

Proposed Resolution to Approve Virtual Convention

Background and Rationale

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it impractical to conduct the 155th Annual Convention as a large, in-person assembly. Since March, the leadership bodies of the Diocese have functioned well by conducting their business using technology that allows participants to remain safely at home or wherever they may be, by taking advantage of the authority granted in Canon XVII, Section 9. That canon is patterned after provisions of Pennsylvania law governing nonprofit corporations, and it authorizes the presiding officers of the various Diocesan bodies other than Convention itself to hold their meetings remotely, using conference telephones or other electronic technology, subject to certain capabilities and requirements.

In June, Diocesan Council approved a Resolution to Permit a “Virtual” Convention this year and directed the Convention Planning Committee to develop specific plans for conducting the Convention with participants “present” only through technology. The Resolution approved by Diocesan Council, and the Final Plan and Mechanics for Conducting Virtual Convention presented by the Convention Planning Committee, are reproduced in the Pre-Convention Journal.

Convention is being asked to ratify the action of Diocesan Council in adopting the Resolution to Permit “Virtual” Convention, and approve the Final Plan and Mechanics for Conducting Virtual Convention.

The approach represented here is similar to the approach that is being taken by many other Dioceses of the Episcopal Church, after extensive consultation among the Chancellors, including the Chancellor for the Presiding Bishop. The resolution affirms that Convention is proceeding in good faith and making every effort to comply with applicable governance.

Proposed Resolution to Approve Virtual Convention

Resolved, that Convention ratifies the Resolution to Permit “Virtual” Convention adopted by the Diocesan Council on June 9, 2020, and approves the Final Plan and Mechanics for Conducting Virtual Convention, as reproduced in the Pre-Convention Journal.

Resolution to Permit “Virtual” Convention

Whereas, Article II of the Constitution of the Diocese of Pittsburgh provides in Section 1 that there shall be a stated Convention of the Church in this Diocese, to be held during the months of October or November of each year at such time and at such place within the Diocese as shall be fixed by the preceding Convention; and

Whereas, Section 2 of Article II provides that for any sufficient cause, occurring after the designation of the place of the meeting of the Annual Convention, the Bishop may appoint another time or place, or both, for the meeting of the Convention; and

Whereas, Canon V of the Diocese provides in Section 1 that the Diocesan Council shall act on behalf of the Convention when the Convention is not in session; and

Whereas, the Rules of Order of the Diocese provide in Section A.1 that subject to the Constitution and Canons and the Rules of Order, the organization, order of business, and program of work of the Convention shall be determined by the Convention Committee with the approval of the Bishop and Diocesan Council; and

Whereas, the Convention Committee and the Bishop, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the risk both to individuals and the public health that have been associated with large, in person assemblies, have requested that Diocesan Council adopt this resolution setting forth a special rule of order permitting the 155th Annual Convention of the Diocese to be held as a “Virtual Convention,” using electronic communications technology having the capabilities specified in the resolution; and

Whereas, the procedure for conducting the Annual Convention permitted by the resolution is patterned after the procedure for conducting a similar meeting of the members of a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation provided in Sections 5704(a) and 5708(b) of the Associations Code, 15 Pa. C. S. Sections 5704(a) and 5708(b).

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. Diocesan Council concurs with the recommendation of the Convention Committee and the Bishop that the plans for the 155th Annual Convention be based on holding the meeting as a “Virtual Convention,” and approves the adoption of a special rule of order to permit the Virtual Convention to be held, using electronic communications technology having the capabilities specified in this resolution.
2. The 155th Annual Convention may be held by means of the Internet or other electronic communications technology in a fashion pursuant to which Clergy and Lay Deputies, wherever they may be physically located, have the opportunity to read or hear the proceedings substantially concurrently with their occurrence, vote on matters submitted to the members of

Convention, pose questions to the President of Convention and members of any other body, make appropriate motions and comment on the business of the meeting, and express their consent or dissent to any matter presented to Convention for action.

3. The participation by a member of Convention at a meeting conducted using the technological means specified in paragraph 2, including voting and taking any other action, shall constitute the presence of, or vote or action by, or consent or dissent of the member of Convention for the purposes of the 155th Annual Convention.

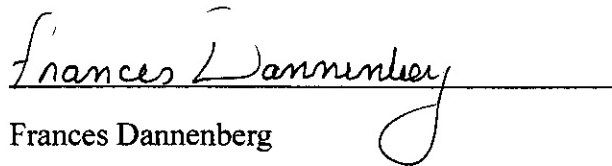
4. The Convention Committee and the Bishop are charged with the responsibility to identify and recommend to Diocesan Council more specific procedures and technology to conduct the Convention in accordance with the requirements of this resolution, and to submit more detailed recommendations for conducting the Virtual Convention to Diocesan Council by Friday, July 31, 2020.

5. The Convention Committee and the Bishop are encouraged to communicate the plans for and, once approved by Diocesan Council, the detailed procedures for conducting the 155th Annual Convention as a Virtual Convention to all members of Convention well in advance of October 16, 2020.

6. The Agenda for the 155th Annual Convention shall include, as a first order of business, a resolution to approve and ratify this resolution of Diocesan Council as a special rule of order, including use of the specific procedures and technology to be identified and recommended in accordance with this resolution, to hold the 155th Annual Convention

Approved this 9th day of June, 2020, at a meeting of Diocesan Council duly convened and conducted pursuant to Diocesan Canon XVII, Section 9.

I certify as Secretary of Diocesan Council that the above resolution is an excerpt from the approved minutes for the meeting of June 9, 2020.



Frances Dannenberg