

LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

DURANGO, COLORADO

Board of Directors Policy

Subject: Elections and Voting Procedures			Policy No: 105
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I. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear, modernized procedures for the conduct of contested Board of Director (Board) elections of La Plata Electric Association, Inc. (Cooperative) and for other matters requiring approval during the Annual Meeting, Special Meetings of the Members, or any other vote of the Membership (hereinafter collectively referred to as “Election”). This policy aims to ensure elections are conducted with fairness, impartiality, confidentiality, transparency, and integrity, while incorporating secure and accessible voting methods that reflect the Cooperative's commitment to inclusivity, member participation, and technological advancements.

II. POLICY

A. Cooperative Neutrality

1. The Board shall not take a position of support or opposition for any individual candidate for a Board election. Board members are prohibited from using Cooperative resources to send communications (including digital communications) regarding the election and may not use Cooperative resources to send individual newsletters or other campaign material, as set forth in C.R.S. § 40-9.5-110(4). Individual Directors may take a position of support or opposition for any individual candidate for a Board election so long as that Director: (a) does not use cooperative resources in communicating that position; and (b) assures that the audience understands that the Director does not speak on behalf of the Cooperative or the full Board in compliance with Policy 122 by including a disclaimer with the following substantive elements: (i) identify the author as a current director of La Plata Electric Association, Inc.; (ii) identify that the opinion is the author's personal opinion; and (iii) identify that the author does not speak on behalf of the Cooperative or its Board of Directors.
2. The Cooperative's resources, including its logo, trademarks, and brand elements (e.g., fonts, colors, graphics, etc.), shall not be used to support or oppose any candidate for election. For the purposes of this policy, “resources” are defined as any assets owned, funded, or maintained by the

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Cooperative, such as cooperative email addresses (ending in @lpea.coop), electronic devices, printing services, postage, mailing systems, employee time, or any other financial or physical assets of the Cooperative. However, this definition of “resources” does not include the membership list of mailing and email addresses provided to bona fide candidates for director elections in accordance with C.R.S. § 40-9.5-110(1)(b). Additionally, hyperlinks directing members to publicly available general information on the Cooperative’s website shall not be considered a misuse of resources.

B. Election Supervision

1. The Board shall appoint an independent third party (such as a Certified Public Accounting firm, professional electioneering firm, or other designee) to receive, prepare, and secure the return envelopes containing ballots, and at the appropriate time, tabulate ballots and report voting results to the Members.
2. The Board shall also appoint an Election Supervisory Committee consisting of a member from each of the Cooperative’s Director Districts and one at-large member.
 - a. To be a member of the Election Supervisory Committee the individual shall be a member of the Cooperative in good standing, shall be fair, impartial, not have an interest or relationship with a candidate that might impair their ability to serve the best interests of the Cooperative, and have some understanding in the general process of elections. Committee members shall be required to swear or affirm an oath of office.
 - b. Nominations for the Election Supervisory Committee shall be made to the Board by the current directors from the respective Director District or, for the at-large member, by the full Board. The Board shall appoint the members of the Election Supervisory Committee to serve for one annual term, with no limit to the number of terms served. Such appointment shall be made prior to the campaign packets being made available.

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- c. The Election Supervisory Committee shall be advised by the Cooperative Attorney.
- d. At least three members of the Election Supervisory Committee are necessary to constitute a quorum to make the decision to resolve an issue or question. If the Election Supervisory Committee's decision ends in a tie, the vote shall be continued until there is an odd number of members participating. The Election Supervisory Committee shall follow the guidelines as presented in the attached Exhibit 1 in carrying out its duties.
- e. The Election Supervisory Committee members shall be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred, such as mileage at the standard IRS rate, plus a per diem rate equal to the per diem rate paid to the Board for attending meetings.

C. Nomination

Elections for members of the Board will be held annually by the Cooperative in accordance with its Bylaws. The date for the Election will be posted on the Cooperative's website no less than six months prior to the Election. Information on how to become a candidate and the schedule of elections shall be posted on the Cooperative's website and otherwise publicized based on a member's preferred method of communication no less than three months before petitions to become a candidate are due.

- 1. Any Member in good standing of the Cooperative, meeting the qualifications of Article III, Section 2, of the Cooperative Bylaws, is eligible to submit a nominating petition to become a candidate for the Board. Nominating petitions must be signed by at least 15 qualified members of the Cooperative and submitted to the Board no later than 60 days prior to the date of the election. Only Members of the Cooperative may sign a nominating petition.

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2. No candidate may solicit for signatures on Cooperative property or use Cooperative resources in campaign efforts, other than obtaining a list of members from the Cooperative in accordance with applicable policy and state statute.
3. Candidates for the Board must sign an affidavit verifying his/her qualifications to run. The Election Supervisory Committee may use electric billing information from the Cooperative, voter registration information from the State of Colorado, and other information as needed to verify that candidates meet the requirements to run.
4. Specific Membership types and acceptable signatures for each include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:
 - a. Individual Membership - The Member of record's signature. In the case of a joint Membership, one signature from any joint Member is acceptable on a return envelope, and one signature is acceptable on a nominating petition.
 - b. Corporate Membership - The signature of an officer or assistant officer of the corporation such as President, Vice-President, Secretary, or Treasurer. Unincorporated Entity Membership - The signature of an authorized representative. The Cooperative may request additional documentation to evidence the appointment of an authorized representative to sign the ballot or nominating petition.

D. Voting.

1. Each Member of the Cooperative shall be entitled to one vote upon each matter submitted to a vote at any meeting of the Members (such as administrative votes to approve minutes, etc.). At all meetings of the Members at which a quorum is present, all questions validly presented at the meeting shall be decided by a vote of a majority of the Members voting by any authorized method; except as otherwise provided by law, the Articles of Incorporation, or Bylaws. Only Members of the Cooperative may vote in an Election.

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2. Mail Ballots shall be mailed to all Members of the Cooperative at their billing address, except for Members who reside in a District in which an election has been cancelled, approximately 30 days prior to the Election. If the Board authorizes the use of Electronic Ballots under Article II, Section 5 of the Bylaws, the Cooperative shall open the voting by Electronic Ballot on the same day the Mail Ballots are mailed.
3. Members who prefer “paperless” communications may elect to “opt out” of receiving a Mail Ballot and only receive an Electronic Ballot. If a member joins the Cooperative after the date the Mail Ballots are mailed, that member may only vote in person at the meeting.
4. All Mail Ballots shall contain a return envelope which must be signed by the Member. Members who vote by Mail Ballot or Electronic Ballot are not entitled to vote at a meeting in the same Election.
5. The deadline to return Mail Ballots or submit Electronic Ballots shall be posted on the Cooperative’s website at least three months prior to the deadline and shall remain so posted until after the election.
6. The ballot position of a qualified candidate will be determined by the Election Supervisory Committee on a random basis in a manner that does not automatically assign the top line to the incumbent prior to the publication of the ballot.
7. If an election is held within that district, the packet that is mailed to Members with the Mail Ballot shall contain the notice of the meeting, voting instructions for both Mail Ballots and Electronic Ballots. Candidates, even if unopposed, will be identified by name and district.

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8. A Member may request a replacement ballot. The Member will be advised that they may vote in person at the meeting, if applicable. Should that be unsatisfactory, a replacement ballot packet will be reissued to the Member. Should the Cooperative receive more than one Mail Ballot from any one Member, any subsequent Mail Ballot after the first Mail Ballot received from said Member will be declared invalid. If the Board authorizes the use of voting by Electronic Ballot under Article II, Section 5 of the Bylaws and the Cooperative receives both a Mail Ballot and an Electronic Ballot from the same member, the Mail Ballot shall control over the Electronic Ballot,
 - a. The Cooperative or its agent will endeavor to contact the Member in question, when multiple ballots are received from a Member, by contacting the Member at the address, phone number, or email on file with the Cooperative. Nothing in this paragraph shall alter the counting process described above, and the purpose of this paragraph is solely to provide the Member with information regarding the effect of submitting multiple ballots.
9. The independent third party will receive the return envelopes and maintain care, custody, and control of the return envelopes until the tabulation process is completed.

E. Communication of Cooperative Election Candidates

1. To ensure transparency, equity, and informed member participation in cooperative elections, LPEA will provide opportunities for members to learn about candidates running for the Board of Directors.
2. A candidate, even if unopposed, may submit up to a 500-word summary of their qualifications and views ("Candidate Statement"). In the event a candidate submits more than 500 words, the statement will be truncated. The Cooperative will not make any other edits to the Candidate Statement.
3. Candidate Statements shall also be featured in at least one official Cooperative communication outlet (e.g., member newsletter, email, or other regularly used channels).

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4. All Candidate Statements will be presented in an equal and neutral format to avoid preferential treatment.
5. LPEA will help facilitate and publicize third-party candidate forums or debates, but LPEA shall not host the forum itself.
6. The third-party forums shall be open to all members and may be conducted in person, virtually, or in a hybrid format to maximize accessibility.
7. Efforts will be made to ensure accessibility for members to candidate information, including accommodations for individuals with limited English proficiency, disabilities, or other barriers

F. BALLOT PROCEDURES

1. For each election a Mail Ballot and a return envelope containing a signature line by the voting Member shall be mailed to each Member who has not otherwise opted to only receive an Electronic Ballot pursuant to Section II.D.3. Each Member shall be instructed that, if the Member wishes to vote, the ballot shall be marked in accordance with instructions to be placed on each ballot and the ballot shall then be mailed or otherwise returned in the return envelope, which must be signed by the Member. Mail Ballots in unsigned return envelopes shall not be counted. Return envelopes containing more than one ballot (i.e., two or more Members returning ballots in a single envelope) shall not be counted. Instructions regarding the signing and return of ballots shall clearly be marked on the return envelope. The process of receiving, preparing, and securing the return envelopes will be in the care, custody, and control of the selected independent third party, under the supervision of the Election Supervisory Committee.
2. Return envelopes shall be addressed to the independent third party. The independent third party shall keep the return envelopes unopened and secure until the tabulation process begins at the designated time and location prior to the start of the meeting, if applicable.
3. The return envelopes list the Member's name, address, voting district, and

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membership number, as generated from the Membership records of the Cooperative. The envelopes shall have a signature block for the Member's signature, printed name, and title. Other appropriate information and directions will also be provided. Any ballots delivered to the Cooperative in person or by mail shall be delivered by secure means to the independent third party prior to the close of voting.

4. Mail Ballots shall be maintained in the following manner:
 - a. Maintain an accounting of the number of returned envelopes by Director District; and
 - b. Sort the envelopes into groups after comparing the Member label to the signature block. The groups include:
 - i. envelopes signed by the member, officer, or authorized representative;
 - ii. envelopes unsigned; and
 - iii. envelopes to be reviewed by the Election Supervisory Committee for their determination of validity.
5. The Cooperative shall report the gross tally of returned ballots by district, including the number of ballots sent and the method of return (mail, electronic, etc.), on the Cooperative's website at least weekly. Said tally shall be the only information released by the Cooperative, the Election Supervisory Committee, or the independent third party, regarding the number of ballots cast. No information shall be released regarding the names of members who have or have not returned envelopes, except for exchanging such information as may be necessary for the Cooperative and the independent third party to determine if a member should receive a duplicate Mail Ballot.
6. The independent third party will maintain custody and control of all ballots cast, supervise tabulation of the ballots prior to the close of voting, supervise the in-person voting process if applicable, and supervise the

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transport and be in control of all ballots cast to a secure site for tabulation. The Election Supervisory Committee shall supervise the independent third party in this process.

7. Unsigned return envelopes will invalidate any ballot contained therein and will remain unopened. The independent third party shall have the unsigned envelopes/ballots available for Member signature at the meeting, if applicable, prior to the close of voting.
8. Electronic Ballots shall be handled in a manner agreed upon between the independent third party and the Election Supervisory Committee.

G. REGISTRATION

1. Registration of Members at the meeting will determine the presence of a quorum and, if required, to verify Membership for voting purposes. The registration process shall be handled by Cooperative staff, employees, and volunteers prior to the start of the meeting, if applicable. [Pursuant to C.R.S. § 40-9.5-109.7 (3), any member who registers electronically or casts a vote through Mail Ballot or Electronic Ballot is considered “present in person” for the purpose of determining a quorum for action by the membership. Pursuant to Article II, Section 4 of the Bylaws, 50 members “present in person” constitutes a quorum.]
2. A meeting of members may be held electronically or in person as determined by the Board. In person balloting will be available to Members prior to the close of voting at all in person meetings of the Members. The Notice of the meeting shall specify the hours of in person balloting at the meeting and the specific time when in person balloting will be closed at the meeting. In person balloting is not allowed for Members who have voted by Mail Ballot or Electronic Ballot prior to the meeting.

H. TABULATION

1. No person shall be allowed to electioneer, photograph, videotape, or tape record any voting activity in the registration and voting area while an Election is in progress at a meeting or at any ballot return location at any

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time. Such area shall include that portion of the interior of the building that is readily visible from where registration and voting is taking place.

2. The independent third party may begin tabulation of Mail Ballots and Electronic Ballots within a reasonable time before the close of voting, as agreed upon between the independent third party and the Election Supervisory Committee. Once balloting has been closed, any ballots cast in person prior to the close of voting shall be transferred to a secure site to begin the remainder of the ballot counting process.
3. The independent third party shall develop its own methods of counting, cross-checking, recording, and reporting the result. Handling questionable or irregular ballots will be determined immediately by the Election Supervisory Committee, in consultation with the independent third party's representative.
4. A qualified candidate, or a representative appointed by the candidate in writing, may observe the tabulation process. Observing the tabulation process shall not include obtaining a tally of votes cast before the final vote is announced. Questions or concerns, raised by the candidate, regarding the registration and/or voting process should be directed immediately to the Election Supervisory Committee for its immediate review and determination. Observation of the tabulation process, whether by the Election Supervisory Committee, a qualified candidate, a qualified candidate's appointed representative, or Cooperative staff may be done by secure video feed if the secure site used by the independent third party is located outside of the Cooperative's service territory.
5. The independent third party will automatically recount all ballots appropriate to that Director District position or particular question if the difference between the highest number of votes cast for that Director District position or that particular question and the next highest number of votes cast is less than or equal to one-half of one percent of the highest vote cast in that particular Director election district or that particular question.
6. In the event of a tie vote in a Director election, the outcome of the election

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shall be decided by the flip of a coin conducted by the President of the Board (or if the election involves the President, the Vice President) in the presence of the Board and the candidates. In the event of a tie on any other issue other than an election of directors, the issue shall fail.

7. The independent third party's representative will certify the results of the election and provide written certification to the President of the Board on behalf of the Board as soon as the results are available. In the event of a recount, the uncertified results will be released at the time of the regular election. The certified results will be released when the recount is finalized.
8. In the event of a withdrawal of a candidate prior to the certification of the election results from a voluntary withdrawal, ineligibility, or death of the candidate, the opposition candidate Director receiving the most votes shall be deemed to win the election. If the withdrawal occurs at the time of a recount involving the withdrawing candidate, the recount process shall immediately cease.
9. All return envelopes, ballots, and any materials used in conducting the count shall be preserved and turned over to the Cooperative for safekeeping after the challenge period and any challenges have been resolved. These envelopes, ballots, and materials will be preserved by the Cooperative for a period of not less than 90 days, after which, they may be destroyed.

I. CHALLENGES

Any qualified candidate may challenge the correctness of any announced result of a Director election in which he/she was a candidate. Should a challenge be presented, it shall be made in writing, specifically asking for a recount, addressed to the Election Supervisory Committee, and presented within ten calendar days from the announcement of the official results. The Election Supervisory Committee will authorize one recount at the requesting candidate's expense to be performed in the same manner as, and by the same independent third party, that performed the original vote count.

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J. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Election Supervisory Committee has the authority to rule on all matters related to the election process, including:

1. Validity of Nominating Petitions and Member Signatures: Determining whether nominating petitions and Member signatures meet the required standards including, but not limited to, clear evidence of a signature by someone other than the Member.
2. Member Registration and Ballot Counting: Overseeing the registration of Members and ensuring the accurate counting of ballots in any Election.
3. Irregular or Disputed Ballots: Deciding the validity of ballots that are improperly marked, irregularly cast, or disputed.
4. Voting and Election Conduct: Addressing questions or issues arising from mail-in or electronic voting, Member participation, or the election of Directors.
5. Challenges and Protests: Resolving any challenges, protests, or objections related to the election process or actions that could impact election results.
6. The Committee is also empowered to take corrective measures it deems necessary to ensure the integrity of the election, which shall include a public statement of findings. Unless the Board overrides the Committee's decision by a three-fourths vote of disinterested Directors, the Committee's rulings and actions are final.

