

# ***BMWED LOCAL LODGE OFFICERS***

***A Guide on roles, responsibilities,  
and functions for  
BMWED Lodge Officers***



A Joint Guide by the  
BMWED Secretary Treasurer's Department  
and BMWED Education Department



# Foreword



Part of the new series of *Guides* for our BMWED Lodge officers, *BMWED Local Lodge Officers* gives our members more detail on the different work they can take on in their Lodge, starting them on their path to being leaders within our Brotherhood.

The content of this *Guide* condenses material found in our BMWED Bylaws, BMWED Ritual, and other resources, offering our members a more accessible tool they can put to use for themselves and at their Lodge meetings.

When in doubt, our Lodge officers should know they have a team of experts within our union on their side, dedicated to supporting them and ensuring our Lodge officers are set up for success in what we do, together.

Any inquiries regarding the roles and tasks laid out in this *Guide* should be directed to your General Chairperson, or the appropriate National Division officers or staff.

You can find their contact information at <https://www.bmwe.org/directory>.



Burlington System Division Lodge 42, Chicago, IL, 2012

# Notes on Revision

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## Proponency

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**Approved for Unrestricted Release**

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# Getting Started

This *Guide* does not replace the governing documents which guide our union. While using this *Guide*, understand it supplements our **BMWED Bylaws**, your **System Division's or Federation's bylaws**, our **IBT Constitution**, and our **BMWED/IBT Merger Agreement**. The intent of this *Guide* is to offer you a useful tool that makes the information in our governing documents more accessible for day-to-day work at the Lodge level.

This *Guide* is all about introducing the leading edge of our ability to fight for our members, our Local Lodge officers!

Whether you are a newly-elected officer to your Lodge, a member getting to know your union better, or someone just trying to learn more about our Brotherhood in general, this *Guide* offers you a chance to find out about the sisters and brothers who do vital work for our union every day, both between the rails and at our local meetings and events.

Learn about standing officers in every Lodge, as well as other important roles each of our BMWED Lodges have for members who want to take charge of the ACTION at their level, sharpen their leadership skills, and keep up the fight for our members, our quality of life, and our dignity at work!

With great men and women in our Local Lodge offices, as a Brotherhood we are **"ON OUR WAY!"**



BMWED Lodge 798 Lodge Chairman  
Nick Allen at an action in Omaha, Mar. 2023

# Gathering Your Tools



**Register for Member Access to our BMWED Website!**

[bmwe.org/account.aspx](https://bmwe.org/account.aspx)

- Find information
- Order Material
- Submit Reports
- Review Records

As a BMWED member, you can find a wealth of resources, tools, and information on our BMWED website under Member Access!

While our union has its roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we work and act in the 21<sup>st</sup> century! We use online platforms and technology to be more agile and reduce unnecessary costs to our members.

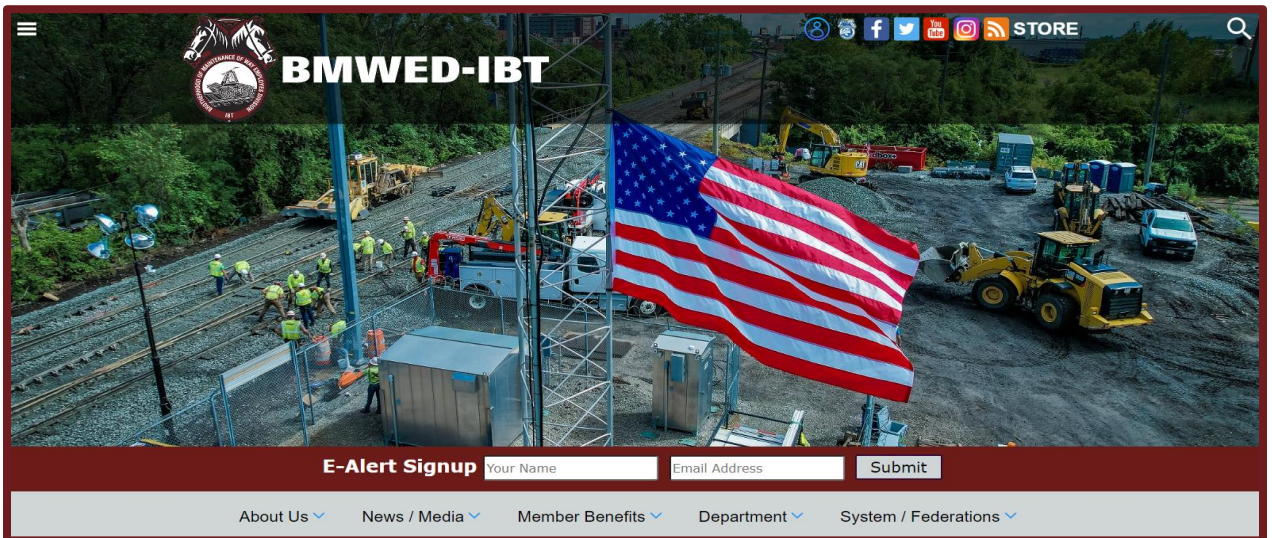
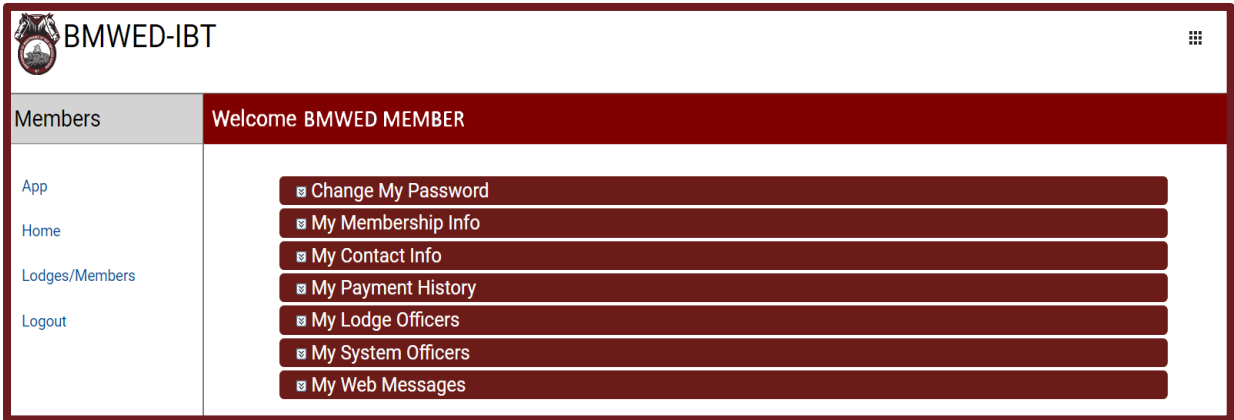


Image capture of <https://www.bmwe.org> from November 17, 2023

All BMWED members have access to special online tools and resources, if they register. Lodge Presidents, Vice Presidents, and Secretary-Treasurers can also access unique and important tools for reviewing or submitting reports, ordering supplies, notifying their Lodges about meetings, and more.

Creating a Member account at [bmwe.org](https://bmwe.org) requires a personal e-mail address (**not a railroad-provided account**). You can create a free e-mail address for yourself with Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook (Hotmail) or other services.

# Gathering Your Tools



With your Member access account set up, you can access the part of our bmwe.org website shown above.

Here you can review personal information, update your own contact data with our union (your phone number, mailing address, or email) and find information about your own Lodge officers, your System Division or Federation officers, and other information.

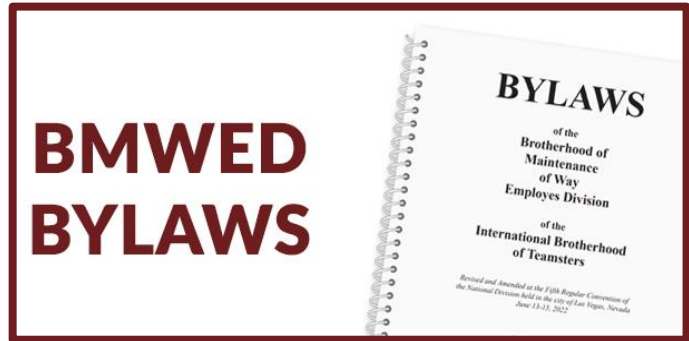
Our Lodges should encourage all our members to sign up for this access. It's quick, easy, and helps our members stay informed.

As a Lodge President, VP, or Secretary-Treasurer, more tools are available to you by clicking the Lodges/Members link in the left-hand column.

[Lodges/Members](#)  ***Tools for Lodge Officers!***

# Our Governing Foundation, Our BMWED Bylaws

Our BMWED Bylaws are the source for knowing what offices we maintain in each of our Local Lodges, how they are elected or appointed, and what roles and responsibilities each officer has for their members and their Lodge.



**Article XVIII (18)  
in our Bylaws  
covers most of  
our Lodge  
officers, but not  
all of them!**

## ***Our Lodges elect:***

- ***A Lodge President***
- ***A Lodge Vice President***
- ***A Past President***
- ***A Secretary-Treasurer***
- ***A Recording Secretary***
- ***A standing Audit Committee***
- ***A standing Grievance Committee, led by the Local Chairperson***
- ***A Lodge Legislative Representative***
- ***Delegates or Representatives to JPB Meetings, Conventions, or other events***

## ***Per our Bylaws and our BMWED Ritual, other appointed offices may include:***

- ***Scrutineers for Lodge elections***
- ***Conductors and Chaplains for ceremonies***
- ***Temporary Committees for Lodge projects, events, or special purposes.***



# Who Can Be A Lodge Officer?

**Article XVIII, Section 9 of our BMWED Bylaws** establishes how our Local Lodges are elected. Any active member of our union should take time to read and understand the provisions for Lodge elections within our Bylaws and in Article XVIII.

*Any member in good standing of a Local Lodge who has established seniority rights on some position coming under the jurisdiction of the BMWED, and who meets the eligibility requirements under the IBT Constitution and the Merger Agreement at the time of nomination and election and is a member in good standing at the time of assuming office, shall be eligible to be a candidate and to hold office unless disqualified therefrom by provisions of these Bylaws, the Merger Agreement, the IBT Constitution or applicable law; provided, however, that when new lodges have been established Article II, Section 4(b) of the IBT Constitution will govern.*

## **So, what's all that mean?**

Lodge officers must have established **seniority** in our craft, meaning they must be on a seniority roster for some railroad or employer whose workers are represented by BMWED. This is rarely a concern for our members, unless there were issues with a seniority transfer or upon hiring. New employees on a probationary status (found within your Agreement) and not yet considered full members of the BMWED are not eligible to run for office.

The **Maintenance of Good Standing** is defined in **Article XVII, Section 7** of our Bylaws. Good Standing means payment of all required dues on or before the last day of the current month without a late or missing payment. Members in Good Standing have met their dues obligations, not voluntarily withdrawn from membership or become ineligible for continued membership, or who has been suspended or expelled as provided in our Bylaws.

Staying up to date on your monthly dues is the most common reason to fall out of Good Standing. If you find you've missed a dues payment, reach out for assistance to your System Division or Federation to get caught up and restore Good Standing.

# Who Can Be A Lodge Officer?

## *Continuous Good Standing*

The eligibility requirements of the **IBT Constitution** and the **IBT/BMWED Merger Agreement** also add a requirement for “**Continuous Good Standing.**” This means that any member seeking nomination or election to a union office must have made timely payments of all required dues, fees, or assessments for the twenty-four (24) months leading up to the month they are nominated for the office.

This is a more restrictive requirement than Good Standing, since any missed dues payments will disqualify a member, even if they are made up later! While the BMWED Secretary-Treasurer may grant dispensations on this issue for extraordinary reasons, any member seeking office should be mindful of their monthly dues obligations.

The most common way to lose Continuous Good Standing is to rely on your employer’s dues check-off to deduct your monthly dues from your earnings. While this is a reliable method when you are consistently working, if you are furloughed or take a leave of absence from your employment, there are no paychecks from which your dues can be deducted and you will end up missing a dues payment!

If you are off work, BMWED has a non-working dues rate you can remit yourself. This amount is substantially less than full working dues. Anyone on furlough or a leave of absence should contact their System Division or Federation office, or their General Chairperson, and arrange for timely payment of non-working dues to maintain Continuous Good Standing!

For new members, the Continuous Good Standing requirement also sets a standard that you will need to be an active, due-paying member for at least two (2) years prior to being eligible to run for elected office. This offers our newest members a chance to learn all they can before they take on leadership roles for their fellow members.

# Who Can Be A Lodge Officer?

## *Other Requirements*

- While our union currently allows BMWED members who took management roles with their employer to pay a “seniority retention fee” equivalent to due, this does **not** make them an active member or eligible for Lodge office.
- If a member is charged, tried, and found guilty of offenses within their Lodge, System Division, Federation, or our union under the provisions of our Bylaws or the IBT Constitution (***IBT Constitution Article XIX***), penalties may include suspensions, expulsions, or the denial of their ability to hold any office permanently or for a fixed period.



BMWED Members and families at a Labor Day parade, September 2022

# Terms of Office

Lodge officers hold their positions for terms set either within our Bylaws or, for temporary offices, for terms set by the Lodge itself. These include:

OFFICE	TERM	SOURCE
<b>Article XVIII Lodge officers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• President</li> <li>• Vice President</li> <li>• Secretary-Treasurer</li> <li>• Recording Secretary</li> <li>• Past President</li> <li>• Audit Committee</li> <li>• Grievance Committee and Chairperson</li> </ul>	3 Years	Article XVIII, Section 10
Local Lodge Legislative Representative	4 Years	Article XII
National Division Convention Delegates and Alternates	---	Article XVIII, Section 14
Representatives or Delegates to System Division or Federation Joint Protective Boards or Conventions	---	Article XIX, Section 4 and as prescribed by System Division or Federation Constitutions or Bylaws
Ritual Officers (Chaplain, Conductor)	---	BMWED Ritual and as deemed necessary within Lodge
Local Lodge Temporary Committee Members	---	Article XVIII, Section 13

**NOTE:** The terms of office, roles, responsibilities, or governing authorities for offices or appointments to System Divisions, Federations, our BMWED National Division, or to bargaining committees are not covered in this *Guide*.

# Holding Officer Elections

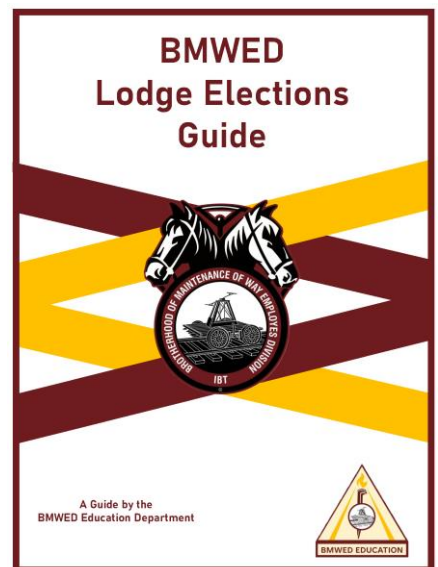
For those Lodge officers provided under our BMWED Bylaws, each Lodge will hold elections to fill vacancies. Refer to **Article XVIII** or our **BMWED Lodge Elections Guide** for more information on how to conduct successful and effective Lodge Elections.



Officers of BMWED's United Passenger Rail Federation being installed after their election

For those temporary positions not described in our Bylaws, the Lodge President has the authority to appoint members unless the Lodge determines another method. This includes the appointment of Chaplains or Conductors for Lodge Ritual or ceremonies, at the Lodge's discretion, and the appointment of members to temporary committees.

If the Lodge prefers to hold elections for these positions, they can also use the Lodge Elections Guide as a reference for how to conduct these elections fairly and in compliance with our BMWED Bylaws.



# The Past President

While our day-to-day work as a union is focused on what's happening right now, many important aspects of our identity as a Brotherhood, our values and our vision, are tied to our traditions and to the history we carry together.

Our Past Presidents hold honorary offices within our Lodges. While our Bylaws and our BMWED Ritual prescribe them some duties, the real value our Past Presidents offer is their ability to carry on the traditions of our union at the Lodge level, providing their guidance and counsel to younger members and officers.

*Brother Phil Cornacchia of BMWED Lodge 882 (\*dec. 2018), attended meetings of his Lodge well past his 1981 retirement, sharing stories with younger members of our union's fights in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, including the New Deal and the passage of laws protecting 40-hour work week (and overtime pay!).*

*This photo is from 2016, when Brother Phil celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday alongside fellow BMWED brothers.*



If a Lodge maintains a Past President, this officer can:

- ***Preside over Lodge meetings in the absence of the President and Vice President.***
- ***Install new officers, or initiate new members, as Installing Officer within our BMWED Ritual.***
- ***Perform other ceremonial duties as required by the Ritual.***

This office can, in effect, be whatever the Lodge makes of it. For larger Lodges, or those with rich traditions, a Past President can be a key member to mentor others. For newer Lodges, a Past President can help build continuity and assist in transition work for newer officers as they take on their roles.

***Our Past Presidents help us recognize our history and our tradition, empowering our Lodges as they move forward!***

# The Lodge President

In the US Army there's an old saying that the commander is responsible for everything their unit does or fails to do. In the US Navy, the ship captain is always responsible, even if he or she isn't. While our Lodge Presidents may not be the most visible officers in our union or do the day-to-day work that generates the most interest among our members, they are the authorized leader within our union for coordinating all the action at the Lodge level and ensuring it gets done!



BMWED Lodge 1481 meeting in 2013.

As provided within our Bylaws, our Lodge Presidents:

- ***Set the agenda for Lodge business and preside over meetings of the Lodge.***
- ***Enforce the provisions of our BMWED Bylaws, other governing documents, and the Lodge's legal obligations.***
- ***Ensure Lodge officers complete and submit all necessary reports or, if the officers are unable, ensure all legally-required reports are timely filed.***
- ***Appoint members to Lodge committees except where they are elected under our Bylaws.***
- ***Preserves decorum at all Lodge events and ensures members are treated with respect.***
- ***Decides all questions of order or procedure, pending an appeal to the entire Lodge. The Lodge President is "the Chair" for parliamentary procedure under Robert's Rules of Order.***

***Our Lodge Presidents set the tone for our Lodges and take the lead in building our strength!***

# The Vice President

This often-overlooked office can, in fact, be one of the best places for younger members to “learn the ropes” in what our union does!

Our BMWED Bylaws have once sentence describing the authority and duties of the Lodge Vice President. Article XVIII, Section 13 provides that *“The Vice President shall assist the President in the performance of his duties and in the absence of the President he shall preside at all meetings of the Lodge.”*

While this seems to make the Vice Presidency an “empty” role, what this really means is that your Lodge VP has the widest opportunity to take charge in the work your Lodge wants to conduct! The Vice President can:

- **Lead temporary committees for Lodge events like family picnics, informational rallies or pickets, or other actions.**
- **Act as the Lodge liaison for educational, organizing, or safety work, putting together material and assisting these BMWED Departments in supporting your Lodge’s members.**
- **Assist the Secretary-Treasurer and Audit Committee with any audits or other financial work your Lodge needs completed.**
- **Support your Grievance Committee and Local Chairperson in gathering information on claims, grievances, or contracting issues.**

***Our Vice Presidents stand ready to assist our Presidents when needed and can be the “jack of all trades” for our Lodges!***



BMWED Members in Denver during our union’s National Day of Action in 2017.



# The Recording Secretary

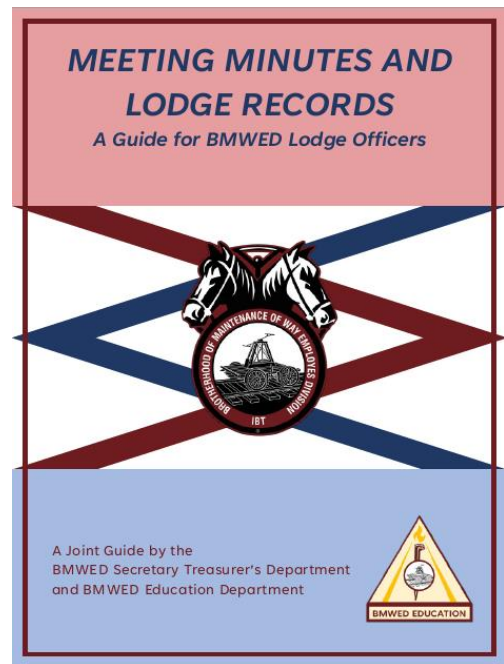
The job of keeping accurate, detailed records of Lodge meetings is the work of our Recording Secretaries, though this office can also be combined with the Secretary-Treasurer in our Local Lodges.

Apart from being the responsible officer for taking down meeting minutes, the Recording Secretary will:

- ***Provide a reading of previous meetings' minutes at each Lodge meeting.***
- ***Read out to members all relevant communications received by the Lodge from the System Division, Federation, National Division, IBT, or other organizations.***

Guidance for the Recording Secretary can be found in our *Guide, Meeting Minutes and Lodge Records*.

Whether or not this office is merged with the Secretary-Treasurer, the duties of keeping an accurate account of our Lodge meetings is vital to empowering our members, keeping Lodge meetings meaningful, and meeting our legal obligations!



***Our Vice Presidents stand ready to assist our Presidents when needed and can be the “jack of all trades” for our Lodges!***

# The Secretary-Treasurer

One of the biggest jobs in the Local Lodge, and throughout our union, is the Secretary-Treasurer. These officers are in charge of ensuring that our union can conduct business effectively, maintaining our finances and informing members of what resources we have available to **ACT!**

The Lodge Secretary-Treasurer will:

- **Receive all communications and correspondence addressed to the Lodge.**
- **Inform Lodge members of upcoming meetings and send out other correspondence, as necessary.**
- **Receive all requests for reimbursement from Lodge members.**
- **Work with the System Division, Federation, and National Division to ensure all required dues are accounted for.**
- **Maintain all Lodge records, including rosters, meeting minutes, financial records, and reports.**
- **Submit Quarterly Audit Reports to BMWED and present them to Lodge members for their review.**
- **Complete and file all legally-required reports.**
- **Sign for all disbursements of Lodge funds.**

With so many different tasks, Lodge Secretary-Treasurers should thoroughly understand their role as provided within our BMWED Bylaws. They should also reach out to their General Chairperson and our BMWED Secretary-Treasurer's Department for guidance and support, and gather all the tools and resources they have available to help them in their work.

Lodge Secretary-Treasurers are **STRONGLY** encouraged to find training resources and guidance at:

**BMWED's YouTube Channel**

[youtube.com/@BMWED](https://www.youtube.com/@BMWED)

**BMWED's Education Library**

[bmwe.org/library](https://bmwe.org/library)

**BMWED's Member Access Portal**

[bmwe.org/members](https://bmwe.org/members)

***Our Secretary-Treasurers have a LOT of responsibility! Fortunately, we have a lot of support for them as they build the firm foundation for our entire union to do our work together!***

# The Audit Committee

A standing committee elected under our Bylaws, the Audit Committee is composed of at least three (3) members in Good Standing who review and approve the Quarterly Audit Report prepared by the Lodge Secretary-Treasurer.



BMWED officers in training, April 2023

The Audit Committee is required, per our Bylaws, to audit the Lodge's Quarterly Audit Report ***no later than thirty (30) days after the end of each fiscal quarter.*** That means this Committee should meet four (4) times per year, often in January, April, July, and November, to review the previous quarter's report.

When reviewing the Quarterly Audit Report, the Audit Committee ensures:

- ***Lodge records are accurate.***
- ***Lodge financial transactions are supported by necessary documentation, evidence, or receipts.***
- ***Lodge business is kept accountable to its members.***
- ***The Lodge is well prepared for annual audit reports required by the Department of Labor. When Quarterly Audit Reports are accurate, complete, and well-supported, these LM Reports can be completed on behalf of the Lodge by our National Division.***

While the bulk of the work is still done by the Secretary-Treasurer, the Lodge Audit Committee performs an important oversight function. This work keeps the Lodge well-informed, engaged, and able to better understand their obligations and available resources!

***Our Audits Committees help keep our Lodges in compliance, on top of our finances, and ready to ACT!***

# The Grievance Committee



BMWED members at an action in Kansas City, 2023

Each System Division or Federation operates their Grievance Committees in a way uniquely suited to the needs of their members and in defense of their on-property agreements. In a nutshell the Grievance Committee is the first level of the **BMWED Protective Department** in preserving our collectively bargained rights.

**Article XVIII** provides that a Lodge Grievance Committee be composed of at least one (1) member from each of the different departments represented within the Lodge. Sounds good, but what does that mean? Some Lodges may have members working on same railroad but within different departments or sub-departments. For instance, a Section Foreman in the Track Sub-Department and a Carpenter in the B&B Sub-Department may be in the same Lodge, but their jobs could be a lot different. Having both on the Grievance Committee ensures nothing important is left out when dealing with claims. Lodges may also represent members working on different railroads, each with their own Grievance Committee to support those members as they protect their Agreements.

Per **Article XIX**, the actual jobs of the Grievance Committee are determined by the **General Chairperson** and their **System Division or Federation Bylaws**. This work may include gathering evidence or statements regarding claims or grievances, keeping officers informed of contracting issues, or other work that helps sustain the rights and benefits provided in our Agreements.

***Our Grievance Committees are our front line in defending our rights on the job and protecting our agreements!***

# The Local Chairperson

Formally the Chairperson of the **Lodge Grievance Committee**, the Local Chairperson is the primary Lodge officer to discuss or consider **BMWED Protective Department** issues. While your **General Chairperson** is the authority on interpreting your collective bargaining agreement, the Local Chairperson can act as a vital link between your Lodge and your System Division or Federation.

Each **General Chairperson** lays out their expectations for Local Chairpersons, in accordance with how claims and grievances are handled on that specific territory. Some Local Chairpersons may help draft claims or appeals, while others act to support Vice Chairpersons. Any member seeking to represent our union and our members in bargaining work, in adjusting claims and grievances, in investigatory hearings, or anywhere we fight for our rights can learn a lot in their Lodge by running for the Local Chairperson position.

This office often has a lot of visibility among our members. Any member on a claim, grievance, or discipline appeal will likely know their Local Chairperson. These officers are often considered standing members on their System Division or Federation's **Joint Protective Board**, unless System/Federation Bylaws provide some other means for selection. Any contracting issues at the local level are also often in the "wheelhouse" of the Local Chairperson, assisting their Vices and their General Chairperson.



Burlington System Division Local Chairpersons meeting as their Joint Protective Board in 2020.

***Our Local Chairpersons lead the fight in protecting our Agreements and guiding the work of our union!***

# The Lodge Legislative Representative

The office of Local Lodge Legislative Representative is one found under **Article XII** of our BMWED Bylaws. The primary work of this officer is to meet with other Lodge Representatives at a **State Legislative Convention**, where they elect **BMWED State Legislative Directors** and **Assistant Legislative Directors** who conduct much of the work within our **BMWED Legislative Department** at the state level.

These officers may also be tasked by our **Director of Government Affairs** or our BMWED President to act on behalf of our union in important communications or advocacy work for critical legislation or regulatory efforts.

BMWED  
Members  
performing  
Legislative  
Department  
advocacy work in  
Washington DC,  
November 2022



As every BMWED member knows, our US Congress has a lot of impact on our work and our livelihood. To ensure our voice is heard in the halls of Congress, our union empowers our members to **ACT** under the guidance of our Director of Government Affairs. Our Local Lodge Legislative Representatives are an important first step for any member seeking to protect our rights and benefits from bad legislation, or to promote the laws which can help us stay safe and enjoy good pay and benefits for the work we do!

***From the statehouse to Capitol Hill, our Legislative Department advocates for our members! Our Local Legislative Representatives are our Lodges' part of that team!***

# Delegates



BMWED Lodge Delegates convening at our National Division Convention in 2022.

Every four (4) years, each of our Local Lodges elect **Delegates** to convene and determine our direction, our leadership, and our work for the next four years.

**Lodge Delegates** and **Alternate Delegates** perform vital work as bearers of their Lodges' voting power in National Division officer elections. Our Lodge Delegates also deliberate on our BMWED Bylaws during each National Division Convention, considering amendments or revisions to our foundational governing document. **Article XVIII, Section 14** details the manner in which each Lodge is to be represented by their Delegate or Alternate Delegate at our BMWED National Division Conventions. The members entrusted by their Lodges with this office perform important work for all their brothers and sisters, making an impact that can last for years within our union.

Depending on the methods governing each System Division or Federation, each Lodge may also elect Delegates or Alternate Delegates to perform similar functions at their System Division or Federation Conventions. This office may be an alternate to a designated representative (like a Local Chairperson) to the Joint Protective Board. Contact your General Chairperson for more information on how your Lodge is represented for these functions.

***Our Delegates carry your Lodge's voice in determining the future of our union and how we **ACT** together!***

# Other Positions

Within our *BMWED Bylaws* and *BMWED Ritual*, there are certain positions which are discussed, but not elected.

The *Chaplain* offers an invocation blessing and closing benediction when determined appropriate by the Lodge. This position may be appointed by the Lodge President and has no restrictions or qualifications apart from membership in Good Standing. Guidance and appropriate wording for Chaplain ceremonies can be found in our BMWED Ritual.

*Conductors* are those members whose work closely resembles the functions of Sergeants-at-Arms or Wardens for other organizations. Within our BMWED Ritual, Conductors examine the credentials of anyone wishing to enter a Lodge meeting. These officers guide members, guests, or visitors to their seats and report to the President on all those present. The President may appoint Conductors when appropriate or as part of formal ceremony. There are no restrictions or qualifications for members in Good Standing to be Conductors.

*Installing Officers* may be the President, the Vice President, the Past President, or any member or special guest (the General Chairperson, for instance, or a National Division officer) that the President empowers with the ceremonial role of installing newly elected officers to the Lodge. While there is no specific guidance within our BMWED Ritual for initiating new members, when that work is not done by the Past President the Installing Officer may perform this function using similar guidance to installations.

*Scrutineers* are temporary positions filled by members in Good Standing who observe the counting of ballots during officer elections. Guidance for the appointment of these officers can be found in *Article XVIII, Section 9*. In some circumstances, Tellers may be appointed to perform a similar function and ensure that election results are accurate, fair, and accountable.

Where these don't conflict with our BMWED Bylaws, IBT Constitution, or the BMWE/IBT Merger Agreement, each Lodge may have other temporary or standing offices as provided by their System Division or Federation Bylaws and their Local Lodge rules.