

Minutes of Westercon 75 Business Meeting
November 25, 2023

The Westercon 75 Business Meeting was called to order at the Los Angeles Airport Marriott Hotel in the Los Angeles 1 Meeting Room at 11:34 a.m. on November 25, 2023, with Kevin Standlee presiding. The other officers were deputy presiding officer Martin Pyne, secretary Linda Deneroff, and videographer Lisa Hayes.

The first order of business was the site selection results.

Nineteen ballots were cast, with one by mail and the rest in person. Ten votes were needed to win.

First Round	By Mail	At Con	Total
Seattle		7	7
Tonopah		5	5
Alcatraz Island		1	1
BayCon		1	1
A Charter Flight from Wake Island to Denver		1	1
Ketchikan AK		1	1
None of the Above	1	1	2
Total With Preference	1	17	18
Needed to Elect (Majority)			10
No Preference/Blank ¹		1	1
Total Ballots Cast	1	18	19

None of the bids that received votes on the first round filed qualified bidding papers with Westercon 75 by the deadline at the close of voting. Therefore, per section 3.15 of the Westercon Bylaws, all ineligible bids were eliminated and the ballots' next-highest eligible preference was counted on the second ballot.

Second Round	By Mail	At Con	Total	
None of the Above	1	3	4	Winner
Total With Preference	1	3	4	
Needed to Elect (Majority)			3	
No Preference/Blank ¹		15	15	
Total Ballots Cast	1	18	19	

The effect of the Westercon bylaws is that after the first round, the only candidate that could win was “None of the Above” (there being no bids filed

¹ Blank ballots or votes for No Preference are abstentions and do not count toward the number of ballots cast for the purpose of determining a majority.

that met the bylaw requirement). Without objection, the presiding officer thanked the tellers and instructed that the ballots be destroyed.

Since there was no Westercon selected by election, choosing a site became the responsibility of the business meeting. However, the meeting could adjourn without choosing a committee and make the site selection LASFS's responsibility.

Ben Yalow moved that the meeting declare itself unable to decide. Debate time was set at 10 minutes. The chair noted that if this motion failed, it could not be raised again without a two-thirds vote to suspend the rules and allow its consideration. Mr. Yalow noted that this would be a test vote to see how people felt about the situation.

Cliff Dunn moved to lay Mr. Yalow's motion on the table², since he felt test votes are better held in a Committee of the Whole ("COTW"). A majority vote to lay the motion on the table was required. With a majority in favor, the motion to declare that the business meeting was deadlocked was laid on the table.

The business meeting then moved into a Committee of the Whole, with the deputy presiding officer chairing.

The Committee of the Whole ("COTW") was chaired by the deputy presiding officer, Martin Pyne. Linda Deneroff served as secretary and Lisa Hayes as videographer.

The COTW rose at 12:55 p.m. and the meeting then recessed.

The Business Meeting resumed at 1:10 p.m. and considered two recommendations from the COTW. The chair ruled that the first order of business would be site selection since that has priority over other business. To that end, Martin Pyne, the COTW chair, reported that, pursuant to Section 3.16 of the Westercon bylaws, Westercon 77 be awarded to a committee consisting of Mr. Standlee and Ms. Hayes, and that they be empowered to find a committee to host Westercon 77 or host it themselves.

² To lay on the table temporarily sets a motion aside without a decision.

Mr. Yalow raised a technical question: would the committee of two identify who will make the final decision. Ms. Hayes agreed a majority vote would not work if they were opposed to each other. Therefore, she would defer to Mr. Standlee, if that happened. Thus, without objection, the COTW recommendation was adopted. This committee named itself the “Caretaker Committee.”

Mr. Standlee then noted that a decision regarding Westercon 77’s eventual disposition would be made by July 2024 at Westercon 76.

The Business Meeting then took up the COTW’s second recommendation to adopt Scenario 2 (see list of scenarios considered by the COTW incorporated herein by reference): to remove the date and zone restrictions from site selection, and to set the filing deadline for bids, the distribution of ballot deadline and voting deadline as relative numbers of days. To do so first required suspending the rules by a two-thirds vote in favor, which passed³. Then the vote to adopt Scenario 2 in its entirety passed with well more than the required majority). However, before the bylaw amendments in Scenario 2 can take effect, they must be ratified at Westercon 76. Thus, the chair pointed out that the 2024 site selection vote to select the 2026 Westercon will take place under the existing rules.

There was no further business.

With all business concluded, Ms. Sullivan announced that SMOFCon would be held next weekend in Providence, RI, as a fully hybrid convention. The program schedule was not yet available, but all items would be on Zoom. Hybrid memberships are \$40. Additionally, all items will be available after the convention for viewing. See smofcon40.org for more information.

Without objection, the meeting adjourned *sine die* at 1:26 p.m.

³ The Chair later observed that this was an incorrect ruling. A group of proposals such as these bylaw amendments can be considered *en bloc*, although if even one member had requested a separate vote on any of them, that would require that they be considered and voted separately.

Proposals for the Westercon 75 Business Meeting

The current Westercon Bylaws document is at

<http://www.westercon.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/WesterconBylaws-202207.pdf>

Scenario 1: Retire Westercon

If the consensus is that Westercon no longer has a purpose and should retire, the most orderly way to do so would be for the members of Westercon to vote to repeal its own bylaws. This would have the effect of “handing in the charter” to the owner of the Westercon service mark, LASFS. The LASFS could then decide what it wanted to do with Westercon, which could include abandoning the service mark so that anyone who wished to do so could hold their own convention under the name “Westercon.”

Item 1.1: Retire Westercon

Moved, to repeal the Westercon Bylaws.

Provided, That any Westercon selected under the current Bylaws shall be held and such Westercons shall be bound by those portions of Article 1 applicable to the convention. Such Westercons shall not conduct a Business Meeting or a Site Selection.

Discussion: Amendments to the Bylaws take effect as of the end of the Westercon where they are ratified. A motion to Repeal the Bylaws is similar to an amendment; therefore, if this motion is passed by the Westercon 75 Business Meeting and ratified by the Westercon 76 Business Meeting, the Bylaws are repealed as of the end of Westercon 76. However, this motion provided that should sites be selected for Westercon 77 and 78, those two conventions shall still be held, but they will not conduct Site Selection or host a Business Meeting. As of the conclusion of Westercon 78, there will be no future sites selected for Westercon. LASFS, as owner of the Westercon service mark, could decide what to do with the name. They could abandon it, sell it, form a new convention, apply it to an existing convention, or otherwise dispose of it as they wish.

Scenario 2: Continue Westercon with Technical Tweaks

Should there be a consensus that we should continue to attempt to hold Westercon under the current Bylaws, we can make technical changes to the Westercon Bylaws to fix issues that have appeared recently. Westercon rules have a number of hard-coded dates in them that assume that Westercon will always be held around the first weekend of July. To increase flexibility, we can remove the portion of the Bylaws referencing the traditional dates, remove most of the restrictions on site selection, and set deadlines relative to the date of the convention, not on fixed dates.

Note that proposals to strike out entire sections do not require explicitly renumbering other sections. The Secretary of the Business Meeting is implicitly authorized to make all necessary numbering and formatting changes, which are not considered substantive.

Item 2.1: Remove Date Restriction

Moved, to remove the reference to the traditional dates of Westercon:

~~1.1 Name and Date~~

~~It is traditional, but not obligatory, that the West Coast Science Fantasy Conference (Westercon) shall take place over the July 4th weekend.~~

Discussion: This rule, which has only been advisory and could always have been ignored, can be removed if the purpose of future changes is to give Westercon a larger scope, including the possibility of being “attached” to other conventions.

Item 2.2: No Zone

Moved, to remove the zone restrictions from Westercon Site Selection:

~~3.2 Site Selection Zones~~

~~The following Site Selection Zones are defined within the area defined in section 3.1:~~

~~**3.2.1: North:** Sites in North America north of the 42nd north parallel.~~

~~3.2.2: Central: Sites in North America between the North and South zones.~~

~~3.2.3: South: Hawaii; California south of and including San Luis Obispo, Kern, and San Bernardino Counties; Nevada south of and including Clark County; Arizona; New Mexico; and all countries, states, provinces, territories, or other political subdivisions southward within North America.~~

~~3.2.4: Other: Any location otherwise eligible under section 3.1 not part of the above Zones.~~

~~3.3 Regional Exclusion Zone~~

~~No site within the Site Selection Zone containing the site of the Westercon administering the site selection election shall be eligible to bid, except as provided in this section. If no eligible bids are filed by the January 1st of the year of the site selection balloting, then all sites defined in section 3.1 shall be eligible.~~

Discussion: It does not appear that Westercon has so many sites clamoring to host the convention that the zonal restrictions that seemed worthwhile a generation ago are still needed. Should a revived Westercon site be perceived to be monopolizing the convention, the members could in the future adopt some sort of new rotation system or zonal exclusion such as the distance-based system currently used by Worldcon. (Currently, Worldcon sites must be at least 500 mi / 800 km from the site hosting the election.)

Item 2.3: Relative Filing Deadline

Moved, to set the filing deadline for bids to appear on the ballot to a relative number of days, rather than as a specific filing date, and to provide for situations where a convention is postponed:

3.4 Filing Deadline for Ballot

Only those eligible bids whose filing paperwork required by section 3.5 is in the possession of the administering Westercon ~~by the April 15th preceding the balloting~~ at least sixty (60) days before the first day of

the administering Westercon shall be listed on the Ballot. Should the administering Westercon be postponed for any reason, the filing deadline shall be accordingly extended, even if this happens after the original deadline has passed.

Discussion: Currently, the deadline for appearing on the ballot, April 15, is 77 days before July 1. This proposal would not only set the filing deadline relative to the actual date of the convention, but it would also give bids slightly longer to get their bids filed with the administering Westercon.

In addition, this proposal explicitly provides for the case where a Westercon is postponed for any reason with less than sixty days before the convention, requiring the administering Westercon to accept bids relatively to the revised date, even if that means allowing bids after the original deadline relative to the original date. This is not an academic consideration. The 2021 Worldcon postponed its dates after the initial filing deadlines for bids had passed. A new bid filed based on the revised dates, and the 2021 Worldcon initially refused to consider the bid, claiming that the original deadline based on the original dates was the only date that applied. They did eventually change their decision and permit the new bid onto the ballot. This provision makes the interpretation clearer and explicit.

Item 2.4: Distribution of Ballot

Moved, to make the date when the administering Westercon is required to distribute the site selection ballot relative to the date of the convention:

3.10 Distribution of Ballot

The site-selection ballot and full rules for site-selection voting, including the deadlines for voting by mail, shall be sent by postal or electronic mail at least 30 days before the first day of the administering Westercon ~~mailed on or before the May 10th preceding the voting~~ to all members of the administering Westercon as of one week before the mailing. The ballot and full rules for site-selection, including the hours during which site-selection will take place and the location of the site-selection, shall be given to all attending members upon registration at the Westercon, or such information shall be

prominently displayed at the registration area throughout the Westercon.

Discussion: The current May 10th deadline is 52 days before July 1. This changes the mailing date to 30 days before the start of the Westercon, and explicitly authorizes electronic mail as a valid method of distribution. However, this change does not contemplate *requiring* members to have email addresses.

Item 2.5: Deadline for Voting by Mail

Moved, to make the minimum deadline for accepting mailed ballots relative to the date of the convention:

3.11 Deadline for Voting by Mail

All ballots received by the administering Westercon ~~prior to June 20~~ at least ten (10) days before the first day of the administering Westercon shall be counted. The administering Westercon may count ballots received less than ten (10) days before the first day of the administering Westercon at their discretion.

3.14 Verification of Ballots

Properly completed ballots shall contain: the member's printed name; the member's membership number as assigned by the administering Westercon; the member's dated signature; the member's address of record with the current Westercon; the member's current address if different; and the member's vote(s) as defined elsewhere in this article. Verification of the ballots shall consist of matching the name and number of the member with the records of the administering Westercon. Ballots received by the committee prior to ~~June 20~~ the deadline in section 3.11, and any others received by mail which may be counted, shall be held by the administering Westercon until the opening of the Westercon, at which time they shall be verified by the administering Westercon and the bidders.

Discussion: The current deadline requiring the administering Westercon to count mail-in ballots is June 20. This change requires that the administering

Westercon must count any ballots received at least ten days before the convention, but also explicitly states that the convention may count ballots received by mail after that. In other words, the convention is not *required* to reject ballots received less than ten days before the convention, but they do not have to count them if it is impractical for them to do so.

The change to section 3.14 is to make the deadline referred to in this section parallel to Section 3.11. As noted earlier, this will almost certainly need to be renumbered by the Secretary should other changes in this document be adopted.

Scenario 3: Wait and See

After the initial publication of this document, several people proposed variations of “don’t kill Westercon, but let it sit for a while until things get better.” This would be difficult to implement within the existing Westercon Bylaws explicitly; however, assuming that LASFS is willing to allow Westercon to be held as part of Loscon indefinitely anytime no bid wins the right to host Westercon through the bylaws process, adopting Scenario 2’s technical changes would have the same effect as a “Wait and See” approach. Until a bid appears that the members accept, Westercon would continue to be held as part of Loscon. Should an acceptable bid appear that the members select, then it would host Westercon.

No extra actions are needed to adopt Scenario 3 other than adopting all of Scenario 2. Those people interested in Westercon’s future separate from Loscon could then work to develop bids, either for stand-alone Westercons or for Westercons held as part of another convention, within a more flexible legislative model.