“Is he worthy and well-qualified?”

Duties of Investigating Committee

Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Oregon

Reprinted June 2012
INVESTIGATION

INTRODUCTION

The Responsibilities of
The Master

1. When a petition is received the night of the meeting it may be held over to the next Stated Communication for action.

2. Review your roster of members to select a committee that will do a good investigation.

3. Contact each Brother prior to his official appointment to learn if he is able and willing to serve.

4. You may choose to appoint two or more committees to serve during the year, or to select a different committee for each petition.

5. The petitioner must be interviewed. A telephone conversation is not an interview.

The Master should meet with his appointed committee to discuss the important matter of investigating the petitioner. To point out its obligation to the Lodge, to see that the petitioner will fit into the character and benefit of the Lodge. Section 237 of the Code should be discussed with the committee. For convenience and ready
reference the Masonic Code of Oregon, Section 237 “Committee On Investigation” states:

1. Appointment and Record —
   Each Petition for the degrees accepted by a Lodge, as provided in Sec. 232-2, also each Petition for Affiliation, Reinstatement, Restoration or Advancement, shall be referred to a Committee on Investigation appointed by the Master, consisting of three members of the Lodge, excluding any member of the Lodge who has recommended the Petitioner, or one whose name has been given as a reference. The members of such Committee shall be made known to each other and to the Lodge.

2. Duties —
   Members of a Committee on Investigation shall diligently inquire into all the qualifications of the Petitioner as required herein. They shall examine the Petitioner in such a manner as prudence may direct and to compare the information thus obtained with the signed statements of the Petitioner. Their investigation must be so thorough that they can intelligently complete the questionnaire which is part of the report.

3. Report, When Due —
   Reports of Members of Investigating Committees on Petitions for Degrees are due within eight weeks after being referred to them, unless
extension of time shall be granted by the Master. Reports on all other Petitions are due within four weeks after being referred to them, unless extension of time shall be granted by the Master. If any member of an Investigating Committee shall fail to act, the Master may appoint another member in his place, and such member shall have four weeks in which to report.

4. Majority Report —
If, within eight weeks after the Petition has been referred to the Committee on Investigation, two members thereof have reported and the third member has failed to act, or ask for an extension of time, the Lodge may then accept the report of the two members of the Committee and act thereon.

5. Unfavorable Report —
If the report of the Committee on Investigation, or any member thereof, shall be unfavorable, the Master shall declare the Petitioner rejected, and record thereof shall be made in the minutes of the Lodge.

6. Reasons for Report Not Required —
No one may demand from a Committee on Investigation, or any member thereof, the reasons for the report.
INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE

READ THE PETITION OF THE PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE CAREFULLY

Each member of an Investigating Committee should make an investigation of the Petitioner and submit an independent report. You should start at the earliest possible moment. A complete investigation will take some time.

My Brother, the Worshipful Master has selected you to serve on an Investigating Committee and entrusts to you a real Masonic duty. You are in large measure a guardian of our portals. This duty, well done, is a distinct service to the Petitioner, the Lodge and the whole Fraternity. Let quality, not quantity, be your watchword. Look well to the Portal of the Lodge.

A visit to the Petitioner’s home is recommended in order to observe his home life and to determine his family’s attitude toward his joining the Craft. It is advisable to invite the wife to remain in the room during your visit. The interview should be informal. The Petitioner should be made to feel at ease. By doing so, his natural reaction, his friendliness, his view on charity or his lack of these desirable characteristics may be better observed and judged.
The following questions are suggested as further guides for a committee member to have firmly in mind as he visits with the prospective member or otherwise carries on his investigation.

1. How long has he been acquainted personally with his recommenders?

2. How long has he resided within the vicinity of this Lodge?

3. Why does he desire to become a member of the Masonic Fraternity?

4. What is his concept of the Masonic Fraternity?
   a. What does he think Masons endeavor to accomplish by their association, one with another?
   b. Does he understand that Masonry is not a financial institution and that no financial returns are to be expected by either the applicant or his family? Does he further understand that the Masonic Fraternity has no death benefits nor does it pay funeral expenses?
   c. Does he consider Masonry merely as a social organization? Does he wish to become a Mason merely that he may have the social fellowship connected with it, or has he a sincere desire to become a Mason that he may better himself and help others?

5. Is he of a charitable disposition?
a. Does he contribute to charitable causes as far as his ability permits?

b. Is he charitable in thought and action toward his fellow man?

6. Financial information:
   a. Is he prompt in meeting his obligations? Is he considered ethical in his business dealings? (Obtain from other sources.)
   b. Does his personal appearance and that of his surroundings indicate he can financially afford the degrees of Masonry? No man should deprive himself or his family of necessities that he may enjoy the degrees of Masonry.
   c. Does he understand there are certain annual dues required from each member and will he promptly meet these and other obligations of a similar nature?
   d. What provision has he made for his family and himself in event of disabilities or death?

7. Does his family appear to approve of his desire to become a Mason?

8. Do you consider him a man who will attend, with reasonable regularity, the meetings of the Lodge?

9. Does he impress you as being one who will try to LIVE Masonry; who will endeavor to bring into actual practice the tenets of our Fraternity?
10. Does he believe in a Supreme Being? No man can become a Mason without this belief. This does not mean that he must profess Christianity, for there are many good Masons throughout the world who are of various beliefs, creeds and religions. It does mean that he MUST believe in a Supreme Being.

11. Physical Condition. Does he have any abnormal physical conditions?

12. Loyalty to Country. Disregarding political party lines, does he declare himself to be loyal to the American form of government? Is he a registered voter? Does he vote? Would he willingly take an oath of allegiance to the United States of America? Has he ever been affiliated with any subversive group or organizations?

**CONCLUSION**

This line of investigation is merely suggested and is very general. Circumstances alter cases. And while some questions might be appropriate on many occasions, they might also be unwise in other instances. No set of questions can be followed literally and exactly in every case. These are suggested primarily to impress on you the necessity of THOROUGHNESS in your work. The nature of the case will suggest to you what information you most require, but be certain you are
secure enough that you may report with certainty and emphasis.

You should always bear in mind that, as a member of an investigating committee, you are selecting the material which will in the future make the structure of our organization strong or weak.

You are to perform this duty as soon as possible and return the Investigating Committee Report, properly completed, to your Secretary at once. If for any valid reason you are unable to do so, advise your Secretary immediately.

And now, my Brother, in making your report, remember always that ours is not and never has been a reformatory institution. Its design is, and always has been, to accept only those coming under the tongue of good report and already prepared in their hearts. Failure to find anything specific against an applicant does not in itself entitle him to enter our portals — there must be something for him.

Finally, if in doubt, give the Lodge the benefit.

AN ACTUAL INVESTIGATION MUST BE MADE.

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