vote, as well as the eligibility of any proxies that are being carried by individual delegates.

Auditing Committee

The General Assembly of the IWW shall elect an auditing committee to audit headquarters books and supplies. Its expenses shall be borne by the General Organization. It shall issue a report within 90 days of its election, and cause this report to be published in the General Organization Bulletin.

Standards for the General Assembly

These Standards are based upon those approved by the General Executive Board for the General Assembly in 2000.

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1. A preliminary working Agenda for the General Assembly will be issued by the General Executive Board by June 15th of each year, and published in the June or July GOB.
 2. All issues for discussion at the General Assembly should be prepared in advance, and published in a GOB before the beginning of the assembly.

All Delegates to the Assembly are encouraged to pre-register, and the GEB should do everything in its power to aid the hosting GMB with assembling pre-registration packets which could be sent out before the Assembly and give attendants a chance to prepare for the Assembly before arrival. The cost for this service may be defrayed by a nominal (\$5 to \$10) registration fee.

All points, petitions and motions for the Referenda Ballot must be submitted in writing 60 days before the start of the General Assembly in order that all Branches will have an opportunity to preview and discuss said motions and make recommendations to the Assembly via their delegates, and have their votes recorded via proxies. These items must be sponsored by an Industrial Union Branch, General Membership Branch, or other subordinate body of the union. The Assembly must consider all issues for the ballot, or appoint a committee to do so, and make its recommendations before the end of the final session.

Should the GA vote against placing any given issue on the ballot, the sponsors of said measure may apply that measure by petition as is specified in the Constitution of the IWW, however any directed decision or recommendation of the GA regarding referenda must be printed in the GOB accompanying the ballot.

All other points, petitions and motions for the Assembly must be submitted in writing 10 days before the start of the General Assembly, and must be sponsored by an Industrial Union Branch, General Membership Branch, or other subordinate body of the union. The Assembly must consider all issues for the ballot, or appoint a committee to do so, and make its recommendations before the end of the final session.

3. A final preliminary agenda, including all issues, petitions and motions to be considered during the Assembly will be issued by the General Executive Board and will be available before the start of the first preliminary session.
4. The GEB encourages the hosts of the Assembly, GMB's and IUB's, and other interested individuals, to prepare workshops, lectures and caucus meetings for the membership of the union to take place on Friday and Monday surrounding the actual "business" sessions of the Assembly. The GEB further proposes to do everything in its power to facilitate such events.
5. Regular sessions of the assembly shall last no more than 8 hours on the Saturday and Sunday of Assembly, although the Assembly reserves the right to schedule additional evening sessions from 6:30 to 8:30, if necessary.

No business of the assembly en mass may be conducted after the hour of 9:00 PM.

Time should be reserved on the Monday following the Assembly for any last minute business, or Committee meetings. Time may likewise be reserved for the Friday preceding the Assembly for workshops or other events.

6. A Resolution passed in 1992 calls for some Direct Action to be associated with each and every General Assembly . . . Plans for some such action should be worked out in advance by the Branch hosting the Assembly.
7. Registration will be available one hour before the start of the first session, and should also be available for at least a half-hour before the start of any sessions, temporary and plenary, and for a minimum of one hour on Friday afternoon and one hour Friday evening. All delegates must be registered and credential before they may take part in the business of the assembly.

8. A Preliminary Session of the Assembly shall be called to order before the formal convening of the General Assembly.
 - a) This preliminary session shall elect a temporary chair and secretary, as well as a committee on rules, a planning committee, and a credentials committee.
 - b) The temporary officers and initial committees will lay the foundation for the active session of the assembly.
 1. Committee on Rules will set working rules for all following sessions, working from the preliminary rules supplied in this motion, to be approved by the assembly en mass the following day.
 2. The Planning Committee will consider all motions on the agenda, and consider the best means for forwarding the business of the Assembly.
This may include:
 - Recommendations as to which committees should be created, and which issues and proposals they will discuss, aside from the standing committees.
 - Allocating time restrictions to certain issues, and setting a particular order of business for each day's debate.
 3. Committee on Credentials will immediately begin checking in all visiting delegates, validate their credentials, issue passes, and information packets.
 - This committee will be responsible for the checking the voting eligibility of all delegates so that the business of the Assembly may begin promptly and in order.
 - This committee will be responsible for the continued monitoring of late arrivals and making sure that all are properly credential.
 - This committee will be responsible for validating all Proxy votes, and determining to which issues they may apply.
 - A representative of this committee will act as a Sergeant of Arms at the door for all remaining sessions, directing delegates to the floor, and visitors without proper credentials to a "guests" area, and enforcing order at the direction of the chair.
9. The following rules shall be adopted for procedural purposes on the floor of the Assembly and submitted to the Committee on Rules for ammendation and/or final approval.
 - #1. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the standard upon which all decisions shall be made.
A standard Primer on the Rules of Decision-Making will be available to every delegate.
 - #2. Members wishing the floor shall raise a hand and hold it up until recognized by the chair.
 - #3. All discussion shall be out of order when there is no motion before the floor, except when a motion has been carried to open the floor for discussion.
 - #4. Only registered and credential delegates may have the floor.
 - #5. No delegate shall speak twice on a motion unless all delegates have had a chance to speak. Speakers shall keep their comments to less than three minutes, and shall be told when their time is up by a timekeeper.
 - #6. Questions (points of information) are not in order when a speaker has the floor. All such points should be held until the end of each speaker's presentation.
 - #7. A point of order (procedural point) can always be made when another delegate has the floor. If the chair is in doubt regarding the point of order, it may be submitted to the floor.
 - #8. When a motion has been made and seconded, the chair must either rule it out of order or put it to the floor for discussion.
 - #9. The secretary shall record the maker of each motion, and may require a written copy of any motion placed on the floor from the motion's proposer.
 - #10. The maker of a motion reserves the right to a closing argument before the question is called on said motion.
 - #11. All resolutions shall be supplied to each delegate in writing before the body before being turned over to committees.
 - #12. Voting shall be decided by a voice or hand count. Abstentions will only be counted when called for.
 - #13. A majority vote shall decide all questions.

- #14 All nominees shall raise their hands when nominated, if present.
- #15 Members need not to be present to accept nominations of the Assembly, but shall notify the GST within 10 days of acceptance or declination.
- #16 No additional motions or issues may be placed on the floor of the GA until all of the business on the Agenda has been given proper consideration.
- #17 The minutes of the previous day's session shall be read at the designated time(s) each day. The minutes may be amended by a floor vote.
- #18 No delegate shall be present at the Assembly while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs of a stimulating or depressive nature which affect said delegate's ability to carry out obligations to the Assembly as defined in these rules.
- #19 That the Assembly minutes shall be assembled and a copy signed by the General Assembly Recording Secretary shall be sent to the GST within 30 days of the closing of the Assembly.
- #20 Each delegate will be responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Primer on the Rules of Decision Making, and utilizing it for conducting the business of the Assembly.

The Committee on Rules shall be responsible for making copies of the approved rules available to all delegates of the Assembly; and will also be responsible for seeing that The Primer on the Rules of Decision-Making, contained below, is distributed to all delegates.

9. It is advisable to appoint/elect at least two recording secretaries to handle the minutes of the meeting. By the rules of the assembly, as outlined above, these individuals would be responsible for correlating the minutes and getting them in the hands of the GST within 30 days of the close of the assembly.

In turn the GST shall make said minutes available to any Branch, ROC other body of the IWW within 10 days of the receipt of the minutes, and to any member of the IWW within 60 days of the close of the Assembly for the costs of printing and shipping.

10. The GEB requires that the following officers, committees, and subordinate bodies to supply written reports to supplement their oral reports to the Assembly:

General Secretary/Treasurer
The Chair of the General Executive Board
Editor(s) of the *Industrial Worker*
Central Secretary/Treasurer of the GDC

The International Solidarity Committee
Audit Committee
All Standing Committees
Representatives of Branches, IU's and Shops

A Primer on the Rules of Decision Making

- A) Chair: The person that is elected to maintain the order of business at the meeting.
- B) Agenda: The order of business, or list of things to be discussed.
- C) Main Motion: The proposed action or policy.
- D) Second: To support opening a motion to discussion; without a second, the original motion is deferred, or dropped.
- E) Discussion: All motions are up for questions and debate before a vote.
- F) Motion to Amend: During discussion, someone may move to amend the main motion. The proposed amendment is then discussed and voted on before returning to the main motion. However, if the amendment is offered as friendly, the amendment does not need to be voted on if it is accepted by the maker of the main motion.
- G) Suspending the Order of the Day: A vote can be taken at any time to suspend the order of business (i.e. the agenda) for free discussion and brainstorm.
- H) Calling the Question: Ends the debate; floor may vote on whether or not to call the question, or the chair may rule to put the question to vote.
- I) Appealing the ruling of the Chair: All decisions in regards to proceeding made by the chair are subject to override by majority. This rarely happens, but is necessary on occasion.
- J) Point of Order: Is always in order, used by anyone to point out that debate has wandered off of the subject at hand
- K) "Out of Order": Someone may be declared "out of order" when they are speaking out of turn, not speaking to the subject or question at hand, or is being disruptive.
- L) Good and Welfare: This is the time when announcements and other items that do not fit into the agenda can be brought up.
- M) Voting may be done with a show of hands or a voice vote.

Procedure Etiquette and Protocol:

- A) Respect each other's opinions, and the process.
- B) Raise hand to get on speaking list (chair or co-chair maintains list).
- C) All should have a chance to speak before anyone speaks twice on a motion.
- D) Allow for ample debate before calling the question. Allow for the group to determine a general agreement on a question before asking for a vote (sometimes general agreement is not possible).
- E) Help the chair do his/her job by helping to move the agenda along.