



## **GENERAL FEDERATION of WOMEN'S CLUBS**

### **GFWC BYLAWS COMMITTEE SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER**

Barbara D. Whitaker, PRP, Chairman

#### **THE GFWC BYLAWS COMMITTEE**

It is an honor to introduce the 2022-2024 GFWC Bylaws Committee. Barbara D. Whitaker, PRP, from Ohio, is serving as Chairman. Also serving is Deen Meloro, PRP, from New Jersey, Arlene Creeden from Rhode Island, Tammie McCoy from Mississippi, and Trina Behbahani from Virginia. Diane Addante, RP, GFWC Parliamentarian, serves as advisor.

#### **WE ARE HERE TO HELP**

The GFWC Bylaws Committee does more than review the GFWC Bylaws and Standing Rules. If you have questions about your state or club bylaws that your state parliamentarian needs help answering, you may contact the GFWC Bylaws Committee Chairman or the GFWC Parliamentarian. The best way is by email. In addition to your question(s), please attach the complete set of the constitution (if any), bylaws, and standing rules for the state or club. Often the answer is found elsewhere in the documents, so just sending the one section in question may not allow for a correct solution to the problem.

#### **UPDATED GFWC BYLAWS**

The proposed amendments to the GFWC Bylaws were all adopted as presented at the GFWC Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Shortly after the GFWC Executive Committee approves the updated document, it will be posted in the Member Portal of the GFWC website under the resources letter "B." Please reference the newly edited document for your state and local bylaws, as they may not conflict with GFWC bylaws.

#### **UPDATED GFWC STANDING RULES**

The GFWC Standing Rules were also updated in Louisville during the GFWC Board of Directors meeting. Again, shortly after the Executive Committee approves the document, it will be posted in the resources under the letter "S." Several amendments had to do with candidates for a GFWC office. If you are in a state with a candidate or are considering promoting one, please review those rules.

#### **YOUR GFWC BYLAWS COMMITTEE IS AT WORK**

The committee continues its through the summer months. We will meet via Zoom over the summer and into the fall to discuss amendments, if any, to the GFWC Bylaws to be presented in Chicago at the 2024 convention. These will be given to the GFWC Executive Committee for final review before being published as proposed amendments.

## **MICRO-VOLUNTEERING FOR BYLAWS AND STANDING RULES**

Micro-volunteering is an approach that allows people to volunteer quickly and conveniently. It's been around for years. Taking a few minutes to donate cans to the food bank or feminine products to a shelter or school is an example of a micro-volunteer project. A review of bylaws can also be done through micro-volunteering. Each volunteer can focus on one section or article of the bylaws and review it for clarity, adherence to GFWC bylaws, and grammar. Volunteers could even read the entire bylaws to look for areas of repetition and inconsistency. Another could look through the Standing Rules for inconsistencies with the bylaws. These volunteers do not have to be members of the club or federation. They could be someone learning parliamentary procedure or even potential members. The committee can then utilize that information to amend the documents as needed.

While these outside volunteers may not know the intricacies of the club or federation, sometimes having someone with "new" eyes examining the document raises interesting questions to be addressed. For instance, the more experienced club members know what "CIP" is, but the volunteer may not. By clarifying the term in the bylaws and standing rules to "Community Impact Program (CIP)," a new member can better understand what serving on that committee involves.

## **A REMINDER**

State federations, GFWC Committees, the GFWC Executive Committee, and the GFWC Board of Directors may propose amendments to the GFWC bylaws. Individual members, clubs, and GFWC Regions may not submit proposed amendments. Proposed amendments are submitted to the Bylaws Committee Chairman by NOVEMBER 1.

When proposing an amendment, please state the Article(s) of the GFWC bylaws and any section or subsection where the amendment is to be made. State exactly what is to be removed, added, or otherwise changed and how the bylaw should be worded if the amendment is adopted. Give the reason this change is proposed. If the proposal comes from a state federation, include the pages of minutes of the meeting where this proposal was presented to the delegates and voted upon, along with verification by the state president and state recording secretary.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

The GFWC Bylaws, amended and adopted on May 30, 1896, in Louisville, Kentucky, were just five articles long. The parliamentary authority was not "Robert's Rules of Order" but was "The Woman's Manual." One can assume this is "The Woman's Manual of Parliamentary Law" by Harriette R. Shattuck, written for women wanting to learn how to conduct meetings as they enter civic life.

In the early years of GFWC, the organization used several parliamentary manuals. Most of these were written by clubwomen, and most of these authors corresponded with General Robert, asking for his advice on parliamentary law. In his biography "Henry Martyn Robert: Writer of Rules, an American Hero" by Professor Joseph F. O'Brien and Dr. Leonard M. Young, PRP, several clubwomen were mentioned as frequent correspondents. Among them were Julia B. Shattuck of the Chicago Woman's Club, Mary Belle King Sherman, who became a president of GFWC, and Emma A. Fox, who wrote "Parliamentary Usage for Women's Clubs."