

WRJ Proposed Constitution Revisions 2021

Article 5, Section A

Topic: Allowing the Legislative Body meeting to not meet in person, but making that preferable

The proposed solution: Adding the words “if possible” to the in-person meetings.

Rationale: The Legislative Body is the meeting of the members in which we vote on resolutions and constitutional revisions. This pandemic has made it very clear that while we prefer to meet in person, we cannot always do so.

Current Language:

Section A. The Legislative Body of WRJ shall be composed of the members of the WRJ Board of Directors and others designated to cast votes (as defined below). The designated officers shall preside over its meetings. The Executive Committee shall convene an in-person meeting of the WRJ Legislative Body at least once every three years.

New language:

Section A. The Legislative Body of WRJ shall be composed of the members of the WRJ Board of Directors and others designated to cast votes (as defined below). The designated officers shall preside over its meetings. The Executive Committee shall convene the WRJ Legislative Body at least once every three years, in-person if possible.

Article 6, Section A

Topic: The composition of the Nominating Committee for the Board of Directors

The proposed solution: Take the Nominating Committee from 17 people to 10 people, plus one alternate while allowing for diversity.

Rationale: The current size of this committee has made it difficult for everyone on the committee to meet at the same time. Most committees are named by the president, in consultation with the Executive Committee. This should be the case here. The president will consult with the district presidents to ensure district diversity, but we also want diversity in age, in background, including sisterhood member/individual member.

Current language:

Section A. A Nominating Committee shall be established at least ninety days in advance of presenting the slate to the WRJ Board of Directors. It shall consist of the chair and seven members appointed by the WRJ president. Of the eight appointees of the WRJ

president, not more than five shall be members of the WRJ Board of Directors. In addition, each district president shall appoint one representative.

New language:

Section A. A Nominating Committee shall be established at least ninety days in advance of presenting the slate to the WRJ Board of Directors. After consulting with the current president of each WRJ District and the Executive Committee to ensure diversity and geographic representation, the WRJ President shall appoint a chair and nine members. The WRJ President also shall appoint one alternate, who shall participate fully with voice and no vote. If one of the members of the committee is unable to fulfill her responsibilities, the alternate will then take her place and will have a vote. No more than five appointees shall be current WRJ Board members.

Article 6, Section B

Topic: How candidates apply to the Board of Directors

The proposed solution: Individual women can apply rather than have to go through their sisterhood, and more than one woman can apply from a women's group in the same year. This would not make a sisterhood woman applying any different than an individual member.

Rationale: Currently a women's group can nominate one candidate for the Board of Directors each time. We want the women to apply individually, which has actually been the practice. The Nominating Committee could choose to seat two women from the same sisterhood in the same year if they were both qualified candidates. Also, the form does ask for references from a women's group, rabbi, board member, etc.

Currently Reads:

Section B. 1. Each affiliated group that meets the eligibility requirements may submit to the chair of the Nominating Committee an application for one candidate for consideration as a member of the board for a three-year term. (See Article 7, Section D).

New language:

Section B. 1. Any WRJ member may apply for the WRJ Board of Directors by completing the application and submitting it to the WRJ Nominating Committee.

Article 7, Section C

Topic: Eligibility to the Board of Directors

The proposed solution: To change from saying "a woman is Jewish" to "one who identifies as a Jewish woman."

Rationale: We want to talk about gender and religious identity in a more inclusive way. We want to be open to diversity on our board including people who are transgender or who have not gone through formal conversion. We trust the nominating committee to do

its work weeding out an applicant who had religious values that were not in line with the values of WRJ.

Current Language:

Section C. Eligibility for membership on the WRJ Board of Directors shall require that:

1. Each woman is Jewish.
2. Each woman is and remains a member in good standing of WRJ.

New language:

Eligibility for membership on the WRJ Board of Directors is open to:

1. One who identifies as a Jewish woman.
2. One who is and remains a member in good standing of WRJ.

Article 7, Section D1

Topic: Timing of when the board assumes its duties and considering extensions as a second term

The proposed solution: We want to make it clear when a new board member starts and have identified that newly elected board members become active board members after the meeting in which they were elected has ended.

We have changed this idea of an “extension” for a board member who has served three years, to being elected to a second term.

Rationale: It has been confusing as to when the board members as well as the Executive Committee members begin their terms. This makes it very clear (and as you will see, we have handled the EC members in the same way). We also do not want women feeling like it is a bad thing to ask for an extension. If they want to serve another one, two, or three years, they are just asking for a second term. They can also ask for additional terms as long as they do not serve more than six years in a row total. For example, Jane could do 3 years, then 2 years and 1 year, or she could do 3 years, then 1 year, 1 year, 1 year, or she could do 3 years, then 1 year, then 2 years and still be in the six-year window.

Current Language:

Section D. WRJ Board of Directors Members’ Term of Office

1. An elected member shall serve for a period of three years, with approximately one third of the board being elected annually.
2. The Nominating Committee may propose any elected or non-elected member for an extension of up to three years, not to exceed six consecutive years of board service. After six consecutive years of board service a Board member must rotate off the Board for at least one year unless she becomes a member of the Executive Committee or serves as one of the president’s appointed Board members-at-large. (See Section E.)

New Language:

1. Board members shall serve for a term of three consecutive years, with approximately one third of the board being elected annually.
2. Newly elected board members shall assume office at the conclusion of the WRJ Board of Directors meeting at which they are elected.
3. At the conclusion of a term, a director may be nominated and re-elected for additional one-, two- or three-year terms. After six consecutive years of board service a Board member must rotate off the Board for at least one year unless she becomes a member of the Executive Committee or serves as one of the president's appointed Board members-at-large. (See Section E.)

Article 8, Section E

Topic: The spending of the Executive Committee

The proposed solution: We want to tie the unbudgeted spending the Executive Committee can do to the total assets of WRJ and tie it to one year instead of three years.

Rationale: The WRJ Board of Directors approves the WRJ budget annually and can be convened in emergencies to make adjustments or authorize additional funds if needed. However, there are occasions when the Executive Committee needs to be able to disperse funds in-between board meetings; recent examples of funding requests that came between board meetings include requests for sponsorships for partner organizations' events, special Reform Movement campaigns or emergency appeals; a consultancy for financial stability; and an emergency request for assistance to move a WUPJ camp to safety. Other examples of unanticipated expenditures could include a sensitive manner such as a lawsuit, personnel matter, or contracts we need to break. Currently, the Executive Committee can authorize up to \$750,000 of the general fund budget in a three-year period. In recent years, however, the Executive Committee occasionally allocated funds from other sources, such as the YES Fund Reserve or the Centennial Fund. The proposed new language would apply to any funds authorized by the Executive Committee in between board meetings, not limited to the general fund. In addition, since the board meets annually to approve the budget, an annual cap makes more sense than a three-year cap. Based on current finances, this change would allow the Executive Committee to authorize about \$350,000 in unbudgeted funds as compared to the current language, which allows for expenditures of up to \$750,000 over three years. In addition, tying the calculation to the net assets total in the most recent audited financial statements is a clearly knowable number, and less ambiguous than 'general fund budget' which can be understood in different ways. At 5% of net assets, the amount available to the Executive Committee to authorize is comparable to the current amount and would be reviewed by the board annually, rather than every three years. The board does see any expense the Executive Committee authorizes in the

financial documents included with the budget each year, and is notified unless it is of a sensitive matter.

Current Language:

Section E. The Executive Committee shall meet at least annually. It shall act for the board in any emergency between the meetings of the board and shall have the power of expending a sum not to exceed ten percent of the total general fund budget during the period between the WRJ Legislative Body meetings.

New language:

Section E. The Executive Committee shall meet at least annually. It shall act for the board in between the meetings of the board and shall have the power of expending annually an unbudgeted sum not to exceed five percent of the total net assets of the organization as stated on the last audited financial statement.

Article 8, Section H

Topic: Who is eligible for the Executive Committee

The proposed solution: We have been confused by the words “one year” and “three years” because sometimes it’s more like 10 months or 14 months or 38 months or 34 months depending on when the board meeting is each year. Instead, we are talking about all Board members being eligible and anyone who has served on the board since the last nominating cycle.

Rationale: By tying this to the last nominating cycle and including all board members, we do feel like we have solved the confusion with the changing dates of the board meetings.

Current language:

Section H. Eligibility for membership of the Executive Committee:

A current member of the WRJ Board of Directors shall be eligible to be nominated for the Executive Committee after having served on the board for at least one year. A former member of the WRJ Board of Directors shall be eligible to be nominated for the Executive Committee within three years of the completion of her board service.

New language:

Section H. Eligibility for membership **on** the Executive Committee:

A current member of the WRJ Board of Directors shall be eligible to be nominated for the Executive Committee. A former member of the WRJ Board of Directors shall be eligible to be nominated for the Executive Committee in the first nominating cycle following the completion of her board service.

Article 8, Section I

Topic: Timing of the Executive Committee and who votes for them

The proposed solution: Just like we did with the Board Members, we are defining the term as starting after the end of the board meeting in which the Executive Committee is elected. We are also defining that it is the sitting board who elects the incoming Executive Committee.

Rationale: We needed to define better the timing of when one Executive Committee ends and the other one begins and not tie it to installation or a conference. It also has been confusing as to who votes for what: Now the sitting board will vote for everything including the new Board, Executive Committee, budget, constitutional revisions, statements, etc.

Current Language:

Section I. Election of the Executive Committee: 1. The WRJ Board of Directors (continuing and newly elected members) shall elect the Executive Committee at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors during which the Executive Committee terms rotate.

New Language:

Section I. Election of the Executive Committee: 1. The WRJ Board of Directors shall elect the incoming Executive Committee during the annual meeting of the Board of Directors at which the outgoing Executive Committee's term concludes.

Article 9, Section B

Topic: The Executive Committee Nominating Committee meeting in person

The proposed solution: Adding the words "if possible" to the in-person meetings.

Rationale: This pandemic has made it very clear that while we prefer to meet in person, we cannot always do so.

Current Constitutional Language (Article 9, Section B)

Article 9 COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section B. The Committee on Nominations for Executive Committee shall meet in person to nominate the officers and At-Large Members of the Executive Committee prior to the WRJ Board meeting at which the Executive Committee will be elected.

New language:

Article 9 COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section B. The Committee on Nominations for the Executive Committee shall meet to nominate the officers and at-large members of the Executive Committee prior to the WRJ Board meeting at which the Executive Committee will be elected. This meeting shall take place in person, if possible.

Article 16, Section D

Topic: District Dues

The proposed solution: We took out the district treasurer because not all districts use the treasurer as the dues collector.

Rationale: This allows districts to designate who will receive the dues, as well it allows for WRJ to collect the dues given by a grant and distribute it to a district. It also allows the district to designate who will create the annual financial report to send to WRJ, but it doesn't have to be the treasurer.

Current Language: *Section D.* The dues claimed by each district shall be collected by the district treasurer, who shall make an annual report to WRJ, giving the current financial statement and proposed budget of her respective district.

New Language:

Section D. 1. District dues shall be collected annually.

2. Each district is responsible for submitting annually to WRJ its current financial statements and proposed budget.

Article 16, Section G

Topic: Timing of the districts

The proposed solution: The WRJ is on a three-year cycle now and we are moving the districts to be part of that three-year cycle.

Rationale: It has been difficult having two different cycles. Now we are aligning the districts and WRJ North America into one cycle. We are also not tying our hands into having district conventions in a particular season of a particular year, allowing for the WRJ calendar to change as needed.

Current Language:

Section G. All districts must hold a biennial district convention every two years. All district conventions shall be held in the fall of even numbered years.

New Language:

Section G. All districts shall hold a district convention once every three years, in alignment with the WRJ calendar.