

Amendment to By-Laws

Replace Article VII (Decision-Making of the Green Party of Michigan) with the following:

[notes and comments are in square brackets, questions and options are in parentheses]

Section 1: Definition of Decisions

“Decisions of the Green Party of Michigan” include matters of state party business in accordance with Federal, state, or local law and/or as required by or for the Green Party of the United States (GPUS); amendments to these by-laws; and additions or amendments to the platform of the Green Party of Michigan (GPMI).

[NOTE: This is an attempt to spell out what “state party business” means.]

Section 2: Groups Empowered to Make Decisions

Decisions of the GPMI may only be made at statewide membership meetings which have been called by the Meeting Manager or a decision of the SCC and announced to party membership at least two weeks in advance. Day-to-day business conducted (under Article V, Section 2 of these by-laws) by the State Central Committee between such meetings does not constitute decisions of the GPMI as a whole, and is subject to being overturned or modified by decisions of the GPMI at such meetings.

[NOTE: As written above, this parallels the Spitzley draft’s elimination of polling the locals – old Article VII, Section 1, item b):

“ . . . or b) a consensus of a quorum of 2/3 of all valid locals in the state.”]

Section 3: Proposals

Any member of the party may make a proposal for a Decision of the GPMI as an individual, as a representative of a local, or as a committee member. Proposals may be submitted to the state party at a statewide membership meeting in writing by someone not able to attend; however, such proposals may only be adopted by consensus or by simple (“yes” or “no”) vote only, with no amendments.

[NOTE: This combines old Section 3, carried over in the Spitzley draft, and old Section 5 dropped in the Spitzley draft.]

Section 4: Decision-Making Methods

Decisions of the GPMI shall be made by consensus of or a vote of the Green Party members attending a statewide membership meeting. Unresolvable blocking concerns to consensus must be identified before a vote may be called on a proposal.

A) Votes Available and Votes Cast:

Before each session of a GPMI statewide membership meeting where business may be done, the Meeting Manager shall provide those running the session, and those counting votes for it, with a count of the votes AVAILABLE for that session. Members with votes can withdraw them from availability for a session by informing the Meeting Manager.

[NOTE: I tried to allow for proxies, if we pass them.]

(QUESTION: If members with votes leave the session without informing the Meeting Manager, do we allow those votes to be “discounted” automatically? If so, after X decisions are taken? after X time since the last casting of the votes in question?)

In simple voting on yes-or-no questions, votes may be cast in four ways: “yes” [Y] to accept the proposal, “no” [N] to reject it, “abstain” [A] to express active uncertainty or a wish for further consideration, or “no vote” [NV] to make explicit that no vote is being CAST on the question (as is implicit if an available vote is not in fact cast).

[NOTE: This is to define the different effects and purposes of votes CAST as distinct from votes AVAILABLE.]

B) Voting Methods: If there is no consensus on a proposal at a statewide membership meeting, the following voting methods shall be used in the following circumstances (unless there is consensus to use different methods for a particular decision or session).

i) Simple Vote: If a proposal involves a single option which must be either adopted or rejected, a Simple Vote may be used. In a Simple Vote, each voter may vote to accept or reject the proposal, cast an active vote to abstain, or choose not to vote.

* If 2/3 of the votes CAST – including active abstentions – are “yes” votes to accept the proposal, it passes immediately.

* If more than 1/2 of the votes CAST – but fewer than 2/3 – are “yes” votes, the proposal must go to a “second reading” (at the next meeting unless it is called back to the floor at the same meeting by consensus). At a second reading:

- Start by again asking for consensus on proposal AS IT WAS PASSED BEFORE.
- If there is no such consensus, check whether the original proposer has agreed to any amendments.
- If so, and if there is consensus on any such amendments, proceed with the second reading; if not, treat the amended proposal as a new proposal on its FIRST reading.

Proposals on second reading may pass by consensus, 2/3 of votes CAST at second reading, or >1/2 of votes AVAILABLE.

[NOTE: A proposal passing this way would have received majorities twice – either at two separate meetings or after consensus had been reached to re-consider the proposal immediately, possibly after compromise and friendly amendment. Note also that, as this process is drafted, a second simple majority would have to be of the votes AVAILABLE, and thus probably stronger than the first.]

(QUESTION: We could also allow an appeal of a 2/3 decision if 1/3 of the votes AVAILABLE ask for the proposal to go to a “second reading”; should we do this? If so, should it be automatic upon request or require another decision?)

ii) Instant Runoff Voting: When one choice is to be made from three or more options, Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) shall be used. In an IRV vote, voters shall mark as many of the options as they desire, ranking them in order of preference. Top-choice votes shall first be counted; if no option gets a majority of top-choice votes, the last-place option is dropped, all votes for that option as top choice are given to the next choice (if that vote indicated any next choice), and all votes are re-counted. This process repeats until one option receives a majority of the votes remaining cast.

[NOTE: I tried to borrow from the descriptions John Gear presented to us in August . . . and I’m open to correction.]

iii) Choice Voting: When more than one option is to be chosen, such as when there are multiple seats for the same position but more candidates than seats, Choice Voting (also called Preference Voting) shall be used. In Choice Voting, as in IRV, voters shall mark as many of the options as they desire, ranking them in order of preference. Top-choice votes shall first be counted; if no option gets a majority of top-choice votes, the last-place option is dropped, all votes for that option as top choice are given to the next-ranked option (if that vote indicated any next choice), and all votes are re-counted. This process repeats until the number of remaining options equals the number of choices to be made.

[NOTE: I tried to borrow from the descriptions John Gear presented to us in August . . . and I’m open to correction.]

iv) Accept/Modify/Reject Ballot: When a proposal involves the adoption of specific language (such as by-laws or platform changes, or GPMI resolutions), it may be presented as an Accept/Modify/Reject ballot. The ballot should include a written version of the proposal, and indicate who will be responsible for modifying it if necessary. Each voter may vote to Accept, Modify, or Reject the proposal. The proposal is adopted as written if 2/3 or more of the votes CAST are Accept; it is rejected if 2/3 or more of the votes CAST are Reject; otherwise, the proposal is referred back to the responsible party to be modified in accordance with comments from the participating members.

C) None of the Above (NOTA): In the case of Instant Runoff Voting and Choice Voting, “None of the Above” should be included as a voting option as long as choosing between the other options is not mandatory. One case where this does not apply is election of the Officers listed in Article IV; those posts must be filled before at-large SCC members may be elected.

D) Ballots: Votes may be conducted by voice, but any vote may be conducted by ballot for reasons of convenience or to preserve secrecy of individual votes. All ballots shall be counted as cast; if there is any question about the intent of a voter, the counters shall consult that voter if possible rather than rely on their own guess as to the voter’s intent.

[NOTE: The second sentence was added in an attempt to address concerns from previous votes.]

Section 5: Quorum Requirements

There is no quorum requirement for decisions of the GPMI.

[NOTE: This was in the DSpitzley draft; I am leaving it in on that basis, and to make clear what otherwise isn’t mentioned.]