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# USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

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## ELECTION GUIDELINES

(As Amended Through 09/18/04)

### I. Purpose

The purpose of the Election Operating Guidelines ("EOG") is to list and maintain in one place all of the election policies and procedures currently in existence in United States Masters Swimming, Inc. ("USMS"). EOG will be updated by the Zone Committee at the annual meeting ("Meeting") of the House of Delegates ("HOD") in the year prior to an election. Copies will be made available to any USMS member through the National Office upon request.

### II. General Information

- A. Pursuant to Article 505.2.1 of the USMS Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition, members of the USMS House of Delegates shall hold an election ("Election") of officers bi-annually in odd-numbered years.
- B. Pursuant to Article 505.2.2 of the USMS Code of Regulations and Rules of Competition, members of the USMS House of Delegates shall hold an election ("Election") for the non-Executive Committee positions on the Board of Directors bi-annually in odd-numbered years.
- C. An Election Committee shall be formed at the annual Board of Directors ("BOD") meeting in the year prior to the Election year, and shall:
  1. Be constituted as an Ad Hoc Committee.
  2. Be comprised of
    - a. all members of the Zone Committee neither seeking election, nor with relatives seeking such election, and
    - b. USMS BOD members neither seeking re-election, nor with relatives seeking election as needed to ensure that each Zone is equally represented.
  3. Evaluate each nominee and prepare a list of candidates for nomination or election (the "Slate").
- D Exchange of documents between the Election Committee and other participants in the process shall be done by electronic media.
- E. Provisions of these guidelines may be amended or suspended by the Zone Committee in an Election year to allow for variations caused by uncontested elections, changes in expected HOD Meeting schedules, or any other circumstance that may interfere with adherence to all the guidelines set forth herein. Any such amendment or suspension must be confirmed by a 2/3 vote of the BOD.

### III. Publications

- A. A request for nominations for the USMS officer positions and for nominations for the remaining non-Executive Committee positions on the BOD shall be announced at the HOD Meeting in the year prior to the Election, printed in the January/February issue of the national publication, posted on the USMS Web Site, and posted in the National Office Newsletter. The announcement will include the candidate qualification criteria as stated in Section V.
- B. Information on the Election shall be posted and regularly updated on the Election Section of the USMS Web Site. Notification of web site changes shall be posted on the "What's New" discussion forum. Candidate information to be published on the web site shall be limited to the candidate questionnaire and a digital picture.
- C. Information on the Election shall be delivered to the national office by the submission deadline so as to be published in the HOD Meeting packet. Published information shall be limited to the candidate questionnaire, resume, and picture. Candidates may be permitted to attach addendums to their questionnaires if issues crucial to USMS have surfaced since the questionnaires were first written.
- D. Candidate letters of nomination, and letters of reference may be published with the permission of the author. Evaluation forms shall remain confidential and shall be for Election Committee use only.

# USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

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## IV. Nominations

### A. Nomination of Candidates

1. The nomination period shall be from January 1 through April 30 of the Election year.
2. Any USMS member may nominate a candidate for office.
3. Any USMS member of a Zone may nominate a candidate for a position on the Board of Directors from that Zone.
4. The Election Committee shall develop a nomination packet which shall be posted on the Election web site by December 1 of the year preceding the election. The packet may also be distributed by e-mail upon request. Contents of the packet shall be as follows:
  - a. Instruction sheet for nominees, which should include the nominee qualification criteria (See Appendix B)
  - b. Candidate questionnaire/consent-to-run form (See Appendix C)
  - c. Sample Evaluation Form (See Appendix D)
  - d. Copy of the these Election Operating Guidelines
5. The completed packet shall be returned to the Chair of the Election Committee by April 30 of the Election year along with:
  - a. A letter of nomination from a USMS member
  - b. A one page resume
  - c. Two personal letters of reference
  - d. A letter from the nominee's LMSC confirming the nominee's qualifications for office.
  - e. A Digital picture
6. Evaluation forms shall be sent to at least one Chair of a committee on which each nominee has served within the most recent 5-year period prior to the nomination deadline. The evaluation forms are to be returned to the Chair of the Election Committee by May 31 of the Election year.
7. All completed questionnaires and endorsements shall be transmitted by the Chair of the Election Committee to each Election Committee member by June 1 of the Election year.
8. Between June 1 and July 15 of the Election year the Election Committee shall evaluate each candidate and choose a slate of candidates for election at the Election meeting.
9. The Election Committee shall notify those candidates selected for the slate by July 15 of the Election year. At that time, information on each candidate shall be posted to the Election web site.
10. Information on the upcoming Election (candidate information and election procedures) shall be submitted by August 1 of the Election year to the National Office for inclusion in the HOD Meeting packet.
11. Beginning August 1 of the Election year the Election Committee shall gather and select a collection of questions for the "Meet the Candidates Forum" to be conducted at the HOD Meeting prior to the Election. Collection of these questions shall cease two weeks prior to the Election.

### B. Nomination of Current Officers and non-Executive Committee members of the BOD

1. Current officers and non-Executive Committee members of the BOD eligible for a second term are automatically nominated. The Chair of the Election Committee shall contact each officer and non-Executive Committee members of the BOD and verify that each wishes to continue in that same position for a second term.
2. When current officers and non-Executive members of the BOD are running for re-election and no other nominations are received, no other activity is required of the committee other than preparing information for the HOD Meeting packet and updating the Election web site.

# USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

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3. . Each candidate seeking re-election shall submit Section One of the Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form, a one-page resume, and photo, and may submit a full questionnaire, if desired.

## C. Floor Nominations

1. Nominations will be accepted from the floor of the House of Delegates at the same time as the nominations for the candidates on the Slate.
  2. Immediately following a nomination, Sections One and Two of the nominee's Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form must be submitted to the Chair of the Election Committee.. The candidate may also submit a fully completed questionnaire, a one-page resume and/or a picture (4 x 6 maximum size).
  3. Each candidate's questionnaire and resume will be duplicated and distributed to the House of Delegates to allow time for review prior to the Election. A picture of that candidate will be placed on the display board with those of the other candidates.
  4. Candidates nominated from the floor of the House of Delegates shall be registered members of USMS prior to their nomination.
- D. A candidate may be nominated for more than one position, but the Election Committee shall not slate that candidate for more than one position.

## V. Candidate Qualification Criteria

- A. Candidates shall be members of United States Masters Swimming, Inc. for the year when the Election is held.
- B. Candidates shall have attended more than one USMS National HOD Meeting.
- C. Candidates shall plan to attend the HOD Meeting for the Election year in which they are standing for election, and shall plan to attend all HOD Meetings during their tenure.
- D. Candidates shall have demonstrated leadership in USMS by holding various positions in the corporation. None of the positions shall be given weight over any others. These positions include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Executive Committee Member,
  - b) National Committee Chair (Standing or Ad-Hoc),
  - c) Special Assignment(s),
  - d) Project Leader in one or more Committees,
  - e) Zone Representative, or
  - f) Any other position which requires leadership abilities.
- E. In addition to the above criteria, Candidates for the non-Executive Committee member positions on the BOD shall each be a registered member of USMS in the Zone each is seeking to represent on the BOD.

## VI.. Candidate Evaluation Procedures

- A. The Chair of the Election Committee shall not vote unless there is a tie vote on a candidate.
- B. All candidates shall be evaluated by the described criteria regardless of the office or non-Executive Committee BOD position for which they are running.
- C. The criteria for evaluation shall be applied to all candidates equally.
- D. All candidates who meet the stated qualifications shall be placed on the Slate.
- E, When an individual member of the Election Committee is unable to reach a conclusion as to the qualifications of a candidate, that Election Committee member shall vote to include that candidate on the Slate.

# USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

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## VII. Campaign Policy

- A. Publicity will be provided for the candidates on the election web site and in the HOD Meeting packet. In addition, a display chart with the pictures of the candidates will be posted on-site in a visible area before and during the HOD Meeting.
- B. The Election Committee shall open an Election thread on the USMS Discussion Forum to allow for an exchange of ideas between candidates, delegates, and other members of USMS.
- C. No mailings may be sent on behalf of a candidate in order to encourage a delegate's vote.
- D. Handouts, signs, stickers, pins or other promotional items may not be used or given at the HOD Meeting on behalf of any candidate.

## VIII. HOD Meeting Nominations

- A. The report of the Nominating Committee, floor nominations, nominating speeches, and acceptance speeches shall be made at the first session of the HOD Meeting.
- B. The Chair of the Election Committee shall present the Slate of candidates.
- C. The Chair of the Election Committee shall then call for nominations from the floor for each office.
- D. Each nomination from the floor requires a delegate nominator.
- E. Each nomination from the floor requires a delegate to second the nomination. The person making the second shall not speak on behalf of the candidate.
- F. After nominations are closed, each candidate will be given a total of five (5) minutes during which time the nominator and/or candidate may speak.

## IX. Meet the Candidates Forum

- A. There shall be a Meet the Candidates Forum in order for the voting delegates to familiarize themselves with the candidates unless current officers or non-Executive Committee members of the BOD are running for re-election and no other nominations are received.
- B. The Election Committee will host the forum to be held Thursday evening of the HOD Meeting.
- C. It is recommended that the room be set up informally with the audience in a semi-circle and the candidates in front, but not at a podium. It is further recommended that some type of refreshments be served.
- D. Candidates must be in attendance and shall make themselves available to answer questions. At the beginning of the forum, each candidate will be introduced by the moderator.
- E. A moderator will ask the questions and control the length of answers. Follow-up questions may be allowed from the floor.
- F. Questions may be submitted by email beginning August 1. Acceptance of email submissions will terminate two weeks prior to HOD Meeting. There will be a question box placed at HOD Meeting check-in on Wednesday which will be moved to the HOD on Thursday morning. Submissions will be terminated following candidate nominations. Questions should be directed to an office or non-Executive Committee BOD position, not a specific candidate, and there should be questions for all positions up for Election.
- G. The Election Committee will analyze and filter the questions, and shall prepare a list of questions for the Meet the Candidates Forum.
- H. Following the formal Meet the Candidates Forum, each candidate will be asked to remain for a half-hour to mingle and to be available for informal questioning from the delegates.

## X. Voting

- A. The Election shall be conducted during the HOD Meeting.

# USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

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- B. If a current member of the BOD is standing for re-election and there have been no new nominations for that member's position (either prior to the HOD Meeting or from the floor), then the current BOD member shall be retained by acclamation immediately following the nomination process.
- C. If voting is to proceed, the Election Committee will prepare ballots, conduct the Election process pursuant to Appendix E, and announce the results.
- D. The initial vote will be taken for all offices simultaneously.
- E. Votes will be collected by roll-call of the HOD and placed in a collection box.
- F. For each contested position, the Election winner shall be the individual receiving a majority of the valid votes cast for that position.
- G. If a contested position does not have a majority winner (more than 50% of valid votes cast), a run-off vote shall be held between the top two candidates from the first vote. Run-off ballots shall be prepared and distributed by the Election Committee, and the recount will be done using the counting process specified in Appendix E.
- H. Once the tabulation of the votes is completed per Appendix E, the names of the persons elected to each position (and the candidates for a run-off vote, if necessary), shall be announced to the HOD. The vote tallies shall not be announced.
- I. Following the announcement of the newly elected persons, there shall be a motion to destroy the ballots.

## **XI. Election Guidelines for Zone Representative**

- A. The Zone Representative shall request nominations from each LMSC in the Zone by June 1 each Election year.
- B. The Zone Representative shall appoint a delegate to accept nominations from the floor and to run the Election if the Zone Representative is running again.

# USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

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## APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE

Pre-HOD Meeting Process	Deadline
Announce request for nominations at the Annual Meeting.	Sep/Oct
Submit call for nominations to National Office Newsletter.	Oct 1
Submit call for nominations to Jan/Feb issue of the national publication.	Oct 15
Post election information on the Election Web Site (part of USMS Web Site).	Dec 1
Contact current BOD members eligible for a second term to determine if they wish to continue in the same position.	Jan 1
Accept nominations. Candidates must submit a completed Nomination Packet during this period in order to be considered for the slate.	Jan 1 thru Apr 30
Obtain evaluations from Committee Chairs under which the candidates have served.	May 1 thru May 31
Election Committee evaluates candidates and chooses slate for election at HOD Meeting.	Jun 1 thru Jul 15
Notify candidates they have been selected for the slate and post candidate information on Election Web Site.	1
Submit election information to National Office for inclusion in the HOD Meeting packet.	Aug 1
Email collection of questions for Meet the Candidates Forum. Email collection to be terminated 2 weeks prior to HOD Meeting.	Begin Aug 1
HOD Meeting Process	
Post election bulletin board and question box for Meet the Candidates Forum on-site at HOD Meeting in visible location(s).	Wed
Nominations and speeches for candidates on the slate as well as nominations from the floor of the House of Delegates.	Thu a.m.
Question box for Meet the Candidates Forum closed.	Thu 12 noon
Meet the Candidates Forum.	Thu 8 p.m.
Elections.	Fri p.m.

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# USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

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## APPENDIX B: NOMINATION PACKET INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Congratulations on your decision to run for an elected USMS position. In this packet you will find all the information you need to get through the nomination process. A copy of the USMS Election Operating Guidelines (“EOG”) has been included to inform you of how the process works from the time nominations open on January 1 until the election at the USMS Annual Meeting. If you have any difficulty complying with the requirements of this packet, notify the Election Chair. Please note that all exchange of documents must be by email or other electronic media.

If you are running for re-election, your instructions are in section **IV. B.** of the EOG. New candidates who intend to be nominated for the pre-HOD Meeting slate will find instructions in section **IV.A.** If you are a candidate who will be nominated from the floor in the House of Delegates (“HOD”), your instructions are in section titled **IV.C.**

### Nomination Period

The nomination period is from January 1 through April 30 in the year when the election is held. To complete your nomination packet, please compile the following documents and return them by email to the Chair of the Election Committee no later than April 30:

1. Completed **Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run** form. The questionnaire will be published on the USMS web site as well as in the HOD Meeting packet.
2. A one page **Resume**. The resume will be published only in the HOD Meeting packet.
3. A **Letter of Nomination** from a USMS member. This should be a simple declarative nomination without elaboration unless the nominator is also writing a letter of reference (see point #4 below).
4. Two (2) one page personal **Letters of Reference**. These letters may be from persons inside or outside of USMS. One of the Letters of Reference may be written by your nominator. In that case, include the nomination statement as the first sentence of the Letter of Reference. The Letters of Reference may be published with the consent of the authors. Please have the persons writing letters for you indicate at the bottom of the letter whether or not the letter may be published.
5. A **Letter** from your LMSC stating that you meet the candidate qualification criteria as outlined in section **V.** of the EOG. The LMSC Letter may be published with the consent of the LMSC. Please have the person writing the letter for you indicate at the bottom of the letter whether or not the letter may be published.
6. Digital picture. The digital picture will be published on the USMS web site, in the HOD Meeting packet, and posted on a board at HOD Meeting.

### Evaluation Forms

Evaluation forms will be sent to at least one of the National Committee Chairs with whom you have worked as identified on your questionnaire. The Committee will endeavor to send forms to chairs with whom you have worked during the previous 5-year period. Evaluation forms will be due to the Chair of the Election Committee no later than May 31. Evaluation forms shall remain confidential and shall be for Election Committee use only.

### Qualification of Candidates

The evaluation forms and documents submitted by nominees will be transmitted to the Election Committee who will evaluate the nominees and prepare a slate of candidates by June 30. The slate will be announced and the picture and questionnaire will be posted on the USMS web site.

Please review the following qualification criteria before submitting your nomination:

1. Candidates shall be registered members of United States Masters Swimming, Inc. (USMS) for the year when the election is held.

# USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

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2. Candidates shall have attended more than one USMS National HOD Meeting.
3. Candidates shall attend the current HOD Meeting and shall plan to attend all HOD Meetings during their tenure.
4. Candidates shall have demonstrated leadership in USMS by holding various positions in the corporation. None of the positions shall be given weight over any others. These positions include, but are not limited to: a) Executive Committee Member, b) National Committee Chair (Standing or Ad-Hoc), c) Special Assignment, d) Project Leader in Committee, e) Zone Representative, or f) any other position which requires leadership abilities.

## **Current Officers or non-Executive Committee members of the Board of Directors**

Current officers or non-Executive Committee members of the BOD eligible and running for a second term shall submit the following information by email to the Chair of the Election Committee no later than April 30:

1. Section One of the **Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form**. (A full questionnaire may be submitted for publication if desired).
2. One page resume.
3. Digital picture.

## **Floor Nominations**

If you do not go through the early nomination process, you may still be nominated from the floor of the House of Delegates during the nomination session. Immediately after your nomination, you must submit the following information to the Chair of the Election Committee:

1. Sections One and Two of the **Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form**. You may submit a full questionnaire if you choose.
2. One page resume (optional).
3. A 3 x 5 or 4 x 6 picture (optional).

Your resume and questionnaire will be duplicated and distributed to delegates to allow time for review prior to the election. The picture will be placed with the display board containing the other members of the slate.

## **In Conclusion**

Thank you for considering running for an elected USMS position. The nomination process and enclosed guidelines are intended to make the election process fair and consistent for all candidates. If you have any problems, please don't hesitate to contact me.

(Insert name & contact information of the Chair of the Election Committee)  
Chair of the Election Committee

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# USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

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## APPENDIX C: NOMINATION PACKET CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE/CONSENT-TO-RUN

Please fill out the following questionnaire/consent-to-run form. You may use as much space as you choose in answering your questions. Slate candidates and current officers should return this form by email with your other documents to the Chair of the Election Committee by April 30. Candidates nominated from the floor must return this form immediately after your nomination.

### SECTION ONE: Consent-to-Run *(All candidates must fill out this section)*

1. Name: *(Insert answer here)*
2. LMSC: *(Insert answer here)*
3. Consent-to-Run: I *(insert name here)* am interested in running for:  
\_\_\_\_ President \_\_\_\_ Vice President for Member Services \_\_\_\_ Vice President for External Services \_\_\_\_  
Vice President for National Operations \_\_\_\_ Vice President for Local Operations \_\_\_\_ Secretary \_\_\_\_  
Treasurer  
  
\_\_\_\_ BOB member for Colonies Zone \_\_\_\_ BOD member for Dixie Zone \_\_\_\_ BOD member for Great  
Lakes Zone \_\_\_\_ BOD member for Breadbasket Zone \_\_\_\_ BOD member for South Central Zone \_\_\_\_  
BOD member for North West Zone \_\_\_\_ BOD member for Oceana Zone \_\_\_\_ BOD member for South  
West Zone

### SECTION TWO: Candidate Qualifications *(New candidates for the Slate and floor candidates must fill out this section)*

1. Please list the USMS National HOD Meetings you have attended as a delegate:  
*(Insert answer here)*
2. Please list USMS committees on which you have served. Include the dates you were on the committees and the names of the committee chairs under whom you served.  
*(Insert answer here)*

### SECTION THREE: Issues *(Candidates for the Slate must fill out this section)*

1. Why are you interested in this position and why do you believe you would be a good candidate?  
*(Insert answer here)*
2. What do you consider to be the major issues facing USMS now and in the future. As a person holding an elected position within USMS, how would you address these issues?  
*(Insert answer here)*
3. Please list any other experience that relates to your qualifications for the position.  
*(Insert answer here)*
4. Please write a short summary statement that will be posted on the display board with your picture at HOD Meeting. If you choose, you may repeat (or point to) a paragraph from one of your other answers.  
*(Insert answer here)*

# USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

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## APPENDIX D: EVALUATION FORM

Please fill out the following Evaluation Form completely and return by email to the Chair of the Election Committee by May 31.

**Candidate's Name:** *(Insert name here)*

**Name of Evaluator:** *(Insert name here)*

**Committee:** *(Insert committee name here)*

**In what way do you know this candidate?**

*(Insert answer here)*

**How long have you known this candidate?**

*(Insert answer here)*

**How have you worked together?**

*(Insert answer here)*

**For each attribute fill-in the level (1-5) that applies to the candidate, with 1 being low (least favorable) and 5 high (most favorable). If you feel that you do not have enough knowledge of the candidate regarding a particular attribute listed below, fill in NA.**

- \_\_\_ 1. Has been active at the national level.
- \_\_\_ 2. Has been active at the local level.
- \_\_\_ 3. Has demonstrated a working knowledge of USMS policies and practices.
- \_\_\_ 4. Takes initiative, independently originates or develops ideas.
- \_\_\_ 5. Interacts effectively with others.
- \_\_\_ 6. Understands and deals effectively with individual differences.
- \_\_\_ 7. Uses tact and diplomacy in getting agreement in difficult situations.
- \_\_\_ 8. Listens to others and accepts their expertise.
- \_\_\_ 9. Expresses self in an organized, understandable, and concise manner.
- \_\_\_ 10. Perceives communication from others appropriately.
- \_\_\_ 11. Communicates regularly and effectively with others in LMSC/Committees.
- \_\_\_ 12. Plans and organizes activities effectively.
- \_\_\_ 13. Completes assignments promptly.
- \_\_\_ 14. Sets and accomplishes objectives effectively.
- \_\_\_ 15. Delegates and shares duties.
- \_\_\_ 16. Is dependable.
- \_\_\_ 17. Retains composure during a crisis.
- \_\_\_ 18. Demonstrates enthusiasm, drive, and energy.
- \_\_\_ 19. Demonstrates flexibility.
- \_\_\_ 20. Demonstrates leadership ability.

**Other comments about this candidate:**

*(Insert answer here)*

# USMS ELECTION OPERATING GUIDELINES

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## APPENDIX E: PROCEDURES FOR COUNTING VOTES

### Personnel

The minimum personnel needed to count the ballots are:

- 1) 1 Vote Caller
- 2) 2 Vote Recorders
- 3) 2 Observer/Proof Readers
- 4) 2 Vote Counters

Other members of the Election Committee may participate in the counting or observing in any fashion the Chair of the Election Committee requires.

### Counting Process

The following procedure to count the votes shall be followed:

- 1) Count one office at a time.
- 2) Divide the ballots into piles of ten (10) ballots each.
- 3) The vote caller calls out the vote for each ballot.
- 4) The recorders record the count on separate tally sheets.
  - a) If a ballot does not have any candidate selected for an office the “**no vote cast**” block shall be marked.
  - b) If a ballot has more than one candidate selected for the same position—the block stating “**invalid ballot**” for that position only shall be marked.
  - c) If a ballot has an indeterminate marking for any or all elected positions, the block stating “**invalid ballot**” for each such affected position shall be marked.) If a ballot has a write-in for a candidate, the vote shall be recorded on a separate line on the tally sheet for that position.
- 5) After each set of ten ballots, the recorders will make sure they have recorded ten total votes.
- 6) After all ballots are recorded, the vote counters will count the votes for each candidate and compare the totals from each tally sheet.
- 7) If the counts are the same, then the results are determined. If the counts are different, repeat steps three (3) through seven (7) for that position.
- 8) Repeat steps three (3) through seven (7) until votes are counted and verified for all positions.

### Run-Offs

If an position does not have a majority winner ( more than 50% of valid votes cast), a run-off vote will be held between the top two candidates from the first vote, and the recount will be done using the counting process specified above. Any ballots marked during the run-off for eliminated candidates will be marked as "invalid ballots."