

THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE OF ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS

OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

RELATED MASONIC ORGANIZATIONS

Applicability and Responsibility

This document is applicable to all Constituent Lodges of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Connecticut, and may be of some use to coordinate and appendant bodies.

Responsibility for maintaining this document rests with the Committee on Masonic Education, and with the approval of the Grand Master.

References

Grand Lodge of Connecticut Constitution, Masonic Law, Practice, Rules and Regulations:

Section 7100 Past Master's Degree

Discussion

Masonic organizations which operate separate from the Lodge provide support and assistance to the Lodge and its officers.

Fellowcraft Club

A Lodge may have associated with it, or with a group of Lodges which meet in the same location, an informal group which is organized for various purposes related to the organization of the Lodge. These groups may have different names, for example, Craftsman's Club, but their purposes are similar.

Many such groups accept the responsibility of recruiting and training the craftsmen required in the third degree. Some are active in raising funds for the Lodge, its building association, or for donation to good causes. They may also plan social activities for Lodge members.

These groups may have bylaws, which prescribe their officers and how they operate. Some, however, simply exist. Bylaws must be approved by the Lodge, and it must be clearly understood that the group exists and functions at the pleasure of the Lodge.

Square Club

A Square Club, which may also be called by another name, is usually a group of Masons, not necessarily from the same Lodge, but often having something in common such as an employer. Their usual purpose is to confer the third degree on new members who share the commonality of the club. These groups may have bylaws, but most simply exist.

Building Association

See the Policy & Procedures Manual Document "Masonic Building Associations". These exist to shield the Lodge from the risks and liabilities of owning real estate.

Blue Lodge Council

Each Masonic District has some form of a Blue Lodge Council or Masters and Wardens Association which exists to provide coordination of schedules and sharing of information amongst Lodges in the District. Host Lodges often provide a dinner preceding the meeting allowing for greater fellowship among the craft.

Blue Lodge Councils operate under their own set of bylaws; these bylaws generally provide for the frequency, location, and type of meetings. The bylaws are subject to the approval of the District Grand Lodge Officer.

Councils choose their own officers; these brethren work closely with the District Grand Lodge officer, District Deputies, and Associate Grand Marshals in planning programs which will benefit the Lodges within the district.

In recent years, Deputy Grand Masters have attempted to visit most of the district Blue Lodge Councils in the months preceding their installation as Grand Master. At these sessions, the craft is encouraged to set forth their concerns, criticisms, and ideas for the future of Masonry. The conversations in these meetings have also served as the basis for the work of the Grand Lodge Committee on Strategic Planning.

With the consent of the constituent Lodges, a Blue Lodge Council may collect dues to help defray meeting costs and to pay for other items. Some districts jointly honor outgoing District Deputies and Associate Grand Marshals with past officer jewels; others make donations to local charities, Masonic youth groups, and the Masonic Charity Foundation.

Councils sometimes appoint internal committees to operate special events. These may be a parade where regional or statewide participation is important, a district family outing, a district CTCHIP event, or a special communication featuring a degree team appropriate for the occasion.

Actual Past Masters Lodge

As noted in the reference section of Grand Lodge law, no man may be installed as Worshipful Master of a lodge until he has "passed the chair" - that is to say, until he has received the Actual Past Master Degree.

This is a tiled piece of ritual at which any Lodge Past Master may be present; Masons who have taken only the Virtual Past Master degree in a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons are not entitled to sit in a lodge of Actual Past Masters.

Some Lodges prefer to confer the degree upon the Master-Elect in their own Lodge. But In most cases, the Past Masters of numerous Lodges in a geographical area (district, county, other specified boundary) band together to confer the degree on a large class of candidates.

A brother need only take the Actual Past Master Degree once, no matter how many times he occupies the East in his Lodge. An association may require the payment of modest annual dues for its membership.

As installations of new officers are held annually, Actual Past Masters Lodges usually meet annually, generally in December. At this meeting, all business, including the degree and election of officers, is held. Those who are eligible to participate are notified of the meeting (and dinner) by the Secretary, who often serves in that position for many years.