

Voting Theory Forum Council Meeting

Sunday, 4/30/23 Agenda - 1pm PT/4pm ET

[Zoom Meeting Link:](#)

[Previous meeting agendas](#)

Host: Sara

Facilitator: (Calling on people and keeping us on track):

Notes on topics, motions and decisions. Notes are in purple and motions passed are in green: Arend Casteleian

Full Attendance: Sara Wolk, Gary Litke, Micah Fitch, David Hinds, Paul Camann, Toby Peralta, Sass, Eric Wilhelm, Arend Peter.

Council Members present: Sara, David, Micah.

Full board at start of meeting: (4) Sara Wolk, David Hinds, Connor Frankston, Micah Fitch. (Toby Peralta and Sass added mid meeting to bring council up to 6 members.)

Moderators: Sara Wolk, Connor Frankston, David Hinds, Micah Fitch, Gary Litke.

Technical Committee: Eric Wilhelm (Admin key), Sara Wolk (Admin key), Arend Peter Casteleian (no admin key), Evans Tucker (Admin key), Jack Waugh (no admin key).

7:35 Updates:

- Jack Waugh has resigned from the council but is willing to keep helping with tech if needed.
- Keith Edmonds and Evans Tucker RSVPed unable to attend, but willing to help.

Tech Committee:

- Forum has been live and working. Email notifications were down, but we believe Jack fixed it.
- Jack Waugh (tech committee) made the decision to add Rob Brown as a site admin and Mod last year and notified the council over email, despite the council having previously decided not to do so. The action stood, Rob took some uncontroversial Mod actions, and it was otherwise uneventful. Sara removed Rob as admin and mod permissions in late March and notified the council.
- Domain and hosting were previously just in Jack's name. The URL is now hosted under Equal Vote as of February and Equal Vote/Sara has admin on the Linode as well as of March. (We'll revisit admin privileges after the elections). This now allows for sharing or transferring of admin roles as desired.
- Minor changes to categories were made. Larger changes were proposed and will be revisited later in the meeting.

Moderation Committee:

- In response to this and lack of posting from council on the forum, Rob Brown posted a thread on the Forum called "[Opportunity to either significantly improve this forum, or just let it die](#)".
 - The post is now edited, but in it he called out Equal Vote as "an organization that has done absolutely nothing to improve or maintain this forum" and called out Jack, saying "I don't think he has had much of a vision". Rob stated his intention to "just claim it back. I'll run it, or someone else can, or I'll do it with someone else." Many of the claims made about the history of the forum's founding and who contributed what to the new forum are incorrect and inflammatory.
 - Council has been sent screenshots and communications from deleted or edited posts and DMs that violate our code of conduct, have created a ton of stress, and eaten up time that could have been spent making the forum better. In short, Rob calls for Sara to step down, for Rob to be given control of the forum, and for the council to be disbanded and all decisions to be made by voting on the forum itself, or at least that appears to be his preference.
- Other moderation actions have been taken along the way, including several in the last month. No proposed actions are outstanding. Would we like to have the Moderation Committee meet about these specifically at a later time or discuss them here?

Meeting Topics for Discussion and Voting:

Forum Council Elections

- **Nominations:** Anyone can nominate themselves or others. Each nominee gives a ~3 min speech as to who they are and why they are interested in serving on the council. Council can ask questions and interview if desired.
- **Vote:** Nominations are voted on One by one. Adding council members requires a unanimous vote.
- **Officer Roles for council directors:** (2/3 approval required.)

Moderator Elections:

- **Nominations:** Anyone can nominate themselves or others. Each nominee gives a ~3 min speech as to who they are and why they are interested in serving as a mod.
- **Vote:** Simple majority approval required for each nominee.

Tech Committee Admin: The Forum does not distinguish between Admin and Managers, so there is no way to give an intermediary level of control for tech team. With the assistance of a tech admin, anyone can volunteer on the tech team, so we just need to vote on who will have tech admin status.

- **Nominations:** Anyone can nominate themselves or others. Each nominee gives a ~3 min speech as to who they are and why they are interested in serving as a tech admin.
- **Vote:** Simple majority approval required for each nominee.

Next Steps:

- **Categories:** It's been proposed that we simplify them. There are a few proposals: Sara's proposal, Andy's proposal.
- **Admin permissions:** Review who has what keys.
- **Vision and goals:**

Motions:

- Micah: motion to ban rob from the forum
 - Sara: Abstains
 - David: Seconded the motion
 - Council Vote: 2 yes (Micah, David)+ 1 abstain (Sara)
 - Moderator Vote: 3 yes (Micah, David, Gary) + 1 abstain (Sara)
- Adding Toby as council member
 - 3 council votes in favor (Sara, David, Micah)
 - 0 council votes opposed
- Adding Sass as council member
 - 3 council votes in favor (Sara, David, Micah)
 - 0 council votes opposed
- Sass nominates BTernaryTau to join the Council
- Sass motions that the council allow itself to remotely vote in BTernaryTau within 3 months should she choose to accept her nomination
 - Sara seconds
 - We will send a direct message to BTernaryTau formally asking her
 - 5 council votes in favor (Sara, David, Micah, Sass, Toby)
 - 0 council votes opposed
- Sass: nominates BTernaryTau for moderator
 - Sara seconds
 - 5 council votes in favor (Sara, David, Micah, Sass, Toby)
 - 0 council votes opposed
- Sara: motion that our moderators be empowered to vote to nominate and add new moderators as needed outside of council meetings using the same procedures as the council, but with a 2/3 threshold.
 - Sass seconds
 - 5 council votes in favor (Sara, David, Micah, Sass, Toby)
 - 0 council votes opposed
- Toby: Adding Toby as a moderator
 - Sara seconded
 - 4 council votes in favor (Sara, David, Micah, Sass)

- 0 council votes opposed
- Arend: volunteer self to be on tech committee (without admin)
 - Sara seconds
 - 5 council votes in favor (Sara, Sass, David, Micah, Toby)
 - 0 council votes opposed
- Sara: volunteer Evans to be on tech committee (with admin)
 - Sass seconds
 - 5 council votes in favor (Sara, Sass, David, Micah, Toby)
 - 0 council votes opposed
- Sass: volunteer Jack Waugh to be on tech committee (without admin)
 - Sara seconds
 - 5 council votes in favor (Sara, Sass, David, Micah, Toby)
 - 0 council votes opposed
- Sass: motion that our tech committee be empowered to vote to nominate and add new non-admin tech members as needed outside of council meetings using the same procedures as the council, but with a 2/3 threshold.
 - Sara seconds
 - 5 council votes in favor (Sara, Sass, David, Micah, Toby)
 - 0 council votes opposed

Notes:

Tech Features:

- Moderator feature to provide feedback on posts (suggested by Gary)
- r/EndFPTP inspired bot to clarify acronyms (suggested by Sass)

Action Items:

- Start pinning welcoming election 101 content under Welcome/Electoral Theory 101 (suggested by David & Micah)
- Update bylaws to include a fallback to Robert's rules (suggested by Gary)
- Create a separate tech specific role so that tech people don't need admin privileges

Agenda items for future meetings:

Notes here:

References:

- **Bylaws:**
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1obwaF82x5022V_K-gifdv7Why-O5LzqFAiB_d4EwgAw/edit?usp=sharing

Voting Theory Forum Council Members:

Sara Wolk (@SaraWolk) , William "Jack" Waugh (@Jack-Waugh), David Hinds (@Marylander), Connor Frankston (@cfrank), Micah Fitch (@micahscopes).

Moderators:

Sara Wolk. Connor Frankston, David Hinds, Micah Fitch, Gary Litke

Tech Committee

William Waugh, Eric Wilhelm, Ivan DelSol, (Rob Brown was added by Jack and keys were shared but that were not officially authorized. That was undone on 3/30/23). (I don't know Eric Wilhelm and Ivan DelSol's usernames.)

Key Motions Passed in Council Meetings (all unanimous!):

Motion 1, v2: "To establish an independent organization with the purpose of owning and maintaining the online discussion forum."

Motion 2 v2: "Move to establish and try to publish an online discussion forum based on the "NodeBB" forum software."

Motion 3: "To do due diligence and apply best practices to protect and minimize the storage of PII of users, with these responsibilities explicitly delegated to specific responsible individuals trusted by the council/board."

Motion 4: "Create a tech committee empowered to make non-controversial "technical decisions" on behalf of the group as needed, with the understanding that the council could revisit those decisions later if needed. The committee should consult the council on questions where the decision may be controversial."

Motion 5: "Order of operations. 1. Pass bylaws. 2. Elect board. 3. Launch website."

Motion 6: "Adopt categories list"

Motion 7: "Adopt Code of Conduct, Terms of Service, Privacy Policy."

Motion 8: "Motion passed unanimously to coalition with Equal Vote and receive donations and pay expenses through Equal Vote account."

Resources:

- Last Meeting's Minutes:
<https://www.votingtheory.org/forum/topic/102/meeting-agenda-7-20-21-5-30pm-pt-forum-council-meeting>
- Bylaws:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1obwaF82x5022V_K-gifdv7Why-O5LzqFAiB_d4EwqAw/edit?usp=sharing
- Procedure Manual:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TCRbEXuBqY8N1gIKf7YHNWMVIWD7blgZQhwomfteigY/edit?usp=sharing>
- Privacy policy. Ready for review.
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QzZp2QAsP60Ti1WWPk29Q8dlnGIM2I438rcJDZLd2Ug/edit?usp=sharing>
- Terms of Service:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AlnP1gvvc986n0iiYYkA0Tc9L33erbxDftM7sX5ypz4/edit?usp=sharing>

- Code of Conduct:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ExGrryHIFOjSfPiTtHYBRPw7GQY8IRsCfWiWsLEslm/c/edit?usp=sharing>

Current Categories:

Voting Theory Forum

CATEGORIES

Welcome

- Introduce yourself
- Electoral Theory 101
- Forum Policy and Resources

Voting Method Discussion

- Voting Methods
- Philosophy
- New Voting Methods and Variations

Election Policy and Reform

- Districting
- Electoral College
- Campaign Finance Reform
- Election Integrity/Security
- Auditing
- Voter Disenfranchisement
- Vote by mail and e-voting
- Political parties
- Forms of Government
- Nation specific policy

Advocacy and Current Events

- Advocacy
- Current Events

Research and Projects

- Research
- Tech development

Meta/Forum Business

- Meta Discussion
- Request for Features
- Issue Reports
- Forum Council Meetings and Agendas
- Moderators and Council

Watercooler

Banter, storytelling, and random musings

Paste Zoom chat here at the end:

N/A