

Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Wisconsin



L. Arby Humphrey
Grand Master 2017 - 2018
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Grand Master's Decision To be read at the next Stated Communication of your Lodge

Whereas, In 2014 Wisconsin Masons adopted the practice of performing background checks on all men who petition for membership in the Free and Accepted Masons of Wisconsin, and

Whereas, the Masonic Code of Wisconsin 56.06 provides the Worshipful Master with absolute power in the government of his lodge subject to the restrictions in section 56.07 including the authority to appoint all committees and to refuse to receive a petition, and

Whereas, When a petition for the degrees is presented the Master may refuse to entertain it and may order it returned to the applicant, but if such action is not taken the Master shall declare that it is received, which declaration shall constitute the act of receiving the petition by the lodge.

Whereas, the current Masonic Code of Wisconsin does not take into account our current practice of performing background checks on all men who petition for membership in the Free and Accepted Masons of Wisconsin, and

Whereas, the current petition process outlined in the Masonic Code of Wisconsin may result in an inordinate amount of time to pass before a candidate may be elected to receive the degree; at times as much as six months.

Therefore, it is my **Decision** to set aside:

That portion of 68.03 of the Masonic Code of Wisconsin that causes a Petition to be read in open lodge prior to assigning an Interviewing Committee and,

68.05 of the Masonic Code of Wisconsin, which states: **Communication When Received**. A lodge may receive a petition for the degrees or take action thereon only at a stated communication and,

68.06 **Interview Committee**. When a petition for the degrees is received by a lodge, the Master shall refer it to a committee of three for an interview and,

68.08 Time Before Ballot. At least thirteen days shall elapse between the time a petition for the degrees has been received by a lodge and balloting thereon.

Therefore, it is also my **Decision** that:

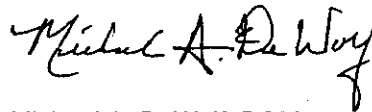
When a petition for the degrees is presented to a lodge it shall be immediately forwarded to the Grand Lodge office where a background investigation is performed, normally within two working days. If the investigation reveals a felony it is forwarded to the Grand Master for further review and determination. The Grand Master may refuse to accept the petition, if so it will be returned to the lodge. The petition must then be returned to the applicant. If the Grand Master accepts the petition, the cleared petition is returned to the Master of the Lodge who may refuse to entertain it and may order it returned to the applicant. If the petition is not returned, the Master shall declare that it is received, which declaration shall constitute the act of receiving the petition by the lodge.

Once the petition is declared received the Master shall immediately refer it to a committee of three for an interview, which should be conducted prior to the next stated communication. At the next stated communication following the interview the petition and the report of the Interview Committee must be presented in open lodge. The petition must then be balloted on unless withdrawn by the petitioner prior to the ballot.

Given under my hand this 21st day of September 2017.

M.:W.:L. Arby Humphrey
Grand Master of Masons in Wisconsin

Attest:



Michael A. DeWolf, PGM
Grand Secretary

