

NWPA Diocesan Council Resolution to Permit “Virtual” Convention in 2020

Whereas, Article III of the Constitution of the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania provides in Section A.1.a. that there shall be a regular convention of the church in this diocese, to be held annually at a time and place to be fixed by the preceding Annual Convention; and

Whereas, Section A.1.b. of Article III provides that for good and sufficient cause, the time or place of meeting of the Annual Convention may be changed by the ecclesiastical authority; and

Whereas, Article V of the Constitution of the Diocese provides in Section F that it shall be the duty of the Diocesan Council to develop, prosecute, and oversee the mission and ministry of the church in the diocese, to develop a budget or budgets for the work of the diocese, to fulfill all other duties laid upon the Council by the corporate charter, by the Constitution and Canons, or by resolution of Convention, and to make full reports of its work to the Annual Convention that the Diocesan Council shall act on behalf of the Convention when the Convention is not in session; and

Whereas, the Bishop Diocesan, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the risk both to individuals and the public health that have been associated with large, in person assemblies, has requested that Diocesan Council adopt this resolution setting forth a special rule of order permitting the 110th Annual Convention of the Diocese to be held as a “Virtual Convention,” using electronic communications technology having the capabilities specified in the resolution; and

Whereas, the Diocese is organized as a Pennsylvania Non-Profit Corporation and subject to the provisions of the Pennsylvania Non-Profit Code which provides 15 Pa. C.S. §5704(a) that if a meeting of members is held by means of the Internet or other electronic communications technology in a fashion pursuant to which the members have the opportunity to read or hear the proceedings substantially concurrently with their occurrence, vote on matters submitted to the members, pose questions to the directors and members of any other body, make appropriate motions and comment on the business of the meeting, the meeting need not be held at a particular geographic location; and

Whereas, the Pennsylvania Non-Profit Code also provides in 15 Pa. C.S. §5708(b) that “the presence or participation, including voting and taking other action, at a meeting of members, or the expression of consent or dissent to corporate action, by a member by conference telephone or other electronic means, including, without limitation, the Internet, shall constitute the presence of, or vote or action by, or consent or dissent of the member for the purposes of this subpart.”

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. Diocesan Council concurs with the determination of the Bishop Diocesan that the plans for the 110th Annual Convention be based on holding the meeting as a “Virtual Convention,” and approves the adoption of a special rule of order to permit the Virtual Convention to be held, using electronic communications technology having the capabilities specified in this resolution.

2. The 110th Annual Convention may be held by means of the Internet or other electronic communications technology in a fashion pursuant to which Clergy and Lay Deputies, wherever

they may be physically located, have the opportunity to read or hear the proceedings substantially concurrently with their occurrence, vote on matters submitted to the members of Convention, pose questions to the President of Convention and members of any other body, make appropriate motions and comment on the business of the meeting, and express their consent or dissent to any matter presented to Convention for action.

3. The participation by a member of Convention at a meeting conducted using the technological means specified in paragraph 2, including voting and taking any other action, shall constitute the presence of, or vote or action by, or consent or dissent of the member of Convention for the purposes of the 110th Annual Convention.

6. The agenda for the 110th Annual Convention shall include, as a first order of business, a resolution to approve and ratify this resolution of Diocesan Council as a special rule of order, including use of the specific procedures and technology to be identified and recommended in accordance with this resolution, to hold the 110th Annual Convention

Approved this 20th day of October, 2020, at a meeting of Diocesan Council duly convened and conducted pursuant to Diocesan Canon V, Sections D and F.