

Why are we trying to change the club bylaws?

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At the May 2002 business meeting (see the May-June 2002 Tattler) we tabled a vote on a proposed bylaws change which would allow the club to more easily set the amount of the annual dues. The dues issue is more important than ever now with the increasing costs involved in leasing and maintaining the tower. Even without the tower expenses, the dues do not cover the annual cost of operating the club. This is clear from our treasurer's analysis presented at the May 2002 meeting. So, without getting into what the amount should be, how can we change the dues? Currently, the section of the club bylaws covering dues (Section 3) reads as follows:

Annual dues shall be \$6.00, except that for grade, high school, and undergraduate college students' dues shall be \$3.00. Additional memberships in the same family household shall be \$3.00 and paid concurrently with the primary family membership. Dues shall be paid upon election to membership, prorated to the next March or September first. Thereafter they shall be paid for a six-month period, or multiple thereof, in advance. A grace period of 60 days shall be allowed for payment, after which membership terminates.

As you can see, the amount is fixed, and no method of changing the amount is specified. Unfortunately, this means that changing the amount means changing the club bylaws. According to the club constitution, a bylaws change may be accomplished as follows (from Article VII):

The By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote of the membership. Proposals for amendments shall be submitted at a regular meeting, but they may not be voted on until the next regular meeting, during which time the Secretary shall notify in writing all members of the proposed action.

Clearly, we don't want to have to go through a bylaws change that requires a majority vote of the membership every time we need to change the dues. This is one reason the dues have not been changed in over thirty years. In order to give the club the flexibility it needs to be responsive to changes in our operating costs, we should establish a procedure for changing the amount of the dues. *Even if we decide not to change the amount now*, we should fix the bylaws so that we *can* change the amount in the future. At the May 2002 meeting, the following language was proposed which would replace Section 3 of the bylaws:

Annual dues shall be decided by majority vote of the members present at two consecutive business meetings. There shall be two distinct votes resulting in two concurring decisions. Only one vote shall be taken per each meeting. Dues shall be changed no more than once per calendar year. Dues shall be paid upon election to membership prorated to the end of the calendar year. Thereafter they shall be paid for a yearly amount or multiples thereof in advance. A grace period of 60 days shall be allowed for payment, after which membership expires.

This proposed change to the bylaws makes it easier to change the dues, but still makes it difficult by requiring two meetings to do it. And, the dues may not be changed more often than once per calendar year.