MEETING PACKET COMMUNICATION

October 5, 2026

Members to Vote on Proposed Changes to M.E.B.A. By-Laws

M.E.B.A. members will have the opportunity to vote on proposed changes to the Union's By-Laws that would establish a new procedure allowing certain members working aboard eligible contracted vessels to participate remotely in collective bargaining contract ratification votes. The Union plans to conduct an online referendum vote in the month of December 2026 (31 days), open to all members in good standing.

The referendum's language, developed by the Constitutional Committee in response to Norfolk Resolution No. 26-03-01, would amend Article Six and Article Nineteen of the M.E.B.A. By-Laws and establish a separate protocol governing remote contract-ratification voting for certain qualifying members who are not able to attend a membership meeting because they are working aboard their vessel. The proposed remote voting procedure would apply only to ratification of collective bargaining agreements put before the vote of the membership at the regular monthly meetings. The Committee offers By-Laws Amendment language that would broadly allow remote voting on contract ratifications. However, the Committee asserted that the implementation of the online contract ratification would be governed by the Norfolk Resolution, as amended by the Committee as well as the Committee's "Protocol for Remote Contract Ratification Voting."

Under the Protocol and system that members will be voting on, a member would have to meet several requirements to participate remotely. The member must be in good standing, have been properly dispatched and be aboard an M.E.B.A.-contracted vessel. In addition, the member must be aboard that vessel at sea or in a foreign port at some point during the Wednesday of the membership meeting week. The Committee has clarified that this requirement applies during the period from 0000 through 2400, local time for the vessel on the Wednesday, meaning a member who is aboard a vessel for only a portion of that day could potentially qualify.

Members seeking to vote remotely would have to register electronically no later than 1700 ET on the Friday preceding meeting week and provide documentation establishing their eligibility. The District Executive Committee (DEC) would then verify the information and determine who is eligible to participate. Those approved for remote voting would receive the proposed contract or salient points, have an opportunity to submit comments for possible inclusion in the meeting packet and receive information for participating in a virtual meeting.

The proposed procedure calls for the remote meeting to take place at 1100 ET on Wednesday of the regular membership meeting week.

There are several important procedural elements to the proposal that members should understand and contemplate before voting on the referendum. Remote participants would be required to appear on camera, would be subject to a roll call against a previously established list of eligible voters and could be removed from the virtual meeting if they were determined to be ineligible. The proposal also places responsibility on the DEC to address security, connectivity and cost issues on a case-by-case basis.
The Committee's proposal further states that members participating remotely generally assume the risk that connectivity problems could prevent them from voting. This is particularly relevant given that the proposed procedure is specifically intended for members working aboard vessels, where internet connectivity and communications can vary considerably depending upon a vessel's location and operating circumstances.

While the resolution calls for remote voting on ratification, the voting process would occur in conjunction with a virtual meeting, and the resulting remote votes would ultimately be commingled with those cast at the regular membership meetings. The Union will therefore have to establish procedures that allow it to verify voter eligibility while maintaining the anonymity of each member's vote, if a secret vote is needed.

If approved by a majority of ballots cast by members in the December online referendum vote, and confirmed by the Tallying Committee, the language chosen by the Constitutional Committee will be codified into the M.E.B.A. By-Laws and the new system will be implemented. Should it fail in the online referendum vote, the matter would revert back to the DEC which would decide how best to proceed.

DISCUSSION

The proposed amendment is intended to address the practical difficulties faced by members who are working aboard contracted vessels and therefore unable to attend a regular membership meeting in person. At the same time, adoption would place a new voting procedure directly into the M.E.B.A. By-Laws. The procedure would involve eligibility documentation, DEC verification, virtual attendance, identification of voters, technological requirements and the subsequent commingling of remote and in-person ballots. Members may therefore wish to consider whether the proposed language provides sufficient clarity regarding ballot secrecy, authentication, connectivity problems, disputed eligibility, costs and the respective responsibilities of the DEC and the membership.

Additionally, while this resolution attempts to address the legitimate issue of Members voting from aboard vessels, Members must consider associated effects of the substantial change, including the significant administrative costs, risks of uncertainty after a vote based on vessel location/eligibility, and opening of voting to many Members not normally involved in Deep Sea affairs. Everyone can understand why there is a desire to vote on contacts while away on a vessel, particularly your own contract, but this referendum opens the voting much more broadly and with the administrative risks, Members must consider whether adopting this specific provision, process, and additional administrative costs actually makes things better, or if implementation could actually make the current contract voting process worse through unintended consequences.

The Constitutional Committee's clarification concerning any "'live aboard' vessel" will create a broad class of members potentially eligible to remotely vote on the deep-sea bargaining unit's contract ratification in question. The stated purpose of the Norfolk Resolution was to provide a means for members who are unable to attend a regular membership meeting because they are working aboard contracted vessels at sea or in foreign ports. However, the Constitutional Committee's revised language does not limit eligibility to traditional deep-sea vessels or to members working under the contract which is being considered for ratification. Consequently, a member aboard any M.E.B.A.-contracted, live-aboard vessel can qualify if that vessel is at sea or in a foreign port for any portion of the Wednesday that the remote meeting occurs.

For example, as the proposed By-Laws language stipulates, the provision will also potentially encompass members aboard non-deep-sea, live-aboard vessels like those in the Alaska Marine Highway System, members aboard the Norwegian Cruise Line passenger vessel, and members aboard research and Government vessels conducting missions, such as Lamont-Doherty, NOAA, Army Corps and Military Sealift Command vessels. M.E.B.A. members sailing on Interlake vessels will also qualify for remote voting under the referendum's implementation, as their vessels sail to foreign (Canadian) ports or may be at sea. Conversely, a Deep Sea vessel that is at the dock in the port of Anchorage, Alaska (US Port) from 0000-2400 on that Wednesday would be ineligible to participate in the remote vote.

There are practical questions concerning how voting would work aboard vessels where several members routinely participate in an online meeting collectively from a single computer or screen. If membership meeting attendees decide to conduct a particular ratification vote by secret ballot, members sharing a single screen or computer may not all be able to participate individually in that secret ballot and maintain the anonymity of their vote. This could potentially leave the member controlling the computer or connection in a position to determine which members can actually cast a confidential vote. In circumstances where members may have differing views on a contract, the arrangement could create an uncomfortable dynamic aboard ship and potentially give one participant an unintended degree of control over the voting access of others. If online voting members wish to hold a secret ballot, those remote members will need to participate individually from separate screens rather than joining the meeting as a group from a vessel.

The Wednesday eligibility requirement also creates a potential administrative problem that may not be immediately apparent. A member may register in advance, be verified by the DEC as otherwise eligible and participate in the Wednesday remote meeting. However, the Constitutional Committee's "Protocol for Remote Contract Ratification Voting" clearly stipulates the member's vessel must actually be at sea or in a foreign port for some portion of the Wednesday (local time for vessel) that the remote meeting occurs, to remain eligible. Thus, a member who has properly registered and otherwise satisfies the requirements in advance can ultimately be ruled ineligible if their vessel remains in a U.S. port throughout the 24-hour period of the remote meeting day. This means those administering the vote may need to know and verify the vessel's movements throughout that entire Wednesday before an individual member's eligibility can be considered final.

This could become particularly complicated if a member participates in the remote vote and the vessel subsequently remains in a U.S. port for the entire Wednesday. If that member's eligibility is later determined not to have existed, the question becomes what happens to the vote that was already cast. If the remote ratification vote is conducted in a manner that preserves the voter's anonymity, there may be no practical way to identify and remove that particular ballot without compromising the secrecy of

the vote. The proposal does not appear to address this situation, leaving an important question concerning when eligibility becomes final and how an otherwise valid-looking vote would be handled if eligibility were subsequently found not to exist.

Ultimately, the proposed By-Laws amendment will provide an additional means of participation for members who cannot attend a regular membership meeting because they are working aboard a qualifying vessel and it would create a new and permanent voting procedure within the M.E.B.A. By-Laws. Members will have to weigh the intended benefit against the practical questions surrounding eligibility, the potentially broad scope of vessels and members covered, shipboard access to voting, connectivity, ballot procedures, administrative costs associated with verification of vessel movements and the legal costs of handling a vote if eligibility is subsequently questioned. The Constitutional Committee has recommended the proposed By-Laws amendment, along with the "Protocol for Remote Contract Ratification Voting," but it is the membership that will determine whether this change becomes part of the governing By-Laws. Members should carefully review both the proposed language and its potential implications before casting their vote in the December referendum.

The protocols and mechanics for remote contract ratification as determined by the Constitutional Committee are pasted here for your reference. The complete Constitutional Committee Report as well as the original Norfolk resolution also follow.

Protocol for Remote Contract Ratification Voting

A. Eligibility for Remote Voting (i.e., WHO Can Vote)
    1. members in good standing, and
    2. who were properly dispatched, and
    3. who are on an M.E.B.A. contracted vessel either:
        a. at sea, or
        b. in a foreign Port

Mechanics of Voting (i.e., How, Where, When Eligible Members Can Vote)

1. initial notice of ratification is distributed via *Telex Times* and/or APB with the email link for registration
2. no later than 1700 ET on the Friday before meeting week, eligible remote voters must register by completing a form and submitting it electronically to the DEC indicating that they meet the following eligibility criteria:
    a. that they are a member in good standing (furnishing a copy of dues receipt)
    b. that they were properly dispatched (furnishing a copy of dispatch)
    c. that they are in an M.E.B.A. contracted vessel either: (i) at sea, or (ii) in a foreign Port
3. the DEC verifies that the remote voter meets the eligibility criteria and notifies the remote voter either that he/she meets the eligibility criteria or does not meet the eligibility criteria
4. as soon as possible, the DEC sends out a draft tentative agreement and/or salient points to eligible remote voters
5. no later than 0800 ET on Monday of meeting week, remote voters can submit feedback letters for possible inclusion in the meeting packet
6. the DEC reviews feedback letters for pertinence and respectfulness
7. no later than 1200 ET on Tuesday of meeting week, the DEC distributes meeting packets and a Zoom or Teams link to those who meet the eligibility criteria

8. 1100 ET on Wednesday of meeting week, a virtual meeting is held by Zoom or Teams. All attendees must be “on camera”
9. Roll call from a previously generated muster list of eligible remote voters is taken and ineligible attendees are expelled from the virtual meeting
10. Discussion and voting occurs as in an in-person meeting
11. Results are commingled with those from in-person meetings
12. Members who engage in fraudulent activity in conjunction with this process shall be subject to internal Union charges that may lead to suspension or expulsion of membership
13. There shall be oversight by the DEC to address security, connectivity or cost issues on a case-by-case basis, but generally, eligible members who participate in this process remotely assume the risk of connectivity issues preventing them from voting.

Constitutional Committee for Norfolk Resolution No. 26-03-01

FINDINGS

I. Responsibilities of the Committee

> ARTICLE TWENTY-ONE
> Amendments
>
> Section 1.(a) . . .
>
> (b) . . . When a proposed amendment is accepted by a majority vote of the membership, it shall be referred to Washington, D.C. Headquarters. A Constitutional Committee composed of five members shall be elected in accordance with such rules as are established by the District Executive Committee. The Committee will act on all proposed amendments to it. The Committee may receive whatever advice and assistance, legal or otherwise, it deems necessary. It shall prepare a report on the amendment, together with any proposed changes, substitutions, or recommendations and the reasons for such recommendations. Said changes, substitutions or recommendations shall not however, contravene the spirit and intent of the resolution. . . .

II. Norfolk Resolution 26-03-01

Norfolk Resolution 26-03-01 was introduced in March 2026. A copy is attached as Addendum A.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is this Committee's unanimous recommendation that, in accordance with ARTICLE TWENTY-ONE, Section 1.(b), these Protocols for Remote Contract Ratification Voting, and Resolution, as amended below, "shall then be submitted to the membership by the District President. If a majority vote of the membership approves the amendment as recommended, it shall then be voted upon, in a yes or no vote, by the membership of the District by secret ballot in accordance with the procedure outlined for elections or the methods outlined by online balloting for referendums, except that the time and duration of the vote shall be set by a majority vote of the membership."

I. Protocol for Remote Contract Ratification Voting

A. Eligibility for Remote Voting (i.e., WHO Can Vote)
   1. members in good standing, and
   2. who were properly dispatched, and

3. who are on an MEBA contracted vessel either:
   a. at sea, or
   b. in a foreign Port

B. Mechanics of Voting (i.e., HOW, WHERE, WHEN Eligible Members Can Vote)
1. initial notice of ratification is distributed via Telex Times and/or APB with the email link for registration
2. no later than 1700 ET on the Friday before meeting week, eligible remote voters must register by completing a form and submitting it electronically to the DEC indicating that they meet the following eligibility criteria:
   a. that they are a member in good standing (furnishing a copy of dues receipt)
   b. that they were properly dispatched (furnishing a copy of dispatch)
   c. that they are in an MEBA contracted vessel either: (i) at sea, or (ii) in a foreign Port
3. the DEC verifies that the remote voter meets the eligibility criteria and notifies the remote voter either that he/she meets the eligibility criteria or does not meet the eligibility criteria
4. as soon as possible, the DEC sends out a draft tentative agreement and/or salient points to eligible remote voters
5. no later than 0800 ET on Monday of meeting week, remote voters can submit feedback letters for possible inclusion in the meeting packet
6. the DEC reviews feedback letters for pertinence and respectfulness
7. no later than 1200 ET on Tuesday of meeting week, the DEC distributes meeting packets and a Zoom or Teams link to those who meet the eligibility criteria
8. 1100 ET on Wednesday of meeting week, a virtual meeting is held by Zoom or Teams. All attendees must be "on camera"
9. Roll call from a previously generated muster list of eligible remote voters is taken and ineligible attendees are expelled from the virtual meeting
10. Discussion and voting occurs as in an in-person meeting
11. Results are commingled with those from in-person meetings
12. Members who engage in fraudulent activity in conjunction with this process shall be subject to internal Union charges that may lead to suspension or expulsion of membership
13. There shall be oversight by the DEC to address security, connectivity or cost issues on a case-by-case basis, but generally, eligible members who participate in this process remotely assume the risk of connectivity issues preventing them from voting

II. Amended Resolution

This Committee finds that Norfolk Resolution 26-03-01 requires amending because it can be read in a way that is factually inaccurate and legally insufficient. Specifically, the fifth Whereas paragraph states that members vote remotely in officer elections. That is arguably incorrect;

members vote by mail ballot but not electronically. Also, should this Resolution pass, both By-laws ARTICLE SIX and By-laws ARTICLE NINETEEN should be amended.

The Committee recommends that Norfolk Resolution be amended as follows:

Whereas the membership of the MEBA all have an interest in the democratic process of ratification of collective bargaining contracts affecting their working conditions.

Whereas members aboard contracted ships at sea cannot attend a regular membership meeting due to the inherent remote nature of work at sea.

Whereas a member aboard a contracted vessel working under a contract up for question on ratification has the most immediate knowledge of work conditions under that contract.

Whereas a member aboard a contracted vessel working under a contract up for question on ratification will most immediately be affected by that ratification or non-ratification.

~~Whereas members already successfully vote remotely in the election of union officials and union representatives.~~

Therefore be it resolved to amend Articles SIX and NINETEEN ~~19~~ of the By-Laws to allow Members in good standing who would normally be allowed a voice and vote at a regular membership meeting, but are currently assigned aboard a contracted vessel at sea or in a foreign port, have the ability to vote remotely only on ratification of collective bargaining contracts when such issue is put to ~~question to~~ the general membership, as follows:

ARTICLE SIX
Section 7.k.2. By a secure and established online and internet based voting/election company. Such internet voting shall not include officer elections ~~*or ratification of Deep Sea contracts*~~*. Voting on ratification for Deep Sea contracts may be held via an online application, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, for certain eligible members aboard a contracted vessel at sea or in a foreign port. Eligibility and protocol for such voting shall be as determined by membership Resolution. This is not intended to set a precedent for any other online or internet based voting.*

ARTICLE NINETEEN
Section 3. [add the following to end of Section]:
For purposes of voting for ratification of collective bargaining agreements only, certain eligible members aboard a contracted vessel at sea or in a foreign port may vote via an online application, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Eligibility and protocol for such voting shall be as determined by membership Resolution. This is not intended to set a precedent for any other online or internet based voting.

Be it further resolved that upon adoption of such an amendment to the By-laws, the ~~union~~ **MEBA** will develop a system to reach members aboard contracted vessels with pending contract ratification and issue them the proposed contract and a secure ~~electronic ballot~~ method of casting their ~~to~~ vote on the ratification on said contract, during the same week of general membership meetings also voting on the question of that contract's ratification. Such system will be as set forth in the Protocol for Remote Contract Ratification Voting devised by the Constitutional Committee, a copy of which is attached hereto.

Finally, be it resolved that the intent of this proposed amendment is to apply ONLY to the question of contract ratification and that all other questions should, both at present and in the future, be heard, discussed and voted on at a regular membership meeting, except as otherwise provided in the By-laws.

III. Conclusion

This Constitutional Committee formulated the foregoing in good faith and transparently with an eye towards maintaining Union democracy, maximizing election security and minimizing burden on the MEBA.

***This information is being added after the report's completion, and clarifies points the Committee has since made regarding the resolution's implementation:**

- The at sea or in a foreign port requirement, is strictly any time between 0000-2400 on Wednesday of meeting week
- Any 'live aboard' vessel is eligible for remote voting if at sea or in foreign port any portion of that Wednesday as per above.

Submitted this 2 day or June, 2026 at Easton, Maryland.

District 1, Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, PCD

John Collins

Fred Cuzner

Sylvan Haas, Chairman

Andrew Martin, Secretary

Kevin Pinegar

Norfolk Resolution No. 26-03-01

Proposed amendment of the By-laws resolution: Remote Voting on contracts, for members at sea

Whereas the membership of the MEBA all have an interest in the democratic process of ratification of collective bargaining contracts affecting their working conditions.

Whereas members aboard contracted ships at sea can not attend a regular membership meeting due to the inherent remote nature of work at sea.

Whereas a member aboard a contracted vessel working under a contract up for question on ratification, has the most immediate knowledge of work conditions under that contract.

Whereas a member aboard a contracted vessel working under a contract up for question on ratification, will most immediately be affected by that ratification or non-ratification.

Whereas members already successfully vote remotely in the election of union officials and union representatives.

Therefore Be it resolved to amend article 19 of the By-laws to allow Members in good standing who would normally be allowed a voice and vote at a regular membership meeting, currently assigned aboard a contracted vessel at sea or in a foreign port the ability to vote remotely on collective bargaining contracts when it is put to question to the general membership.

Be it further resolved upon adoption of such an amendment to the By-laws, the union will develop a system to reach members aboard contracted vessels with pending contract ratification and issue them the proposed contract and a secure electronic ballot to vote on the ratification on said contract, during the same week of general membership meetings also voting on the question of that contract's ratification.

Finally, be it resolved that the intent of this proposed amendment is to apply only to the question of contract ratification and that all other questions should be heard, discussed and voted on at a regular membership meeting.

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