Introduction to the General Assembly
August 2023

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A Legal Mandate

WSAVA is a not-for-profit organisation incorporated in Canada under the Canadian Not-for-Profit Act (NFP Act). The NFP Act states that WSAVA must hold a meeting of members each year. Within WSAVA the annual meeting of members is known as the General Assembly. As an association of associations WSAVA’s membership consists of many different veterinary associations from around the world, each with an active interest companion animal veterinary practice. Each WSAVA member association appoints a member representative. The member representative attends the General Assembly and acts on their association’s behalf. The General Assembly is the ultimate decision-making body for WSAVA as it is they who elect the Executive Board, and it is the Executive Board who are responsible for supervising the activities of WSAVA. The Executive Board set the WSAVA strategy and delegate delivery of the WSAVA strategy to the Executive Director.

Types of General Assembly

There are two types of General Assembly: annual and special. The annual General Assembly takes place every year in conjunction with the WSAVA World Congress during September or October. It is usually an in-person event without the option to view or participate remotely. Special General Assembly’s take place as needed. A special General Assembly will usually be called when there are matters which can only be decided by the General Assembly, and it is not practical to wait until the next annual General Assembly. A special General Assembly may take place online or in-person.

Attendance

In addition to member representatives, the General Assembly is attended by the Executive Board, Secretariat, Past Presidents, and other invited guests. Many member representatives choose to be attended by a colleague from their member association. Accompanying colleagues and invited guests attend in an observer’s capacity and are admitted only on the invitation of the Chair or by resolution of the members (by-law 6.6). The Chair of the General Assembly is the WSAVA President or President-Elect (by-law 6.7).
Format

An annual General Assembly is a full day event. Registration will be open from 08:00am and the proceedings will start at 09:00am. The day is split into two sessions. The morning session will focus on one or two topics. The topics are chosen by the Executive Board as matters of importance to WSAVA, and which require the memberships input. A variety of participatory exercises are used to canvas opinion(s). Those opinions will inform the Executive Boards decision making. During the morning the layout of the room will usually be cabaret style (circular tables seating around eight people).

Morning Session at the General Assembly 2022 – Lima, Peru.

The afternoon session is more formal. This is where official discussion, proposals, voting, and elections take place. During the afternoon the room will be laid out in lecture style with rows of tables. Member representatives will be allocated the rows toward the front. Observers will take their seats towards the back. It is common for a new WSAVA product to be introduced
to the membership at the General Assembly (guidelines, etc.). This will happen at the end of the agenda. The day often concludes with a short drink’s reception.

Language

WSAVA’s official language is English, and the General Assembly is conducted in English throughout. Member representatives are welcome to have a translator accompany them if they wish.

Agenda

The WSAVA by-laws state that the Executive Board sets the agenda for General Assembly meetings (by-law 6.8). The agenda is partly informed by legal requirements. For example, it will always include consideration of the financial statements, receipt of report from the public accountant, appointment of a public accountant, and election of directors. Items which require General Assembly approval will also be on the agenda (by-law 6.9).

Notice of General Assembly meetings will always be issued to member representatives with no less than twenty-eight days’ notice. The WSAVA will always endeavour to provide up to
sixty days’ notice (by-law 6.1). When a notice of meeting is issued to members it will be accompanied by sufficient information to allow members to understand the business to be conducted at that meeting (by-law 6.8). Members may add items to the agenda. Requests for adding items to the agenda must be received no later than fourteen days before the General Assembly. Additions to the agenda must be accepted by the General Assembly (by-law 6.8). Instructions on how members may add to the agenda are included when the notice of General Assembly is issued. At the start of the afternoon session and once the Chair has called the meeting to order, one of the first matters to be voted upon will be the acceptance of the agenda.

**Consent Agenda**

The afternoon session of a General Assembly will almost always have a section called consent agenda. A consent agenda groups routine meeting discussion points into a single agenda item. As a result, the grouped items can be approved in one action, rather than through the filing of multiple motions. The consent agenda will only be used for items which are not expected to need discussion. However, if your association believes an item listed in the consent agenda requires further discussion at the General Assembly, you can request for it to be removed. That item will then be discussed once all other agenda items have been covered. Before the meeting concludes, the Chair will move for the consent agenda to be approved by a vote.

**Quorum**

A quorum at any meeting of the members shall be a majority of the members entitled to vote at the meeting. Members may be deemed present in person, by proxy, or by electronic means. If a quorum is present at the opening of a general assembly, the members present may proceed with the business of the meeting even if a quorum is not present throughout the meeting (by-law 6.10).

For example, if WSAVA had 100 member associations then a quorum would be present if no less than 51 member associations were present at the General Assembly. At the start of the afternoon session of the General Assembly a vote will take place for the purposes of determining whether a quorum is present or not. If for whatever reason a quorum is not present, the agenda may proceed but any votes are not binding and will not take effect.
**Participating in Discussion**

It is the right of all WSAVA member associations to participate in the General Assembly via their appointed member representative. Participation at the General Assembly is strongly encouraged. During the morning session much of the discussion(s) will take place in small groups. Time will be allocated on the agenda for the themes arising from your groups discussion to be shared with all attendees.

During the afternoon how you participate will be a little more formal. You can participate by sharing your association’s opinion on agenda items, declaring your support or opposition for motions, asking questions, and by voting. A variety of microphone stands will be set up around the room. If you wish to participate in discussion, you should walk to one of the microphones stands and wait to be acknowledged by the Chair. When the Chair acknowledges you, first start by introducing yourself by name and association, followed by the comment(s) you wish to make. You should address your comments to the Chair. You will have up to two minutes speak. When you have finished or your time is up, you will only be allowed to speak for a second time once everyone else who wishes to speak has also had their turn. It is very important that you use the microphones as this will ensure we can minute the discussion accurately.

If you put forward a motion that is not already on the agenda, then this must be seconded by another member representative. Seconding a motion helps to indicate that there is support for an item to be discussed by the General Assembly as a whole. Motions stated on the agenda do not require a seconder as they have either been ratified by a WSAVA committee or reviewed and approved by the Executive Board. During the General Assembly try not to worry about remembering what to say and when because the Chair will guide participants to what is required. As a reminder, only member representatives, the Executive Board, and Secretariat can participate in discussion. All other General Assembly attendees are observers only.

**Voting**

Only member associations have the right to vote at the General Assembly. The number of votes an association receives is dependent on their membership category and membership size (by-law 5.1.2).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voting Member Category</th>
<th>Number of Companion Animal Veterinarians that have an Active Membership with the Voting Member</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliated Member</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Member</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Member</td>
<td>0 – 100</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>101 – 400</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>401 – 900</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>901 – 1,600</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,601 – 2,500</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,501 – 3,600</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,601 – 4,900</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;4,901</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WSAVA uses an electronic system called Election Buddy to collect and count votes. If you are attending the General Assembly in person you will need to bring with you a smartphone, tablet, or laptop computer to submit your votes through. Power outlets and wireless internet will be available in the meeting room. You will be prompted by the Chair when a vote has opened. Most votes will be simple and in the following form: for, against, abstain. Votes will remain open for a couple of minutes before the results are announced to attendees. All results will be shared with a breakdown of the number of votes received for, against, and the number of abstentions. The only exception to this is election votes where only the winning candidate will be announced. However, if no majority is received on the first round of election voting, then the vote will be repeated less the candidate with the least number of votes, until a candidate is elected with a majority (by-law 6.1).

All member representatives and proxies will receive details on how to access the electronic voting system on Sunday 10 September 2023. You should keep this email safe as you will need it during the General Assembly. If you have any questions regarding electronic voting or do not receive details on how to access the electronic voting system, email admin@wsava.org ASAP.
Remote and Proxy Voting

If you are unable to attend the General Assembly in person you may still submit your associations votes, either by remote vote (by-law 6.3.1) or by proxy (by-law 6.3.2). It is important for you to understand that if you vote remotely or by proxy you will not have the ability to amend your vote following any discussion that takes place during the General Assembly.

If you choose to vote remotely then you will receive an email notification each time a vote is opened during the General Assembly. You will need to monitor your email inbox closely during the day as when ballots are opened there will only be a short window of time to vote. Alternatively, you may choose to keep the voting page open on your web browser. Votes will appear on the screen as they are opened. For the General Assembly taking place on 26 September 2023, you can expect to receive notification(s) of ballots opening between 13:00 to 17:00 UTC.

If you choose to vote by proxy, a proxy may be a member representative of another association, or someone independent. If you appoint a proxy who is also voting for another WSAVA member association, they will need to logout of the electronic voting system once they have submitted the vote for their association, before logging back into the voting system to vote for your association. In the interests of simplicity for the proxy, it is recommended you appoint a proxy who is not a member representative of another association.

If you are not attending the General Assembly in person and have not already told us you wish to vote remotely or appoint a proxy, you should let us know HERE.