

237th Annual Communication Legislation

TITLE FOUR, ARTICLE IV, Section 1 Standing Grand Lodge Committees; Part 7. Committee on Temple & Lodge Finance

Current Legislation:

A Committee on Temple and Lodge Finances to which shall be referred all matters pertaining to financial conditions of lodges and present or future Masonic temples and other meeting places. Said Committee shall be empowered to investigate all matters referred to it and report thereon to the Grand Master with such recommendations as it shall deem advisable.

Proposed Legislation:

A Committee on Temple and Lodge Finances which shall, as directed by the Grand Master or as requested by the Grand Lodge Trustees or any lodge, educate and assist Lodges in matters pertaining to the acquisition, sale, or maintenance of lodge buildings and other real property; the tools, systems, and methods of financial recordkeeping, controls, and reporting to its members and the Grand Lodge, and the investment of the lodge's financial assets. In so doing, the Committee will coordinate with the Audit, State of the Craft, and other committees and may, with the approval of the Grand Lodge Trustees, coordinate with accountants, tax preparation firms, and such other professionals as the Grand Lodge Trustees shall have retained on behalf of the Grand Lodge. Said Committee shall be empowered to investigate all matters referred to it and report thereon to the Grand Master with such recommendations as it shall deem advisable.

Explanatory Notes:

In prior years, lodges were concerned with building and maintaining Masonic Temples. Lodge finances were generally a simple checking account, bank certificates of deposit, and possibly a handful of paper stock shares in a lodge safe. Recordkeeping and reporting was a handwritten check register and a straightforward paper spreadsheet. Today, buildings are deteriorating and often sold. Many lodges invest in registered funds or individual securities through brokerage accounts, keep records through various computer systems, pay utilities and other vendors electronically, and are required by law to provide complicated information for tax reporting. A significant number of lodges have requested assistance in correctly handling these matters. This change reflects how the activities of this committee have evolved over the past several years to meet these needs.

Proposed by:

Richard F. Schmidt Lodge: Fulton-Friendship No. 102, Ronald A. Murad
Lodge: Atlas Pythagoras No. 10, Leonard J. Rust Lodge: Mantua No. 95
Roy G. Simpadian Lodge: Fidelity No. 113

TITLE FOUR, ARTICLE IX, Section 9, Part 9 e and f

Current Legislation:

- e) One Dollar (\$1.00) for the ongoing support of New Jersey DeMolay.
- f) One Dollar (\$1.00) for the ongoing support of New Jersey Rainbow.

Proposed Legislation:

- e) One Dollar *and Fifty Cents (\$1.50)* for the ongoing support of New Jersey DeMolay.
- f) One Dollar *and Fifty Cents (\$1.50)* for the ongoing support of New Jersey Rainbow.

Interpretive Statement:

Our youth Masonic Youth groups are tomorrow's leaders and need our continued support. This minor increase will significantly assist their efforts.

Proposed by:

Leonard Vander Horn PM, Clifton Lodge No. 203

TITLE FOUR, ARTICLE VII. Subordinate Lodges, Section 7. Mergers & Liquidations

Current Legislation:

None.

Proposed Legislation:

Part 19. Petition for Surrendering Warrant

Part 20. Reading of Petition for Surrender

Part 21. Issuance of Summons

Part 22. Meeting on Return Date of Summons: Vote

Part 23. Warrant Surrender Certificate

Part 24. Approval by Grand Lodge; Surrender of Warrant

Part 25. Surrender of Property, Former Members

Part 19. A Petition for the Surrendering of a Warrant.

If it is proposed to surrender the Warrant of the Lodge, the procedure herein provided shall be instituted when at least 10% of the membership of any such Lodge requests the Master of that Lodge to present the proposal.

Part 20. Reading of Petition; for Surrender. At the first regular communication of the Lodge following the receipt of such written request the Secretary shall read the request to the lodge.

Part 21. Issuance of Summons. The Master shall cause summonses to be issued to each member of the Lodge stating that a proposal has been received to surrender the Warrant of the Lodge and stating the date of the regular communication at which time action shall be taken. Said summonses shall be mailed in sealed envelopes bearing the words "Important Notice" in the lower left-hand corner and shall be mailed at least 15 days before the date on which action is to be taken. The date of the regular communication upon which action is to be taken shall not be less than 60 days and not more than 90 days after the date of the filing of the report with the Secretary.

Part 22. Meeting on Return Date of Summons: Vote.

The Petition to Surrender the Warrant shall be read at the regular communication of the Lodge at which action is scheduled, and action upon the proposition shall not be postponed. A vote by written ballot shall be taken to approve the surrender of the Warrant. An affirmative vote of three-fourths or more of the members present shall be required to adopt the proposal to surrender the Warrant.

Part 23. Surrender Certificate. When any Lodges have

voted to surrender its Warrant, each such Lodge shall make a certificate which shall be addressed to the Grand Master shall be signed by the Worshipful Master and Secretary of the Lodge, shall bear the seal of the Lodge, and shall be delivered to the Grand Master. Each such certificate shall set forth:

- a) The name and number of the said Lodge.
- b) The place where the Lodge meets.
- c) The number of members of the said Lodge who signed the request to present the proposal and the date on which it was presented to the Master.

- d) The number of members of the said Lodge when the request was presented to him.
- e) A copy of the summons given to the members of the Lodge and the date on which it was mailed.
- f) The date when action was taken.
- g) The number of members of the Lodge who were present when the vote was taken, the number of members voting in favor of the proposal and the number of members voting against it.
- h) A list of the entire membership, with a record of the standing of each member.

Part 24. Approval by Grand Lodge; Surrender of Warrant. At the next Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge the Grand Master shall advise the Grand Lodge of the proposed Warrant surrender, shall state his recommendation with respect thereto and shall present the proposal to the Grand Lodge for its action. If the Grand Lodge shall approve the surrender, the warrant the Lodge shall forthwith be delivered to the Grand Secretary.

Part 25. Surrender of Property; Former Members. Upon the demise of any Lodge within this jurisdiction, the last Secretary and Treasurer of said Lodge shall, within one month thereafter, surrender to the Grand Secretary all the books, papers, jewels, funds, and furniture of the Lodge so demised; nor shall any former member of said demised Lodge in arrears for dues be affiliated with any other Lodge until he shall have paid such arrears to the Grand Secretary.

a) Disposition of Lodge Assets Following the Surrender of Warrant. In the event that the warrant of a Lodge is permanently arrested, or a Lodge surrenders its' warrant voluntarily and permanently, then the provisions of this part shall govern the disposition of the assets of the Lodge, which shall be referred to as the dissolved Lodge. The dissolved Lodge's affairs will be administered by the Grand Lodge Trustees. The assets of the dissolved Lodge, after payment of any obligations outstanding, shall be distributed to the Lodges in the State of New Jersey with which members of the dissolved Lodge shall affiliate. The members of the dissolved Lodge shall notify the Grand Lodge of their succeeding membership no more than six months following the arrest or surrender of the dissolved lodge's warrant.

Interpretive Statement:

The Surrendering of a Warrant is an act of the individual Lodge and perhaps the hardest thing the membership of a Lodge will ever have to do. There is, however, no formal procedure for Surrendering the Warrant of a Lodge in the Constitution and Laws. The addition of the amendments above would give direction to those Lodges who have elected to surrender their Warrant.

Proposed by:

Walter A. Siri, Jr., PM, Eclipse Lodge No. 6, Gordon M. Fleming, PM,
Madison Lodge No. 93, Thomas W. Murphy, PM, Kittatinny Lodge No. 164,
Kenneth E. Wasiewicz, PM Clifton Lodge No. 203

TITLE FOUR, ARTICLE VII. Subordinate Lodges, Section 7. Mergers & Liquidations

Current Legislation:

Part 17. Surrender of Property; Former Members. Upon the demise of any lodge within this jurisdiction, the last Secretary and Treasurer of said lodge shall, within one month thereafter, surrender to the Grand Secretary all the books, papers, jewels, funds, and furniture of the lodge so demised, nor shall any former member of said demised lodge in arrears for dues be affiliated with any other lodge until he shall have paid such arrears to the Grand Secretary.

a) Disposition of Lodge Assets Following Arrest or Surrender of Warrant. In the event that the warrant of a lodge is permanently arrested or a lodge surrenders its' warrant voluntarily and permanently, then the provisions of this part shall govern the disposition of the assets of the lodge, which shall be referred to as the dissolved lodge. The dissolved Lodge's affairs will be administered by the Grand Lodge Trustees. The assets of the dissolved lodge, after payment of any obligations outstanding, shall be distributed to the lodges in the State of New Jersey which members of the dissolved lodge shall affiliate with. The members of the dissolved lodge shall notify the Grand Lodge of their succeeding membership no more than six months following the arrest or surrender of the dissolved lodge's warrant.

Proposed Legislation:

Part 17. Surrender of Property, Former Members. Upon the demise of any lodge within this jurisdiction, the last Secretary and Treasurer of said lodge shall, within one month thereafter, surrender to the Grand Secretary all the books, papers, jewels, funds, and furniture of the lodge so demised, nor shall any former member of said demised lodge in arrears for dues be affiliated with any other lodge until he shall have paid such arrears to the Grand Secretary.

a) Disposition of Lodge Assets Following Arrest of Warrant. In the event that the warrant of a lodge is permanently arrested, then the provisions of this part shall govern the disposition of the assets of the lodge, which shall be referred to as the dissolved lodge. The dissolved Lodge's affairs will be administered by the Grand Lodge Trustees. The assets of the dissolved lodge, after payment of any obligations outstanding, shall be distributed to the lodges in the State of New Jersey with which members of the dissolved lodge shall affiliate. The members of the dissolved lodge shall notify the Grand Lodge of their succeeding membership no more than six months following the arrest or surrender of the dissolved lodge's warrant.

Interpretive Statement:

This is a housekeeping change, contingent on the approval of the preceding proposal. It simply removes the words: "or a lodge surrenders its warrant voluntarily and permanently" from section and corrects the verbiage from "which the members of the dissolved lodge shall affiliate with" to "with which the members of the dissolved lodge shall affiliate."

Proposed by:

Walter A. Siri, Jr., PM, Eclipse Lodge No. 67, Gordon M. Fleming, PM, Madison Lodge No. 93, Thomas W. Murphy, PM, Kittatinny Lodge No. 164, Kenneth E. Wasiewicz, PM Clifton Lodge No. 203

TITLE FOUR, ARTICLE IX. Membership Section 1. Candidates, Petitions, Initiation & Advancement

Current Legislation:

Part 4. Committee of Investigation. A petition for initiation or restoration after 5 years shall be referred to a Committee of Investigation which shall make diligent inquiry as to the character of the petitioner and report upon the same to the lodge at a regular communication. No report shall be received nor a ballot taken upon a petition for initiation or restoration after 5 years in less than 4 weeks subsequent to the date of the reception of the petition, and unless there be seven members present; nor, except by special dispensation, shall any candidate be advanced until four weeks have elapsed after receiving a degree, and he has exhibited suitable proficiency therein in open lodge. [Gen. Reg. Paragraph 4 above in part, repeated here for reference purposes]

Proposed Legislation:

Part 4. Committee of Investigation. A petition for initiation or restoration after 5 years shall be referred to a Committee of Investigation which shall make diligent inquiry as to the character of the petitioner and report upon the same to the lodge at a regular communication.

4A. In addition, a background check will include the candidate submitting to having his social media content vetted by agreeing to disclose in writing all of his presence on major platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc., for the past 24 months. His actions on the various Social Media outlets should reflect the highest standards of morality and integrity he would practice within the Lodge.

Any red flags, such as:

- *Racist, sexist, or otherwise bigoted content*
- *Unlawful activity (i.e., drug use or underage drinking)*
- *Sexually explicit content, and*
- *Aggressive or violent behavior such as trolling. Should constitute an immediate rejection from the Worshipful Master of the said candidate's application and an inability to apply for 24 months to any lodge in New Jersey.*

4B. No report shall be received nor a ballot taken upon a petition for initiation or restoration after 5 years in less than 4 weeks after the date of the reception of the petition, and unless there be seven members present; nor, except by special dispensation, shall any candidate be advanced until four weeks have elapsed after receiving a degree, and he has exhibited suitable proficiency therein in open lodge.

Proposed by:

Patrick J. Glover, PM -Eclipse Lodge No. 67

TITLE FOUR, ARTICLE IX. Membership Section 1. Candidates, Petitions, Initiation & Advancement

Current Legislation:

Part 12. Candidate Advancement.

- a) Advancement Defined. Advancement denotes the conferring of a degree after the first has been conferred. This is subject to the provisions of the 4th Gen. Reg. See also 3rd Gen. Reg.
- b) Examination. The examination of a candidate as to his proficiency in any of the three degrees must be held in a tyled lodge and only while the lodge is at labor on the degree in which he is to be examined.
- c) No Vote for Advancement. No vote or ballot shall be taken for the advancement of a candidate except in such cases as the Grand Lodge provides.

Proposed Legislation:

Part 12. Candidate Advancement.

- a) Advancement Defined. Advancement denotes the conferring of a degree after the first has been conferred. This is subject to the provisions of the 4th Gen. Reg. See also 3rd Gen. Reg.
- b) Examination. The examination of a candidate as to his proficiency in any of the three degrees must be held in a tyled lodge and only while the lodge is at labor on the degree in which he is to be examined. *A candidate for advancement may demonstrate his proficiency in any of the three degrees, though either the long form or short form version of the examination, at the discretion of the Worshipful Master, both forms of which will be included in the ritual cipher book.*
- c) No Vote for Advancement. No vote or ballot shall be taken for the advancement of a candidate except in such cases as the Grand Lodge provides.

Interpretive Statement:

The long-form examination has proven overwhelming for many new Masons since being reinstated in 2023 as the standard requirement to demonstrate proficiency. It has caused great frustration and lengthy delays in the advancement process for new brothers. While a slowing down of the process is not necessarily a bad thing in all cases, it has also resulted in lodge's losing new brothers who give up on the process and fail to advance. Under this legislation, all new brothers would do the short form proficiency, at minimum, to advance to the next degree. The decision of long-form vs. short-form would be made at the Blue Lodge level, where the Worshipful Master and his officers are in the best position to make this determination as it relates to their candidates. Lodges may opt to have their new brothers do the long form if that is their tradition. Some new brothers are certainly capable of learning the long-form proficiency, but many are not. The short-form version is sufficient to show proficiency and was the standard for ten recent years with no negative impact on the fraternity. In fact, many current, active brothers might not be members of the fraternity today if long-form rather than short-form was the requirement they needed to meet.

The short-form proficiency requires work and must be presented in an open lodge in front of the brethren. It allows the new brother to develop a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment rather than frustration and builds a foundation and desire to do more advanced ritual work in the future. The short

form strikes a balance while not overwhelming new Masons. Those new brothers who have an aptitude for ritual can learn all of the elements of long-form and in more time. Those who do not can still learn what is required in the short-form version and become productive members of the fraternity, allowing them to share other gifts and talents and grow as men and Masons. Mandatory long-form proficiency is not something we should be losing our new brothers over, but it seems we should be. The long-form proficiency has been counterproductive to recent advancements that have been made in the jurisdiction in attracting, initiating, and retaining new brothers. We need to give good men and new Masons the best possibility of success.

Proposed by:

Robert Gaydosh PM, - Raritan Valley Lodge No. 4

TITLE FOUR, ARTICLE III. Communications and Elections, Section 1. Annual Communication of Grand Lodge

Current Legislation:

Part 1. Date and Time of Annual Communication. The Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge shall be held at 9:00 AM on up to two consecutive days in November, each year, but shall not conflict with Thanksgiving. This stated communication shall be subject, nevertheless, to be changed as to time and date of meeting by a majority vote of the Grand Lodge at its Annual or emergent Communication provided such change shall not cause conflict with any national or religious holidays.

Proposed Legislation:

Part 1. Date and Time of Annual Communications. The Annual Communications of the Grand Lodge shall be held at 9:00 AM *on a Saturday in May, except Memorial Day Weekend, and* on up to two consecutive days in November, each year, but shall not conflict with Thanksgiving. These stated communications shall be subject, nevertheless, to be changed as to time and date of meeting by a majority vote of the Grand Lodge at its Annual or emergent Communication provided such change shall not cause conflict with any national or religious holidays.

TITLE FOUR, ARTICLE III. Communications and Elections, Section 3. Voting and Elections in the Grand Lodge

Current Legislation:

Part 1. Nominations. At a convenient time in the morning of each day of the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge, the Grand Secretary shall read all nominations for the information of the Grand Lodge.

a) Content of Nominations. Nominations shall give the name of the nominee, his lodge, district number, and title of office for which nominated and shall bear the written assent of the brother nominated.

b) Withdrawal of Nominations. Any nominations may be withdrawn in writing by the nominee not later than October 31st.

c) Time for Filing. Nominations shall be filed in the Office of the Grand Secretary on or before June 30 of each year preceding the time of holding of the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge. The Grand Secretary shall arrange alphabetically the names of the nominees of each office, and identified by Lodge and District, which shall be published in the official publication prior to the Annual Communication.

d) Delayed Nominations. Delayed nominations may be filed with the Grand Secretary after June 30, but no later than July 31, provided, however, such nominations bear the signature, Lodge number, District number and post office address of at least one member of the Grand Lodge from at least five Masonic Districts and the written assent of the nominee.

Proposed Legislation:

Section 3. Voting and Elections in the Grand Lodge

Part 1. Nominations. At a convenient time in the morning of each day of the May Annual Communication of Grand Lodge, the Grand Secretary shall read all nominations for the information of the Grand Lodge.

a) Content of Nominations. Nominations shall give the name of the nominee, his lodge, district number, and title of office for which nominated and shall bear the written assent of the brother nominated.

b) Withdrawal of Nominations. Any nominations may be withdrawn in writing by the nominee not later than *two weeks before the May Annual Communication*.

c) Time for Filing. Nominations shall be filed in the Office of the Grand Secretary on or before *November 30* of each year preceding the time of holding of the *May Annual Communication* of the Grand Lodge. The Grand Secretary shall arrange alphabetically the names of the nominees of each office, and identified by Lodge and District, which shall be published in the official publication prior to the Annual Communication.

d) Delayed Nominations. Delayed nominations may be filed with the Grand Secretary after *November 30*, but no later than *December 31*, provided, however, such nominations bear the signature, Lodge number, District number and post office address of at least one member of the Grand Lodge from at least five Masonic Districts and the written assent of the nominee.

TITLE FOUR, ARTICLE IV. Grand Lodge Meetings and Elections, Section 1. Meetings

Current Legislation:

Part 1. Annual Communication. The Grand Lodge shall meet statedly once a year, for the communication of all the lodges, and may have occasional communications, as business may require, at such times and places as Grand Master shall appoint.

Proposed Legislation:

Part 1. Annual Communication. The Grand Lodge shall meet statedly *twice a year, on a Saturday in May and two consecutive days in November, for the communication of all the lodges*, and may have occasional communications, as business may require, at such times and places as Grand Master shall appoint. *Installation of Grand Lodge officers is to be held at the November communication.*

TITLE SIX. By-Laws of the Masonic Charity Foundation

Current Legislation:

ARTICLE II – Meetings

Section 1. The annual meeting of members for the election of trustees and such other business as may come before the meeting, shall be held in April of each year, concurrently with the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge. The exact dates shall be made known and printed in Grand Lodge mailings, the Freemason and via the Internet. Such notice to be made known, no less than ten, or more than sixty days prior to the meeting. In no case however, shall any date conflict with Passover or Maundy Thursday.

Section 2. The annual meeting of the members shall be held upon not less than ten nor more than sixty days' written notice by mail, of the time, place and purposes of the meeting at the same place as the Grand Lodge shall be holding its Annual Communication.

ARTICLE III - TRUSTEES

Section 11. Nominations shall be filed in the office of the Secretary of this corporation at its registered office on or before December 31st of each year, proceeding the time of holding the annual meeting. The Secretary shall cause the names of the nominees for trustee, for each designated term, arranged alphabetically thereunder and identified only by Lodge and District, to be published in the notice of the annual meeting of this corporation. Delayed nominations may be filed with the Secretary of this corporation after December 31 but no later than January 31; provided, however, such nominations bear the signature, Lodge number, District number and post-office address of at least one member of the Grand Lodge from at least five Masonic Districts and the written assent of the nominee.

Proposed Legislation:

ARTICLE II - MEETINGS

Section 1. The annual meeting of members for the election of trustees and such other business as may come before the meeting, shall be held in *May* of each year, concurrently with the *May* Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge. The exact dates shall be made known and printed in Grand Lodge mailings, The Freemason and via the Internet. Such notice to be made known, no less than ten, or more than sixty days prior to the meeting.

Section 2. The annual meeting of the members shall be held upon not less than ten nor more than sixty days' written notice by mail, of the time, place and purposes of the meeting at the same place as the Grand Lodge shall be holding its Annual Communication.

ARTICLE III - TRUSTEES

Section 11. Nominations shall be filed in the office of the Secretary of this corporation at its registered office on or before *November 30* of each year, proceeding the time of holding the annual meeting. The Secretary shall cause the names of the nominees for trustee, for each designated term, arranged alphabetically thereunder and identified only by Lodge and District, to be published in the notice of the annual meeting of this corporation. Delayed nominations may be filed with the Secretary of this corporation after *November 30* but no later than *December 31*; provided, however, such nominations bear the signature, Lodge number, District number and post-office address of at least one member of the Grand Lodge from at least five Masonic Districts and the written assent of the nominee.

Interpretive Statement:

The purpose for separating the Grand Lodge elections and installation is to allow the newly elected Junior Grand Warden, Historic Trenton Masonic Temple Trustees, Grand Lodge Trustees and Masonic Charity Foundation Trustees to become oriented to their respective duties and responsibilities and receive input from other Elected Officers and board members before they are installed and have to make decisions affecting the future of the Craft. The newly elected Junior Grand Warden and board members would be permitted to sit in on the meetings of the boards to which they have been elected, offer opinions and participate in discussions, but not have a vote until they are installed. This model is in place and has been successfully used in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and other Jurisdictions.

Proposed by:

Bruce Golway PM, Vineland Lodge No. 69

TITLE FOUR, ARTICLE XII. Regalia & Tokens, Section 1. Regalia

Current Legislation:

Part 1. Regalia of the Grand Master

a) Grand Masters Apron. Aprons for the Grand Master and for the Past Grand Masters shall be of plain white lambskin, lined with purple silk, 14 inches by 16 inches in size, with a border of purple silk 2 inches in width, which purple border shall be edged on each side with a ½ inch gold braid, flaps to be 5 inches in depth with a similar border, corners to be square, with a sunburst in the center of the apron. The Sunburst shall be one and three-quarter inch in diameter, with the center located five and one half up from the bottom edge of the apron and centered equal distance from the right and left side, made of gold lame padded and with a braided gold metallic thread border; two eyes having black pupil on a white background; eyebrows, mouth, outline of eyes, nose, and mouth embroidered in gold metallic thread; total of seventy two gold metallic thread rays with ends securely fastened to plain broadcloth under the white lambskin; and starting at twelve o'clock, a one and three-eighth inch long gold metallic thread over eleven one-eighth gold sequin equally spaced, a one and one-eighth inch long gold metallic thread over seven one-eighth inch gold metallic thread. This combination of the four rays are repeated seventeen times clockwise, thus completing the circle around the sunburst. Be it resolved that as a symbol of the esteem a Brother who has served this Grand Lodge as its Most Worshipful Grand Master, shall, at the completion of his tenure, be presented with a "Past Grand Master's Jewel". Such jewel shall conform in totality to the specifications dated the 13th day of December 2000 on file in the Office of the Grand Secretary. The cost of any deviations from these specifications shall be borne by the person requesting the deviations.

b) Grand Masters Jewel. The jewel of the Past Grand Master shall be cast using the molds supplied for that purpose by the Grand Secretary. The body of the jewel shall consist of a ruler and frame which shall be of 14k white gold. The laurel shall be 14k green gold and riveted into the channel. The compasses and bottom border shall be of white gold and feature 36 pave' set diamonds. The bead set channel (Quadrant) shall be set with 12 full cut diamonds, approximately 10/100 ct. each. Each side of the "V" design (Compasses) shall be set with 12 diamonds (5 full cut and 7 single cut) with an approximate total weight of 1.00 ct. total diamond weight shall be 2.20 ct. of VS to SS I clarity and FG color range. At the top of the compasses shall be a bezel set .50 ct. round brilliant cut diamond of VS2 clarity and H color grade. The "sunburst" design shall be of 14k yellow gold. The center of the sunburst shall feature shall be a bezel set diamond, which shall be of round cut brilliant of 1.09 to 1.11 ct. weight of VS2 clarity and H color grade (G.I.A. Certified). On the reverse side shall be a round plate attached which may be engraved with the recipient's data. This jewel shall be suspended from a curb link sterling silver chain to fit the recipient and suspend the jewel to mid chest level, approximately 36 inches more or less as required, ending with a ¾ inch octagonal detail bearing the seal of the Grand Lodge of New Jersey.

Proposed Legislation:

Section 1. Regalia

Part 1. Regalia of the Grand Master

a) Grand Masters Apron. Aprons for the Grand Master and for the Past Grand Masters shall be of plain white lambskin, lined with purple silk, 14 inches by 16 inches in size, with a border of purple silk 2 inches in width, which purple border shall be edged on each side with a ½ inch gold braid, flaps to be 5 inches in depth with a similar border, corners to be square, with a sunburst in the center of the apron. The Sunburst shall be one and three-quarter inch in diameter with the center located five and one half up from the bottom edge of the apron and centered equal distance from the right and left side, made of

gold lame padded and with a braided gold metallic thread border; two eyes having black pupil on a white background; eyebrows, mouth, outline of eyes, nose and mouth embroidered in gold metallic thread; total of seventy two gold metallic thread rays with ends securely fastened to plain broadcloth under the white lambskin; and starting at twelve o'clock, a one and three-eighth inch long gold metallic thread over eleven one-eighth gold sequin equally spaced, a one and one-eighth inch long gold metallic thread over seven one-eighth inch gold metallic thread. This combination of the four rays are repeated seventeen times clockwise, thus completing the circle around the sunburst.

b) Grand Masters Jewel. *Be it resolved that as a symbol of esteem a Brother who has served this Grand Lodge as its Most Worshipful Grand Master shall, at the completion of his tenure, be presented with a "Past Grand Master's jewel". Such jewel shall conform in totality to the specifications dated the 13th day of December 2000 on file in the Office of the Grand Secretary. The cost of any deviations from these specifications all be borne by the person requesting the deviations.* The jewel of the Past Grand Master shall be cast using the molds supplied for that purpose by the Grand Secretary. The body of the jewel shall consist of a ruler and frame which shall be of 14k white gold. The laurel shall be 14k green gold and riveted into the channel. The compasses and bottom border shall be of white gold and feature 36 pave' set diamonds. The bead set channel (Quadrant) shall be set with 12 full cut diamonds, approximately 10/100 ct. each. Each side of the "V" design (Compasses) shall be set with 12 diamonds (5 full cut and 7 single cut) with an approximate total weight of 1.00 ct. total diamond weight shall be 2.20 ct. of VS to SS 1 clarity and FG color range. At the top of the compasses shall be a bezel set .50 ct. round brilliant cut diamond of VS2 clarity and H color grade. The "sunburst" design shall be of 14k yellow gold. The center of the sunburst shall feature shall be a bezel set diamond, which shall be of round cut brilliant of 1.09 to 1.11 ct. weight of VS2 clarity and H color grade (G.I.A. Certified). On the reverse side shall be a round plate attached which may be engraved with the recipient's data. This jewel shall be suspended from a curb link sterling silver chain to fit the recipient and suspend the jewel to mid chest level, approximately 36 inches more or less as required, ending with a ¾ inch octagonal detail bearing the seal of the Grand Lodge of New Jersey.

Interpretive Statement:

This is simply a housekeeping function to move a statement regarding the Past Grand Master's Jewel from subsection (a) describing the specifications for the Grand Master's Apron to subsection describing the specifications for the Grand Master's Jewel where it properly belongs.

Proposed by:

Robert V. Monacelli PM - Clifton Lodge No. 203

TITLE FOUR, ARTICLE XII. Section 1 Regalia

New Parts

Part C. Any Past Grand Master's Jewel presented after November 7, 2024 shall be subject to a lifetime loan agreement in the form approved by the Grand Lodge Trustees. The loan agreement shall confer on the receiving Past Grand Master custody of and fiduciary responsibility for the jewel and chain, and the right to wear it at all appropriate Masonic activities for the remainder of his natural life. Upon the death of the Past Grand Master, upon the effective date of any other cessation of membership in the Grand Lodge of New Jersey, or such earlier date as he may designate, the jewel and chain will be returned to Grand Lodge in the same condition as received, normal wear and tear excepted, and with all stones intact. Any material exception to this requirement will create a lien in the amount of the replacement cost for restoring the jewel and chain to its original condition placed upon the Past Grand Master or his estate, as the case may be. All jewels on loan shall remain the property of Grand Lodge and Grand Lodge will obtain appropriate insurance covering loss or damage with the value established by an independent, official appraisal, as may be available to protect its interest, with the borrower as additional insured.

Part D. For any Past Grand Master's jewel presented after November 7, 2024, any diamond set in the jewel may be either a natural mined diamond or a manufactured "laboratory" diamond of equivalent quality, at the discretion of the Grand Lodge Trustees. The trustees shall base their decision on comparable cost, including the net cost or benefit of removing one stone and replacing it with another.

Interpretative Statement:

The language of Part a) of this section says the jewel, "as a symbol of the esteem a Brother who has served this Grand Lodge as its Most Worshipful Grand Master, shall, at the completion of his tenure, be presented with a "Past Grand Master's Jewel." Heretofore, the jewel has become the property of the recipient with no related income tax obligation. Upon death, Grand Lodge typically offers to repurchase the jewel at its appraised value, which since 2018 has been its value in the resale market. Occasionally, the jewel, recognized as property belonging to the Past Grand Master's estate, has been resold to Grand Lodge with the primary diamond(s) removed and replaced with man-made diamonds of lesser value. In some cases, some Past Grand Master's estates have declined to sell the item back. And at other times, no previously presented jewel has been available, requiring Grand Lodge to order a new jewel to be manufactured. The complexity and increasing cost of this process has imposed a financial burden on the Grand Lodge budget and the declining membership who funds it. Additionally, the Federal tax requirements of the transactions have been deemed a "gray area" with possible consequences on both the Grand Lodge and the recipients. This legislation will eliminate any tax risk and, as the change is implemented, reduce the cost of providing this amenity by several thousand dollars each year.

Laboratory or manufactured diamonds today are chemically equivalent to and of equal and often better visual quality as mined or natural diamonds but costing far less. Both are "real". Natural diamonds are advertised and marketed as having higher emotional value, and thus might have higher investment value. With Grand Lodge retaining ownership of Past Grand Masters jewels, higher resale prices are not needed. Thus, permitting replacement diamonds to be laboratory-grown will provide additional savings.

Proposed by:

Ronald A Murad PM, Atlas Pythagoras No. 10, Richard F. Schmidt PM, Fulton Friendship No. 102, Larry Alcime PM, Alpha No. 116, Kenneth F. Carpenter, Jr PM. Collingswood Cloud No. 101, George A. Olsen PM, Jr. Genesis No. 88

TITLE FOUR. Grand Lodge By-Laws, Article IX. Membership, Section 9. Fees, Dues & Assessments, Part 9, Annual Membership Assessment, Subsection A.

Current Legislation:

- a) Six dollars (\$6.00) for the Masonic Charity Foundation of New Jersey.
- e) Fee to Masonic Home. Each initiate, in addition to all other fees or charges, each affiliate from a foreign jurisdiction, and each new Dual member from a foreign jurisdiction shall be required to pay the sum of twenty-five dollars to be applied to the use of the Masonic Home as directed by this Grand Lodge.

Proposed Legislation:

- a) Six dollars (\$6.00) *that was assessed annually for the Masonic Charity Foundation of New Jersey, now to be redirected to the Grand Lodge Permanent Fund, for the period of three (3) years, at which time the membership can re-access whether to keep the money going to the Grand Lodge Permanent Fund or revert back to the Masonic Charity Fund.*
- e) Fee to Masonic Home. Each initiate, in addition to all other fees or charges, each affiliate from a foreign jurisdiction and each new Dual member from a foreign jurisdiction shall be required to pay the sum of twenty-five dollars as directed by Grand Lodge, *should be redirected to the Grand Lodge Permanent Fund, for the period of three (3) years, at which time the membership can re-access whether to keep the money going to the Grand Lodge Permanent Fund or revert back to the Masonic Charity Fund.*

Interpretative Statement:

This proposed Legislation would not add any additional money to our Annual Assessments. I am submitting this Legislation due to the current unfortunate financial situation of our Masonic Charity Foundation, which is facing 82 Million dollars in debt. This (\$6.00) times approximately 12,284 members (\$73,704) is currently flying out the window, good hard earned money chasing bad debt that is unattainable. This (\$6.00) is the balance of the previously (\$18.00) assessment, of which (\$12.00) was voted in 2020 by the Membership to redirect to the Grand Lodge. That redirection of funds has made it possible for the Grand Lodge to sustain and maintain Grand Lodge operations without any recent increase of assessments to the Membership. The Grand Lodge Permanent Fund of \$5.2 million dollars supplements our Grand Lodge budget on average of (\$200,000) annually from its Interest Earnings. This additional (\$73,704) a year contribution to the Grand Lodge Permanent Fund would help grow the fund and help increase the potential interest earnings to help offset future contributions to the Annual Budget, hopefully maintaining our current assessments. By no means am I dismissing the importance of our Masonic Charity Foundation and the great work it does, but at this time, I would rather see this money go to a better resource to help aid and assist our Fraternity. All other subsections of Title Four, Article IX, Section 9, Part 9. It would remain the same.

This proposed legislation would not change the amount of this assessment. Only redirecting it for a three (3) year period, at which time it will be re-accessed by the membership. It would then be my recommendation if the Masonic Charity Foundation has re-aligned itself and becomes financially independent from our current debt, that the assessment revert back to the Masonic Charity Foundation.

Proposed by:

Gregory J. Scott PM, Peninsula Lodge #99

RESOLUTION
**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE BOARD OF
TRUSTEES OF THE MASONIC
CHARITY FOUNDATION OF NEW JERSEY TO
AMEND BY LAWS AND TO TRANSFER
CERTAIN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES RELATING TO
THE OPERATION OF THE
MASONIC VILLAGE AT BURLINGTON**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Title Four, Article VI, Sections 1 and 2, and Title Six, By-Laws of the Masonic Charity Foundation of New Jersey (“MCFNJ”), the governance and control of the MCFNJ, including the entire jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to the care, conduct, control, supervision and management of the Masonic Home (now known as the “Masonic Village at Burlington”) has been entrusted to the Board of Trustees of the MCFNJ, subject to the direction of the Grand Lodge; and,

WHEREAS, over the course of the 125+ years of the operation of the former Masonic Home and the Masonic Village at Burlington, the number of Masons and relatives of Masons who benefit from the Masonic Village at Burlington, as residents, has fallen from 100% to approximately 15%; and,

WHEREAS, approximately 85% of the residents at the Masonic Village at Burlington have no Masonic Affiliation and,

WHEREAS, the majority of the assets, gifts, devises and endowments from Master Masons and the relatives of Master Masons, are currently being utilized, and consumed, for the ongoing support of the Masonic Village at Burlington, when the vast majority of the beneficiaries of those gifts and assets are no longer Masons or relatives of Masons; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the MCFNJ have determined that it is in the best interests of the MCFNJ, and New Jersey Freemasonry, to separate the Masonic Village at Burlington, and the assets and liabilities relating to that CCRC operation, from the other charitable endeavors of the MCFNJ, to better serve needy Masons, their wives, widows, sons, daughters, relatives and our communities, and to endeavor to divest itself of any ongoing participation in the business of healthcare, to focus on other charitable endeavors for the benefit of Masons and their families; and,

WHEREAS, the By-Laws of the MCFNJ provide that those By-Laws may not be altered, amended or repealed by the Board of Trustees, but require a vote of the Members at a meeting called for the purpose of voting on amendments; and,

WHEREAS, the Certificate of Incorporation of the MCFNJ provides that any action of the MCFNJ, outside of the actions authorized by the By-Laws and the New Jersey Nonprofit Corporations Act, require a vote of the Members at a meeting called for that purpose,

NOW, THEREFORE, it is this day of November 2024,

RESOLVED as follows:

1. That Article XI of the By-Laws of the MCFNJ is hereby amended to permit the Board of Trustees to alter, amend, or repeal any of the By-Laws of the MCFNJ as they shall deem necessary to effectuate the purposes of this Resolution and

2. The Board of Trustees of the MCFNJ is hereby authorized to exercise their discretion, in the best interests of the MCFNJ and New Jersey Freemasonry, to separate the assets and liabilities of the Masonic Village at Burlington, previously known as the Masonic Home, from the other charitable endeavors of the MCFNJ; and

3. The Board of Trustees of the MCFNJ is hereby authorized to divest the MCFNJ of those assets and liabilities relating to the CCRC known as the Masonic Village at Burlington and to terminate further involvement in the business of healthcare in the manner in which that Board, in its sole discretion, shall deem most appropriate and advantageous to the MCFNJ, and to refocus the attention and activities of the MCFNJ to the other charitable activities and endeavors of the MCFNJ, for the benefit of Masons, relatives of Masons, and the communities served by the Masonic fraternity; and,

4. The Board of Trustees of the MCFNJ is hereby authorized to take such action and to execute any agreements, contracts, and any related documents required to effectuate the purposes of this resolution and to divest the MCFNJ of any ongoing responsibility for, or involvement in, the CCRC known as the Masonic Village at Burlington.

This RESOLUTION is adopted this day of November 2024, by a majority vote of the members present at the meeting called for this purpose.

ATTEST:

Roger B. Quintana, PGM, Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of F&AM of NJ

Robert J. Sheridan, PGM, Secretary, Masonic Charity Foundation of NJ