

Extracts from R I Website on updates on COL

Representatives to the 2010 Council on Legislation left Chicago having enacted a number of monumental measures that will make e-clubs a permanent part of Rotary International, create a fifth Avenue of Service for New Generations, increase the annual per capita dues that clubs pay to RI by US\$1, and give Rotarians in North America a choice of how they receive *The Rotarian* .

Representatives approved a \$1 increase in annual per capita dues starting in 2011-12 that will allow RI's budget to remain profitable through 2013, but experience a deficit of about \$3 million by 2015.

Rotary clubs will pay per capita dues to RI of \$51 per year in 2011-12, \$52 per year in 2012-13, and \$53 per year in 2013-14. Per capita dues were already set at \$50 for 2010-11.

The increase is only half the amount the Board of Directors had originally planned to seek. But after favorable financial forecasts, the Board offered an amended request for the \$1 increase. RI's General Surplus Fund is well above the Council-mandated minimum reserves. Market performance has improved, and the Secretariat has made significant cuts in expenses.

After years as part of a pilot project, e-clubs found a permanent home in Rotary. Representatives approved a measure that will allow up to two e-clubs per district, amended from just one per district. Proponents of the amendment argued that districts that use more than one language would be better served by more e-clubs.

The measure defines e-clubs as Rotary clubs that meet through electronic communications. A handful of e-clubs have been operating as part of the pilot project set to end 30 June. Some of the pilot clubs meet solely through online forums, while others combine electronic with in-person meetings.

Representatives also voted to add a fifth Avenue of Service, New Generations, to the four that already exist: Club Service, Vocational Service, Community Service, and International Service. Before starting a project, Rotarians are asked to think broadly about how their club and its members can contribute within each avenue. Supporters of the fifth avenue feel it will encourage and recognize the positive change implemented by youth and young adults involved in leadership development efforts, service projects, and exchange programs.

In the final days of the Council, representatives voted to give Rotarians in the United States and Canada the option of receiving an electronic version of *The Rotarian* magazine. The Council rejected a proposal to completely do away with the subscription requirement, but it did allow for joint subscriptions for two Rotarians residing at the same address. It also voted against giving a choice between print and electronic magazines to Rotarians living outside North America.

The Council tackled a variety of other issues, including decreasing the number of members on the Nominating Committee for President of Rotary International from 34 to 17; giving the Board authority to take steps to limit the number of election complaints from a district, including disqualifying a nominee for district governor; giving the Board authority to eliminate or change district boundaries if a district falls below 33 clubs or 1,200 members; and precluding clubs from limiting membership based on sexual orientation.

The Council on Legislation meets every three years to consider changes to the RI Constitution, RI Bylaws, and the Standard Rotary Club Constitution. This year's Council convened 25-30 April. Representatives from Rotary's 531 districts considered more than 200 pieces of legislation submitted by Rotary clubs, districts, and the RI Board of Directors. With the Council adjourned, an official Report of Action will be compiled and posted online as soon as possible.

During five days of deliberation, the Council on Legislation discussed more than 200 proposed enactments and resolutions.

- Approved an enactment to revise the Board's authority to change district boundaries. The enactment would amend the RI Bylaws by changing the minimum number of clubs per district from 30 to 33 and Rotarians per district from 1,000 to 1,200 by 1 July 2012. The Board would be able to eliminate or change the boundaries of a district that falls below the new minimums, but only after consulting with and providing a reasonable opportunity for the governor and clubs involved to provide another recommended change. Opponents argued that merging districts could lead to a decline in membership. Proponents argued that it could save RI money and encourage clubs to be proactive in recruiting new members.
- Approved the creation of a standing committee of RI for Interact. The committee would consist of six members, each of whom would serve a term of three years, with two members appointed each year. David L. Gallagher, of District 5220 (California, USA), said there was no better time to create a permanent Interact committee in light of the Council's recent decision to add New Generations as a fifth Avenue of Service.
- Approved the addition of a travel reimbursement policy to the RI Bylaws. The policy would require that anyone traveling at the expense of RI or The Rotary Foundation, except certain senior Rotary leaders, be ticketed or reimbursed according to the lowest available economy fare. Proponents stated that the measure would reduce costs for RI and the Foundation.

Rejected a measure to eliminate the requirement that Council representatives be past RI officers. Proponents said that allowing Rotarians who have not been officers to be eligible would bring fresh viewpoints to the Council and ensure that the best qualified

representative attends. Opponents said that the level of knowledge necessary to attend the Council makes serving as an RI officer essential.

- Approved a resolution to encourage the RI Board to support the use of Comely Bank, the Chicago home of Rotary founder Paul P. Harris, as an archive for past RI presidents' documents and memorabilia. Proponents said the Comely Bank archive would educate future generations about the history of Rotary and serve as an attraction for Rotarians visiting Chicago. The resolution notes that the Paul and Jean Harris Home Foundation, a nonprofit corporation, has not been receiving enough donations to make necessary repairs. RI would incur costs to restore and maintain the building.
- Agreed to decrease the number of members on the Nominating Committee for President of Rotary International from 34 to 17. Proponents cited cost and logistical problems. "Having 34 zones on the committee [lessens] efficiency and is not cost effective," said John Örtengren, of District 2350 (Sweden).
- Rejected a proposed enactment to reduce per capita dues for members under the age of 40. Proponents said the measure might help attract younger members, but opponents suggested that clubs find more creative ways to recruit young Rotarians.
- Rejected an enactment to extend the term of district governors from one year to two years. While the measure's backers argued that one year isn't enough time to visit each club in the district and complete projects, those against it said extending the term by a year would pose familial and professional challenges for governors.
- Approved a proposal to give the Board authority to take steps to limit the number of election complaints from a district. The measure, which representatives debated for almost an hour, would allow the Board to take any or all of the following actions if two or more district governor complaints were filed in a district within a five year period, and if the Board believed the RI Bylaws or election complaint procedures had been violated: 1) disqualify a nominee for district governor and select a past governor instead, 2) remove from office any governor interfering with the election process, and 3) strip past governors interfering with an election of their titles. The measure also would give the Board power to dissolve a district and assign clubs to surrounding districts, if the district incurs three or more election complaints in a five-year period. The Board argued that the measure is necessary to cut down on the number of election complaints, which cost RI money to address. Opponents said the measure would penalize clubs for exercising their right to submit election complaints as they feel necessary.

Council on Legislation representatives Tuesday endorsed the concept of a new type of Rotary club, a satellite club, that would allow prospective members to become Rotarians through a host club while they wait for the satellite to gain enough members for its own charter.

Representatives voted in favor of asking the RI Board of Directors to propose legislation for the next Council on creating satellite clubs. Satellite clubs would differ from provisional clubs because there would be no limit to how long they could exist before gaining enough members for a charter. Also, prospective members would be considered full-fledged members of the host club until the satellite club gained its charter. "Provisional clubs often fail to achieve the number of members they need to get their charter. Years of work by the host club go to waste and the provisional members often lose interest in Rotary, never to return," said John C. Williams of District 1150 (Wales), which proposed the legislation. "If satellite clubs fail, the members are far more likely to remain Rotarians because they are members of the host club."

Representatives were in a far less charitable mood, however, toward other proposals designed to create new membership categories. The Council

- Rejected a measure to create a category of corporate membership that would allow corporate members to designate up to three other people from their business or profession to attend meetings in their place for purposes of meeting attendance requirements. The corporate member would pay dues for the additional people, but they would not be considered members. Proponents said the measure would attract executives of large industries or big businesses who do not have time to attend regular meetings. But opponents felt the new category would change the nature of Rotary membership. "Rotarians are human beings. I have never yet seen a corporation walk through my club's door to be a member," said Kari Tallberg of District 1420 (Estonia and Finland).
- Rejected proposals to ask the Board to draft legislation for the next Council that would create associate memberships. Associate members would pay reduced dues of 50 percent, but would not have voting rights. The associates would have to become full members after two years. Opponents felt the measure would create two classes of members. Supporters felt the new category would allow prospective members, deterred by cost, to join for up to two years and learn more about the organization.
- Approved a measure that would preclude clubs from limiting membership based on sexual orientation. Enactment 10-40 amends the RI Bylaws, which already provide that clubs cannot limit membership on the basis of gender, race, color, creed, or national origin.
- Approved two measures that would make it harder for a member to transfer to a new club for reasons other than relocation. The first measure would preclude admission of a Rotarian who has terminated membership in one club to another until the former club provides the new club with a certificate confirming previous membership. The second measure would establish a 90-day waiting period, during which the new club could confirm that the prospective member has no outstanding dues or liabilities to the former club. (On Friday, the Council amended the measure to include current and former Rotarians transferring to a new club.)