

GRAND CHAPTER OF ROYAL ARCH MASONS 2019

JURISPRUDENCE SUB-COMMITTEE PAPER

What is the Jurisprudence Sub Committee of Royal Arch Masonry?

If you are thinking that we are a jury made up of prudes who are dense you may be right on some days even though we try our hardest not to fall into that category or trap as it may be.

In reality what the correct definition of Jurisprudence is "The philosophy or science of law or A system of laws". Jurisprudent is "One skilled in the law"

The Jurisprudence Sub-Committee is a group of Royal Arch Masons who are appointed by the Executive Committee.

The members are selected based on their proven track record of being impartial, open minded and have developed the skills required to review the Notices of Motion, requests etc. and confirm that the requesters have complied with the appropriate procedures and reviews prior to presenting their request to the Grand Chapter or Grand Executive. In addition they must have a high level of knowledge regarding the Principles and Tenants of Freemasonry and the Royal Arch Constitution and Regulations.

What is the hardest thing about being a member of the Sub-Committee?

I used to think it would be the knowledge of the Constitution and Regulations, Policies and Procedures. What I found was, any unknowns in this area can be quickly looked up and reviewed. In fact the hardest thing is one we literally remind each other of when we start the review

of a request, which is "It does not matter if we personally agree with the request or not, it is the process and regularity of the proposed motion we are reviewing".

Who makes up the Jurisprudence Sub-Committee?

The Sub-Committee members are myself MEC Wally Watts (Chairman), MEC Jerry Kopp (Grand Scribe "E") VEC Ken South, VEC Robert Cantwell

What process does the Sub-Committee go through when a request is submitted by a Chapter?

Once a request is received through the Grand Scribe "E" the Sub-Committee Chairman will quickly review the request and if the necessary documents are present the Notice of Motion is distributed to the members for a detailed review and comment.

Comments are then passed back to the Chairman for review.

The review will identify one of three things:

- 1/ The Chapter did not follow the proper process and procedures, the request does not reference the correct Article(s) or not all affected Articles have been addressed and possibly not all the supporting documents required have been provided. In which case the motion is rejected with reason through the Grand Scribe "E". The Chapter is then free to start the process over should they so wish.
- 2/ The wording presented is incomplete, wrong terminology has been used. At this point the Notice of Motion may be returned to the Chapter for word smithing or the Sub-Committee may make some very minor adjustments provided the intent of the Notice of Motion is not impacted and then through the Grand Scribe "E" the

Chapter will be advised of the minor word changes and their acceptance of same will be received.

- 3/ The Notice of Motion has followed the necessary protocols and procedures, wording is acceptable, all the affected Articles of the Constitution and Regulations have been addressed, and the Notice of Motion does not create a conflict with other portions of the Constitution and Regulations.

When reviewing a Notice of Motion what other considerations does the Sub-Committee keep in mind?

The Sub-Committee must be very careful and not just breeze over a request that at first review seems very simple. The Sub-Committee must look at all requests from different directions such as:

- 1/ How does this motion immediately impact our present personnel in office?
- 2/ How does it impact our personnel in office and those being elected or appointed in the near future (2-3 years);
- 3/ Has all the Articles of the Constitution and regulations, which are impacted or potentially impacted been address to ensure the change if approved does not create a conflict with another Article.
- 4/ Has the Chapter followed the Protocols and Procedure and made sure that the Chapter Members have had due notice, opportunity to debate and understand the Motion being proposed. Have the Members present had due opportunity to vote on the Notice of Motion.
- 5/ Has the Grand District Superintendent reviewed and support the Chapter's Notice of Motion. (Note: this is not a I agree or disagree with the Motion, but rather just a check for anything that may have been over looked or that the same Notice of Motion was

brought forward to Grand Chapter, defeated and insufficient time has passed per the Constitution and Regulations before the Notice of Motion may be once again presented).

- 6/ One very key criteria to be viewed, is whether the Notice of Motion only serves the benefit of one or two Chapters as opposed to benefiting all Chapters in the Jurisdiction;
- 7/ Does the Notice of Motion contravene the Constitution and Regulations?

How long does it take for the Jurisprudence Sub-Committee to complete a review?

There is no set time or even a mean average of time required. In some cases it takes only a matter of days if the request is simple and all items are in order to several months if the request is complicated and impacts many articles in the Constitution and Regulations. The amount of time also depends on the individual Sub-Committee members having time to review and provide an opinion. It is important to remember that all members are volunteering their time and expertise and must balance the demands of family, work and other public avocations.

How is it possible for three people to know everything required to make recommendations on all Motions?

It is not possible for us to know everything, to enable us to make educated recommendations on all requests. In the cases where lively debate among the Sub-Committee Members does not bring us to a suitable recommendation the expertise of other Past Grand First Principals, Executive Committee, other Sub-Committee members and Companions with particular areas of expertise are approached and their guidance obtained to steer us in the correct direction. This request may be for something as simple as an unbiased opinion, to a Companion(s) trained advise or opinion in the finer points of Law or Finance etc.

What happens once the Jurisprudence Sub-Committee Rules that the Chapter Notice of Motion is Approved?

The Jurisprudence Sub-Committee **does not approve** Notices of Motion. We review the Notice of Motion for COMPLIANCE ONLY.

Depending on the nature of the Notice of Motion the Sub-Committee will prepare a recommendation letter and submit the letter to the Grand Scribe "E" for further processing.

In the case of a request for a new set or changes to an existing set of Chapter By-laws the submitted documents complete with the Letter of Recommendation are presented to the Grand First Principal for signature.

In the case of a request to modify, add or delete an Article(s) within the Constitution or Regulations, The Sub-Committee will develop a letter highlighting the existing wording, changes requested and the new wording. The letter may identify that the Notice of Motion is incomplete and needs to be returned to the Chapter for further development or that the review has found it acceptable and is ready to be brought to the floor of the Grand Chapter for review, debate, and vote by the Companions.

Are Chapter Notices of Motion the only items that the Jurisprudence Sub-Committee deal with?

No. Periodically the Grand First Principal or the Executive Committee may request the Sub-Committee to review a specific Article or Articles to determine:

A/ is something still relevant and providing positive results for the work required to carry out said requirement contained within the Constitution and Regulations.

E.G.: a few years back a review was performed to review the need for Grand Representatives. The result was that the Grand Representatives who had active communication with their counter part would continue as long as viable, however, the Grand Chapter would not to appoint new Grand Representatives

B/ Is it viable to carry on with something as presently written or does it require updating to match our present needs or abilities.

E.G.: This year we were requested to review the viability of Life Memberships in a Chapter. This was done and the recommendation will be coming to the Grand Chapter floor tomorrow for reading, debate and vote.

C/ Have the Laws of Alberta or Canada changed putting part or parts of our Constitution and Regulations in contravention.

POINT OF INTREST

Did you know that Royal Arch Masonry in Alberta is in existence under an Act to incorporate the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Alberta. The Act came into existence in 1914 and remains in effect through to today.

D/ The Sub-Committee at times is also asked for interpretations of the Constitution and Regulations Articles. This allows Chapters to properly apply and understand the meaning of an Article. In addition, this quite often high lights Articles that need to be modified for clarification and or expanded to cover aspects that have been overlooked or contradict other Articles.

Closing

Companions, I would like to thank you for being here today and allowing me to provide some basic information regarding the Jurisprudence Sub-Committee which I trust will at some time prove helpful to you or your Chapter.

Should you or your Chapter have specific questions on a specific item feel free to first contact your Grand District Superintendent for assistance or advise and if more detailed information is required feel free to submit a letter detailing your subject and what the issue is through the Grand Scribe "E". We will be glad to be of service where we can.

Resented by.... **M. Ex. Comp Wally Watts**