

The Nature of a Convention and how it differs from other meetings.

A convention is a gathering of delegates for a yearly session, which may consist of several meetings. Delegates are the representatives of the constituent units of a larger group. For example, a national organization (GFWC/CFWC) with hundreds of chapters (clubs) might hold an annual convention, composed of delegates and officers of each chapter for the purpose of electing national officers and setting policies for the organization. The convention serves as a single deliberative body acting in the name of the entire organization. (RONR 12 ed. 58:1)

Although there are many similarities in the way business is conducted at a convention and the way it is conducted at other meetings, there are a few significant differences. Because each convention may have multiple meetings and is normally composed of a new set of delegates, it must begin with a series of steps by which it “organizes” itself before it can go on to consider substantive business.

The steps in beginning a convention:

1. Send out the “call” or notice of convention by specified time in advance.
2. Establish its membership by adopting the Credentials Committee report – The voting membership must be officially established.
3. Decide upon its rules (to some extent these will differ from those in the parliamentary authority) by adopting the report of the Committee on Standing Rules—agree to the provisional convention rules.
4. Approve the order in which it will consider its business by adopting the Program Committee Report – Adhere to the proposed program business agenda and special events. (RONR 12th ed. 59:10-13).
5. Consideration of the Resolutions Committee—discuss, amend, adopt policies that express the group’s views.
6. Conduct elections—according to the organization’s bylaws.

The procedures for determining the qualifications and number of delegates and how they are selected are listed in the CFWC bylaws (Article XIII Section 13.2, A). The Delegate representation number is in addition to the Club President—eligible to vote by virtue of office. Your club must send in “credentials” forms designating the number of delegates attending before a date specified in the “call”, in advance of the convention.

As a delegate you are privileged to take your place in the hall. You are free to vote as you see fit on matters that come before the convention, except that you must vote in accordance with any instructions your club may have chosen to give you. After returning, it is your duty to be prepared to present to the club an informative report on what happened. (RONR 12 ed. 58:6-9, 59:14(5),58:18)