

Ethics and Elections Committee Mid-Year Report 2022

July 2022 Board of Directors Meeting

Arthur I. Zygielbaum, KØAIZ, Chair
Vernon (Bill) Lippert, ACØW, Member
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This report is intended to inform the ARRL Board of Directors about the activities and plans of the Ethics and Elections Committee (E&E) at the midpoint of 2022. The report is divided into three sections. Issues is a high-level sanitized record of ethical investigations and findings. Elections discusses activities related to the conduct of elections. Guidebooks presents plans to create standardized, one-stop guidebooks related to E&E activities and elections.

Issues

- The E&E was asked to review a complaint about misleading false information being posted and broadcast by one section manager candidate about another. E&E found that the accused candidate had posted such material but removed it upon direction from ARRL staff. Given no evidence of continuing inappropriate postings, E&E issued a notice to the alleged offender about the complaint, acknowledged the removal of the offending material, and suggested that the candidate refrain from negative campaigning.
- E&E received a complaint about the removal of a Section Emergency Coordinator. In reviewing the situation, E&E found that ARRL Staff needs to do a better job communicating with ARRL Field Organization appointees and encouraging them to contact staff to resolve issues rather than generating negative Facebook posts, etc. The removal of the appointee is within the authority of the Section Manager. Overseeing such actions is the responsibility of the Field Organization. The Field Services Manager was advised that, in the committee's opinion, resolving this problem was within their purview and did not require action by E&E.
- A potential violation of the prohibition against campaigning on the air during a section manager election was the subject of a complaint. A recording of the transmission seemed more focused at getting out the vote rather than self-promotion. We advised the accused individual of our finding and suggested that he take greater care to avoid the appearance of violating an election rule.
- We advised the Field Services Manager on a question regarding the section manager recall process. A member was considering starting a recall and needed to understand what was required.
- A potential section manager candidate expressed concern about not meeting the requirement that a candidate be an ARRL member for two years prior to the election. His two year tenure would be completed two days before candidate petitions are due at ARRL Headquarters. E&E found that the candidate met the intent of the requirement and that there was no prohibition against his collecting petition signatures before his tenure was complete.

- A member of the ARRL Board asked the E&E to review the member's plans for a possible change in employment as well as outside writing activities. E&E found no concern about conflicts of interest in either case.

Elections

In accordance with ARRL Bylaws, electronic balloting is allowed as an alternative to paper balloting for elections. The ARRL Board passed a motion in January 2021 tasking the Ethics and Elections Committee to investigate the state, cost and availability of commercial electronic balloting services. The E&E Committee worked with Chief Financial Officer Diane Middleton, to develop a project plan to make electronic balloting available for the 2022 Division Elections.

A contract was executed with Election Services Company (ESC) on March 30, 2022, after the E&E Chair, Ms. Middleton, and Director Ria Jairam visited the company in Melville, NY. Presentations and discussions indicated that ESC had an excellent track record and was well equipped to handle both paper and electronic balloting for ARRL Director elections.

In accordance with the project plan, an article was authored to explain the election process to the ARRL membership. The article will be published in the September, October, and November QST and the September issue of On The Air.

The election period will be busy. There will be short turn-arounds for the E&E to approve candidate statements and electronic and paper proofs.

Guidebooks

The E&E Committee is taking on the development of two guidebooks. One will be a single source about elections covering the process, the ethics, and the rules. The need for this is apparent from the many questions received on the election process as well as potential disconnects because the rules and regulations regarding elections are currently distributed among several documents.

The second guidebook will be a living document offering standard procedures for the E&E committee itself as well as enabling a documented history of investigations and findings. The intent is to create consistency in process and to maintain a record of decision precedents as a reference for the committee's work.