

**American Library Association Constitution and Bylaws Committee**  
**Report to Council**  
**Midwinter Meeting 2015—Chicago, Illinois**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

ALA corporate memory in the Governance Office places ALA's adoption of the *Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* sometime prior to 2001. *Sturgis* was adopted at that time because its language was more user-friendly and au courant than the language then used in *Robert's Rules of Order*. It appears that this was done to make it easier for ALA members to understand procedural rules, especially for those who do not deal with parliamentary procedure issues frequently.

The reasons for this precedent-setting endorsing intelligibility and usability action fifteen or more years ago remain relevant today.

Article XII of the ALA Bylaws states:

Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure, in the latest edition, shall govern the Association in all cases to which it can be applied and in which it is not inconsistent with the Constitution, the Bylaws, or special rules of order of the Association.

The most recent edition bearing the "Sturgis" name is *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, 4th. ed., updated by the American Institute of Parliamentarians and published in 2001. That, however, is not the most recent edition of the *Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*.

It has been superseded by *The American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, 2012 (aka AIPSC), an updated edition of what has commonly been referred to as "Sturgis." The Bylaws' explicit naming of "Sturgis" as ALA's parliamentary authority and the absence of "Sturgis" from the new edition's title raises a question the Constitution and Bylaws Committee considered during its January 31, 2015 meeting: Is this 2012 edition now *de facto* ALA's parliamentary authority? That is one reading of the current Bylaws statement.

Yet in practice, the superseded 2001 edition bearing the Sturgis name remains in day-to-day use within ALA. The Committee has concluded that this is an inconsistency that merits attention and clarification.

One way to resolve the inconsistency would be for the ALA Council to take action to revise the ALA Bylaws to specify that the latest edition of the *Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* "shall govern..." This could be done by deleting one word from Article XII, i.e.: "Sturgis." Article XI, section 2 of the ALA Constitution states:

The Council, upon recommendation of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee or the Committee on Organization, may make such editorial changes in these bylaws as do not change their substance and meaning.

Would that be simply an "editorial change?" The Constitution and Bylaws Committee concluded that it would more than an editorial change.

Even though it remains in use within ALA, the 2001 manual is no longer available in printed book format; it is available only as a downloadable ebook. For some ALA members in governance positions, including members of Council, who need or want access to the content of ALA's parliamentary authority, this would be acceptable. However others may find access to that content more convenient in printed form.

For those who prefer a paperback for reference and guidance to parliamentary procedure, the list price for the printed 2012 *The American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* manual is \$19.00, available from Amazon for \$14.50 (<http://aipparl.org/site/bookstore-2/>).

## OPTIONS

Though recent correspondence and face-to-face discussion at the Committee's January 31 meeting with Eli Mina, ALA's parliamentarian, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee has reviewed all options for addressing the current inconsistency between the Bylaws and practice:

1. Do nothing.
2. Revise the ALA Bylaws to remove the reference to "Sturgis."
3. Revise the Bylaws to adopt *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2011. 716 p., \$12.34 in paperback from Amazon) as ALA's parliamentary authority.

Mr. Mina identified the following advantages to *Robert's* offers:

- *Robert's* is used by many more organizations than use AIPSC.
- As a result of that widespread use of *Robert's* in many organizations (e.g. college and university faculty senates, civic organization and library boards), many ALA members are more familiar with *Robert's* than with either Sturgis or AIPSC.
- There is a greater number of expert advisors schooled in *Robert's*. Mr. Mina noted that if/when ALA needs to engage the services of a new parliamentarian, this means ALA will have a wider pool of experts to consider.
- ALA members in governance roles interested in a useful source of information about the procedures codified in *Robert's* can purchase a personal copy of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised In Brief*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2011, 197 p., \$7.50 in paperback)
  - It offers brief scenarios for use of various rules. Many of these are in a very easy to understand and apply question-and-answer format
  - It is by the same authors—Henry M. III Robert, Daniel H. Honemann, Thomas J. Balch and "contributors" Daniel E. Seabold, Shmuel Gerber—who produced the full 2011 edition of *Robert's*. The fact that they produced a new edition of *In Brief* to accompany the 2011 edition implies that when a newer edition of *Robert's* is issued, it too will be accompanied by a new edition of *In Brief*.

Mr. Mina advised the Constitution and Bylaws Committee that a switch to Roberts would have minimal the impact on actual meeting procedures in ALA.

## PROCEDURAL INFORMATION ON AMENDING THE ALA BYLAWS

Article XI of the ALA Constitution states:

### Article XI. Bylaws Amendments and Editorial Changes

Section 1. All proposals for amending the Bylaws shall originate in the Council. A proposed amendment or new bylaw shall become effective when it shall have been approved by a majority of the members of the Council present and voting at a meeting of the Council, followed by ratification by the members of the Association either by a vote by mail of a majority of the members of the Association voting, or by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a membership meeting of the Association. The Council, on approving a proposed amendment, shall specify whether a vote for ratification shall be taken at a membership meeting of the Association or by mail, and if a mail vote is ordered, the Council shall fix the time for the beginning and closing of the balloting. If a vote at a membership meeting is ordered, at least one month's written notice shall be given to the Association of the text of the proposed amendment or new bylaw.

Section 2. The Council, upon recommendation of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee or the Committee on Organization, may make such editorial changes in these bylaws as do not change their substance and meaning. Those changes shall take effect upon such action and shall be referenced in the next ALA Handbook of Organization.

### **ACTION ITEM—Recommendation that Council place an amendment to the ALA Bylaws on the spring 2015 ballot**

Resolved, that following amendment to the ALA Bylaws be presented to the ALA membership on the spring 2015 ballot:

Amend Article XII of the ALA Bylaws to state:

Robert's Rules of Order in the latest edition, shall govern the Association in all cases to which it can be applied and in which it is not inconsistent with the Constitution, the Bylaws, or special rules of order of the Association.

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For convenience and clarity, the tracked changes version of this amendment appears below:

~~Robert's Rules of Order~~ ~~Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure~~, in the latest edition, shall govern the Association in all cases to which it can be applied and in which it is not inconsistent with the Constitution, the Bylaws, or special rules of order of the Association.

*The Constitution and Bylaws Committee thanks and commends Eli Mina and JoAnne Kempf for sharing their knowledge and expertise.*

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Respectfully submitted to the ALA Council, February 1, 2015

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