

Business Meeting Items Summary (BMIS)  
Review Subcommittee Process

## **BMIS Review Subcommittee**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the BMIS Review Subcommittee (“BRS”) is to facilitate the development of well-crafted items for inclusion on the Annual Business Meeting (“ABM”) agenda and to facilitate the efficient functioning of the ABM.

### **Status:**

Subcommittee of the Conference Charter Committee (“CCC”)

### **Committee Number:**

The subcommittee must always consist of an odd number of members. Although it is preferable to have all the committee members present, either 3 or 5 members may constitute the requisite number for decision making.

### **Committee make-up:**

It is suggested that:

No more than 2 members be from the CCC.

Committee members come from a variety of Conference Committees.

No more than 2 members be from any one other Conference Committee.

No more than 2 members be from any one group, or intergroup.

At least one person not be a member of any Conference Committee.

At least one person be a returning member.

In the spirit of rotation, each member may serve no more than two years consecutively on the BRS, followed by at least a one year break in service on the BRS.

### **Membership Process:**

The BRS chair nominates proposed members, subject to approval by the Conference Charter Committee. Members of the BRS need not be members of the CCC.

### **Observers:**

Observers may attend the meetings only with the advanced consent and agreement of the CCC Chair and the BRS Chair, in conjunction with input from BRS members.

### **Qualifications:**

- (1) Members should have an understanding of the ABM, motion structures, and business process.
- (2) Members should be interested in facilitating the submission of motions and Items

## Business Meeting Items Summary (BMIS) Review Subcommittee Process

For Discussion “IFDs”, and in assisting those making submissions to develop motions and IFDs with clarity, practicality, effectiveness, impartiality, and efficiency / timeliness.

- (3) Members should support the idea of revising, clarifying and in some cases rejecting BMIS items.

### **Tasks:**

- (1) Members work with item submitters to craft well-written motions and items for discussion (IFDs) for the BMIS;
- (2) Members work with other members of the BMIS subcommittee to improve the quality of items and insure the smooth introduction and understanding of items by the membership at the ABM;
- (3) Members support the CCC in the production of the BMIS.

### **Ideal Scenario for the BRS:**

Through face to face or in person web or phone conversations help groups and encourage participants to enter the review process and make motions and items for discussion clearer for the membership.

### **Process:**

This process is intended to assist individuals, groups, Intergroups, Conference Committees, and the Board of Trustees in the development of well-crafted items for inclusion on the ABM agenda. Because no service body of the Conference has the authority to prevent the Board of Trustees (BOT) from fulfilling what it perceives to be its fiduciary obligations, the BRS may not reject any item submitted by the BOT.

### **Submission of Agenda Items:**

Items can be submitted any time of the year. However there are deadlines for inclusion on any one given year's ABM agenda.

Items can be submitted to the FWS office or directly to the BMIS editor between ABMs. Items can be submitted to the CCC at any time for inclusion on any given year's ABM, items must be submitted by the deadline stipulated by the CCC for the particular ABM year.

### **Agenda Item Review Process:**

For an item to have BRS consideration, it must be submitted on such submission form developed for this purpose, or provide all the pertinent information identified on such submission form. Incomplete submissions, whether on the form or an equivalent, will be returned to the submitter for completion in order to be considered. The item originator(s) must be clearly identified, along with valid contact information as deemed appropriate for this purpose.

Business Meeting Items Summary (BMIS)  
Review Subcommittee Process

Further, for an item to have BRS consideration, it must be submitted by an S.L.A.A. member, or if not a member of the Fellowship, then a member of the Conference. Members of the Conference who are not members of the Fellowship might include FWS office staff, members of the BOT, and/or others as may be determined by future Conferences.

Incomplete submissions will be returned to the submitter, noting that it does not meet the criteria for consideration. An item can be modified to satisfy the requirement for BRS consideration and can be resubmitted.

Questions for the BRS to ask regarding each item before deciding whether to include the item as is, reject the item, or send it back to the submitter with a request for revision.

- 1. Is the item's goal already effectively accomplished by a Motion previously adopted by the Conference;
- 2. Is the item's goal identical to, or a portion of, a motion defeated in the immediately preceding Conference year;
- 3. Is the item's goal identical to, or a portion of, a motion already included in the BMIS for the current year;
- 4. Is the item best combined with another item, at which time the BRS can suggest teamwork between multiple submitter of items;
- 5. Has the window of time in which an item's goal already passed as of the time of the submission, or will it pass before the item can be voted upon by the Conference;
- 6. Does the item's goal exceed the scope of authority of the service entity expected to exercise such authority;
- 7. Does the item contain names of people, places or things; dates; times; or other specifics that are not integral to the effectiveness of the discussion item or execution of the motion (Integral to means central to and necessary for.);
- 8. Does the item contain date specific information, where the date is not an essential portion of the item;
- 9. Does the item contain date specific information, for which the date has already passed;
- 10. Does the item assume previous agreement, action or processes that may not be the case;
- 11. Is the item unclear, confusing, vague, ambiguous, or in some other way not comprehensible to the BRS as a whole;
- 12. Does the item propose to create, produce or approve literature where the literature in question has not gone through the Conference Literature Committee review and approval process;
- 13. Does the item propose to take action that is already being taken, including repackaging existing Conference Approved literature;
- 14. Does the item clearly identify implementation of the decision, at least at a conceptual level that can be developed by the Conference, the Board of Trustees,

Business Meeting Items Summary (BMIS)  
Review Subcommittee Process

and/or the FWS Office as delegated by the Board of Trustees;

- 15. Does the motion respect the right of the Board of Trustees to determine the method of execution of Fellowship-wide priorities (nonetheless, priorities can be set by the Fellowship as a whole through the Conference per Traditions Two and Nine.);
- 16. Is there an insufficient body of supporting or background information included for the Conference to make an adequately informed decision or comment on the item (per Tradition Two.);
- 17. Is the item longer than necessary and can be trimmed considerably without losing effectiveness, scope, or understandability;
- 18. Would the item more effectively be considered as is, or combined with other items?

These are subjective elements, which will invariably be interpreted differently by individuals. The BRS members are trusted servants, and should be accorded that trust in accordance with the Twelve Traditions. BRS members may consider other elements in lieu of, or in addition to, these suggested elements, so long as such elements are chosen by group conscience of the entire BRS. The BRS will objectively evaluate items in the form submitted. The BRS shall not research the history and merits of an item.

**Acceptance of Received Items:**

For an item to be accepted without change onto the BMIS, the item must have a majority vote of the members of the BRS who are not abstaining from the vote. A majority vote to accept an item without change will result in 1) adding the item to the BMIS without change, and 2) inclusion of a note on the right side of the BMIS stating: *This item was accepted without change onto the BMIS by a vote of x-x-x.* If a submission is accepted without change, the BRS will designate a member to communicate this decision to the submitter(s).

When an item does not receive a majority vote of the BRS for inclusion on the agenda without change, it will be considered for the revision process outlined elsewhere in this document.

**Revision of received items:**

Items are requested for revision when they are unclear as to intent or they may present a confusing or conflicting point or points to the ABM. The submitter(s) of the item may either (1) accept and revise the item or (2) reject the revisions.

For an item to have a request for revision, the request must have a majority vote of the members of the BRS who are reviewing the incoming items. A majority vote is assured by having an odd number of members of the committee (a “2 or more out of 3” vote, or a “3 or more out of 5” vote, depending on the number of committee members, assuming no abstentions).

Once an item is designated for request for revision a member or members of the BRS are

Business Meeting Items Summary (BMIS)  
Review Subcommittee Process

designated as primary liaison(s) for that item and would take responsibility for working with the originator(s) (the submitter of the item if an individual or the group or committee bringing the item to the ABM) to: express the concern of the majority of the BRS; prepare a proposed revision of the item; and, if the item is revised, bring the item back to the BRS for a vote.

A majority vote of the BRS would be needed (again, a “2 or more out of 3” vote, or a “3 or more out of 5” vote, depending on the number of committee members) to approve the revised item for the BMIS. The liaison would then be responsible for communicating the vote on the revised item to the originator.

If the submitter(s) accept the revision a note on the right side of the BMIS will read: *This item was revised by the submitter and accepted onto the BMIS by a vote of x-x-x.* If there is a minority exception to the vote, that exception may be included as well.

If the submitter(s) choose not to accept the committee recommendation to revise, the item may be accepted on to the BMIS and a note on the right side of the BMIS will read: *The BRS requested a revision by a vote of x-x-x; however, the item was not revised by the submitter.*

**Reasons An Item Can Be Revised:**

- (1) Motions or IFDs containing date specific information, where the date is not an essential portion of the item;
- (2) Motions or IFDs which are not worded appropriately for the more effective process;
- (3) Motions or IFDs assuming previous agreement action, or process that may not be the case;
- (4) Motions or IFDs which are in some other way confusing, vague, or ambiguous, so long as the BRS can submit the reasons for revision in writing;
- (5) Motions or IFDs not submitted on the FWS form or containing the equivalent information.

ITEMS SHALL NOT BE REVISED BASED ON COMMITTEE MEMBERS' PERSONAL OPINIONS OR PREFERENCES.

**Rejection of received items:**

The item should be evaluated against a list of previously existing and understood guidelines (see below). A unanimous vote of those BRS members voting is required to keep an item out of the BMIS. Full participation of the subcommittee in voting is expected, but a member may abstain for good reason (for instance, if the committee member feels there is a conflict of interest).

*If the item is unanimously rejected,* then one member of the BRS is designated as the liaison to communicate the rejection, the reason(s) and alternative avenues for consideration to the originator.

Business Meeting Items Summary (BMIS)  
Review Subcommittee Process

*If the item is rejected by a simple majority, then the recommendation to reject and the reasons for the rejection will be forwarded to the CCC Chair, to be handled at the next full CCC meeting (see below for suggested process).*

*If the item is accepted by the CCC, then the item will be included on the BMIS and the BRS may then choose to begin the revision process (see above).*

**Reasons An Item Can Be Rejected:**

- (1) Motions or IFD to create, produce, or approve literature where the literature in question has not gone through the Conference Literature Committee review and approval process;
- (2) Motions or IFD to take an action that is already being taken, including repackaging existing Conference Approved literature;
- (3) Motions or IFD submitted by inappropriate bodies such as non-SLAA members who are not voting members of the Conference;
- (4) Motions or IFD containing date specific information, where the date has passed and was an essential portion of the item;
- (5) Motions or IFD which cannot be enforced;
- (6) Motions or Items for Discussion that were considered at the previous Annual Business Meeting (Exception: literature approved and submitted by the Conference Literature Committee may be brought back to a subsequent ABM);
- (7) Motions or IFD submitted to the Conference that would be more appropriately addressed by another body such as the BOT, a particular Conference committee, or FWS (not including circumstances relating to Article V, Section 4, where the BOT is seeking input regarding an item that is otherwise within its sole purview).

ITEMS SHALL NOT BE REJECTED BASED ON COMMITTEE MEMBERS' PERSONAL OPINIONS OR PREFERENCES.

**Motions and Item for Discussion from the Board of Trustees:**

Motions and IFD initiated by the Board of Trustees are not subject to rejection by the BRS. However, the BRS may offer the BOT its opinion for possible revisions or reasons for withdrawal of a BOT Motion or Item for Discussion.

**Conference Charter Committee Process for Handling Referrals:**

Any referral item from the BRS regarding rejection of an item in the BMIS shall be handled at the next CCC meeting following the referral. Minutes of the BRS discussion (regarding the referral) will be provided to CCC members prior to the CCC meeting where the item will be addressed.

The CCC will read the proposed item, and the proposed reason(s) for rejection. Because

Business Meeting Items Summary (BMIS)  
Review Subcommittee Process

of the amount of in-depth discussion at the BRS level, the item will go to an immediate 1st vote, with no preliminary pro and con discussion.

The normal voting process will be used:

- a 1<sup>st</sup> vote, with an opportunity for minority opinion; then
- a 2<sup>nd</sup> vote, if necessary, with an opportunity for minority opinion; and then
- a 3<sup>rd</sup> and final vote, if necessary.

Group conscience (not simple majority or unanimity) of the CCC will be the final vote on the inclusion or exclusion of the item on the BMIS.

If the item is rejected by the full CCC, then one member of the BRS is still designated as liaison to communicate the rejection, the reason(s) for the rejection, and alternative avenues for consideration to the originator.

**Items for Discussion (IFD) Process at the ABM:**

IFDs, shall be handled by having discussion for a time established by the Facilitator (usually 10, 15, or 20 minutes). Each participant statement will be limited to one or two minutes. Each person will have the opportunity to speak once; if there is still time after everyone who wants to speak has spoken, people may speak a second time. People may give whatever feedback they wish on the issue at hand; sound bytes are not necessary.

The ABM Record keeper will take down the gist of the comments as well as he/she is able; the rest of the written record will be filled in using the audio recordings. At the end of the allotted time, the facilitator will end the discussion and the item will be closed for that ABM. The information gathered during the discussion will be captured in the official ABM minutes, which are distributed as usual.

After the ABM, IFD items that were discussed will be “assigned” to various committees as is currently done with Motions. Additionally, the new BRS Chair/BMIS Editor will communicate with the submitter to pass along the content of the discussion from the minutes, inform the submitter of the rest of the process, and offer help from the BRS, if needed and/or desired.

The item will remain on the agenda in its original form until the CCC sends out the 1st draft of the BMIS for the following year. On the right hand side, there will be a note regarding the process that either (a) there is a motion replacing the IFD or (b) that if there is no motion returned by [established due date, as stated below] and that the item will be removed.

Motions intended to replace IFDs from the previous year must be received by the deadline established by the CCC for feedback from Conference Committee for the 2nd draft of the BMIS. If, by the deadline for feedback for the 2nd draft of the BMIS, a motion has been submitted regarding the item, based on the discussion from the previous year, the motion will assume the place of the item on the BMIS.

Business Meeting Items Summary (BMIS)  
Review Subcommittee Process

If, by the deadline for feedback for the 2nd draft of the BMIS, no motion is submitted relevant to the item, the item will be removed from the agenda. Motions can be submitted by any service body or individual, and multiple submissions are possible. As with all submissions, motions received through this process are still subject to the motions acceptance process of the BRS.

**Communications Re: BRS Activities:**

These guidelines should be published at least once a year in relevant publications and websites at the same time as the first communication of the BMIS submission deadline. Further, any item which is rejected shall be noted in the BRS minutes submitted to the Conference Charter Committee and included in the Conference Charter Committee report to the ABM along with the reasons for the rejection.