



Electing Lodge Officers

Providing Resources to Support Units, Chapters, and Lodges

Each year, lodges elect the youth who will lead the lodge for the following year. Generally, lodges elect a lodge chief, one or more vice-chiefs, a treasurer, and a secretary. The process to complete this task should be simple, fair, and fun. One lodge developed the following process thirty-five years ago. It has proven to be so successful that the lodge continues to use the process to this day.

Preparation. The lodge announces the election details in the annual lodge calendar. The election occurs on Sunday morning of one of the lodge's Ordeals. The lodge informs candidates that they must be registered in the BSA and must be active participants in their respective units. At the lodge executive committee meeting prior to the election, candidates declare their intention to run for office.

Campaigning. The lodge does not permit candidates to distribute any published literature—either in hard copy or electronically—prior to the weekend of election. Candidates may circulate, display, or distribute campaign literature during the weekend of election until midnight Saturday prior to the Sunday election.

Approval. Each candidate must obtain a letter of approval from his chapter adviser. Each candidate must submit the letter to the lodge adviser by noon on Saturday. A candidate's failure to submit the letter by noon results in his disqualification.

Nomination. At the Saturday lunch, candidates are nominated by a lodge member. Only a youth may nominate another youth. This is done verbally, and the nomination must be accepted by the candidate. As a nomination is made and accepted, the candidate comes to the front of the room to make his statement.

Candidate Statements. After all nominations have been made and accepted for a particular office, the candidates for that office are allotted ninety seconds each to provide an overview of their qualifications and announce their basic goals. This is normally a very short, simple statement. Candidate presentation is based on order of nomination: Those nominated first speak first.

Election Basics. On Sunday morning following the business meeting, the lodge commences with the election. The lodge chief is elected first, followed by vice chief(s), secretary, and then treasurer. At the election, nomination is open again so the new brothers can nominate only a new brother, as they are now entitled to all rights and privileges as any other Arrowman. Each candidate has three minutes to present their goals and other ideas. This is a timed process with notifications for one minute, forty seconds, and ten seconds remaining.

If the current lodge chief seeks re-election, he turns over the duties to the highest ranking current elected officer not seeking re-election. If the chief is re-elected he immediately resumes his responsibility and continues to run the meeting. If he loses the re-election, he continues to conduct the election until the newly elected chief is sworn into office.

Voting. To expedite voting, the lodge uses a simple voting box. Lodge adult members create a blind or some distance sufficient enough to allow privacy for voting youth Arrowman. The lodge provides closed boxes with slots in the top to receive voting chips. The number of boxes correlates with the number of candidates for office, and on each box an index card is attached with the candidate's name. Lodge youth members are placed in a line controlled by an adult adviser. That adult presents each voting member with a chip—much like a poker chip—prior to them moving to the voting booth. Each member places his chip in the box and moves to the other side of the room or into another room. The voters do not return until that round of voting is complete.

Boxes are opened in the presence of the lodge adviser, in view of the membership, and chips are silently counted. The candidate with the highest number wins the office. The number of chips each candidate receives is not announced. This process is repeated after each group of candidates presents speeches to the membership.

The above resource was submitted by O-Shot-Caw Lodge in Miami Lakes, Florida, which has experienced smooth, fair lodge elections. The lodge typically has between 600 and 700 registered members, and a typical election consists of three or four individuals running for each position. Send your lodge's unique, successful ideas to ChapterResources@oa-bsa.org.