

Business Meeting Minutes of Westercon 74

A. Call to Order

The Business Meeting of the 74th West Coast Science Fantasy Conference (Westercon) was called to order at 11:01 a.m. on Sunday, July 3, 2022, in the Main Hall of the Tonopah Convention Center. A quorum was present. The meeting officers were Kevin Standlee, Chairperson; Martin Pyne, Secretary; and Lisa Hayes, Videographer.

B. Committee Reports

B.1. Westercon 75 Selection Committee

The Westercon 73 Business Meeting awarded Westercon 75 to a committee consisting of Kevin Standlee and Lisa Hayes with the understanding that they would choose another committee to host Westercon 75 somewhere other than Tonopah. The committee had the unilateral authority to select a subsequent committee, which was the current committee (Anaheim) for Westercon 75 who are currently selling memberships. There was no business relating to Westercon 75.

B.2. Westercon 76 Site Selection

Sharon Sbarsky announced the results of the site selection election. A bid committee must, per Section 3.5 of the Westercon Constitution, have at least two (2) separate people declaring themselves Chairman and Treasurer; an organizing instrument such as bylaws, articles of incorporation or association, or a partnership agreement; and a letter of intent or option from a hotel or other facility declaring specific dates on which the Westercon shall be held; and, for a sponsoring organization from within the United States of America, evidence that the sponsoring organization is a non-profit association or corporation within the applicable state law of the sponsoring organization. Site Selection received an intent to bid from the Utah in 2024 committee which had the Chairman and Treasurer and letter of intent from a facility but not a document of organization or a sponsoring organization.

The result of the balloting was as follows:

Candidate	Thu	Fri	Total
Utah in 2024	24	31	55
Any state that protects abortion rights		2	2
None of the Above		1	1
Total With Preference	24	34	58
Needed to Elect (Majority)			30
No preference	2		2
Total votes cast			60

As there was no qualified bidding committee, Section 3.16 of the Westercon Constitution provides that a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the business meeting of the administering Westercon may award the Westercon to any committee, or a simple majority of the meeting may decide that they are unable to decide. If the business meeting does not choose a site, the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, Inc. shall choose a site within six (6) weeks of the close of the administering Westercon. A site chosen under the provisions of Section 3.16 shall not be restricted by any portion of Article 3 except this Section 3.16 and Section 3.1.¹

Joni Brill Dashoff asked if we knew that Utah failed to qualify before the Site Selection was administered. The Chair declared it to be irrelevant as nobody had asked the Site Selection Administrator.

Linda Robinett asked if the Utah bid aware that they had not submitted all the required paperwork. The Chair ruled that this was properly a question for the bid.

Rick Kovalcik, believing that it was the clear intent of the voters, nominated the Utah in 2024 committee led by Charles R. Galway and Cheryl A. Sneddon to host the 2024 Westercon. No other committee was nominated.

There being an objection to declaring that the Utah in 2024 committee would host the 2024 Westercon, the matter of site selection was referred to Committee of the Whole without objection. Martin Pyne was appointed chair.

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With the conclusion of the Committee of the Whole, the meeting reconvened at 11:32 a.m. Martin Pyne reported that the Committee of the Whole recommended that the Business Meeting adopt the Utah in 2024 bid committee, as comprised previously and discussed, as Westercon 76.

There was no debate. With more than three-fourths of the assembly in favor, the Utah in 2024 committee was selected as the Westercon 76 committee.

By unanimous consent, the Site Selection Administrator was thanked for her work and instructed to destroy the ballots.

Judy Morman asked what would happen if the Westercon 76 committee does not obtain non-profit status. The Chair observed that nothing would happen.

Carol Alves noted an earlier comment (made in Committee of the Whole) that Westercon may be going downhill. Since there were at least a hundred people here, she found that Westercon was very much alive.

Adrienne Foster thought the Westercon bylaws required a committee governed by a non-profit. The Chair ruled that this matter had been settled but he could explain it after the meeting.

¹ Westercon must be somewhere in North America west of 104°W or in Hawaii.

Kim Brown raised that the Chair failed to recognize somebody prior to the vote on site selection. The Chair ruled that the matter of site selection is final since a point of order had not been raised in a timely fashion.

Jason Spitzer raised a point of order relating to proceedings when there was no valid committee. This was ruled to not be a valid point of order.

The Chair observed that any person who voted in favor of selecting the Utah Committee may move reconsideration. If that was seconded, a majority can reconsider the question and return the meeting to the three-fourths vote for site selection.

Sharon Sbarsky moved to reconsider so nobody felt that that they were disenfranchised.

Andrew Trembley, on a parliamentary inquiry, asked if a motion to reconsider implied that the person making the motion thought that their vote might have been wrong. The Chair indicated that this was not necessarily the case, and that it might mean that you wanted the members to decide whether they wanted to take the matter back up again.

Joni Brill Dashoff raised a question of privilege that the meeting should fix the problem for short people by handing out colored papers or program books before proceeding further. Program books were handed out to enhance the visibility of people seeking recognition.

Jason Spitzer inquired as to why the motion to reconsider had to be made by a person in favor. The Chair pointed out that this is required by *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.²

Linea Thompson spoke in favor of the motion because it is important that all members are heard and somebody got overlooked, probably because of the speed in which the meeting was trying to resolve things.

Lisa Hayes agreed that it is important for everybody to get their point across, but it was clear that the meeting has a majority in one direction and the majority shouldn't have its time wasted redebating the same things when it had an overwhelming majority.

Ben Yalow moved the previous question, which was ordered without objection. The motion to reconsider failed via an uncounted show of hands.

C. Pending Bylaw Amendments

There was only one item of business on the agenda; it received first passage last year and was now up for re-ratification.

C.1. Business Meeting Site Selection

Moved, to amend Section 3.16 to lower the majority necessary for the Business Meeting to select a site when the normal process does not return a winner by ~~deleting~~ and adding words as follows:

² Specifically, §37:10 of the 12th edition.

3.16 Procedures When No Bid Wins or is Eligible

Should no eligible bid gain the needed majority, or should there be no qualified bidding committee, or should “None of the Above” win, a ~~three-fourths (3/4)~~ two-thirds (2/3) majority of the site-selection business meeting of the administering Westercon may award the Westercon to any bid, or a simple majority of the meeting may decide that they are unable to decide. If the business meeting does not choose a site, the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, Inc. shall choose a site within six (6) weeks of the close of the administering Westercon. If “None of the Above” wins, none of the bids which were on the ballot may be selected. A site chosen under the provisions of this section shall not be restricted by any portion of this article except this section and section **Error! Reference source not found.**

Discussion: Rick Kovalcik noted a previous case that took three hours to get a three-fourths majority. Most things at most require two-thirds, which is an overwhelming majority and we should just go with that.

Mary Morman, on a point of information, inquired as to the difference between three-fourths and two-thirds. The Chair noted that three-fourths is 75% and two-thirds is 66 2/3%; three-fourths is three times as many in favor as against while two-thirds is twice as many.

Jason Spitzer inquired of the Chair as to, given existing Site Selection traditions, what the Chair’s recommendation on the motion was, whether he believed this will have any major effect, and what the downsides would be. The Chair found that it would be improper for him to express an opinion, the question of whether the change would be good being one for debate. Mr. Spitzer understood that this would probably save time and make it easier to select a site but wanted to know what other effects this would have. The Chair stated that the only effect objectively is that it makes it take fewer votes to select a site.

Kent Bloom felt that there is the opportunity for a committee that is intensely disliked by some people to be selected, and it would be easier for that to happen with a two-thirds vote than a three-quarters vote as it would take more people who intensely dislike the committee to block it. This doesn’t necessarily apply today but could in the future.

Andrew Trembley noted that all committees have some people who intensely dislike them and changing the threshold doesn’t change that. His specific speech in favor: “#smofpocalypse.”

Kevin Roche, to more explicitly set before the meeting what his husband implied, observed that switching to two-thirds means a small, entrenched naysaying group cannot stop a popular committee.

Mr. Kovalcik closed by pointing out that two-thirds is still a supermajority and it’s good enough.

There was no objection to ending the debate and bringing the matter to a vote. By an uncounted show of hands, the amendment was ratified and will become a part of the Constitution at the close of the Westercon, first affecting the Site Selection held next year.

D. New Business

Jordan Brown raised a parliamentary inquiry as to the process for merely making a statement. Permission of the assembly was required, and there was no objection for a two-minute statement. Mr. Brown had thought about the earlier statement about just letting Westercon die and felt that as long as there's a committee willing to run it, it should live; people who don't want it to live should just not come.

Linnea Thompson, on a parliamentary inquiry, asked if that would be more appropriate for the Announcements portion of the agenda. The Chair noted that the last speech was in the nature of debate on the question of whether Westercon should continue, while announcements are more neutral.

Lisa Hayes made a motion to adjourn, which was laid on the table without objection.

Rick Kovalcik, president of MCFI, said that should the Utah Committee not find a local nonprofit, he would do his best to get MCFI to be the sponsoring organization. But he really hoped that Utah would find a local nonprofit or incorporate their own.

Kent Bloom, an attorney, observed that it takes about 4 hours to incorporate a nonprofit in Colorado, online, with a twenty- or twenty-five-dollar fee. He suspected it's similar in Utah. All secretaries of state have processes to create nonprofit corporations on their website using boilerplate and he strongly recommended the Utah committee should look into this.

Kevin Roche raised a point of information as to whether the Westercon Constitution requires a nonprofit or a tax-exempt organization. The Chair noted that the applicable language of Section 3.5 is "for a sponsoring organization from within the United States of America, evidence that the sponsoring organization is a non-profit association or corporation within the applicable state law of the sponsoring organization," which does not have to be tax-exempt. It is possible to create a non-profit, non-tax-exempt organization. But the Chair did not wish to turn the meeting into a seminar on non-profit law.

E. Announcements

Mr. Roche announced that the bar would open early.

Michelle Deborah Weisblat-Dane announced that due to the lateness in which the 2023 Anaheim Westercon was selected, the 2023 Westercon Committee could greatly use help and volunteers since they hadn't filled all the committee positions.

Jason Spitzer asked if we could define what time the bar will open. Andrew Trembley said it would be when you all saw them standing behind the bar.

F. Adjournment

The motion to adjourn previously moved by Lisa Hayes was taken from the table by unanimous consent. By uncounted show of hands, the Westercon 74 Business Meeting adjourned *sine die* at 12:05pm.

Martin Pyne
Business Meeting Secretary