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IAB and IESG Selection, Confirmation, and Recall Process: Operation of the Nominating and Recall Committees

Status of this Memo

This document specifies an Internet Best Current Practices for the Internet Community, and requests discussion and suggestions for improvements. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

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Abstract

The process by which the members of the IAB and IESG are selected, confirmed, and recalled is specified. The evolution of the process has relied principally on oral tradition as a means by which the lessons learned could be passed on to successive committees. This document is a self-consistent, organized compilation of the process as it is known today.

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1. Introduction

This document supercedes RFC2027, the first complete specification of the process by which members of the IAB and IESG are selected, confirmed, and recalled. Prior to that time, a single paragraph in RFC1602 is the extent to which the process had been formally recorded.

This revision is based on the experience of the 1996 Nominating Committee, the first committee to operate according to RFC2027. The following two assumptions of that specification are also true for this revision.

- (1) The Internet Research Task Force (IRTF) and Internet Research Steering Group (IRSG) are not a part of the process described here.
- (2) The organization (and re-organization) of the IESG is not a part of the process described here.

The time frames specified here use IETF meetings as a frame of reference. The time frames assume that the IETF meets at least once per year with that meeting occurring during the North American Spring time, i.e., the IETF meets at least on or about March of each year.

The remainder of this document is divided into four major topics as follows.

General

This a set of rules and constraints that apply to the selection and confirmation process as a whole.

Nominating Committee Selection

This is the process by which volunteers from the IETF community are recognized to serve on the committee that nominates candidates to serve on the IESG and IAB.

Nominating Committee Operation

This is the set of principles, rules, and constraints that guide the activities of the nominating committee, including the confirmation process.

Member Recall

This is the process by which the behavior of a sitting member of the IESG or IAB may be questioned, perhaps resulting in the removal of the sitting member.

A final section describes how this document differs from its predecessor: RFC2027.

2. General

The following set of rules apply to the selection and confirmation process as a whole. If necessary, a paragraph discussing the interpretation of each rule is included.

- (1) The principal functions of the nominating committee are to review the open IESG and IAB positions and to either nominate its incumbent or recruit a superior candidate.

The nominating committee does not select the open positions to be reviewed; it is instructed as to which positions to review.

At a minimum, the nominating committee will be given the title of the position to be reviewed. The nominating committee may be given a desirable set of qualifications for the candidate nominated to fill each position.

Incumbents must notify the nominating committee if they do not wish to be nominated.

The nominating committee does not confirm its candidates; it presents its candidates to the appropriate confirming body as indicated below.

- (2) The annual selection and confirmation process is expected to be completed within 3 months.

The annual selection and confirmation process is expected to be completed one month prior to the friday of the week before the Spring IETF. It is expected to begin 4 months prior to the friday of the week before the Spring IETF.

- (3) One-half of each of the then current IESG and IAB positions is selected to be reviewed each year.

The intent of this rule to ensure the review of approximately one-half of each of the sitting IESG and IAB members each year. It is recognized that circumstances may exist that will require the nominating committee to review more or less than one-half of the current positions, e.g., if the IESG or IAB have re-organized prior to this process and created new positions, or if there are an odd number current positions.

- (4) Confirmed candidates are expected to serve at least a 2 year term.

The intent of this rule is to ensure that members of the IESG and IAB serve the number of years that best facilitates the review of one-half of the members each year.

It is consistent with this rule for the nominating committee to choose one or more of the currently open positions to which it may assign a term greater than 2 years in order to ensure the

ideal application of this rule in the future.

It is consistent with this rule for the nominating committee to choose one or more of the currently open positions that share responsibilities with other positions (both those being reviewed and those sitting) to which it may assign a term greater than 2 years to ensure that all such members will not be reviewed at the same time.

All member terms begin and end during the Spring IETF meeting corresponding to the end of the term for which they were confirmed. Normally, the confirmed candidate's term begins when the currently sitting member's term ends on the last day of the meeting. A term may begin or end no sooner than the first day of the meeting as determined by the mutual agreement of the currently sitting member and the confirmed candidate.

- (5) Mid-term vacancies are filled by the same rules as documented here with four qualifications. First, the most recently constituted nominating committee is reconvened to nominate a candidate to fill the vacancy. Second, the selection and confirmation process is expected to be completed within 1 month, with all other time periods otherwise unspecified prorated accordingly. Third, the confirming body has two weeks from the day it is notified of a candidate to reject the candidate, otherwise the candidate is assumed to have been confirmed. Fourth, the term of the confirmed candidate will be either:
 - a. the remainder of the term of the open position if that remainder is not less than one year.
 - b. the remainder of the term of the open position plus the next 2 year term if that remainder is less than one year.
- (6) All deliberations and supporting information that relates to specific nominees, candidates, and confirmed candidates are confidential.

The nominating committee and confirming body members will be exposed to confidential information as a result of their deliberations, their interactions with those they consult, and from those who provide requested supporting information. All members and all other participants are expected to handle this information in a manner consistent with its sensitivity.

(7) Unless otherwise specified, the advise and consent model is used throughout the process. This model is characterized as follows.

- a. The IETF Executive Director advises the nominating committee of the IESG and IAB positions to be reviewed.
- b. The nominating committee selects candidates and advises the confirming bodies of them.
- c. The sitting IAB members review the IESG candidates, consenting to some, all, or none.

If all of the candidates are confirmed, the job of the nominating committee with respect to reviewing the open IESG positions is considered complete. If some or none of the candidates are confirmed, the nominating committee must reconvene to select alternate candidates for the rejected candidates. Any additional time required by the nominating committee should not exceed its maximum time allotment.

- d. The Internet Society Board of Trustees reviews the IAB candidates, consenting to some, all, or none.

If all of the candidates are confirmed, the job of the nominating committee with respect to reviewing the open IAB positions is considered complete. If some or none of the candidates are confirmed, the nominating committee must reconvene to select alternate candidates for the rejected candidates. Any additional time required by the nominating committee should not exceed its maximum time allotment.

- e. The confirming bodies decide their consent according to a mechanism of their own choosing, which must ensure that at least one-half of the sitting members agree with the decision.

At least one-half of the sitting members of the confirming bodies must agree to either confirm or reject each individual nominee. The agreement must be decided within a reasonable timeframe. The agreement may be decided by conducting a formal vote, by asserting consensus based on informal exchanges (email), or by whatever mechanism is used to conduct the normal business of the confirming body.

3. Nominating Committee Selection

The following set of rules apply to the creation of the nominating committee and the selection of its members.

- (1) The committee is comprised of at least a non-voting Chair, 10 voting volunteers, and 3 non-voting liaisons.

A Chair is permitted to invite additional non-voting advisors to participate in some or all of the deliberations of the committee.

- (2) The Internet Society President appoints the non-voting Chair, who must meet the usual requirements for membership in the nominating committee.

The nominating committee Chair must agree to invest the time necessary to complete the duties of the nominating committee and to perform in the best interests of the IETF community during the performance of those duties.

- (3) The Chair obtains the list of IESG and IAB positions to be reviewed and publishes it along with a solicitation for names of volunteers from the IETF community willing to serve on the nominating committee.

The list of open positions is published with the solicitation to facilitate community members choosing between volunteering for an open position and volunteering for the nominating committee.

The list and solicitation must be publicized using at least the same mechanism used by the IETF secretariat for its announcements.

- (4) Members of the IETF community must have attended at least 2 of the last 3 IETF meetings in order to volunteer.
- (5) Internet Society Board of Trustees, sitting members of the IAB, and sitting members of the IESG may not volunteer.
- (6) The Chair announces the pool of volunteers from which the 10 voting volunteers will be randomly selected.

The announcement must be made using at least the same mechanism used by the IETF secretariat for its announcements.

- (7) The Chair randomly selects the 10 voting volunteers from the pool of names of volunteers using a method that can be independently verified to be unbiased and fair.

A method is fair if each eligible volunteer is equally likely to be selected. A method is unbiased if no one can influence its outcome.

The method must include an announcement of an enumerated list of the pool of names together with the specific algorithm for how names will be chosen from the list. The output of the selection algorithm must depend on random data whose value is not known at the time the list and algorithm are announced.

One possible method is to compute the MD5 hash of future winning lottery numbers and use the result to select names from the list.

All announcements must be made using at least the mechanism used by the IETF secretariat for its announcements.

- (8) The sitting IAB and IESG members each appoint a non-voting liaison to the nominating committee from their current membership who are not sitting in an open position.
- (9) The Chair of the prior year's nominating committee serves as a non-voting liaison.

The prior year's Chair may designate an alternate voting member from the prior year's committee if the Chair is unavailable. If the prior year's Chair is unavailable and is unable or unwilling to make such a designation in a timely fashion, the Chair of the current committee may do so.

- (10) The Chair may solicit additional non-voting liaisons from other organizations, who must meet the usual requirements for membership in the nominating committee.

4. Nominating Committee Operation

The following rules apply to the operation of the nominating committee. If necessary, a paragraph discussing the interpretation of each rule is included.

The rules are organized approximately in the order in which they would be invoked.

The term nominee refers to an individual under consideration by the nominating committee. The term candidate refers to a nominee that has been selected by the nominating committee to be considered for confirmation by a confirming body. A confirmed candidate is a candidate that has been reviewed and approved by a confirming body.

- (1) All rules and special circumstances not otherwise specified are at the discretion of the Chair.

Exceptional circumstances will occasionally arise during the normal operation of the nominating committee. This rule is intended to foster the continued forward progress of the committee. All members of the committee should consider whether the exception is worthy of mention in the next revision of this document and followup accordingly.

- (2) The Chair must establish and publicize milestones, which must include at least a call for nominations.

There is a defined time period during which the selection and confirmation process must be completed. The Chair must establish a set of milestones which, if met in a timely fashion, will result in the completion of the process on time. The Chair should allow time for iterating the activities of the committee if one or more candidates is not confirmed.

The milestones must be publicized using at least the same mechanism used by the IETF secretariat for its announcements.

- (3) The Chair must establish a voting mechanism.

The committee must be able to objectively determine when a decision has been made during its deliberations. The criteria for determining closure must be established and known to all members of the nominating committee.

- (4) At least a quorum of committee members must participate in a vote. A quorum is comprised of at least 7 voting members.
- (5) The Chair may establish a process by which a member of the nominating committee may be recalled.

The process, if established, must be agreed to by a 3/4 majority of the members of the nominating committee, including the non-voting members since they would be subject to the same process.

- (6) All members of the nominating committee may participate in all deliberations.

The emphasis of this rule is that no member, whether voting or non-voting, can be explicitly excluded from any deliberation. However, a member may individually choose not to participate in a deliberation.

- (7) The Chair announces the open positions to be reviewed and the call for nominees.

The call for nominees must include a request for comments regarding the past performance of incumbents, which will be considered during the deliberations of the nominating committee.

The announcements must be publicized using at least the same mechanism used by the IETF secretariat for its announcements.

- (8) Any member of the IETF community may nominate any member of the IETF community for any open position.

A self-nomination is permitted.

- (9) Nominating committee members must not be nominees.

To be a nominee is to enter the process of being selected as a candidate and confirmed. Nominating committee members are not eligible to be considered for filling any open position.

- (10) Members of the IETF community who were recalled from any IESG or IAB position during the previous two years must not be nominees.

- (11) The nominating committee selects candidates based on its understanding of the IETF community's consensus of the qualifications required to fill the open positions.

The intent of this rule is to ensure that the nominating committee consults with a broad base of the IETF community for input to its deliberations.

The consultations are permitted to include a slate of nominees, if all parties to the consultation agree to observe customary and reasonable rules of confidentiality.

A broad base of the community should include the existing members of the IAB and IESG, especially sitting members who share responsibilities with open positions, e.g., co-Area Directors.

- (12) Nominees should be advised that they are being considered and must consent to their nomination prior to being confirmed.

The nominating committee should help nominees provide justification to their employers.

A nominee's consent must be written (email is acceptable) and include a commitment to provide the resources necessary to fill the open position and an assurance that the nominee will perform the duties of the position for which they are being considered in the best interests of the IETF community.

- (13) The nominating committee advises the confirming bodies of their candidates, specifying a single candidate for each open position and a testament as to how each candidate meets the qualifications of an open position.

The testament may include a brief resume of the candidate and a summary of the deliberations of the nominating committee.

- (14) With respect to any action to be taken in the context of notifying and announcing confirmed candidates, and notifying rejected nominees and candidates, the action must be valid according to all of the rules specified below prior to its execution.

- a. Up until a candidate is confirmed, the identity of the candidate must be kept confidential.
- b. The identity of all nominees must be kept confidential (except that the nominee may publicize their intentions).
- c. Rejected nominees may be notified as soon as they are rejected.
- d. Rejected candidates may be notified as soon as they are rejected.
- e. Rejected nominees and candidates must be notified prior to announcing confirmed candidates.
- f. Confirmed candidates may be notified and announced as soon as they are confirmed.

It is consistent with these rules for a nominee to never know if they were a candidate or not.

It is consistent with these rules for some nominees to be rejected early in the process and for some nominees to be kept as alternates in case a candidate is rejected by a confirming body. In the matter of whether a confirmed candidate was a first choice or an alternate, that information need not ever be disclosed and, in fact, probably never should be.

It is consistent with these rules for confirmed candidates to be notified and announced as quickly as possible instead of requiring all confirmed candidates to wait until all open positions have been reviewed.

When consulting with individual members of the IETF community, if all parties to the consultation agree to observe customary and reasonable rules of confidentiality the consultations are permitted to include a slate of nominees.

The announcements must be publicized using at least the same mechanism used by the IETF secretariat for its announcements.

5. Member Recall

The following rules apply to the recall process. If necessary, a paragraph discussing the interpretation of each rule is included.

- (1) Anyone may request the recall of any sitting IAB or IESG member, at any time, upon written (email is acceptable) request with justification to the Internet Society President.
- (2) Internet Society President shall appoint a Recall Committee Chair.

The Internet Society President must not evaluate the recall request. It is explicitly the responsibility of the IETF community to evaluate the behavior of its leaders.

- (3) The recall committee is created according to the same rules as is the nominating committee with the qualifications that the person being investigated and the person requesting the recall must not be a member of the recall committee in any capacity.
- (4) The recall committee operates according to the same rules as the nominating committee with the qualification that there is no confirmation process.
- (5) The recall committee investigates the circumstances of the justification for the recall and votes on its findings.

The investigation must include at least both an opportunity for the member being recalled to present a written statement and consultation with third parties.

- (6) A 3/4 majority of the members who vote on the question is required for a recall.
- (7) If a sitting member is recalled the open position is to be filled according to the mid-term vacancy rules.

6. Changes From RFC2027

- (1) In order to foster better communication between nominating committees from one year to the next the Chair of each year's committee has been added as a non-voting liaison of the next year's committee.
- (2) In order to confirm the eligibility of each volunteer in the pool of names from which nominating committee members are chosen the Chair must announce the list prior to the random selection.
- (3) In order to confirm the random selection process used to select voting nominating committee members the Chair must announce the fair and unbiased method used in advance of its execution.
- (4) Some guidance was added to ensure that the nominating committee consults with a broad base of the IETF community.
- (5) Some guidance was added to ensure that the nominating committee understands that it may name prospective nominees when consulting with individual members of the IETF community.
- (6) Some guidance was added to ensure that the nominating committee understands that it is responsible for ensuring that an appropriate set of one-half of each of the IESG and IAB positions are reviewed each year.

7. Security Considerations

Any selection, confirmation, or recall process necessarily involves investigation into the qualifications and activities of prospective candidates. The investigation may reveal confidential or otherwise private information about candidates to those participating in the process. Each person who participates in any aspect of the process has a responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of any and all information not explicitly identified as suitable for public dissemination.

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