

Preface for Amending the Bylaws of Minnehaha Lodge No. 5

To the Brethren of Minnehaha Lodge No. 5,

This is the Rationale Document for the proposed bylaw changes to Minnehaha Lodge No.5. I want to begin by acknowledging the significant time and thoughtful effort that went into the preparation of these changes. I did not approach this task lightly. Every section was carefully considered, with particular attention given to potential conflicts between provisions and the need for consistency across our governing documents.

Brother Jim Hoy, who is a member of this Committee, and the Grand Lodge Jurisprudence Committee has vetted the proposed bylaws. He has no issues or comments as to form or structure. Our Trustees also vetted the bylaws, and they have no issues as to the form or structure of the bylaws, however, they did make several suggestions which were incorporated into the bylaws.

You will notice that I have struck through any language in the bylaw document (this rationale document provides the full sections) that is being deleted and highlighted any language that is being added. It is my hope that it will make your review of the actual bylaws easier.

You will note that there is a change to the Membership Dues and Initiation Fees sections of the bylaws. I took into account the suggested compromise amount that was brought up last year when dues were discussed and tried to provide a reasonable path forward for the Lodge.

At the suggestion of the Trustees, a Bylaws Review provision has been added. I fully support this addition, as it will ensure that our Lodge remains adaptable, responsive, and able to revise and refine practices that may not serve us as effectively as intended. This is especially critical to issues like dues and fees and ensures that they are reviewed for any adjustments that may be needed.

A budget section was also added, where the officers-elect must present a budget to be amended and voted upon by the body of the Lodge. I used a fiscally conservative approach to address concerns regarding financial oversight and the stewardship of funds collected through dues and fundraising that were previously raised.

Once the Lodge has passed the final version of the bylaws, I will format the document to remove the strikethrough language and the highlights. I will then fix any hanging paragraphs or sections that should start on the following page. This will ensure that it is in proper form prior to being signed and sent to the Grand Lodge.

It is my sincere hope that the rationale outlined within this document will offer clear and compelling reasons for the proposed changes, while answering any questions and addressing any concerns you may have. If it does not, you are free to reach out to me.

Fraternally and respectfully,

Brian Pulling

The Rationale for Adding a Second Stated Communication for Minnehaha Lodge No. 5

Proposed Bylaw Language:

SECTION 1

The Stated Communication of this Lodge shall be held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM.

SECTION 2

The Stated Communication on the 1st Thursday will be held as a business meeting and the Stated Communication on the 3rd Thursday will be held for the conferral of Degrees and to dispose of any business that has come before the Lodge since the previous Stated Communication.

Purpose of the Amendment:

The purpose of this amendment is to provide a clear and structured schedule for the two monthly Stated Communications held by Minnehaha Lodge No. 5. This division supports efficient Lodge management while emphasizing the importance of ritual and candidate experience.

Benefits of the Amendment

1. Improved Meeting Structure and Efficiency:
 - Clearly designating the 1st Thursday for business and the 3rd Thursday for degree conferrals and any new business enables officers and members to better plan and prepare.
2. Maintains Business Continuity:
 - Including other new business on the 3rd Thursday ensures time-sensitive issues are addressed without delay between meetings. The ability to have two meetings to ballot on petitions will enhance the candidate experience and allow the Lodge to quickly move through its business during the second meeting.
3. Supports Candidate Experience and Ritual Excellence:
 - Regular scheduling of degree work allows degree teams and candidates to be better prepared, resulting in more consistent and meaningful rituals.

Conclusion

This proposed amendment does not "lock" the Lodge into meetings irrespective of practical considerations. As clearly outlined in Article III, Section 3 of the proposed bylaws, the Lodge retains full authority to call from labor for up to two months per year by majority vote. Further, there is no provision in the Grand Lodge Constitution and Bylaws that requires a Lodge to meet on every stated meeting date. Therefore, for example, the Master could determine that it is in the Lodge's best interest to cancel the second meetings in November and December or at any time throughout the year. We are not locked into anything. This flexibility directly addresses seasonal or family considerations without compromising the Lodge's overall structure or responsiveness. If our Lodge continues to grow, we will not have the luxury of waiting a month to do business. As the pace of life in our society continues to accelerate, we must keep up with it or risk falling into obscurity.

Furthermore, Article XIII below sets forth an order of business that ensures stated communications remain purposeful. Regularly scheduled communications also support candidate progression and timely balloting, which aligns with Sections 4.95 to 4.98 of the Grand Lodge Bylaws, requiring balloting to occur at stated communications unless a special dispensation is granted. By keeping a second stated meeting, the Lodge avoids delays or bureaucratic burdens. There were times when I was Secretary that we waited almost until the last moment for a special dispensation to be granted by the Grand Master, putting in jeopardy everything the Lodge had planned, and potentially wasting the time of all those involved. We have had a "second meeting" for well over five years now; this is just formalizing our current practices and permitting necessary business (e.g., petitions and balloting) to be conducted on the 3rd Thursday, which also helps the Lodge maintain momentum even when a candidate-heavy schedule arises.

By adopting this structured approach to its Stated Communications, Minnehaha Lodge No. 5 promotes operational clarity, ritual excellence, and timely governance, reflecting its ongoing commitment to excellence in all facets of Masonic labor.

The Rationale for Increasing Initiation Fees to Join Minnehaha Lodge No. 5

Proposed Additions to Bylaws – Initiation Fee:

SECTION 1

The initiation fee for conferring the Degrees shall be equal to the current annual dues amount for one year, all of which should accompany the petition unless special arrangements are made with the Lodge Secretary.

SECTION 2

The fee shall be apportioned according to the Bylaws of the Grand Lodge of South Dakota and the Budget of the Lodge.

Purpose of the Amendments:

The intent of these bylaw amendments is to formalize a fair and consistent approach to the initiation fee for prospective candidates, while ensuring compliance with Grand Lodge requirements and responsible budgeting practices.

Benefits of the Amendments:

1. **Creates Consistency with Lodge Dues:**
 - Tying the initiation fee to the current annual dues provides a clear and easily adjustable benchmark that reflects the current financial structure of the Lodge.
2. **Streamlines Financial Processing:**
 - Requiring the full fee with the petition simplifies accounting and encourages sincere commitment from the petitioner.
3. **Supports Compassionate Flexibility:**
 - Including the ability for the Lodge Secretary to make special arrangements ensures that financial hardship does not prevent worthy candidates from joining.
4. **Aligns with Grand Lodge and Lodge Budgeting Rules:**
 - Apportioning the fee according to Grand Lodge Bylaws and the Lodge's budget guarantees compliance with jurisdictional expectations and supports effective planning.

Conclusion:

These amendments establish a clear, fair, and adaptable standard for initiation fees at Minnehaha Lodge No. 5. They ensure that the Lodge remains accessible while maintaining financial transparency and regulatory alignment.

THE COST OF NEW MEMBERSHIP AND WHY WE LOSE MONEY ON EVERY PETITIONER

For each new candidate, the Lodge currently incurs over \$168 in direct costs:

- \$43 Bible (approximate cost with tax and shipping)
- \$44 Apron with no protective tube (approximate cost with tax and shipping)
- \$6 Square & Compass pin (approximate cost with tax and shipping)
- \$30 Grand Lodge assessment (\$10 per degree)
- \$45 OneSource background check (which the Lodge will likely request going forward)

That's \$168 per new member, which doesn't include any additional costs of printed new member materials, welcome kits, or educational packets.

Even if we raise initiation fees to \$150, we still run a deficit per new member unless further adjustments are made. However, keeping this in step with our membership dues (see below) will eventually allow it to catch up to reality and not have to be subsidized by the Lodge's reserves.

We are trying to give our candidates a real membership experience and the best way to do that is to add value to that membership. One way that can be done is to give them something like an apron case so that the white leather apron they get can be proudly worn and used by them versus getting stuck in the back of a closet and forgotten about. The better we make the candidate experience coming into the Lodge, the stronger the tie they will feel to the Lodge. That builds engagement and engagement builds into active Masons.

The Rationale for Increasing Membership Dues at Minnehaha Lodge No. 5

Proposed Additions to Bylaws (Option 1):

SECTION 1

The annual dues for each member shall be \$150.00 payable in advance on or before the last day of December. The dues for each member shall increase by 5% each year.

SECTION 2

If there is a duly voted on and approved increase in per capita dues in the Grand Lodge or Masonic Building Association, the per capita increase will be deducted from that year's 5% increase. If the per capita increase is larger than the automatic increase, then the automatic increase will be suspended for that year. Any total increase, which is not a whole dollar amount, will be rounded up to the next whole dollar amount.

SECTION 3

The dues for each member raised or affiliated during the year shall be prorated by the following formula: $1/12$ of the annual dues stipulated in Article VI, Section 1 for each month left in the calendar year on the date of being raised or affiliated. If that amount is not a whole dollar amount, it will be rounded up to the next whole dollar amount.

SECTION 4

Any member whose dues shall not have been paid at least to the beginning of the current year, may be suspended by a majority vote of the members present. In no case shall the Lodge carry a delinquent member for more than two years as per Grand Lodge By-Laws, Section 4-84.

SECTION 5

The Lodge may remit the dues of a member by a majority vote of the members present under Grand Lodge By-laws Section 4-85.

Purpose of the Amendments:

The proposed bylaw amendments are designed to provide a clear, consistent, and sustainable structure for Lodge dues, including mechanisms for automatic adjustment, fairness in new member dues, and procedures for handling delinquent accounts. These changes reflect financial stewardship, compliance with Grand Lodge regulations, and compassion for member circumstances.

Benefits of the Amendments:

1. Financial Predictability and Growth:
 - The 5% annual increase supports long-term financial sustainability by keeping dues aligned with inflation and increasing operating costs.
2. Flexibility for External Increases:
 - Integrating adjustments for Grand Lodge and Masonic Building Association dues ensures that members are not overburdened by overlapping increases.
3. Fair Treatment of New Members:
 - The prorating formula ensures that new and affiliated members are only responsible for dues covering their remaining time in the calendar year.
4. Compliance and Accountability:
 - Codifying suspension procedures reinforces members' responsibility to remain in good standing, in harmony with Grand Lodge rules.
5. Compassionate Relief Mechanism:
 - Allowing dues remission by vote offers a pathway for financial relief to Brothers in hardship, preserving fraternity and membership continuity.

Conclusion:

These bylaw amendments bring financial foresight, equity, and procedural clarity to the dues structure of Minnehaha Lodge No. 5. By formalizing these practices, the Lodge affirms its commitment to responsible stewardship, regulatory compliance, and compassionate governance.

The Rationale for Increasing Membership Dues at Minnehaha Lodge No. 5

Proposed Additions to Bylaws (Option 2):

SECTION 1

The annual dues for each member shall be \$130.00 payable in advance on or before the last day of December.

SECTION 2

If there is a duly voted on and approved increase in per capita dues in the Grand Lodge or Masonic Building Association, the dues will automatically increase by that amount. Any total increase, which is not a whole dollar amount, will be rounded up to the next whole dollar amount.

SECTION 3

The dues for each member raised or affiliated during the year shall be prorated by the following formula: $1/12$ of the annual dues stipulated in Article VI, Section 1 for each month left in the calendar year on the date of being raised or affiliated. If that amount is not a whole dollar amount, it will be rounded up to the next whole dollar amount.

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Any member whose dues shall not have been paid at least to the beginning of the current year, may be suspended by a majority vote of the members present. In no case shall the Lodge carry a delinquent member for more than two years as per Grand Lodge By-Laws, Section 4-84.

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The proposed bylaw amendments are designed to provide a clear, consistent, and sustainable structure for Lodge dues, including mechanisms for automatic adjustment, fairness in new member dues, and procedures for handling delinquent accounts. These changes reflect financial stewardship, compliance with Grand Lodge regulations, and compassion for member circumstances.

Benefits of the Amendments:

1. Financial Predictability and Growth:
 - The annual dues will be for a set amount. This amount will remain static until there is need to change it again to accommodate future rising costs.
2. Fair Treatment of New Members:
 - The prorating formula ensures that new and affiliated members are only responsible for dues covering their remaining time in the calendar year.
3. Compliance and Accountability:
 - Codifying suspension procedures reinforces members' responsibility to remain in good standing, in harmony with Grand Lodge rules.
4. Compassionate Relief Mechanism:
 - Allowing dues remission by vote offers a pathway for financial relief to Brothers in hardship, preserving fraternity and membership continuity.

Conclusion:

These bylaw amendments bring procedural clarity to the dues structure of Minnehaha Lodge No. 5. Unfortunately, this dues amount will not cover the basic costs the Lodge incurs on an annual basis.

THE TRUE COST OF MEMBERSHIP: A FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING

A review of actual Lodge expenses, when you remove the considerable donations that have been made by Brothers of the Lodge, shows that our current dues of \$122.50 are unsustainable. Here is the real-world financial requirement per member, based on actual current and recurring obligations:

- \$60 per member annually to the Masonic Building Association (MBA) – currently not being charged to Life Members
- \$35 per member Grand Lodge per capita dues – Currently not being charged Life Members

- \$2 per member per month, paid to the Secretary.
 - As our numbers grow, so does the workload for our Secretary, and he should be compensated accordingly.
- \$2 per member annually for postage (stamp, ink, paper, envelope)
 - Each delinquent member typically receives an email, a text, and two or more letters to get them to pay. Sending letters is very expensive and is something we simply have to move away from. Unfortunately, for right now, it is a reality of our Lodge.
- \$0.50 per member per month to the Treasurer
 - We should be paying our Treasurer a small amount for all the trips he takes to the bank each year, their efforts to keep the books, file the taxes, and create the reports.
- \$0.50 per member per month to cover under-payment of food costs
 - This is to reimburse the Brother who brings food for any shortfall from the payments received that night. Currently, those Brothers paying for the meal do not cover the costs of the meal. Each month the Brother providing the meal is left significantly short of recovering their cost, which is why no one wants to provide the monthly meals for the Lodge. This has been true whether a Brother prepares the meal, or the Lodge caters in a meal. Creating a quality Lodge experience and providing value to a member starts with a quality meal. If we are going to be a classy organization, we can't serve bargain basement food.
- \$10 per member annually for Elmer C. Andersen Scholarship(s)
 - We can no longer fund this by asking a Brother to donate the money raised at the meal because the same Brothers can not be expected to donate meals for 30 guys. Additionally, it's the same 5-8 Brothers who are providing the meals, so you are forcing those same 5-8 Brothers to fund the scholarship each year as well as provide the meals.
- \$1 per member annually to dry clean collars each year
 - I checked with my local dry cleaner, and it is around \$8-\$10 per piece for something the size of our collars, but it could be more.
- \$2 per member annually for awards costs
 - This covers the five awards we present each year, as well as the more fun ones.
- \$2 per member annually for AV costs

- The initial cost for those new projectors in each of the Lodge rooms was around \$2,000 each, and we need to build a fund for their maintenance and eventual replacement.

Things we need to add are line items for:

- \$25 per member annually for new member outreach
 - We are currently not advertising our Lodge or hosting events, such as open houses. Any time we have done something like that, it has been paid for out of a Brother's own pocket. We also don't have a website, which would require us to pay for hosting and site management. As an example, those DKOI little mobile billboards cost \$400 per week to rent. If we use one of those 4 times during the year for one week, that cost alone is \$1,600. There is also the \$200/yr Downtown Sioux Falls membership that one of our Brothers has been paying for. This allows us to be on the list for the Wine and Canvas Walk, Downtown Trunk or Treat, and the Easter Egg Hunt. The first two of those events got us a couple of interested people, and one even took a petition home with him. We didn't participate in the Easter Egg Hunt this year because we had difficulty recruiting volunteers for the first two events.
- \$1 per member annually to fund a Prospect Manager's Program
 - This would be approximately \$20 per new member raised through the Prospect Manager's program to cover expenses such as taking a prospect out for coffee or lunch, and could also be used to help compensate Brothers on the investigation team for the same expenses.

Total Amount Currently Required: \$148 per member annually or approximately \$12.33 per month per member. A dues increase to \$130 per member will not cover these basic costs. We should be building our Lodge and helping provide those candidates and our members with a good experience, not stagnating and just scraping by. To be impactful and find potential new members, we would need to add the other \$26 which would be a minimum of \$174 per member annually or approximately \$14.50 per month.

Even at the proposed \$150/year rate, we are barely at breakeven and that leaves almost nothing for Lodge programming, educational materials or family outings. These are just some of the things that would add value to being a member of the Lodge.

SOME REQUIRED PAYMENTS ARE BEING SUBSIDIZED BY THE LODGE

The Lodge is currently paying the following amounts for these memberships:

- \$5 to the Grand Lodge for the George Washington Masonic National Memorial for EACH affiliate member (unless they show proof of direct donation)

These mandated payments have been paid from Lodge reserves in an effort to keep things inexpensive for someone to affiliate with our Lodge. This also increases our financial liability and puts a burden on the Lodge.

COMPENSATION FOR OFFICERS: A NECESSARY EVOLUTION

We must recognize the increasing administrative burden placed on the Secretary and Treasurer. As our Lodge grows, so do the time commitments and responsibilities of those officers:

- Our Secretary manages communications, dues tracking, chasing down members to pay their dues, event planning, and correspondence. This is deserving of a base stipend of \$2 per member/month.
- Our Treasurer maintains and updates the signature authority with the bank, reconciles financial records and invoices, provides reports to the Lodge, prepares tax documents, and deposits funds. This is a labor worth \$0.50 per member/month.

This minimal compensation respects their commitments and helps prevent burnout.

COMPARISON TO OTHER LODGES

Minnehaha Lodge No. 5 is significantly below the national and regional average in dues for a city our size. Many urban Lodges across the U.S. charge \$200–\$1,200/year standard, not including assessments or additional fees.

We currently charge \$122.50 per member annually, the lowest in our city (Trinity, Scottish Rite and York Rite all charge more). However, the true cost to support and grow the Lodge is pointedly higher.

Even smaller Lodges in South Dakota have come to the realization that they have to raise dues in response to inflation, aging buildings, and declining donations. Those that have not, are either closing or merging with other Lodges and paying higher dues there.

THE VALUE OF A STRONG LODGE PRESENCE

We are losing opportunities due to lack of outreach funding. Examples:

- DKOI mobile signboards cost \$400/week to rent. Running them 4 times annually for one week is \$1,600.
- We don't have a website which would require paying a hosting service and site management (keeping the page fresh and software/virus/compliance updates).
- We opted out of the Downtown Sioux Falls Easter Egg Hunt due to lack of volunteers, despite gaining real prospects from two similar events.

Lodges that grow do so because they are visible, active, and well-resourced.

THE 80% BUDGETING RULE AND SUSTAINABILITY (See Proposed Article VII Budget below)

Our amended bylaws will include a requirement to budget based on 80% of dues-paying members to maintain a conservative financial plan. But even with the \$150 dues and 5% increase, it will take several years before we reach breakeven and longer yet before we can even consider setting aside money for a "rainy day fund" or make improvements to our Lodge or help with improvements to the building.

For example, here is what it would look like over the next three years without figuring in any inflationary costs or other dues increase (remember our current cost to the Lodge is \$148/member):

- Year 1: \$150 = ~\$120/member net usable funds (a \$28 loss per member)
- Year 2: \$158 = ~\$126/member net usable funds (a \$22 loss per member)
- Year 3: \$166 = ~\$133/member — STILL WELL BELOW our \$148 per-member operating needs to have a sustainable Lodge even if we spend every dollar we take in.

WHY 5% ANNUAL INCREASES ARE NEEDED

Without automatic incremental increases, we risk:

- Delays in Lodge improvement projects
- Loss of outreach and charitable engagement
- Inability to absorb inflationary increases in the costs to our Lodge

The 5% cap ensures predictability and member understanding, allowing us to sustain growth without sudden, painful jumps in dues.

THE TRUE VALUE OF DUES: BEYOND THE DOLLAR

Raising dues is not about excluding Brothers, it's about enriching their experience. Higher dues allow us to:

- Deliver quality meals and meetings
- Offer real educational opportunities
- Reward service and excellence
- Represent ourselves proudly in the community
- Provide assistance to Brothers in need
- Plan events that include our families
- Outreach to our widows to fulfil our obligation and so they know we care

Freemasonry teaches value, not cheapness. Lodges that charge \$300+ are not better, but they are often more stable, vibrant, and visible. Currently, if a member has a good idea they want to run with, we could not help them because we do not have the funds. That would leave them to beg for money from the members of the Lodge or take up time during a meeting to debate it. These are big blockers that could be eliminated with a budget that had enough money for programing in it.

We need to ensure we have funds even for simple things like cleaning and maintaining our aprons and collars. We need quality and refreshed material and not a bible box that is falling apart or a bible that isn't falling apart with torn out and ripped pages. There should be funds available to make these happen. Forcing our Lodge leadership to go begging to the Brothers is not a sign of a vibrant and successful Lodge that supports its mission; it is a sign of a failure to plan for the future which equals a future that will fail.

We also need to engage our Brothers and teach them about legacy giving where a portion of their estate is given to the Lodge. This can lead to an endowment fund that could limit dues raises in the future and provide the Lodge with a stable income source.

Some have argued that instead of having funds to help us aid our Lodge and the community we serve, we should "roll up our sleeves" and DO things out in the community. While it is heartening to hear the call for more physical engagement in

community outreach, and I sincerely wish that were something that was actually happening. Currently, there are approximately 6-8 Brothers in our Lodge who are willing to "roll up their sleeves," and help when the call goes out, and they are also the identical 6-8 Brothers who are willing to reach for their wallets when the Lodge has needed it. This is not fair or sustainable.

Additionally, financial capacity and volunteer action are not mutually exclusive. In fact, prudent financial management enhances our ability to support hands-on programs when those opportunities arise. The proposed amendments seek not to replace action with funding, but to equip the Lodge with modern tools to fulfill its mission effectively.

Just as in other areas of life, people tend to associate higher costs with higher value. When dues are minimal or haven't kept pace with inflation or expenses, the implicit message can be that the organization is declining, undervalued, or struggling. Conversely, reasonable and consistent dues levels suggest:

- The Lodge has an active and ongoing mission.
- It provides meaningful programs, events, and upkeep.
- Membership is not simply honorary; it is participatory and valuable.

We should not involve ourselves or the legacy of our Lodge in a "race to the bottom".

Freemasonry obligates us to plan wisely, act honorably, and safeguard our institutions for those who follow. In this spirit, the proposal to raise our annual dues to \$150, with an annual 5% increase, is not a luxury. It is a baseline necessity. It reflects respect for our traditions, our officers, our candidates, our members, and our future. It recognizes our growing obligations and opportunities, and it preserves Minnehaha Lodge No. 5 for future generations.

Let us not be remembered as the Lodge that was proud but broke and left a legacy of destitution and despair; thus, forcing future Brothers to have this same painful discussion over and over again. Let us be the Lodge that rose to the challenge with wisdom and strength of purpose; that understood its principles and future, and made provisions to secure its place in Sioux Falls for future generations to come.

The Rationale for Requiring a Budget Mechanism at Minnehaha Lodge No. 5

Proposed Additions to Bylaws – Budget:

SECTION 1

Each year, after the elected line officers (Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, and Secretary) are voted upon, but before they are installed, they shall create an annual budget for the Lodge and vet it with the current Trustees. The Budget will be based on 80% of that year's current dues paying members. The Trustees will review the Budget and, if found reasonable, assent to the budget prior to it being proposed to the Lodge membership for approval.

SECTION 2

This Budget shall be presented for approval by the Lodge membership at the first Stated Communication after installation of its officers. The Budget shall be balloted upon with any amendments at the first Stated Communication after installation.

SECTION 3

Any budget surpluses will be moved to the next annual budget as a surplus amount line item and will not impact the 80% of members calculation.

SECTION 4

Life Members will be assessed any annual increases, including any per capita increases, beyond the total dues amount of \$122.50 which was established at the beginning of 2025. Any total increase, that is not a whole dollar amount, will be rounded up to the next whole dollar amount.

Purpose of the Amendments:

These amendments are proposed to ensure the financial planning of Minnehaha Lodge No. 5 is deliberate, sustainable, and responsive to its membership realities and fiscal responsibilities. They also align budgetary processes with leadership transitions, enhancing continuity and accountability.

Benefits of the Amendments:

1. Improves Budgeting Accuracy:
 - Basing the budget on 80% of dues-paying members provides a conservative and realistic estimate of available funds, protecting against overextension.
2. Strengthens Officer Accountability:
 - Having elected officers prepare the budget before installation ensures they understand the Lodge's financial condition and take ownership of fiscal planning from the outset.
3. Enhances Trustee Oversight:
 - Involving Trustees as a review body builds trust and checks the reasonableness of the budget before presentation to the Lodge.
4. Promotes Member Engagement and Transparency:
 - Requiring Lodge-wide approval ensures members are informed and empowered to participate in the financial governance of their Lodge.
5. Maintains Fiscal Continuity:
 - Treating surpluses as carry-over amounts without adjusting the 80% calculation ensures consistency and guards against sudden shifts in financial strategy.
6. Clarifies Life Member Contributions:
 - Defining how Life Members contribute to future increases ensures fairness across the membership and provides a structure for sustainable dues management.

Conclusion:

These bylaw amendments create a proactive and responsible budgeting framework for Minnehaha Lodge No. 5. They ensure Lodge officers plan realistically, include the oversight of the Trustees, and engage the membership in meaningful financial decision-making. This structure promotes sustainability, accountability, and fairness for current and future members.

It also allows the Treasurer to immediately pay invoices that are budgeted for thus preventing potential late fees or penalties by having to wait until a Stated Communication to present and obtain approval to pay the invoice. It also shortens the time of the meeting since invoices or costs that were passed in the budget do not need to be discussed in Lodge as they have already been approved for payment.

ON LIFE MEMBERS

The Grand Lodge Constitution (Section 2.48 and Section 4.11) makes it clear that Life Memberships are funded through a system in which the Grand Lodge pays the per capita portion, not full dues in perpetuity. Nor does the collection of those funds take into account rising per capita costs for the buildings which those members attend.

Currently, the Life Memberships barely cover the per capita to the Grand Lodge, meaning the Lodge is left holding the bag for any other costs associated with a Brothers' membership in a Lodge. This means that Life Members are not contributing to the Lodge's support. Many Lodges are finding that these payments no longer cover the operational share expected of each member. A significant number of the Lodges that I have visited, which are having to close their doors, are full of Life Members, and the Lodge can't pay the bills.

The proposed amendment limits any new assessment only to the amount above \$122.50, the 2025 baseline, and does not retroactively diminish Life Membership. For example, the membership fee assessment valuation for a Life Member, as things currently stand, would be \$7.00 for the year ($\$122.50 + 5\% = \$128.63 - \$122.50 = \6.13 round up to \$7.00). If the \$150 dues are passed the amount the next year would be \$35 for the year or \$2.92/mo. ($\$150 + 5\% = \$157.50 - \$122.50 = \35).

This simply asks Life Members to participate in increases above that baseline, much like cost-sharing mechanisms used in Medicare and insurance. People's insurance premiums increase every year, and if they experience a loss their premiums also increase exponentially, much like we would suffer a loss from the death of a member or other factors. Having Life Members contribute that small portion above the 2025 baseline would help mitigate these losses. This is not unlike how "paid-up"

insurance may still have evolving conditions in response to broader economic or actuarial realities. The Lodge's intention is fairness and financial equity, not rescission.

The legacy of the Life Membership fund is one of financial imbalance, as it does not adequately support the ongoing costs of the Lodge. The amendments concerning dues were all crafted in an attempt to help account for those changes so our Lodge can survive long after we have laid down our working tools.

The Rationale for Amending the Good Works/Charity Section at Minnehaha Lodge No. 5

Proposed Addition to Bylaws – Good Works Committee:

SECTION 1

The Worshipful Master and Wardens shall, unless otherwise ordered, be ex-officio members of a Good Works Committee, and shall have power during recess of the Lodge to draw orders on the Treasurer for any sum not exceeding \$250 for the relief of any one applicant.

Purpose of the Amendment:

The proposed amendment establishes a clear process for authorizing charitable relief during periods when the Lodge is not in session. It empowers the principal officers to act compassionately and efficiently on behalf of the Lodge in circumstances requiring timely assistance.

Benefits of the Amendment:

1. Timely Charitable Relief:
 - Allows for immediate action to assist Brothers, widows, or community members in need, without waiting for a Stated Communication.
2. Officer Responsibility and Oversight:
 - Restricting this authority to the Worshipful Master and Wardens ensures decisions are made with senior leadership involvement and accountability.
3. Reasonable Financial Limit:
 - The \$250 cap ensures prudent use of Lodge funds while still enabling meaningful support for urgent needs.
4. Encourages Benevolence Without Bureaucracy:
 - Streamlines the process of giving relief, reinforcing the Masonic principle of charity while avoiding unnecessary administrative delay.
5. Lodge Recess Coverage:
 - Ensures Lodge benevolence continues even when the Lodge is dark or during periods when regular meetings are not scheduled.

Conclusion:

The increase from \$100 to \$250 in Article IX is intended to align with modern needs and inflation. This is for showing charity to a Brother and is explicitly capped *per applicant*, not per officer or cumulative. No change has been proposed that allows unrestricted spending. Further, Grand Lodge Charity Fund applications often take time and may not address the immediate needs of a Brother. Not to mention, \$250 is only enough to pay the average monthly Xcel Energy bill for someone who lives in a home.

This provision is a safety net. It affirms our Masonic duty to provide relief promptly and discreetly, especially when the Lodge is dark between meetings. Moreover, oversight remains: such disbursements are made by the Worshipful Master and Wardens through the Treasurer; they are not unilateral decisions.

This amendment formalizes a compassionate and practical tool for Lodge leadership to respond to urgent needs in a responsible and Masonic manner. It exemplifies the values of relief and brotherly love, providing flexibility without compromising oversight or fiscal responsibility.

The Rationale for Amending Treasurer Reporting at Minnehaha Lodge No. 5

Proposed Additions to Bylaws – Treasurer Reporting:

SECTION 1

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer or his proxy to make a report to the Lodge at each first monthly Stated Communication showing receipts, disbursements, and financial condition of the Lodge.

SECTION 2

The Treasurer or his proxy shall make an annual report reporting on the financial condition of the Lodge to the Lodge at the last Stated Communication of the current term.

SECTION 3

The Treasurer will complete any income tax returns or reporting on or before the filing or request date thereof.

Purpose of the Amendments:

The purpose of these bylaw amendments is to establish consistent, transparent, and accountable financial reporting practices for the Treasurer of Minnehaha Lodge No. 5. These provisions ensure that members are kept informed of the Lodge's financial health and that regulatory obligations are met in a timely manner.

Benefits of the Amendments:

1. Promotes Financial Transparency:
 - Monthly and annual reports keep the membership informed and engaged with the Lodge's financial condition.
2. Ensures Accountability:
 - Requiring regular financial updates and documentation supports good governance and oversight.
3. Supports Informed Decision-Making:
 - Access to timely financial information enables the Lodge to make better operational and charitable decisions.

4. Strengthens Compliance:
 - Ensuring the timely filing of tax and financial reports which protects the Lodge from penalties and legal exposure.

5. Allows for Delegation When Necessary:
 - Recognizing a proxy ensures that financial duties are fulfilled even in the temporary absence of the Treasurer.

Conclusion:

These amendments reinforce the principles of transparency, accountability, and diligence in Lodge financial management. They codify practical duties already expected of the Treasurer while providing a structure that supports ongoing operational excellence and legal compliance.

The Rationale for Amending the Order of Business and Degrees Bylaw at Minnehaha Lodge No. 5

Proposed Additions to Bylaws – Order of Business and Degrees:

SECTION 1

When the Lodge is opened on a Stated Communication on the 1st Thursday of the month, the following order of business shall be observed:

1. Approving the minutes and reports of committees as communicated;
2. Reading and approving current bills that are not otherwise approved for payment in the Budget;
3. Reading of correspondence;
4. Reading and referring of petitions;
5. Balloting upon applications for initiation or affiliation;
6. Receiving and considering resolutions and communications;
7. Considering unfinished business;
8. Disposing of such other business as may come before the Lodge;
9. Conferring degrees as designated by the Worshipful Master.

SECTION 2

The Stated Communication on the 3rd Thursday of the month will be held for the conferral of Degrees and/or the disposition of any business that has come before the Lodge since the previous Stated Communication. This includes but is not limited to reading and referring of petitions, and balloting on applications for initiation or affiliation.

SECTION 3

Provided, that matters of charity shall always claim precedence.

Purpose of the Amendments:

These amendments are intended to bring structure, clarity, and consistency to the conduct of Minnehaha Lodge's Stated Communications, while also ensuring flexibility for addressing urgent matters and preserving Masonic priorities such as charity.

Benefits of the Amendments:

1. Enhances Meeting Structure and Efficiency:
 - Establishing a formal order of business promotes consistency, prevents disorder, and ensures meetings are productive and respectful of members' time.

2. Clarifies Intent for Degree Conferrals:
 - Designating the 3rd Thursday for degree work provides regular opportunities to progress candidates while maintaining flexibility for urgent business.

3. Ensures Flexibility and Responsiveness:
 - By permitting necessary business (e.g., paying a bill, reading and balloting on petitions) on the 3rd Thursday, the Lodge maintains momentum even when a candidate-heavy or business-heavy schedule arises.

4. Upholds Masonic Principles:
 - Prioritizing charity reaffirms one of the fundamental tenets of Freemasonry, ensuring that no urgent request for relief is delayed by procedural matters.

5. Improves Transparency for Members and Visitors:
 - A consistent and published order of business allows members, officers, and visitors to prepare for meetings and engage more meaningfully.

Conclusion:

These bylaw amendments ensure that Minnehaha Lodge No. 5 operates with a high level of order, responsiveness, and Masonic integrity. They empower the Lodge to manage its business effectively while continuing to prioritize degrees and charitable work as key components of its mission.

The Rationale for Amending How Bylaws are Amended at Minnehaha Lodge No. 5

Proposed Addition to Bylaws – Amendment Procedure:

SECTION 1

The proposed amendment shall be in writing and submitted at a Stated Communication of the Lodge, and shall be laid over until the next Stated Communication, held on the same Thursday meeting the following month thus allowing for a layover of as close to 30 days as the calendar allows, when action thereon shall be taken, and two-thirds vote of the members present in favor of the amendment shall adopt.

Purpose of the Amendment:

This bylaw amendment establishes a clear, consistent, and reasonable procedure for proposing and adopting amendments to the bylaws of Minnehaha Lodge No. 5. It ensures that all proposed changes are given due consideration by the membership and that there is sufficient time to discuss, reflect, and prepare before voting.

Benefits of the Amendment:

1. Ensures Transparency and Notice:
 - Requiring written submission and layover promotes awareness and allows members to review proposed changes in advance of a vote.
2. Encourages Thoughtful Deliberation:
 - The layover period ensures members have adequate time to discuss implications, suggest improvements, or raise concerns.
3. Promotes Member Engagement:
 - Scheduling the vote at the following month's same-day meeting allows for consistent planning and increased member participation.
4. Provides Clear Voting Threshold:
 - A two-thirds vote requirement ensures that bylaw changes reflect a strong consensus and broad support within the Lodge.
5. Aligns with Common Masonic Practices:
 - This procedure is consistent with Masonic norms and expectations for amending fundamental governance documents.

Conclusion:

This amendment reinforces democratic governance and thoughtful stewardship within Minnehaha Lodge No. 5. It ensures that all voices are heard before significant changes are made and provides a transparent and predictable process for shaping the Lodge's future.

The Rationale for Adding a Bylaw Review are Amended at Minnehaha Lodge No. 5

Proposed Additions to Bylaws – Bylaws Review:

SECTION 1

The Bylaws of this Lodge shall be reviewed biannually by a committee appointed by the Worshipful Master prior to the first meeting in July. The purpose of this review shall be to:

1. Ensure continued compliance with the Constitution, Regulations, and Edicts of the Grand Lodge;
2. Identify any inconsistencies, outdated provisions, or necessary amendments;
3. Recommend any proposed changes to the Lodge for discussion and approval in accordance with proper procedures.

SECTION 2

The committee shall consist of not fewer than three Master Masons in good standing, one of whom shall be a past elected officer of the Lodge. A written report of the committee's findings shall be vetted by the Trustees and then presented at the first stated meeting in August. Any proposed amendments shall be handled in accordance with the amendment procedures outlined in these Bylaws or the Grand Lodge Constitution and Bylaws.

SECTION 3

Failure to conduct the biannual review shall not invalidate the Bylaws but shall be reported at the next stated meeting and corrected at the earliest opportunity.

Purpose of the Amendments:

These amendments are intended to ensure that the governing documents of Minnehaha Lodge No. 5 remain current, compliant, and reflective of the Lodge's evolving practices and obligations.

Benefits of the Amendments:

1. Promotes Ongoing Compliance:
 - Regular reviews help ensure alignment with Grand Lodge laws and edicts.
2. Encourages Good Governance:
 - Identifying outdated or inconsistent language supports clarity and consistency in Lodge operations.
3. Fosters Accountability and Transparency:
 - A formal committee process, including input from Trustees, ensures that changes are deliberate and well considered.
4. Includes Experienced Oversight:
 - Requiring one past elected officer ensures institutional memory and experience are part of the review process.
5. Provides a Clear Process and Timeline:
 - The July appointment and August reporting window establish a consistent cycle that members can anticipate and rely upon.
6. Avoids Legal or Procedural Gaps:
 - Even if the review is missed, requiring a report and correction protects the Lodge from unintentional noncompliance.

Conclusion:

These amendments support the long-term health, relevance, and functionality of Minnehaha Lodge No. 5. They institutionalize a practical safeguard to ensure the Bylaws remain accurate and actionable. They are intended to ensure that the governing documents of the Lodge remain current, compliant, and reflective of the Lodge's evolving practices and obligations. It provides a practical safeguard to ensure the bylaws remain accurate and actionable. Additionally, these amendments do not preclude an amendment being brought before the Lodge at any time within those two years should it be needed. Our bylaws should be a living, breathing document that grows with our Lodge and our needs, not something stuck in a mindset from 50 years ago.

A Final Word on the Proposed Bylaw Amendments for Minnehaha Lodge No. 5

These proposed bylaws reflect careful thought, alignment with Grand Lodge bylaws and policies, and a desire to ensure Minnehaha Lodge No. 5 is positioned for long-term success. Every provision contains safeguards, flexibility, and has been calibrated based on historical practice, financial prudence, and fraternal values. The underlying intention has never changed: to preserve and advance the work of our Lodge for generations to come.

Thank you for your time, attention, and dedication to the continued growth and excellence of Minnehaha Lodge No. 5.