

# Manual for Operation of the GPMI State Central Committee

This is part of the GPMI Handbook as referenced in the bylaws, and shall be included as part of the Handbook. A separate section on operation of State Central Committee is important because the committee should function in a manner that makes positive improvements to the Green Party of Michigan.

This part of the Handbook is for use by both the Administrator (currently the Committee Manager) and the members of the State Central Committee (SCC). When approved at a State Membership Meeting or by the SCC as an addition to the Handbook, the Administrator is granted the authority for enforcement of the guidelines, and has the responsibility to carry out other responsibilities for the proper functioning of the SCC.

The Administrator shall initially make all members of the SCC aware of this manual by emailing a digital copy of it to all the members of the SCC. The Administrator shall also send it to all new members of the SCC as they become members, and request that they review all rules for participation in the SCC.

The Administrator shall also maintain a current list of all SCC members, their title or qualifying role for membership on the SCC, and email address. A record of current SCC members is maintained by the Chair, Committee Manager and Locals Liaison in a spreadsheet entitled "SCC voting members," in the GPMI Google Drive account:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1iYoG8-kNgwcMFJ-RQz2m7lQRszKSq3NzqPzfePRYtlc/edit?usp=sharing>

This is important so that all members can communicate off list with one another when their communication does not need to be shared with the entire listserv.

**Purpose of the SCC:** The primary decision-making body is the State Membership Meeting. The SCC makes necessary decisions in between those meetings. Business of the SCC is conducted via a restricted group at [migreensscc@yahoogroups.com](mailto:migreensscc@yahoogroups.com). Only SCC members may post; attachments are permitted.

## Group Email addresses:

Post Message: [migreensscc@yahoogroups.com](mailto:migreensscc@yahoogroups.com)

Unsubscribe: [migreensscc-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:migreensscc-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com)

Subscribe: [migreensscc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:migreensscc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

List Owner: [migreensscc-owner@yahoogroups.com](mailto:migreensscc-owner@yahoogroups.com)

## I. Posting Guidelines

**A. Signing Posts.** All list posts should be signed at the bottom of every message with the first and last name of the author. Members should also identify their position.

**B. Relevance.** Posts unrelated to formal party business should not be sent to the SCC list. Messages of a personal nature are not considered relevant.

**C. General Netiquette.** In general, when quoting other messages, the person quoted should be properly cited, and extraneous text (including headers, footers, irrelevant messages to the section being responded to when replying to a digest, and the like) should be deleted. Non-substantive one-word replies generally should be sent off-list. Violations of General Netiquette guidelines can result in written informal reminders from the Administrator. Repeated off topic posting, over-posting and other disregard for the purpose of the lists can be grounds for an official warning according to enforcement rules.

**D. Tone.** Insults, name-calling, sexist/sexual, racist, homophobic, or otherwise demeaning or degrading comments will not be tolerated. (Personal, one-on-one arguments are inappropriate and should be taken off list for one-on-one communication.) Hateful, abusive, and threatening language are prohibited. Attacks of a personal, ad hominem nature are prohibited. Making false and defamatory accusations on the listserv against another list member, candidate, committee, caucus or the Green Party of Michigan, that can be clearly and objectively disproved, is prohibited. If such accusations are made unintentionally, a retraction is called for. Failure to retract such allegations can result in an action by the Administrator.

All listserv members are strongly encouraged to bear in mind the official nature of the list and refrain from the use of obscene or otherwise offensive language in keeping with Respect for Diversity.

**E. Forwards of Private Messages.** Forwarding private messages to the list without the expressed written permission of the original author is prohibited.

**F. Forwards of Other Items.** Copyrighted material (newspaper articles, website content, etc.) and other items forwarded should be accompanied by, if applicable, a source URL, the name(s) of the author(s), and the originating source (if a publication).

**G. Proper Use of Messages.** List members retain their personal copyright for their original messages, but through use of the forum grant other members the right to publicly quote portions of their message in any medium, and the right to forward messages in their entirety to others so long as the author's name and web address is cited or linked.

## **II. Enforcement of Posting Guidelines**

The Administrator may deny access to the listserv or remove the posting privileges of members who violate the Posting Guidelines, and will notify individuals through a private email message of the violation. **No member who is offended by a post should respond on the listserv to any post that violates the above guidelines. The member should immediately inform the Administrator of the violation. Persons who respond to the violator to scold or complain are themselves in violation of the rules.**

The Committee Manager is the primary officer responsible for enforcement of the guidelines, proper dissemination of information to members, and contacting members who are not active as described below. The Chair will serve as a back-up in the event the Committee Manager for any reason does not enforce the guidelines or perform other responsibilities. At the request of three members of the SCC the Chair will review the state of enforcement and maintenance of the SCC, and if necessary assume responsibility or assist in the administration of the SCC. Both the Committee Manager and the Chair may form working groups as provided in the bylaws to assist in administration and enforcement of guidelines.

The process for dealing with violations will be as follows:

A. First Violation – Warning: Subscribers violating the rules for the first time will generally receive a communication from the Administrator about the inappropriate nature of the posting(s).

B. Second Violation within a six-month period – Probation: Should a second violation occur, the subscriber will be notified and asked to review the rules, and subsequent postings will be subject to approval prior to posting for a period of time commensurate with the seriousness of the incident (one to four weeks). If deemed appropriate, the member will be asked to provide public apologies.

C. Third violation within a six-month period – Suspension of Posting Privileges: A third violation will result in suspension of posting privileges for a time commensurate with the seriousness of the incident (one to three months). At the end of the suspension period, the member must request reinstatement of posting privileges with the understanding that further violations will result in immediate suspension if the violations are made within one month of the suspension.

**D. Extreme incident: Posting of illegal material, purposeful dissemination of viruses or intentional unprovoked personal attacks will result in immediate suspension of posting privileges.**

## **III. Responsibilities of Members and duties of Administrator for Retaining Active Members.**

A. Members of the SCC have a responsibility to actively participate in the work in of the SCC. It is important for members to vote because of quorum requirements for voting. Members are responsible for reporting to the administrator any change in email address.

B. The administrator, upon being notified of a new member, shall invite the member to join the SCC, provide the member with a copy of the Manual for the SCC, and request that the member be familiar with the contents before posting on the SCC listserv.

C. If newly appointed members to the SCC do not respond to a request to join the listserv within 14 days, the person may

not be added to the list of members unless the member later specifically requests to join the SCC.

D. The Administrator shall periodically contact SCC members who have not actively participated within the last 90 days (contacting "absent" members at least once every 4 months but immediately if a quorum is not reached for any vote), and request that they review the manual and affirm to the Administrator that they will be active and wish to remain on the committee. If no response is received from the member after 20 days, the Administrator shall remove the person from the membership list and inform the member of the removal. If the person is a representative of a local, the officers of the local shall be informed of the removal and allowed an opportunity to replace the individual.

E. Only recognized members of the SCC may participate in discussions on the SCC. The Administrator may allow other persons who are members of GPMI to observe the discussions.

### **DECISION-MAKING / CONSENSUS PROCESS**

The SCC makes decisions by a modified consensus process. Any SCC member may present an idea for an action to be taken, such as sponsorship, recommendation to nominate or endorse a candidate or ballot issue or action taken by another organization, a proposal for a modification of the by-laws or of the GP-MI or GP-US platform. An SCC member may present an Idea on behalf of a GP-MI member who is not on the SCC. The SCC may fill vacant positions, subject to ratification at the next SMM. The SCC may not nominate candidates for public office or amend the GP-MI By-laws — these may be approved only at an SMM. NOTE: Any decisions made by the SCC may be reversed at a state membership meeting.

Postings need to be clear, as brief as possible, and easy to follow. We recommend that the most applicable officers be consulted first to determine whether a proposal is even necessary, such as proposing a place for a convention when the Meeting Manager already planned a place for it. Other potential proposals can be most effective and efficient if the idea is "run by" a few members to fine-tune it. The idea is first discussed for clarification, to fill in details, to handle concerns.

When and if the idea is ready to become a proposal, the presenter will state "PROPOSAL" in the Subject line with a brief yet clear title. When the Idea has the explicit support of two other voting members of the SCC, it becomes a formal proposal to be decided and is given a date code. If the proposal does not receive two supports from other voting members within 14 days, the proposal is considered to have been withdrawn, and may be submitted by the proposer at a later date. During this time there may have been concerns expressed by voting members that can form a basis for amending the proposal and re-submitting it. The proposal may be withdrawn at any time by the member who submitted the proposal either before or after it is supported.

The Administrator will state the timeline for decision. Typically, a proposal is discussed on the SCC list for one week. Because this is an online discussion, and everyone is not on the internet at the same time, the week is measured in whole days following the day in which the Idea became a formal proposal. That is, it may be eight days after the Idea was first presented.

If the specific nature of the proposal requires a decision sooner, any SCC member may request it to be expedited, which reduces the process to two days, provided there are no blocking objections. The two-day process means two whole days following the day in which the Idea received two supports and became a formal proposal. Sometimes called "no-brainers," these should obviously agree with our platform and values. It is a legitimate objection that a quick decision is not necessary. Once this or any other objection is made, the one-week discussion period then applies.

During the discussion period, we try to arrive at consensus. A member with concerns about the proposal should express those concerns. If an amendment to the existing language of the proposal would remove the concern(s), a friendly amendment should be proposed with appropriate language necessary to alleviate any concern(s). The amendment then becomes part of the discussion. If the original proposer agrees to the amendment, and the proposal as amended receives the support of any two members the discussion continues on the proposal as amended. During the discussion period, the discussion time may be extended at the discretion of the Administrator, or at the request of the proposer. Extensions of the discussion period may be made in 3-day increments. The goal is to address all concerns that are raised, and give adequate time for the discussion. However, the discussion period may only be extended twice. A blocking objection may be removed by the objector at any time during the discussion period so as to facilitate consensus.

USING BLOCKING OBJECTIONS. Blocking objections should be used rarely. Any SCC member with a blocking objection should indicate that by using the specific phrase "blocking objection," so there is no ambiguity. If a member has a criticism that does not rise to the level of a blocking objection, it is helpful to state, "This is not a blocking objection."

WHAT IS A BLOCKING OBJECTION? No blocking objection should be made for the main purpose of forcing the proposal to a vote. Any blocking objection must relate to the proposal, and be something the proposer can do something about. The blocking objection should specify exactly what part of the proposal (underlying reason, language in the proposal, violation of a by-law or Green Party principle, additional necessary matters to be considered, etc.), gives rise to an objection serious enough to kill the proposal. If the member objecting wants something added, changed, removed, or replaced, the member objecting should propose an amendment that would remove the particular objection whenever possible, rather than voicing a blocking objection. This helps to clarify the objection and promotes consensus. The Administrator may declare the blocking objection is not recognized as such if it appears that the member objecting has not adequately considered an alternative to voicing a blocking objection. The Administrator will explain clearly the reason for their decision.

The presenter may be able to modify the proposal to resolve an objection during the discussion period, whether it is a blocking objection or a lesser concern, with the support of any two members.

Consensus may be reached even if not every member supports the proposal. Those who disagree, but do not have a blocking objection may explicitly agree to stand aside. However, those who have concerns and do not stand aside, do not prevent the proposal from passing by consensus. It may be that some members who agree with the proposal or at least have no objection to it have said nothing. We do not require that every member express an opinion on every proposal.

If a blocking objection is not resolved during the discussion period, a vote is required. The voting period is also one week. Once voting has started, the proposal may not be changed.

Our modified consensus process is considerably less than perfect. Our process is as much expedient as it is principled. We still need to make decisions and move on. Our imperfect process allows us to do that.

Ideally, we would take as long as needed to resolve a blocking objection, and would resort to voting only if the issue itself needs to be acted upon. However, that's simply impractical in an online discussion. Many issues could be discussed indefinitely without ever being resolved. Thus we have decided on a time limit for discussing a proposal.

## **VOTING and RECORDS**

In the event of a vote, current By-laws require participation of at least 2/3 of the SCC membership for a quorum. Votes of "YES," "NO," and 'ABSTAIN" count towards the quorum. A Proposal may fail if the SCC does not reach a quorum. A majority of at least 2/3 of those voting "Yes" or "No" is required to adopt the proposal.

One person may be an SCC member for more than one reason. For instance, she may be an elected officer and an NC Representative. Each person on the SCC gets one and only one vote.

Documents such as bylaws, the Handbook, list of current members, minutes of meetings and other documents are posted on the GPMI website at [migreenparty.org](http://migreenparty.org).

## **TWO WAYS TO PARTICIPATE ON the Listserv**

Ordinarily, every message sent to the group list will appear in your email, mixed in with all of your other email. Because those posting to the list do not always (to put it mildly) change the subject line when they change the subject, following the discussion can be confusing.

You may also go to Yahoo.com and establish an account. After your account is established, you may go directly to the list after log-in. Set your membership options—such as Daily or Digest. You may look at and search past group emails ("Conversations") and more on that site.

With Digest, you will receive all of the day's group emails in one lump. However, when members reply and retain every

prior message in the chain, it makes it unnecessarily lengthy. And one may not delete or keep individual messages with Digest.

#### **AMENDING THIS MANUAL**

This manual may be amended by vote of the SCC in accordance with voting procedures outlined above.