

Why Bylaws?

A summary of the material discussed in the April Conference Call

Jo Konen TFRW VP-Bylaws

16719 Mandeville, Spring, TX 77379; 281-370-1177, jokonenbylaw@sbcglobal.net

Bylaws are crucial to the smooth functioning of your club. Bylaws define the primary characteristics of your club, prescribe how your club functions, and include all the rules that your members consider so important that they cannot be changed without previous notice and a specified large majority. Bylaws contain whatever limitations are placed on the club and have a direct bearing on the rights of members within the club.

Because your club is federated with TFRW and NFRW, which are higher authorities, your bylaws must conform to the bylaws of both of those organizations. Both require certain elements to be in your bylaws and require certain aspects of your club organization to be specified.

Some of you remember that, in the past, TFRW has required every club to have its bylaws reviewed every two years before its anniversary of federation, whether or not changes were made. That requirement was repealed at the TFRW Convention in 2005.

A club, however, is still required to submit its bylaws for review when they are amended. The provision is in TFRW Bylaws Article IV, Section 9, A. Causes for Removal, #2: "Failure to submit bylaws amendments to the TFRW Vice President Bylaws for approval before the amendments become effective". So now the review happens only when you amend your bylaws.

That brings us to why every club must have its bylaws reviewed this year (2008). And the deadline I have set for receiving your bylaws is October 31, 2008. The 2007 TFRW Convention made a change in the TFRW Bylaws that affects every club. It means that each club must now change its bylaws to reflect that revision. The NFRW Convention raised its per capita dues from \$5 to \$8. If you have the actual figure in your bylaws, you must change it. These changes must be made for your club to be in good standing and eligible to send delegates to the 2009 TFRW and NFRW Conventions. *[The details about the changes were published in the 2008 January and March President's Newsletter and in the February President's E-Newsletter.]*

Since you have to make changes to your Bylaws anyway, I suggest that you appoint a committee to review your entire Bylaws to make sure they are in complete compliance with TFRW and NFRW Bylaws. I have already had several bylaws submitted that had to be sent back because the club had not made some changes in the past.

Also, the committee should read them with an eye to how your club is doing its business now. Are some of the items in your bylaws no longer applicable to your club? Are there things you are doing now that need to be included in your bylaws?

A good guideline for review is the "Sample Bylaws," Page 129 thru 134, in the *2008-09 TFRW Leadership Handbook* provided to your president. These Sample Bylaws were completely rewritten this year. Although designed for new clubs, the Sample Bylaws provide an excellent check list for what your bylaws should contain. Make a copy of them for your Bylaws Committee, as well as the actual TFRW Bylaws

Please check the following items that have been brought to my attention as I have read various clubs' bylaws.

- 1) **Policy.** You should probably include this statement under "Policy": "This club shall be a Political Action Committee and registered as such with the Texas Ethics Commission." You are already doing that because TFRW requires it. So it stands to reason that it should be a written policy in your bylaws.
- 2) **Membership Eligibility.** Many of you have not made it clear in your bylaws that all your members, whether active or associate, **must be U.S. citizens.** You still have the old sentence: "If she is a U.S. citizen, she must be a registered voter". When we all became PAC's, we were required to admit only U.S. citizens to membership. The reason is that PAC's, by law, cannot accept money from foreign nationals. Dues fall into that category.
- 3) **PAC Treasurer.** Many of you may need to review her duties. You need to include a requirement for her to be registered with the TEC and to file all reports required by the TEC and in a timely manner to meet their deadlines.
- 4) **Assistant PAC Treasurer.** If you only have one treasurer, your PAC Treasurer, you might consider providing for your president to appoint an Assistant PAC Treasurer who is registered with the TEC. In case of an emergency that leaves your PAC Treasurer unable to file your reports, you will have someone already registered with the TEC who can file those reports. One club that I know of did have that problem.
- 5) **Audit Committee.** Many of you still use this term. The term "audit" has a very specific meaning in CPA circles, involving a professional, paid audit by a CPA. Therefore, several years ago TFRW suggested that all the clubs change that term in their bylaws to "Financial Review Committee," unless you actually do have a paid audit.
- 6) **Standing Rules** do not belong in your bylaws. They are a separate document. They are operating rules that can be changed by a simple majority at any general meeting of your membership.

Don't wait until October to submit your bylaws! Get them to me as soon as possible. Also, you must submit your entire bylaws, not just a page or two with the changes.

Feel free to contact me with any questions. My email address and phone number are above.

Remember, the consistency between the National Federation of Republican Women Bylaws, the Texas Federation of Republican Women Bylaws, and your club's bylaws is what unites us into a Federation and allows us to reach our common goals of fostering good citizenship, promoting good government, and electing Republicans!

Computer Info to Help Your Communication

NOTE: When you send an e-mail to a TFRW officer, DP, DD, chairman or the TFRW office, **please put the full name of your club in the subject line.** Many of you simply use initials. For example, we have four clubs whose initials are CCRW and four GCRW's, just as a start.

ALSO: If you want a quick reply to your e-mail messages, you will need to make sure it will get back to you. Several officers have had their replies "bounce," saying that your e-mail won't accept messages from that officer's address, that it's spam. If you haven't received a reply to your questions, that just may be the reason. Check your computer set-up. Sometimes you have to have the address of the incoming message in your contact list.

Thanks for being aware of these problems and for your cooperation in overcoming them.

Deadline for receiving your bylaws is October 31, 2008