

2021 Director Election and Candidate FAQ

What is on the ballot in 2021?

- Only one seat, from Augusta/Highland County.

When is the Annual Business Meeting?

- The annual business meeting of co-op members will be via telephone, on Thursday, August 13, 2021, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

How and when will members vote?

- Voting will be by mail and online and take place in the weeks leading up to the meeting. Results will be announced near the end of the annual business meeting,

How can a member appear on the ballot?

- There are two ways:
 1. By petition submitted for nominating committee review. 2021 will be the third year in which the main focus of the nominating system is on petitions. The great majority of members are eligible for nomination by petition, making it up to the individual member whether to run for a seat on the board.
 2. By nomination from the nominating committee. There can be only one committee nominee. The reason the committee picks a candidate is to make sure there is at least one candidate, so the seat will be filled even if no one petitions for candidacy. Except for that reason, all candidates would submit petitions.
- The nominating committee has selected Larry C. Howdyshell, the incumbent, for the lone seat up for election this year. Nominating committees often name the incumbent if that person seeks another term, knowing that most any other member can seek candidacy by petition, and that up to three petition candidates can be on the ballot along with the committee nominee for each open seat.

- If more than three members satisfy the eligibility and petition signature requirements, the Nominating Committee will choose the three who it believes are most qualified to run.
- If more than the committee nominee and three petition nominees were permitted to run, a candidate could win with a low percent of votes cast. This would put a candidate on the board without having received meaningful support from co-op members voting. Another reason to limit the number is that members look to Cooperative Living for biographical information on candidates, and there are space limitations that would reduce the information that could be given for each candidate if there were more than four candidates.

What is the role of the nominating committee?

- Under the cooperative's bylaws (Article IV, Section 4), it is the duty of the nominating committee to nominate one and only one candidate for each board seat due for election in a given year.
- The board of directors appoints members to serve on the nominating committee from the jurisdiction(s) up for re-election. That way, committee members are more likely to have information about members seeking to be candidates. This allows the committee both to choose one nominee, and also decide which three petition candidates are best qualified if more than three members submit valid petitions.

Who is on the nominating committee?

2021 Nominating Committee

Nick Collins
850 Hotchkiss Road
Churchville, VA 24421

Josh Puffenbarger
1056 Mt. Solon Road
Mt. Solon, VA 22843

What are the steps to obtaining a petition?

- Any candidate interested in submitting a petition must obtain the document from SVEC's corporate attorney Dale Davenport and return the petition by 4:00 p.m. on March 15th.
- Petitions must have the signatures of at least 50 SVEC account holders in good standing. It doesn't matter if the member signing lives in the jurisdiction(s) where there is the vacancy sought. The candidate must live there, but a member who signs a petition may live anywhere as long as they are a member in good standing.
 - **Important Note:** While 50 signatures is the minimum required, petitioners are encouraged to obtain additional names to ensure their document is certified. On past petitions, the signatures that could be counted have been fewer, sometimes a lot fewer, than the number signing the petition. One problem arises if a husband and wife each sign a petition when SVEC membership is only in the name of one of the couple. If the co-op has no record of a spouse signing as a member, the signature cannot be counted. Also, the member signing must have paid their bill to be in good standing. The safest approach is to get many signatures above the 50 required. Also, unfortunately there is no substitute for having ink-on-paper signatures; digital substitutes cannot be allowed.
 - **How many petition nominees are allowed?**
 - Again, three. If more than three members petition for the same seat, the nominating committee is to choose the best three qualified.

Timeline for Petition Candidates

- February/March: Obtain a petition by contacting Dale Davenport at 540-437-2223. He will go over the process in detail and answer any questions.
- 4 p.m. March 15: Submit petition with signatures of 50 SVEC account holders in good standing to Davenport at Hoover Penrod PLC, 342 South Main Street, Harrisonburg, Virginia. Petitions must be actually received by this date, so take into account the possibility that the mail may be delayed if the petition is not delivered in person.
 - As petitions are submitted, SVEC staff will immediately work to confirm the eligibility of the petition candidate and 50 signatures. It is not feasible to return a petition with an insufficient number of valid signatures for a second effort. Again, far more than 50 signatures will give a safety margin.
- Later in the week of March 15: Nominating committee members will review petitions and select no more than three candidates to run against the previously nominated candidate.

What should a candidate do if he/she has questions?

- All candidate inquiries should go through Dale Davenport at 540-437-2223.