


**THE
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
GRAND COUNCIL
OF
ROYAL AND SELECT MASTERS
OF
SOUTH CAROLINA**



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Corrected for Scrivener's
Errors
3/21/2022**

CONSTITUTION
of
THE GRAND COUNCIL
of
ROYAL AND SELECT MASTERS
of
SOUTH CAROLINA

Original Constitution Adopted February 15, 1860, with Amendments to March 1999.
Reformatted and reprinted with amended changes to 2018.

Inclusive

Incorporated February 17, 1916 – Act No. 397

ARTICLE I

Name

SECTION I. The Name, style and title of this Grand Council shall be “The Most Illustrious Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of South Carolina.”

ARTICLE II

Jurisdiction and Authority

The Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of South Carolina is the Supreme Cryptic authority in the State of South Carolina and exercises full authority and control over the degrees of Royal Master, Select Master, and Super Excellent Master, and over all Councils of such, within the State of South Carolina.

ARTICLE III

Members

SECTION I. The Grand Council shall consist of a Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Principal Conductor of the Work, Grand Treasurer, Grand Recorder, Grand Chaplain, and Grand Captain of the Guard, who shall be elected by ballot; Grand Conductor of the Council, Grand Marshal, Grand Steward, six District Deputy Grand Masters, and a Grand Sentinel, who shall be appointed by the Grand Master; together with the Past Grand Masters, Past Deputy Grand Masters, and Past Grand Principal Conductors of the Work of this Grand Council; together with the first three officers of every subordinate Council in this state.

SECTION II. The official title of the Grand Officers shall be as follows: Grand Master – “Most Illustrious;” the officers down to and including Grand Captain of the Guard and the District Deputies – “Right Illustrious;” and all other officers – “Illustrious.”

SECTION III. Upon the date that a Companion becomes a member of a Council in this Grand Jurisdiction he shall be furnished by the Council with a card signed by the Recorder, certifying his membership, and standing as a Select Master. These cards shall be designed and furnished by the Grand Recorder at cost.

SECTION IV. Each Council in South Carolina must be represented at one Grand Assembly in a three-year period. Failure to attend will be reason for arresting the Council's charter.

ARTICLE IV
Grand Assemblies

There shall be one Annual Assembly of the Grand Council, which shall be Holden at such place as the Grand Council may from time to time determine, during the Second Week in March. The Grand Master shall call such special assemblies as he shall think proper and necessary, and in case of his inability to attend, he shall have the authority to appoint the Deputy Grand Master, Grand Principal Conductor of the Work, or a Past Grand Master to preside in his stead. The representatives of three Councils shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE V
Regularity of Visitors

No Select Master shall ever be acknowledged as regular, or admitted, or permitted to visit any Council in this State unless he shall have received the degrees of Royal Master and Select Master in a just and legally constituted Council.

ARTICLE VI
Formation of New Councils

SECTION I. The Grand Master shall have the power to grant dispensations for the formation of new Councils, which dispensations shall remain in force until the next Annual Assembly of the Grand Council.

SECTION II. The fee for a dispensation for the formation of a new Council shall be the sum of fifty dollars, to be paid to the Grand Council.

ARTICLE VII
Standing Committees

Following each Annual Assembly, the Illustrious Grand Master shall appoint the following Standing Committees:

Audit

1. Composition: The audit Committee shall consist of three (3) members, one (1) member to be appointed annually following the Annual Assembly by the Illustrious Grand Master. The Chairman will be designated by the Illustrious Grand Master each year following the Annual Assembly.
2. Term: The term of each appointed member shall be three (3) years, and: no appointed member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms, except that the terms of the first, and only first members of the Committee appointed under the provisions of this section when adopted shall be: one (1) member with initial term of one (1) year; one (1) member with two (1) years and (1) member with three (3) years.
3. Duties: To examine the books of the Grand Treasurer and the Grand Recorder and certify to the Grand Council the condition, state, and repository of all funds and investments.

Finance

1. Composition: The finance Committee shall consist of three (3) member one (1) to be appointed annually by the Illustrious Grand Master. The Chairman will be designated by the Illustrious Grand Master each year following the Annual Assembly. By their positions the Illustrious Grand Master, The Grand Treasurer and the Grand Recorder shall automatically be members of the Committee.
2. Term: The term of each appointed member shall be three (3) years, and: no appointed member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms, except that the terms of the first, and only first members of the Committee appointed under the provisions of this section when adopted shall be: one (1) member with initial term of one (1) year; one (1) member with two (1) years and (1) member with three (3) years.
3. Duties: To receive and consider all matters pertaining to finance referred to it by the Grand Council. To prepare and submit to the Grand Council at its Annual Assembly, a balanced budget setting forth all the expected revenues and expenditures necessary for the operation of all functions of The Grand Council for the ensuing budget year. Such budget, when adopted by the Grand Council shall govern all expenditures for the ensuing budget year. And, at the direction of the Illustrious Grand Master, perform all other duties pertaining to The Grand Council finances not specifically assigned by the constitution to the Grand Treasurer and the Grand Recorder.

Jurisprudence Committee

1. Composition: The Jurisprudence Committee shall consist of all current Past Illustrious Grand Masters and no more. The Deputy Illustrious Grand Master, The Grand Principal Conductor of Work, The Grand Captain of the Guard, and the Grand Recorder shall be ex-officio members of this Committee with no vote. The Chairman shall be designated by the Illustrious Grand Master each year.
2. Duties: The committee shall have in its charge the responsibility to determine the validity of all changes and additions concerning Cryptic Law. The Committee shall, before the Annual Convocation review the Illustrious Grand Master's Address to ensure that his actions during his term of office are not contrary to Cryptic Law.

Special Committees

The Illustrious Grand Master shall appoint all other Committees as needed, which shall serve until their work is complete or the Illustrious Grand Master's term of Office ends. Reports from such committees shall be made to the Illustrious Grand Master.

ARTICLE VIII
Grand Council Officers

SECTION I. The Most Illustrious Grand Master shall govern and preside over this Grand Council when present, and in his absence the Deputy Grand Master, Grand Principal Conductor of the Work, or Grand Captain of the Guard, taking precedence according to rank. The M.I. Grand Master shall have all the prerogatives and powers of granting dispensations usually vested in and exercised by said presiding officer. On the Day of the Grand Assembly, the M.I. Grand Master shall submit to the Grand Council a written address, to be printed with its transactions, setting forth an account of his official acts during the past year, and suggesting such recommendations for advancing such views as he may consider to be for the good of the Grand Council or its Subordinate Councils, or for the advantage of Cryptic Masonry in general.

SECTION II. The Grand Treasurer shall have charge of all the funds, securities, and vouchers of the Grand Council, and shall pay all budgeted expenses approved by the members of Grand Council at its Annual Assembly from the moneys on hand and such orders signed by the M.I. Grand Master and attested by the Grand Recorder. It shall be his duty to attend all the Assemblies of the Grand Council, with the books of account, and records for money paid out. He shall be bonded under the general surety bond provided by the Grand York of SC. For the faithful performance of his duties, the Grand Treasurer shall receive such sum as the Grand Council shall from year to year determine.

SECTION III. The Grand Recorder shall record the transactions of the Grand Council and shall personally attend each Assembly of the Grand Council with the necessary books and papers of his office, he shall attest and authenticate the signature of the M.I. Grand Master upon official documents, and to furnish Masonic certificate under seal, when so directed by the M.I. Grand Master. He shall receive, receipt for, and immediately deposit all dues, fees, and other monies, taking a proper receipt therefore; he shall keep a faithful journal of all the proceedings of the Grand Council; distribute the same when ordered printed for circulation, and conduct all correspondence required of him under the orders of the Grand Council or the directions of the M.I. Grand Master; he shall procure all the necessary books and stationery, to be paid for out of the funds of the Grand Council, shall have charge of all the records, jewels, papers, parchments, certificates, and documents other than those belonging to the Grand Treasurer; he shall do and perform any other duties customary to his office under the established usage of Cryptic Masonry, and for his service he shall receive such annual salary as the Grand Council shall from year to year determine.

He shall be bonded under the general surety bond provided by the Grand York Rite of SC.

SECTION IV. The Grand Chaplin shall review annual mortality reports and prepare appropriate memorials.

SECTION V. The Most Illustrious Grand Master shall appoint annually six Worthy Companions as R.I. District Deputy Grand Masters, whose duties shall consist of:

- (a) Being the direct personal representatives of the M.I. Grand Master.
- (b) Executing and carrying out all his instructions.
- (c) Visiting all constituent Councils in his District.
- (d) Coordinating and scheduling of District visitations and educational meetings.

SECTION VI. All officers elected and appointed in Grand Council shall be a current or Past Illustrious Master.

ARTICLE IX

Voting in Grand Council

SECTION I. Each member of the Grand Council is entitled to one vote. Each chartered Council is entitled to three votes, to be cast by the top three officers or their proxies. Each one of the top three officers possess for himself the inherent prerogative of representing his Council at all Grand Assemblies; also, to appoint his own proxy for that purpose if by reason of inability he cannot attend in person. Such proxy shall be a member of the Chapter he represents. The Grand Recorder shall be notified of such proxy prior to Grand Assembly.

SECTION II. No Companion shall be allowed to vote both as a member of Grand Council and as a representative of a local Council but shall be required to give his vote as a representative of a local Council in preference to that as a member of the Grand Council if he is present in both capacities.

SECTION III. All questions before the Grand Council shall be determined by a majority of the votes given. If the votes are equal on any question the presiding officer shall, in addition to his own vote, cast the deciding vote.

ARTICLE X

Property

SECTION I. When a Charter shall be surrendered or arrested, all the property of the Council, of whatever kind or description, shall be vested in the Grand Council for a period of ten years, subject to the debts of the Council: Provided, that upon the revival of the Council the property shall be restored to it by the Grand Council.

SECTION II. A Council cannot dispose of the funds of a Council for any other than strictly Masonic purposes.

ARTICLE XI

Candidates

SECTION I. No Council shall greet a candidate whose application has been rejected in any other Council, after having received notice of such rejection; and it is hereby made the duty of the Recorder of each and every Council under this Jurisdiction to give notice of the name, residence, and occupation of every rejected applicant Notice and verification will be through the York Rite Information System and it is hereby made

the duty of the Recorder of every Council under this jurisdiction to give notice of a rejected petitioner by entering them as a petitioner into the York Rite Information System and marking the file as rejected.

SECTION II. Every candidate for initiation must be of sound mind and capable of learning the art and complying reasonably with the requirements as to initiation ceremonies.

SECTION III. No candidate shall be elected to receive the degrees in, nor any Select Master admitted a member of, any Council in this Jurisdiction without the unanimous consent of all members of the Council then present, nor shall any unaffiliated Mason be accepted as a candidate in any Council in this Jurisdiction.

SECTION IV. No petitioner for the degrees of Royal and Select Master shall be eligible unless he be a member in good standing of some Royal Arch Chapter.

ARTICLE XII

Jurisdiction

SECTION I. A chartered Council has concurrent Jurisdiction with all other chartered Councils within the state of South Carolina. (Amended 2001)

SECTION II. A petitioner having a lawful Masonic residence within the Jurisdiction of a Council at the time his petition was received, the Council does not lose jurisdiction by his moving before his receiving the degrees. (Amended 2001)

SECTION III. No resident of any other State in which there is a Council can receive the degrees in any Council in this state without the consent of the Council nearest his place of residence. (Amended 2001)

SECTION IV. Waiver of jurisdiction completely severs all connections between Council and petitioner and is final.

SECTION V. A Council conferring degree at the request of another Council has no right to the fees or any part thereof, nor should it spread the ballot. The membership remains in the Council making the request.

ARTICLE XIII

Petitions

SECTION I. All receptions of petitions, reports on same, and all balloting must be had at stated Assemblies, and none are stated Assemblies except those designated as such in the By- Laws of the Council

SECTION II. All petitions for degrees or membership shall be entered into the York Rite Information System to verify the petitioner has not petitioned or been rejected by another Council, after which they may be received and balloted upon at the same Stated Assembly.

SECTION III. After a petition is regularly received by a Council and entered upon its minutes it cannot be withdrawn.

SECTION IV. A petitioner for degrees or affiliation who has been rejected may, after one lunar month, be re-balloted upon and if rejected again, may after six months again re-petition in writing and the petition must be referred to a Committee and lie over one lunar month.

SECTION V. A petition that may have been rejected by the Council having jurisdiction thereof may, upon the recommendation by a unanimous vote of such Council waive jurisdiction for consideration to any other Council to receive and be acted upon. (Amended 2001)

SECTION VI. A petitioner has no right to know the names of the committee on his petition.

ARTICLE XIV Balloting and Objecting

SECTION I. A ballot need not be had on an unfavorable report.

SECTION II. A unanimous ballot in favor or petitioners for degrees or affiliation is required.

SECTION III. A new ballot is required in case a petitioner does not take the degrees for one year after his election, and a new petition shall be required if the Council desires it.

SECTION IV. An Illustrious Master may order a second or perhaps a third ballot when he thinks that a black ball may have been cast by mistake. This must be done before the result of a ballot is declared. Once a ballot is declared it is final.

SECTION V. The right of a Companion to cast a black ball cannot be questioned in any case where a secret ballot is had; neither should the Council or any of its members attempt to find out who cast it; full protection must be given to the Companion casting a black ball.

SECTION VI. Any Council can file objections in another Council against the conferring of any of the degrees, but the reasons must be given, and if of a trivial nature they need not be recognized; but if such as justify the preferring of charges, they must be respected.

ARTICLE XV Council Membership

SECTION I. A demitted Royal or Select Master, who is also a demitted Royal Arch Mason or demitted Master Mason, must affiliate with a Lodge and Chapter before he can become a member of a Council.

SECTION II. A Council should not consider a petition for membership unless accompanied by a demit or a certificate of Masonic standing equivalent to a demit under the law of the Grand Jurisdiction whence emanating.

SECTION III. No companion shall be expelled, suspended, or otherwise punished by any Council in this Jurisdiction unless written charges have been preferred at a stated Assembly, a copy of which is to be delivered to him if his place of residence be known, and trial has been had at some subsequent stated Assembly. Opportunity shall be given him to make his defense and power granted to summon witnesses if Companions, or to examine them by Commission if they are not.

SECTION IV. It shall require a vote of two-thirds to expel or suspend, but a majority may reprimand or censure.

SECTION V. No Mason having been expelled or indefinitely suspended can be restored except by a unanimous vote of the Council after petition and reference.

SECTION VI. A Mason expelled or suspended by a Symbolic Lodge or Royal Arch Chapter shall stand in the relation of an expelled or suspended Cryptic Mason without further trial.

SECTION VII. Any member may appeal from the decision of the Council to the Grand Council, whose decision shall be final; and the sentence of the Council in cases of trial shall be held in abeyance until the decision of the Grand Council is had when notice of appeal is given.

SECTION VIII. All trials of Companions shall take place in the Select Master Degree, but a brother who is not a Select Master shall be tried in the degree to which he has attained, but the final decision must be taken in the Select Master Degree.

ARTICLE XVI

Work

Nine members are necessary to open a Council of Select Masters.

ARTICLE XVII

Visitors

SECTION I. Councils subordinate to the Grand Council of South Carolina must require of all visitors for examination from other Jurisdictions prior to admission a declaration in the following words: "I do not stand suspended or expelled for any cause whatever; neither has my name been stricken from the roll of members, nor have I been suspended from membership for non-payment of dues in my Lodge of Master Masons or, my Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, or my Council of Royal and Select Masters."

SECTION II. Councils shall admit visiting companions from such Councils only as hold warrants from Grand Councils recognized by the Grand Council of South Carolina.

SECTION III. A visiting companion is present in a Council by courtesy only and can participate in the Council proceedings simply to the extent that leave is granted, and his action is simply advisory.

SECTION IV. If a member of a Council objects to the admission of a visitor, the objection must be respected, and the visitor denied admission.

ARTICLE XVIII Council Fees and Dues

SECTION I. Every Council under this Jurisdiction shall pay two (2.00) dollars for every Companion Greeted therein.

SECTION II. Every Council under this Jurisdiction shall pay Eleven dollars and fifty cents (\$11.50) for every regular member upon its roll, except in the case of members who are Ministers of God, who may be exempt from fees and dues by its By-Laws.

SECTION III. Any Companion who has been in good standing for a period of sixty years, either consecutive or accumulative, shall be exempt from the payment of per capita to the Grand Council. Those with forty years as of March 11, 2019, will be grandfathered and exempt from payment of per capita. (Amended 2019)

SECTION IV. Every Council under this Jurisdiction shall make an annual return in the prescribed form, the York Rite Information System containing full information of its members, number of degrees conferred, up to December 31st, and pay the amount due thereon to the Grand Recorder's office before the first day of February following the close of the calendar year. The Grand Recorder shall add and collect as a penalty, in addition to the fees and dues of Subordinate Councils, ten percent of the gross amount, upon all such returns as are not before the first day of February following the close of the calendar year.

SECTION V. Councils may relieve or exempt any member from payment of dues to such Council, but such action will not relieve or exempt such Council from payment of the Grand Council per capita for such members, except ministers of God, who may be exempt by its By-Laws.

SECTION VI. Any Council neglecting for one year to make due payments without good cause shown to the satisfaction of the Grand Council shall be punished by the arrest of its charter, to be restored only on the payment of the per capita due and satisfactory reasons given for such non-payment.

SECTION VII. A member's dues begin at the date he is greeted or affiliated.

SECTION VIII. Members are not liable for dues during the suspension of their

charter.

SECTION IX. A suspended Companion cannot be charged with dues during the term of his suspension.

SECTION X. No Council shall confer the degrees of Royal Master and Select Master for any lesser amount than the sum of twenty dollars (\$20.00), to be paid with the petition, except upon Ministers of God, who may be exempt from fees and dues by a provision of its By-Laws.

SECTION XI. It is unlawful to accept notes or other promises in payment of fees; and any rebate, donation, or other devise which in effect reduces the fees below twenty dollars is unlawful, and upon prima facie evidence that such has been done the M.I. Grand Master shall arrest the charter of such Council until the next annual Assembly of the Grand Council.

SECTION XII. All dues to the Subordinate Councils shall be payable annually in advance on December 31. Any Companion failing to pay said dues on or before the following October 31 shall stand automatically erased from the roll of members. Should any Companion so erased pay said dues, or should the same be remitted by the Council, on or before the following December 31, he shall become automatically reinstated as of October 31 preceding.

SECTION XIII. A Council under dispensation does not collect dues nor pay Grand Council per capita; those named in a dispensation creating a new Council pay dues to the chartered Council to which they belong.

ARTICLE XIX

Councils Under Dispensation

SECTION I. A petition for a dispensation to open and hold a new Council must be presented for the recommendation of the nearest chartered Council at a stated Assembly. No petitioner can vote on the question of granting the recommendation.

SECTION II. The M.I. Grand Master before granting a dispensation for a new Council must have satisfactory evidence that the proposed officers are duly qualified.

SECTION III. A Council under dispensation cannot meet or work without its warrant.

SECTION IV. All who are named in a dispensation creating a new Council, together with those greeted therein, are entitled to vote on all matters coming before the Council.

SECTION V. An officer of a chartered Council may also be an officer of a Council under dispensation.

SECTION VI. A Council under dispensation has no representation in the Grand Council, except by special vote of the Grand Council.

SECTION VII. The charter members of a new Council should consist of those named in its dispensation, those greeted in the Council, and such Companions as the Council may select by a unanimous ballot.

SECTION VIII. A. Council under dispensation has no power or authority except to advance Masons, and for that purpose has the same territorial jurisdiction as chartered Councils.

ARTICLE XXI

Miscellaneous

SECTION I. No Council can suspend its By-Laws even by unanimous consent.

SECTION II. All balloting for candidates must take place in the Select Masters Degree and at a Stated Assembly.

SECTION III. On all subjects upon which these By-Laws, are silent, the laws, usages, and customs of Ancient Craft Masonry prevailing in this Jurisdiction shall govern.

SECTION IV. All papers coming before the Grand Council which are to be referred to committees shall be placed in the hands of the Grand Recorder, and by him passed to the appropriate committee, before they shall be considered as matters for record.

SECTION V. No Companion shall be permitted to sit as a visitor in the Grand Council without the consent of the Presiding Officer of the Grand Council.

SECTION VI. There can be no appeal from the decision of the Illustrious Master, except to the Grand Council.

SECTION VII. The election of the Illustrious Master, Deputy Master, Principle Conductor of Work, Treasurer and Recorder shall be by a majority vote by ballot and shall take place at the stated Assembly next preceding the festival of St John the Evangelist (December) or at the prior stated Assembly (November) and the officers-elect shall be installed as soon after the election as possible and on or before such festival, and such Officers shall hold office for the space of one year from the festival of St. John the Evangelist next succeeding their election, and until their successors shall have been duly elected and installed. Immediately after the installation the Recorder of each Council shall enter the Officers into the York Rite Information System.

All other officers named, unless differing to approved Constituent By-Laws, shall be appointed by the Illustrious Master, with the consent of the Deputy Master and the Principal Conductor of Work and they shall be installed with the elective officers.

SECTION VIII. The Illustrious Master-elect on the night of his installation shall appoint a committee of three companions to act as an Audit Committee, whose duty it shall be to examine the books of the Recorder and Treasurer and to report their

findings at the stated Assembly in March. The Council at their expense may hire an outside-accredited agency to perform the audit. (Section VIII, Added 2013)

SECTION IX. The A Finance Committee shall consist of the Illustrious Master, Deputy Master, Principal Conductor of Work, Treasurer, and Recorder whose duty it shall be to annually review the financial condition of the Council and to make such recommendations to the Council as they may deem necessary, and to report their actions at the Stated Assembly in December. (Section IX, Added 2013)

SECTION X. The Most Illustrious Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of South Carolina shall be a full participant in the Life Membership Program Grand York Rite Bodies of Freemasonry of South Carolina. This Grand Council shall conform to and abide by the rules and regulations as set forth in the Life Membership Program.
(Section X, Added 2014)

ARTICLE XX Amendment

No By-Law shall be altered or done away with, or new one adopted, until the proposed alteration, amendment, nullification, or addition be reduced to writing and seconded by five members. It shall then be entered upon the minutes and lie over until the next succeeding Annual Assembly of the Grand Council when, if approved by two-thirds of the members present, the same shall be adopted: Provided, that by unanimous consent any proposition as aforesaid may be acted upon at the Assembly at which it is introduced.