

## Special Committee to Evaluate a Hybrid General Assembly

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## Background and Special Committee Charge

At the 2022 General Assembly Meeting a motion was passed requesting the Board or ad hoc committee of the AAE to research the possibility of allowing all eligible members to participate in and vote at the General Assembly, and submit a report to the 2023 General Assembly.

AAE President Stefan Zweig appointed the special committee and charged it with reporting to the Board on the potential for a hybrid model for the General Assembly (including live participants at the meeting, and remote virtual participants.) As part of its work the committee was asked to consider various factors including logistics, parliamentary considerations, resources and cost required.

## Evaluation Method

The committee was asked to consider what information should be gathered in order to make a recommendation on the potential for a hybrid General Assembly. Factors for Consideration as prepared by staff were reviewed in November 2022 and updated per committee recommendations (Referenced in Attachment A).

Following the committee's November meeting, staff reached out to vendors, experts, and other organizations to develop detailed reports on these factors. These reports were provided to the committee for consideration at its January 2023 meeting.

## Summary and Recommendation

The committee evaluated input from legal and parliamentary experts, reviewed the practices of other similar organizations, and reviewed technology requirements, costs, and personnel requirements for holding a hybrid meeting. A brief description of these evaluations follows.

### *Historical Perspective*

General Assembly meetings (both in-person and virtual) over the past few years show similar attendance. For this reason, it is not expected that adding a virtual component to the General Assembly proceedings will yield more than a modest increase in attendance. A special assessment for virtual attendees was discussed by the committee to neutralize the additional cost. The expected significant cost of adding a virtual component, coupled with modest virtual attendance, would likely yield a per-attendee cost exceeding that of the annual meeting registration.

### *Other Organizations' Experience*

Seven dental organizations, including specialties, the ADA and ADEA, as well as two non-dental organizations, provided responses to an inquiry regarding whether they allow for hybrid participation in

their General Assemblies or Houses of Delegates. No respondents provide this option. Several groups cited similar concerns with hybrid governance meetings: high costs, complex technical and logistical requirements, and strains on limited staff resources.

### *Parliamentary Implications*

Two outside parliamentarians were consulted as part of the committee's investigation, and although both agreed that a hybrid meeting is possible to deliver, they both acknowledged the complexities of holding a hybrid meeting. A key point was that all voting members must be treated equally and fairly, which is more difficult to do in a scenario where some participants are in the room together and others are participating remotely.

### *Legal Implications*

The committee consulted with legal counsel, who noted that holding a hybrid meeting is not unlawful and that the AAE's Constitution and Bylaws would permit the AAE to hold such a meeting without requiring an amendment. However, the AAE is not required to offer a hybrid meeting. AAE's legal counsel shared his knowledge of other organizations' experiences- specifically, that he is not aware of any association that is offering a hybrid governance meeting, largely due to the significant logistical and financial requirements.

### *Technology, Security, Voting*

The following requirements were identified for a hybrid General Assembly:

- 1) Synchronous viewing, participation, and voting by in person and virtual attendees
- 2) Virtual attendees are able to hear and view the general assembly presentations on screen, speakers on stage, and speakers from the audience
- 3) In person attendees are able to view and hear virtual attendees
- 4) Ability to establish a speaker queue for in person and remote attendees, with ability to identify and alternate between pro and con speakers
- 5) Voting technology to accommodate secure voting from in person and virtual attendees
- 6) Voting technology to include real-time creation of motions, and publication of ballot results
- 7) Voter authentication and anonymity
- 8) Required technicians and labor teams to operate and manage cameras, video streams, audio systems, and voting technology

Based upon these requirements, the total cost for the AAE to provide a hybrid General Assembly meeting ranged from \$120,000 to 135,000- this range varies based upon the type of voting solution utilized.

### *Recommendation and Board Comment*

The committee determined that holding a hybrid meeting would be complex and costly, and that the risks inherent in offering a hybrid meeting far outweighed the potential rewards. Therefore, the committee recommends that the AAE not pursue a hybrid General Assembly meeting at this time.

The Board supports the committee's recommendation. This report is informational and no motions are presented.

## ATTACHMENT A

### Factors Considered

#### *Cost Implications*

- 1) Livestreaming the GA Meeting such that remote participants can follow along with proceedings, including presentations from the podium and testimony from the floor
- 2) Technology to allow remote participants to speak and be heard by the assembly; and to queue up to speak pro/con/point of order
- 3) Technology to allow in person and remote secured voting
- 4) Parliamentary management – determine needs and number of parliamentarian(s) required
- 5) Consideration of a break-even model and evaluation of what the cost per remote member might be.

#### *Other Organizations' Experiences*

Have they hosted hybrid governance meetings, and if so, what was their experience? If they have not done so, have they considered this as an option and what weighed into their decision?

- 1) Dental Specialty Groups (DSGs)
- 2) American Dental Association
- 3) Inquire with AAE's parliamentarian
- 4) American Dental Education Association
- 5) American Society of Association Executives
- 6) American Medical Association
- 7) American Bar Association

#### *Security and Access*

- 1) Evaluate whether there are secure systems that would allow live voting remotely and in person
- 2) Evaluate ease of use/accessibility for such platforms. Of note, a secure stand-alone virtual voting system was attempted for the 2021 General Assembly, but the technology and access proved to be a barrier for members, resulting in moving all virtual voting to the Zoom platform.

#### *Historical Perspective*

- 1) Review of the number of voting members in attendance at the Annual meeting, and trends in General Assembly participation. Consideration of cost/benefit analysis.

#### *Parliamentary and Legal Implications*

- 1) Obtain opinions on amendments to the AAE constitution specifying requirements for in person and virtual attendance and voting at the General Assembly.
- 2) Obtain legal advisement on state law relative to AAE conducting business via a hybrid General Assembly.