



# UNIT CHAIR HANDBOOK

**CHAIRMAN RICHARD L. ANDERSON**  
115 E. GRACE ST., RICHMOND, VA 23219

REVISED  
AUG 7, 2024

## **Table of Contents**

Section I: The Republican Creed .....	2
Section II: Introduction .....	2
Section III: Methods of Nomination .....	3
Section IV: Committees of the RPV .....	3
Section V: Role of Unit Chairs .....	3
Section VI: The Unit Committee .....	8
Section VII: Legislative District Committee .....	15
Section VIII: Congressional District Committee .....	17
Section IX: State Central Committee .....	17
Section X: The Nomination Process .....	18
Section XI: Political Resources .....	19
Appendices	
A. Sample Proxy Form .....	22
B. Check List and Timeline .....	23
C. Sample Code of Conduct .....	27
D. Precinct Organization Best Practices .....	28

*Please note that any reference of a section number will refer to the relevant section of the Republican Party of Virginia's Party Plan.*



## **SECTION I: THE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF VIRGINIA CREED**

### **We Believe:**

That the free enterprise system is the most productive supplier of human needs and economic justice,

That all individuals are entitled to equal rights, justice, and opportunities and should assume their responsibilities as citizens in a free society,

That fiscal responsibility and budgetary restraints must be exercised at all levels of government,

That the Federal Government must preserve individual liberty by observing constitutional limitations,

That peace is best preserved through a strong national defense,

That faith in God, as recognized by our Founding Fathers, is essential to the moral fiber of the Nation.

## **SECTION II: INTRODUCTION**

The unit committee and the unit chair occupy a position of great responsibility and authority under our State Party Plan -- indeed, they are the backbone of the Republican Party of Virginia. Efforts to win elections at all levels begin at the unit level, and it is here that the Party builds the foundation for success, from the School Board to the White House.

This Guide is designed to help all City and County (Unit) Committee leadership understand their legal requirements and mission and effectively implement the actions that will get our best candidates on the ballot and into office.

- In addition to this Guide, Republican leaders should consult several other sources to include: The Plan of Organization of the Republican Party of Virginia (the "State Party Plan"), which is the basic document governing the operations of the Republican Party of Virginia
- Bylaws of the Unit Committee and Congressional District Committee.
- Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, which governs the operations of the party where the Party Plan, District or Unit Bylaws are silent. Each chair should obtain a copy for reference and to further understand the principles and proper methods of conducting organizational meetings.

### **SECTION III: METHODS OF NOMINATION**

Effective January 1, 2024, state law prohibits the use of nomination methods that have the practical effect of excluding military and overseas voters, students away at school, people with disabilities and people with communicable diseases during public health emergencies. Conventions and mass meetings, and even party canvasses without robust absentee voting process, may be subject to challenge under this law.

Based on additional legal guidance sought to clarify the practical effects of this law, the RPV advises against the use of party-run nomination processes for public office. The exceptions to this guidance include the circumstance of a special election, or a scenario where no candidate files the required paperwork by prescribed deadlines. Committees should consult with RPV General Counsel prior to selecting these methods of nomination.

This handbook includes multiple references to party-run processes. These are included to serve as a guide specifically for special elections or nominations where no candidate is properly filed.

### **SECTION IV: COMMITTEES OF THE RPV**

The Republican Party of Virginia (RPV) (the "Party") is responsible for conducting the affairs of the Republican Party throughout the state and at every level (unit, legislative, and district) within the Commonwealth of Virginia. To assist in carrying out this responsibility, the Party has adopted a Plan of Organization (the "State Party Plan") which establishes governing committees at each level of operation. The governing committees are listed below, and the role of these committees can be found in Sections V-VIII of this handbook.

- State Central Committee
- Congressional District Committees
- Legislative District Committees
- Unit Committees

### **SECTION V: ROLE OF UNIT CHAIRS**

The Unit Chair's primary role is to organize people at the local precinct level to help elect Republicans at every level. The Unit Chair provides leadership to expand the understanding of Republican principles and how those principles will better affect people's lives.



The Unit Chair must:

- Organize the committee to carry out its functions;
- Coordinate with other unit chairs to conduct the affairs of the Party at the congressional and legislative district level as a member of those committees;
- Fulfill the duties imposed by state law in certifying the Party's nominees for public office;
- Communicate and coordinate with public officials, candidates and staff at all levels of the Party and the government to see that the work of the Party is done effectively.

Person by person, group by group, block by block, precinct by precinct, we explain Republican principles and expand our voter base to accomplish our goal of better government. The unit chair, along with their leadership team, ensures we not only contact and motivate those people who agree with our principles but to engage those who don't yet realize that they too agree with our principles.

Good management principles would require that the unit chair be organized, plan ahead, communicate well, and know how to motivate volunteers. After all, the Republican Party is a voluntary association of like-minded individuals. Where differences do exist, however, the unit chair should be able to resolve differences amicably and encourage constructive action.

Unit Chairs shall always remember that a Unit Committee is a political organization with the primary responsibility of aiding and supporting the election of Republican candidates. As such, a unit's primary focus is on candidates, campaigns, and elections, and it is a subordinate field unit of the Republican Party of Virginia that must act and message in ways that comport with actions and standards of the state party headquarters. It is tasked neither with making policy, endorsing policy, nor directing elected officials regarding their policy-making role. Those are important responsibilities reserved for all citizens but are not the role of a Republican unit, operating under the umbrella of the Republican Party of Virginia.

## **A. Responsibilities**

### **i. Conduct Regular Unit Meetings**

- The chair calls for meetings of the committee and presides at its meetings. It is the chair's responsibility alone to issue a written notice with an agenda at least seven days prior to each committee meeting.
- Unit committees must meet at least once during each calendar quarter, with no

more than four (4) months between each meeting.

- The chair, acting at the direction of the unit committee, issues the "call" for each mass meeting, canvass and convention. Note that the Unit Committee makes the determination of how nominations and other elections are to take place; the chair's role is ministerial in carrying out the committee's wishes and therefore, the chair must not act unilaterally for the committee.
- NOTE that party-run nominations are to be utilized in the special circumstances outlined in the "Party Run Nomination Guidance" on page 3 of this document.

ii. Conduct Party and Local Elections as Needed

- Mass Meetings and Conventions (*see Section IX for more details of a mass meeting or convention*)
  - When the unit holds a mass meeting or convention, the unit chair calls the meeting to order and conducts the election of the officers of the mass meeting or convention. The mass meeting or convention is a distinct entity, separate and apart from the unit committee, and as such it may elect its own chair and secretary. Keep in mind that the chair of the mass meeting or convention may be a different person from the chair of the unit committee. The official role of the unit chair is to preside over the election of the temporary chair, who then has sole responsibility for conducting the meeting. Unit committees often serve as fiscal agents of LDCs so that LDCs do not have to set up separate bank accounts.
  - The role of the chair of the mass meeting or convention is simply to preside for the duration of that particular meeting. He or she has no power or authority (other than, to make certifications) following the mass meeting or convention. In contrast, the unit chair has on-going responsibilities and serves a two-year term.
- Canvasses (*See Section IX for more details of a Canvass*)
  - a party-run process that is a method of electing or nominating individuals who file in advance for a specific party or public office.

**NOTE:** Unit Chairs should understand that the committee for the political district which would be holding a party-run nomination method is wholly responsible for the costs, logistics, implementation, adequate venue, and recruitment of sufficient volunteer staff to properly and fairly conduct the method chosen. If it is a local process, the Unit is responsible for these important tasks and obligations. If it is a legislative district committee or a Congressional District Committee, then those committees are so responsible. Unit Chairs should recognize that by serving on a Legislative District Committee or a Congressional District Committee or sending an authorized representative to same, they are responsible for ensuring that said committee will have the monetary, logistical and staffing resources needed for that committee to properly conduct the method of nomination. The Republican Party of Virginia has no obligation to assist in raising funds, securing volunteers, or assisting in any way in the proper planning and conduct of the chosen method.

### Additional Committee Memberships

Under the State Party Plan, a unit chair automatically becomes a member of his Congressional, State Senate and House of Delegates legislative district committees if he or she resides in those districts. If the Unit Chair does not reside in the district, the Unit Chair shall appoint an authorized representative to represent the Unit Chair in those districts. It is the sole prerogative of Unit Chairs to appoint their authorized representative, and they serve at the pleasure of the Chair. The Unit Committee has no part to play in this regard. These positions require additional coordination, attendance at meetings and possibly administrative responsibilities.

### Candidate Certification

Under both the State Party Plan and Virginia law, the unit chair performs certain functions relating to the nomination of candidates.

Where a primary has been designated, the unit chair must receive a receipt that the candidate paid the Primary Filing Fee, the Filing Petitions, and a Declaration of Candidacy from candidates for the Republican primary. The unit chair also certifies to the Department of Elections the names of candidates who properly file for the Republican primary.

In the special circumstance where the Party nominates by a method other than a primary, the unit chair certifies to the Department of Elections the name of the Party's nominee.

**NOTE:** *It is imperative that a Unit Chair understand these certification responsibilities. They should note these important deadlines on his or her calendar well in advance of the compliance dates. The failure of a Unit Chair to properly certify a nominee could result in the disqualification of that nominee with a resulting easy win by the opposition.*

### Election Day Operations

Virginia law specifies that poll watchers in a General Election must be designated in writing by a party chair, normally a unit chair, in order for the election officials to admit them to the polling place.

The General Registrar may call upon the Unit Chair on Election Day to help resolve problems at polling locations, especially when there is a Republican Primary being conducted. The General Registrar is also an excellent source of information and assistance. In some cases, the Registrar may remain available late to help with voter registration issues during your Mass Meeting or a Party Canvass.



## **Electoral Board**

The unit chair makes recommendations to the Circuit Court for appointment to the city or county electoral board. Each electoral board member serves a three-year term. The Party with the second most votes for Governor in the last election will have one electoral board member while the Governor's Party will have two members. Virginia Code (§ 24.2-106) requires the party to provide to the Circuit Court at least three names as the Party's nominee to serve on the local electoral board by December 15 of each year depending on the term expiration of the current board members. This is an advisory recommendation only, as the judge is free to make the appointment as he or she sees fit. The recommendation has traditionally been a function of the unit chair only, and the consent of the unit committee is not required.

These appointments are to be taken very seriously, as members of the Electoral Board share the burden of ensuring the secure and competent execution of each election. The Republican Party of Virginia, including the Party General Counsel, are available to provide guidance regarding responsibilities and qualifications for Electoral Board members.

It is a good idea to maintain a working relationship with the city or county Electoral Board and Registrar. The unit chair should be invited to observe the testing and sealing of the voting equipment prior to each election. Attendance at Electoral Board meetings and participation in post-election canvasses is an excellent way to keep abreast of actions that may impact the Party and foster a good working relationship.

## **Endorsements**

The State Party Plan does not prohibit the chair from taking sides in a nomination or a dispute. However, to be an effective leader, the unit chair should strive to be impartial in most instances and able to work with all factions. Unit chairs should counsel their officers, magisterial district/ward chairs, and other members of any executive or steering committee of their unit committee similarly to avoid any unproductive perceptions or appearances of impropriety. This is particularly true in the special circumstance of a party-run nomination process.

## **Unit Member List Maintenance/Distribution**

Unit Chairs should be cautious about distributing their member lists with contact information. Many units cover this in their Bylaws by permitting only members to obtain the list and restricting the use of the list to electing Republican nominees and endorsees.

## **Press Relations**

It is appropriate to maintain good relationships with local media and provide them with information regarding special events and success of the unit. The unit chair may also be requested to provide comment on behalf of candidates, or to provide technical information around elections and methods of party nomination. It is important to understand the unit chair does NOT speak on behalf of the Republican Party of Virginia, and when asked to comment on controversial or politically sensitive matters, the Chair must first consult with the RPV Press office or the Executive Director. If a unit chair provides quotes to the media that are not aligned with RPV and candidate strategy and views, the RPV and/or candidates reserve the right to refute statements or clarify that they do not reflect broadly held views.

## **SECTION VI: THE UNIT COMMITTEE**

Virginia has 132 cities and counties, and within each city and county, the Unit Committee conducts the business of the party precincts and assists with elections. The Unit Committee is the backbone of the entire party structure, comprised of representatives from each precinct within the unit. Its focus and mission rest exclusively in campaigns, candidates, and elections.

The Unit Committee serves an extremely important role in the operation of the Party. After all, it is the Unit Committee that conducts the affairs of the Party closest to the "grassroots."

It is the Unit Committee that determines how to nominate candidates for local offices, how to select delegates to legislative, congressional, and state conventions, and is responsible for the most visible of all organizational activities: getting volunteers to distribute ticket materials at all polling places and to serve as Poll Watchers and Election Officials on Election Day.

The Unit Committee is instrumental in assisting candidates in contacting voters. By assisting with door knocking and phone banks, holding forums and meet and greet functions, committee members educate voters on the principles of the Republican Party and positions of the candidates. They also recruit additional Party members and motivate voters to exercise their voting responsibilities.

## **Responsibilities of the Unit Committee**

The Unit Committee is charged with a number of responsibilities under the State Party Plan. These responsibilities include:

- Determining whether candidates for local and constitutional offices will be nominated by mass meeting, convention, canvass or primary (see page 3 re: "Party Run Nomination Guidance," and Section IX for detailed definition).

- Calling for regular and special mass meetings, conventions and canvasses, to elect delegates to district and state conventions, or to elect the Unit Chair and members of the Unit Committee for their regular election in even-numbered years;
- Determining the pre-filing requirements, if any, and registration fee, if any, at all mass meetings, conventions and canvasses.
- Cooperating with the State Central, Congressional and Legislative District Committees in conducting all elections and fundraising activities
- Filling a vacancy in the Unit Chair and precinct and at-large positions on the committee itself.
- Deciding contests and appeals arising within its jurisdiction.

### **Structure of the Unit Committee**

The Precinct is the basic political organization of voters in a community. Voters in a geographical area with similar community interests express their desire for leadership from the school board to the White House through their vote at the precinct.

The Unit Committee consists of precinct representatives, at-large members, elected officials and committee officers.

#### **i. Precinct Representatives**

The State Party Plan requires each unit to establish the number of representatives each precinct will have on the Unit Committee. This is done using the Republican votes from the most recent presidential and gubernatorial elections. The raw vote totals are expressed in a formula to determine the number of precinct members. For example, the number of precinct representatives may be equal to one member for each 500 Republican votes for president and governor combined. In a hypothetical example, a Unit with five precincts would have the following number of members based on these election results:

Precinct	President & Governor Election Republican Candidate Votes	# members (1 per 500 GOP)
A	1,200	2
B	1,800	4



C	554	1
D	1,450	3
E	1,075	2

Each precinct must have at least one member. The number of members is rounded to the nearest whole number. The precinct members must live within the precinct that they represent (which means the position is vacated when a member moves to a different precinct).

The notion behind the precinct representation requirement is that the Committee will have representation from throughout the unit, but no one area of the unit can dominate. The Committee truly "represents" the Republican voters based on recent voting history.

ii. At-Large members

In addition to the precinct members, the committee may have At-Large members, who may live in any precinct within the unit. However, the number of at-large members may not be more than thirty percent of the total membership. The purpose of this requirement is consistent with the precinct-representation requirement, so that one portion of a city or county does not dominate the committee.

iii. Associate or Sustaining Members

Some Committee Bylaws provide for Associate or Sustaining memberships. These are non-voting members who may or may not pay dues. In some cases, Committee members who lose their positions for some reason (such as missing three consecutive meetings without a proxy), automatically are moved to the Associate (non-voting) membership rolls. Collecting dues for Associate memberships can be an effective fundraising method.

iv. Publicly Elected Officials

All publicly elected Republicans may serve as ex-officio on the unit committee, if provided for in the unit bylaws. This only includes persons elected as a Republican and not those persons elected to non-partisan offices (such as many city councils and all school boards).

v. Officers

The Unit Committee is required to have a Chair, one or more Vice Chair(s), a Secretary and a Treasurer. The Unit Chair is elected every even-numbered year at the same time delegates are elected to the Congressional District Convention (whether by a unit mass meeting, convention or canvass). The Unit Chair is elected at a Mass Meeting, Canvass, or Convention, not by the Unit Committee. The Unit Committee will elect only to fill a vacancy for the remainder of a term.

The Unit Committee, through its bylaws, usually establishes the other officers of the Committee. Some units have decided to elect only one Vice Chair, who presides in the absence of the Unit Chair. Other units have decided to elect several vice chairs, each with specific organizational responsibilities (such as finance, membership/recruitment, or programs). This decision rests solely with the Unit Committee.

The Secretary keeps minutes of meetings, maintains the roster of members of the Unit Committee, and certifies organizational documents (such as delegate lists). The Treasurer is custodian of committee funds and has certain critical responsibilities for financial reporting, compliance, and disclosure.

The Unit Vice Chairs, Secretary and Treasurer are elected for a term of two years, and are elected in one of two ways:

- (1) By the mass meeting, convention or canvass that elects the unit chair; or
- (2) By the unit committee at the first meeting following the election of the unit chair.

The State Party Plan charges the Unit Committee with determining which method of election is followed. Most units specify this decision through the unit bylaws.

The Unit Chair is always entitled to a vote on the unit committee. However, the other officers are not entitled to vote, unless they also hold either an at-large or a precinct membership position on the unit committee.

#### vi. Auxiliaries

Although the State Party Plan does not specify that auxiliaries such as the Virginia Federation of Republican Women, Young Republicans and College Republicans are to be represented on the unit committee, many unit committees do provide for auxiliary members. The auxiliaries are not entitled to a vote on the unit committee in their own right, however; they must hold either an at-large or a precinct membership on the unit committee in order to vote.

### A. Operation of the Unit Committee

i. Call and Agenda.

A sample call and agenda might read as follows:

"I, John Smith, Chair of the Richmond Republican Committee, do hereby call for a meeting of the Richmond Republican City Committee at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 1, at the Main Library, 101 Franklin Street, Richmond, VA 22319. The agenda shall be as follows:

- A. Call to order
- B. Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, and RPV Creed
- C. Appointment and Report of Proxy Committee
- D. Roll Call of Members, Quorum Declaration
- E. Approval of Minutes from July 8th meeting
- F. Chair Report
- G. Treasurer's Report
- H. Unfinished Business
  - 1. Amendment to Bylaws, Article IV
- I. New Business
  - 1. Fundraiser on Oct. 10
  - 2. Election Day activities
- J. Adjourn

The exact format and level of detail is more a matter of preference, style and custom than any formal requirement. However, several suggestions are strongly urged:

- 1. Provide the exact date, time and place of the meeting. The meeting must be in a public facility, such as a library, courthouse or school. Private homes are not permitted to be used for committee meetings. However, if the unit committee maintains a campaign headquarters, the use of that facility would be permitted.
- 2. Include a proxy form either on the back of the agenda or as a separate page in the mailing. This facilitates those members who cannot



attend but who wish to recruit someone else to go in their place.

3. Give notice of important votes expected at the meeting. For example, if the bylaws are to be amended, state so in the agenda and include the text of the amendment. If an election to fill a vacancy on the committee, state the position(s) to be filled. If a call for a mass meeting is to be considered, include a draft if possible, but at least put the item on the agenda.

Observing these recommendations will help minimize the possibility that any committee member is caught "off-guard" and surprised when the discussion and voting occur.

## **B. Parliamentary Procedure**

Each unit committee meeting must be conducted in accordance with the State Party Plan. When the State Party Plan is silent, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern meetings. This protects all members and generally helps move along decisions in an orderly way. While the unit chair does not need to be an expert in parliamentary procedure, it is helpful to be familiar with the basics and perhaps to recruit a lawyer or an expert to advise the chair during meetings. Some units specify that the unit shall have a parliamentarian appointed by the chair, but this is not required by the State Party Plan. The unit chair of a smaller unit may simply wish to have someone he or she can turn to for advice during meetings and can do so without formal authority in the unit bylaws.

Keep in mind that the State Party Plan must at all times be observed. The State Party Plan specifies that whenever a conflict exists between the State Party Plan and a unit's bylaws, the State Party Plan shall prevail. The same is true when a mass meeting, convention or canvass adopts a rule that is contrary to the State Party Plan: the State Party Plan must prevail.

## **C. Proxies**

When a voting member cannot attend a unit meeting in person, the member is entitled to send a proxy. The holder of the proxy must be someone who is not already a voting member (because no person may cast more than one vote at a meeting). In addition, if the absent member is a precinct member, the proxy holder must reside in the same precinct.

The form for proxies should be included with every meeting notice. (A sample can be found in Appendix A.) Proxies are only used for committee meetings. Proxies are not permitted for mass meetings, conventions, canvasses, or primaries.

## **D. Quorum**

For a committee to transact business, a quorum of members must be present. The State Party

Plan specifies that a quorum is a majority of the voting members, unless the committee bylaws specify a different number. In determining a quorum, proxies are counted if the proxy form is correctly filled out. A properly completed proxy must be signed and witnessed, and the proxy holder must be eligible to cast the proxy (see above).

### **E. Absences**

The State Party Plan specifies that if a committee member is absent for three consecutive meetings without representation by a proxy, the member automatically loses his or her position from the committee. The purpose of this provision is to enable the committee to fill membership slots with active members. It also helps minimize the chances that a committee cannot meet the quorum requirement, and therefore become paralyzed as an organization. It is imperative that the Unit Secretary keep accurate membership rolls and attendance records.

If a member loses his or her position because of excessive absences, the committee may restore the person to the committee. However, keep in mind that a committee with many non-participating members may soon find itself in a downward spiral. It is often better to quietly ease someone off the committee rolls in order to open the way for an interested, active member.

Unit Committees with Associate or Sustaining memberships often vote to transfer Associate members to fill Precinct or At-Large vacancies or to restore voting rights to members who have previously missed three consecutive meetings without a proxy.

### **F. Filling vacancies.**

As noted previously, the committee allots a certain number of precinct members and at-large members, usually through a formula or through the bylaws. Many committees do not operate at "full strength." meaning there are unfilled positions once the biennial elections have taken place. The Unit Committee may fill vacancies in the precinct and at-large positions. The exact process varies from unit to unit. However, the State Party Plan requires that the unit chair give notice in the call for the meeting.

Some units have adopted a process whereby the prospective member is a guest at one meeting and is then invited to the next meeting where the unit committee votes to elect the person to a vacant position. In any case, a majority vote of the unit committee present at a meeting would be required to fill a vacant position. The term of a member so elected would expire at the next mass meeting, convention or canvass called to elect delegates to a district convention.

## **G. Dues**

Some unit committees require payment of dues as a condition of membership. This decision rests entirely with the unit committee. Keep in mind that payment of dues will count towards the various campaign finance thresholds and limits, so accurate records must be maintained.

## **H. Application form**

Some unit committees require a prospective member to complete an application form. There is no standard form or procedure that is used; each committee is free to adopt an application form, if any. The advantage is that a written record exists with the new member's address and phone number, voting precinct, and perhaps other personal data. This written record is useful, especially for administering the affairs of a large committee.

## **SECTION VII: LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT COMMITTEES**

Each Unit Chair is a member of the House of Delegates and State Senate Legislative District Committees in the District in which they reside. Where a unit encompasses more than one legislative district, the unit chair appoints a representative to the legislative district committee(s) that is (are) not the unit chair's residence. The unit chairs, or their representatives, within each legislative district comprise the legislative district committee.

In some instances, the legislative district may consist of only one person. This occurs where an entire legislative district exists within a unit (such as Fairfax County or Virginia Beach). In other instances, the legislative district may consist of many persons because there are a number of units within the legislative district.

### **Weighted Vote**

Unlike other committees, voting is weighted according to the "Republican Party Voting Strength" of each unit. This is a formula that uses the most recent election history for Governor and President cast by each unit (or portion of a unit) within the legislative district. The legislative district chair should contact RPV for assistance in locating the official election results (do not use the unofficial newspaper totals published after the election, which may contain errors). The effect is that on some committees, one unit chair may effectively control the outcome of each vote because one unit provides the majority of Republican votes within the district. Even so, legislative district committees must meet in order to coordinate activities among the units, especially if a legislative district convention will be held.



### **Required Meeting**

The State Party Plan requires each legislative district committee to meet in the month of December preceding each legislative election year. The purpose of this meeting is to elect a chair for the legislative district, who may be one of the unit chairs (but not necessarily so). At this time, one of the members of the legislative district committee should notify RPV so that certain material can be mailed by the Department of Elections. The legislative district chair serves a term of two years for a House district, and four years for a Senate district. The legislative district chair may continue to serve as such, even if he or she steps down as a unit chair. If the legislative district chair is not also a unit chair (or unit representative), however, the legislative district chair is not entitled to vote. Only unit chairs (or their representatives) are entitled to the unit's weighted vote.

### **Nomination Method**

Once the legislative district committee is organized, it should begin making arrangements for the nomination process. The legislative district committee determines the method of nomination, following RPV guidance re: Methods of Nomination on page 3 of this document.

State law provides for a window of time, usually late February to mid-March of the election year, for the committee to notify the Department of Elections of the method of nomination being utilized. The most critical aspect of this provision concerns primaries. The Department of Elections provides the forms to notify them if a primary or other method will be used; be certain to submit these forms on time.

### **Primary Petitions and Declarations**

If a **primary** is held, the legislative district chair will need to receive the petitions and declarations of candidacy from candidates in the primary. The deadline for submission of these materials usually occurs in April of an election year. (The actual deadline can be found at the Department of Elections web site.) By the middle of the following week, the legislative district chair must certify to the Department of Elections the names of all candidates who have properly filed for the primary. Once that task is done, the legislative district chair usually has no further duties since the state and the localities conduct the primary and certify the winner.

### **Elect**

The Virginia Department of Elections publishes bulletins for party committees and candidates. They are clear, easy to read, annotated and hyperlinked. They may be found on the [ELECT website](#) under the "Candidate Bulletins" tab.

## **SECTION VIII: CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT COMMITTEES**

For each of the eleven congressional districts, the Party is organized with a District Committee. Representation on the District Committee is by Unit, so that each Unit Chair (or an appointed representative when the Unit Chair lives in a different Congressional District) casts one vote on the District Committee. The District Committee is chaired by the Congressional District Chair, who is elected at the biennial District Convention for a term of two years. Three State Central Representatives are elected at the Quadrennial Convention and serve for four years. The other officers of the District Committee are elected either at the District Convention or by the District Committee, depending upon the committee's bylaws. In addition, members of the State Central Committee for that district may be granted a vote on the District Committee by the District Convention. Typically, a representative of the Young Republican, College Republican, and Republican Women Affiliates will also have a vote on the District Committee.

The District Committee determines the method of nomination for the Republican Congressional Candidate.

The District Committee has the power to remove a Unit Chair where necessary for neglect of duties. In that case, the District Committee may appoint a new Unit Chair, or establish a method of election for a new chair, and establish a new Unit Committee, although such an event is rare.

The District Committee may fill a vacancy among the district's State Central representatives. Following each congressional and presidential election, if the district carries for the Republican nominee, then the District Committee elects an additional State Central member, who serves a term concurrent with the Congressman or the President, respectively.

District Committees must meet at least once quarterly, at the call of the District Chair. One-third of the voting members of the District Committee may call a meeting when the needs of the Party so require.

## **SECTION IX: STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

The State Central Committee is comprised of those persons as set forth in the State Party Plan. Under the State Party Plan, each congressional district is entitled to three representatives, plus the congressional district chair.

Some congressional districts are entitled to "bonus" seats for winning congressional and presidential elections within their district. In addition, the three recognized auxiliaries (the Virginia Federation of Republican Women, the Young Republican Federation of Virginia and the College Republican Federation of Virginia) are entitled to three seats each on the State

Central Committee.

The Chair of the State Central Committee is the State Chair, who is elected at the quadrennial (presidential-year) state convention. The RNC National Committeeman and RNC National Committeewoman, both of whom are also elected by state convention, also serve on the State Central Committee. The other officers of the State Central Committee are elected by the Committee. Most members of State Central are elected for a term of four years. When a vacancy occurs, the appropriate committee (district, auxiliary or State Central itself) fills the vacancy for the remaining portion of the term. The State Central Committee must meet every 4 months, at the call of the State Chair.

The State Central Committee selects the nomination method for statewide offices including Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, along with U.S. Senate and President. The State Central Committee writes and approves the State Party Plan and any amendments thereto. The State Central Committee is the governing authority of the State Party and is the final arbiter of any disputes that may arise through the District Committees.

## **SECTION X: THE NOMINATION PROCESS**

Determination of the Nominating Method is one of the critical functions of the Committee toward the successful election of Republicans to office.

The State Party Plan prescribes four methods for nominating candidates and electing party officials (such as delegates to conventions). These methods are described below.

**NOTE:** When nominating candidates for public office, refer to guidance in the "Method of Nomination" section on page 3.

- **Mass Meeting** -- a meeting of Republicans for a specific election district (such as a city, county, magisterial district or legislative district) called for a specific purpose (such as the nomination of a candidate or an election of delegates). A mass meeting operates under a "one person-one vote" framework and is open to all Republican voters of the election district.
- **Convention** -- an assembly of elected delegates and alternate delegates for a specific purpose. Voting at a convention is weighted. Representation at a convention is by unit (or, at a unit convention, by precinct, ward, or magisterial district). Only elected delegates (or alternates who take the place of an elected delegate) may vote.
- **Canvass** -- also known as a "firehouse primary," is essentially a party-run process to

elect or nominate individuals who file in advance for a specific party or public office. A canvass, like a mass meeting, is open to all Republican voters and is conducted as "one person – one vote" (i.e., no weighted voting), and without pre-filing requirements on the voters. Unlike the previous two methods, voting takes place over a period of several hours and may occur at more than one location. Voters may be asked to renounce prior participation in a Democrat nomination processes, or to affirm support of the Republican nominee.

- **Primary** -- an election conducted by state and local officials to determine the Party's nominee for a public office. A primary requires submission of petitions and other paperwork by strict deadlines in order to be listed on the primary ballot.

The winner of the nomination, as certified by the proper election officials, automatically is placed on the general election ballot.

The unit committee determines the method of nomination of candidates for the election of local party offices except for school board.

In each even-numbered year, a congressional district convention will be held to elect a congressional district chair and, in presidential election years, to elect members of the State Central Committee, and a presidential elector. The delegates to the district convention are chosen by either a unit mass meeting, canvass, or convention. At the same time, the Unit Chair and members of the Unit Committee are elected by the mass meeting, canvass, or convention.

In years in which a state convention will be held, the State Central Committee may specify that the delegates and alternates must be elected within a certain time frame. Likewise, the congressional, legislative or unit committee may specify when delegates to a convention are to be elected.

## **SECTION XI: POLITICAL RESOURCES**

A unit chair may find the need to consult a variety of resources in the course of an election. This section is devoted to helping the reader understand a few of the resources available, especially those unique to Virginia and the Republican Party.

1. **Past Unit Chairs** – Never ignore the unique experience and knowledge possessed by those who served as past unit chairs. Unit chairs should strive, regardless of the circumstances of a unit chair election, to cultivate a good relationship with past unit

chairs. Past unit chairs can be invaluable resources.

2. **Republican Party of Virginia Plan of Organization (State Party Plan)** -- Downloadable from the internet (<https://virginia.gop/>). In effect, this document establishes and governs the Republican Party of Virginia including all State, District and Unit Committee Operations.
3. **General Counsel Opinions** -- these are official interpretations of the State Party Plan issued by the Party's General Counsel in response to a request from the chair of a unit, legislative, or congressional district, or the State Chair. General Counsel Opinions are also available at the RPV web site (<https://virginia.gop/general-counsel-rulings/>).
4. **Code of Virginia, Title 24.2** -- the election law statutes of the Commonwealth of Virginia. These laws include the requirements for state and local elections, candidates, party officials (including Unit Chairs) campaign finance disclosure, and election offenses. The Code of Virginia is also available at the Department of Elections website (<http://elections.virginia.gov/>) and the General Assembly Legislative Information System website (<https://lis.virginia.gov/>)
5. **The Virginia Department of Elections** – The Department of Elections implements the laws and regulations governing the election of public officials. They maintain a centralized voter registration system; official lists of candidates; official election results; and campaign finance reports for all PACs, statewide candidates, and General Assembly candidates. The website includes the laws and regulations concerning political parties and elections including candidate filing forms, election schedules and deadlines. ([http://elections.virginia.gov /](http://elections.virginia.gov/)).
6. **Your local Electoral Board and Registrar** -- maintain voter registration forms and records; the training and assignment of Precinct Election Officials; a list of persons who have applied for absentee ballots; official election results; maps showing precinct lines and election district boundaries; and campaign finance reports for local candidates. It may be beneficial for Unit Chairs to attend local Electoral Board meetings to keep apprised of, and possibly have input to changes, in local election procedures.
7. **Virginia Public Access Project** (<http://www.vpap.org/>) has extensive information on campaign contributions and donors. You can find who and what organizations have donated (and amounts) to each candidate for public office. This can be very helpful in determining who supports the principles of the Republican Party and Republican

candidates.

8. **General Assembly Legislative Information System (LIS)** has extensive information on current members of the General Assembly, committee memberships, and all legislation proposed and passed including the recorded votes both in committee and on the floor of the House and Senate (<https://lis.virginia.gov/>).
9. **Your local library** -- may have additional legal resources, such as the Opinions of the Attorney General, legislative journals (with floor votes cast by General Assembly members), and legislative bills. Many of these materials are also available on-line.
10. **Your local newspaper** -- may have clips on particular persons, issues and elections, which may also be available through the local library.
11. **Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia** -- publishes a number of reference materials relating to local government, politics and elections.
12. **Your post office** -- information on bulk mailing requirements. Local party committees may mail at regular third-class bulk ("standard mail") rates by paying an annual fee and meeting certain preparation requirements.

## Appendix A SAMPLE PROXY FORM

### PROXY

"KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, That I \_

\_\_\_\_\_  
of \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby constitute and appoint  
\_\_\_\_\_  
my true and lawful attorney, to vote as my  
proxy (with full power of substitution)\* at a meeting of the Republican \_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee on the \_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_, or at any  
adjourned meeting thereof and for me and in my name, place and stead to vote  
upon any question that properly may come before such meeting, with all the  
power I should possess if personally present, hereby revoking all previous  
proxies.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal, this\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
day of\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Seal)

WITNESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Seal)

\* Inclusion of the power of Substitution is discretionary with the member. Its  
omission shall preclude substitution.

## Appendix B

### Four-Year Checklist and Timeline for Unit Chairs

The Unit Committees and Unit Chairs are elected for a two-year term at a Mass Meeting usually in March or April of even numbered years. This Checklist and Timeline will cover the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Unit Chairs term. Since the duties of the Chair are slightly different in the two-year period of Presidential Election years, a separate line will be included each time the quadrennial requirements are different.

- **Monthly** (or at least quarterly) The Unit Chair must issue the Call, including the meeting agenda, at least 7 days before regular meetings, Executive Committee meetings and for any special meetings.

#### March and April Even Numbered Years

- Unit Mass Meetings
- Election of Unit Chair
- Re-establishment of Unit Committees
- Election of Delegates to District Conventions
- Election of Delegates to State Convention

Immediately following election (if not before) Unit Chairs should:

- Review the RPV Plan of Organization (Party Plan), paying close attention to the duties of the Unit Chair.
- Review the unit committee bylaws paying close attention to the duties of the Chair and each of the additional officers and sub-committees.
- Become familiar with Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

First Regular Meeting after the Mass Meeting

- Election of Unit Officers (Vice Chairs, Secretary, and Treasurer)
- Appoint Sub-Committee members
- Appoint Legislative District Representatives (for Districts where the Chair does not reside)
- Ensure all members have a copy of the unit bylaws, Party Plan, and proxy form
- Identify Precinct Captains, Neighborhood Captains and volunteers willing to make phone calls, work festivals and door knock.
- Identify volunteers to be Officers of Elections, Inside Poll Watchers, and Outside Poll Workers.



### **March and April – Odd-Numbered Years**

- Certification of Nominees for Public Office
  - If the Method of Nomination is to be a June Primary, the Legislative District Chairs must:
    - Receive and validate the petition signatures for House and Senate Offices
    - Notify the Department of Elections the Names of the Candidates (as they should appear on the Ballot)
    - Order in which the Names are to appear on the Primary Ballot.
  - In the special circumstance of the Method of Nomination being other than a primary, the Legislative District Chair must provide the Department of Elections the name of the Nominee to be placed on the November Ballot.

Unit Chairs must receive the petitions and validate the signatures for local offices. They must then certify the candidates to the Department of Elections to place the names on the Ballot.

### **May – June each Year**

- Formalize Precinct Operations in support of candidates for the Primary or other Methods of Nomination. Committees shall not endorse one Republican candidate over another, but individual members may volunteer for individual campaigns.
- After Primaries are over, meet with campaign staff.
- Communicate to committee members and other volunteers the locations of victory centers and hours of operation.

### **June – November each Year**

- Precinct Operations in support of Republican nominees to include door knocking, phone banking, manning of Victory Offices, etc. Prepare for the heart of campaign season and Election Day Operations such as scheduling debate parties, prepping for weekly communications on candidate rallies and appearances.

### **August**

- Call your local Registrar's office and ask for a copy of the November ballot.
- Begin meetings in Magisterial Districts and/or Precincts for the purposes of organization and understanding of Election Day Operations.
- Begin putting together precinct materials (check Precinct Operations Manual for details) Vote on approval of your precincts' sample ballots.

## September

- **Early Voting Begins!**
- Have early voting location volunteers and poll watchers lined up and ready for the 45 days of Early Voting.

## October

- Make sure all Election Day precincts have volunteers for each shift.

## November

- Election Day! - Unit Chairs should attempt to visit as many precincts as possible to thank volunteers. Be prepared to respond to Poll Watcher and Poll Worker problems or concerns. If budgets allow, provide for coffee, drinks, doughnuts, or other snacks especially for Outside Poll Workers.

## December

- Set membership meeting schedule for upcoming year; (publish on your website and send to RPV for publication on their website.

## December – Even-Numbered Years

- Each House Legislative District Committee must meet to elect a House Legislative District Chair and select the nomination method for that House Seat.
- Every four years the Senate Legislative District Committee will meet in December to elect a Chair and select the nomination method for that State Senate Seat.
  - By December 15, Be prepared to recommend Electoral Board member(s) to the circuit court.

## January

- The unit may adopt an annual budget. A look towards annual fundraising along with Party and candidate awareness projects is always good at this time of year. Identify potential candidates for leadership positions in your unit..
- Be prepared to recommend officers of election to the Electoral Board

## February Odd-Numbered Years

- Each Legislative District Chair must notify the Department of Elections

the Method of Nomination selected for the upcoming November election for that District.

- If local Constitutional Officer elections are scheduled the Unit Committee must select the Method of Nomination.
- If Board of Supervisor or City Council elections are Partisan, Unit Committees must select the Method of Nomination.
- Develop Delegate/Member Filing Form. This form should include options for applying for membership in the committee and to become a delegate at unit, district and/or state conventions.
- In the special circumstance where a method other than a primary is chosen, publish the Calls (Note, Calls must be published on your website and sent to RPV for publication on their website.
- Report to Department of Elections on all methods of election for your unit. Note: If you are not the Legislative District Committee Chair for certain State Senate or House of Delegate seats ensure that the LDC chairs have completed the paperwork.
- Begin preparation for any District Conventions (in even years)
- The local General Registrar may also ask for a list of Republican Election Officials to work in the Precincts.

## Appendix C

### Sample Code of Conduct

Membership in the XXX Republican Committee (hereto referred to as the "Committee") is a privilege that comes with an expectation of civil conduct. Meetings and events will follow the below Code of Conduct and be held in a manner that respects all individuals, void of harassing behavior. Any individuals who violate this Code will first be asked to leave and then escorted from the premises by the Sergeant at Arms.

Committee members are expected to treat each other with respect. This includes following the parliamentary rules that govern our meetings, such as speaking only when recognized by the Chair. {These rules can be found in our Committee bylaws and also in Roberts Rules of Order, NV}. This allows us to conduct our business in an orderly fashion and allows every member to have a voice and be heard. Public discussion and debate is welcome and encouraged as long as general rules of decorum are observed.

#### Prohibited Conduct:

Certain conduct is prohibited and may subject the individual involved to disciplinary action, up to and including loss of membership and limited or denied access to official committee meetings, and events. The following examples are illustrative of the type of misconduct that will not be permitted, but these are not intended to be all-inclusive. questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Committee Chairman.

- (a) Attending an official meeting or event under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- (b) Use of profane or abusive language
- (c) Falsifying a membership application
- (d) Violence or threats of violence.
- (e) Verbal, personal attacks or otherwise defaming a fellow committee member over social media or through other means
- (f) Representing yourself as an official spokesperson for the Committee or Party in the media
- (g) Breach of confidential information discussed in closed, non-public settings
- (h) otherwise disrupting an official committee meeting or event

The XXX Republican Committee exists to recruit, elect and support Republican candidates and elected officials. Campaigns, Candidates and Elections are our focus and we welcome any and all who share this goal. Extraneous policy debates are important and there are many venues for those. But the role of the XXX Republican Committee, as a part of the Republican Party of Virginia is to elect and support Republicans. All who share this mission, align with the values of the Republican Party of Virginia and abide by our Code of Conduct and State Party Plan are invited and welcome to participate in our events, seek membership and join alongside us as we pursue these goals.

## Appendix D

### Precinct Organization/Best Practices

Precinct organization is key. Below is a very short and non-exhaustive primer on the basics of precinct organization:

#### Precinct Organization 101

##### STEP 1 – Grow Your Precinct Organization Team

- Committees should designate/elect a separate magisterial district or ward chair for each magisterial district or ward in its jurisdiction. They will be responsible for the next level of organization – precinct organization.
  - To organize precincts, recruit precinct captains.
    - Magisterial district or ward chairs need precinct captains because they are our “recruiters-in-chief.”
      - Precinct captains recruit others in their precinct to come to meetings and get involved in precinct and county activities.
    - Basic tasks of precinct captains include, without limitation:
      - Hold regular precinct meetings to network with your existing precinct volunteers.
        - Collect volunteer contact data and ensure all contact information is correct so you may keep them up to date to any events, meeting or announcements.
        - These meetings can be at a coffee shop, at someone’s house – wherever in the precinct where a group of Republicans can get together and organize.
        - If meeting in person is a problem, virtual meetings can suffice as can conference calls.
      - Grow precinct organization by recruiting new volunteers.
        - Set a goal of two to three new people at each

meeting.

- Turn your new recruits who are particularly energetic and dependable into block captains
  - A block captain will work on their block or neighborhood and has the ability to locate Republican voters who are most likely to volunteer for a candidate or cause by getting to know your neighbors.
  - Many Republicans have the desire to volunteer but are reluctant because they have not been asked.
  - Block captains can reach these folks first and not only will your precinct gain valuable volunteers, but also motivate Republicans to vote.
- Unit chairs should give their magisterial district/ward chairs direction by way of discrete action items that they can complete over time and report back as having been completed successfully.
  - Unit chairs can develop these goals for magisterial district/ward chairs after consultation with them once they are oriented and up and running.
  - The magisterial district/ward chairs can then do the same with their block captains.
  - Examples include:
    - After each meeting, give members of your precinct organization an action item to help grow your precinct;
    - Make it discrete, easy to understand, and practicable;
    - Make it due by the next meeting;
    - Give praise when it is accomplished in whole and if accomplished only in part;
      - Offer help if it accomplished in part – never forget that we rely on volunteers.
    - Sample Action Items – modify to fit your specific unit:

- Contact every Republican in your neighborhood and get one of them to attend the next precinct meeting.
- Collect 10 emails and cell phone numbers before the next meeting
  - Even if these people are not involved due to time constraints, we can still contact them with special events and announcements.
- Register 10 new people to vote before the next meeting to grow our Republican numbers.
- Attend a local event – a fair, football game, or other large, public event and sign people up.
  - Your county GOP may be already attending with a booth and they always need people to have a presence at the booth with stickers and other literature to be handed out.
- Work as phone bankers in the local victory office or with the local campaign.
- As a unit chair always remember that “perfection is the enemy of the good enough.”
  - Teach that to your team;
  - Work hard and run with the organization you have at the time;
  - Keep working your county/city and, over the course of time, the rest of what you need in organization will come; and
  -

## STEP 2 – Identify Voters in the Precinct

- Once a precinct captain has a core cadre of block captains and volunteers, the next step is to fan out and identify likely GOP voters.
- The RPV provides free access and customized lists for units to conduct voter contacts
- Often, campaigns will already be using a service.
  - Cooperation with campaigns is key so that a committee will be permitted to “piggy back” off that service to develop its database.

- Knock doors;
- Make calls; and
- Write postcards.

### STEP 3 – Get Out The Vote or “GOTV”

- Once GOP voters have been identified, the big lift is to get them out on Election Day.
  - Reach back out to all of the volunteers and voters you have identified and encourage them to get out and vote.
- “No reason” absentee voting is now available in Virginia.
  - Unit chairs should note the relevant deadlines and push their mail/call/email outreach to coincide with those deadlines.
- Participate in campaign GOTV efforts. Examples include:
  - Literature drops;
  - Absentee ballot chasing; and
  - GOTV calls and texts.
- Print up sample ballots/signs for use at the polling locations.
  - Sample ballots can be on paper (any paper color other than white is acceptable.)
  - They can also be in the form of signs, e.g., yard signs or A-frames.
  - Unit chairs should develop relationships with local printers for these and other work.
- Put volunteers at key polling locations.
  - ID key, high profile polling locations, especially those frequented by the press.
  - Coordinate with campaigns on them and the rest.
  - Train poll volunteers who are working inside the polls and outside.
    - Outside = poll greeters
    - Inside = poll watchers