

THE METEORITICAL SOCIETY COMMITTEE ON METEORITE
NOMENCLATURE (NOMCOM) PROCEDURES OCTOBER 1980

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Bylaws authorizing the NomCom.

Last updated in 2023, Article 12 of the Meteoritical Society Bylaws describes the membership and general functions of the NomCom:

ARTICLE 12 - METEORITE NOMENCLATURE COMMITTEE

1. The Meteorite Nomenclature Committee shall be responsible for establishing guidelines for the naming of meteorites, for the approval of new names, for decisions regarding pairing or separation of meteorites previously named, and for dissemination of this information in the *Meteoritical Bulletin* and the *Meteoritical Bulletin Database*.
2. The Meteorite Nomenclature Committee shall consist of nine to twelve members appointed by the President in consultation with the Chair of the committee, plus three ex officio members, the latter being the Vice-President of the Society, the Editor of the *Meteoritical Bulletin*, and the Editor of the *Meteoritical Bulletin Database*. Ex officio members shall have full voting privileges. Appointed members shall serve a three year term and may be re-appointed for additional three year terms without limit. A minimum of three terms shall expire each year. The membership of the Committee shall be chosen to provide a balance among researchers, curators and field workers, and to provide representation from those countries having high meteorite recovery rates.
3. The President shall designate one of the appointed members to serve as the Committee Chair. The term of the Chair shall be three years or the remainder of his or her current term as member, whichever is less. The Chair may serve two consecutive terms, and may be subsequently reappointed after a hiatus of three years.
4. The term of the Editor of the *Meteoritical Bulletin* shall be four years and may be renewed without limit. One year before the end of an Editor's term the President shall nominate an *ad hoc* committee to nominate an Editor for the next term. Final selection of the Editor shall be made by Council.
5. The term of the Editor of the *Meteoritical Bulletin Database* shall be four years and may be renewed without limit. One year before the end of a Database Editor's term, an *ad hoc* committee comprising the Chair of the NomCom, the Editor of the *Meteoritical Bulletin*, and one or more additional persons selected by the Chair shall nominate a Database Editor for the next term. Final selection of the Database Editor shall be made by Council.

6. The Committee shall formulate rules appropriate to its function. These rules shall be official following ratification by the Council.

Rules of the Nomenclature Committee

A. Duties and responsibilities.

- 1) The principal duty of the NomCom is to approve new meteorite names and, when necessary, change or abolish existing meteorite names. This includes voting on proposed pairs or separations, as well as creation of synonyms and abbreviations.
- 2) The NomCom creates and manages a system of provisional names for specimens found in areas of dense concentrations of meteorites.
- 3) The NomCom oversees the publication of the *Meteoritical Bulletin (MetBull)*.
- 4) The NomCom creates rules for carrying out items 1 and 2 above, “*Guidelines for Meteorite Nomenclature*,” and publishes them on the Meteoritical Bulletin Database website and, from time to time, in the *MetBull*.
- 5) The NomCom oversees the online *Meteoritical Bulletin Database (MBDB)*.
- 6) The Editors of the *Met Bull* and the *MBDB* should endeavor to keep the meteorite classification terms used in the *Met Bull* and *MBDB* consistent and up-to-date.
- 7) The NomCom may also deal with other matters referred to it by the President or Council of the Society.
- 8) The Committee shall be responsible to the Council of the Society, to whom the Chair will report annually.
- 9) The bylaws require the Chair of NomCom to consult with the President of the Society to help fill vacancies on the committee. The chair should provide the president with at least one nomination for each vacancy. Under normal circumstances, members of NomCom who have served two consecutive terms should not be nominated to a third term unless three years have elapsed since the end of their last term.

B. Procedures for approval and publication of new meteorite names.

- 1) The Editor of the *MetBull* shall receive and circulate all proposals to members within a reasonable amount of time following receipt. However, where information is clearly insufficient, the Editor shall have the option of seeking further details before circulating proposals.
- 2) The Editor, in consultation with the Chair, may unilaterally reject a proposal that is clearly nonresponsive to the *Guidelines for Meteorite Nomenclature* or when a request for further required information is not satisfied. However, the submitter is entitled to protest such a decision in writing to the Editor in order to refer the matter to the full NomCom.
- 3) Voting on meteorite names shall normally be done using an online voting system, or alternatively, by email. The voting period shall not be less than two weeks unless the Editor and Chair agree that an emergency vote is warranted. At the end of the declared voting period, a vote is considered valid if at least the majority (i.e., 7 or 8) of the voting members (i.e., 9-12 regular members plus 3 ex officio members consisting of the Editors of the *MetBull* and *Database* and the VP of the

Society) have either voted or abstained. Approval of a proposal shall require a two-thirds majority of all votes cast, not including abstentions.

- 4) No member of the NomCom should obtain or appear to obtain special advantages for themselves, their relatives, their employer or their close associates as a result of their services on the Committee. Possible conflicts of interest arise when NomCom members have a financial, professional, or personal interest in a submitted meteorite or work at the same institution as a person who played a significant role in preparing a submission.

The *MetBull* Editor shall make an initial evaluation of possible conflicts of interest and decide whether the conflict is of sufficient magnitude to require the member to refrain from voting, from participating in the discussion of that meteorite, or should be entirely excluded from reviewing and assessing the information about the submitted meteorite. Members who subsequently identify possible conflicts of interest shall notify the Chair. The Chair shall have the final authority to rule on possible conflicts and their appropriate resolution. If the Chair has a possible conflict of interest, the *MetBull* Editor will have this authority. If the *MetBull* Editor has a possible conflict of interest, the Chair or the *MBDB* Editor shall act in his/her stead and assume all Editorial duties for the vote on that meteorite.

Members who are excluded from voting shall not count toward the establishment of a quorum or majority.

- 5) The Editor of the *MetBull* may suspend a vote and/or call for a revote at any time prior to the end of the voting period on the basis of new information received or on the basis of comments from committee members.
- 6) All discussion by the NomCom during voting is considered confidential. Only the *MetBull* Editor or NomCom Chair may communicate with a submitter about their submission during voting.
- 7) A vote by the NomCom constitutes a recommendation to the *MetBull* Editor on whether a meteorite should be accepted for publication in *MetBull*. No meteorite shall be accepted without this recommendation. However, if in the *MetBull* Editor's opinion comments made by the NomCom raise significant issues, the *MetBull* Editor may seek revision of the information from the submitter and, if the *MetBull* Editor deems it necessary, send the meteorite back to the NomCom for a second vote.
- 8) The Editor of the *MetBull* shall inform the proposer and the NomCom of the result as soon as possible. The Editor of the *MetBull* will provide a summary of comments made by the NomCom during voting, as provisions for publication. All names or identifying comments will be redacted to preserve confidentiality.
- 9) The NomCom may work with regional consultants who are familiar with the geography, language, and culture of regions where meteorites are found. The committee will work with the regional consultants to determine appropriate meteorite names, including names for dense collection regions. These consultants are not members of NomCom but are officially recognized by the society for their important contributions to the work of NomCom. The Vice President of the Meteoritical Society may appoint any number of regional consultants, nominated by the chair, for terms of up to 4 years, each ending on December 31, and renewable without limit. At least 6 months prior to the end of each consultant's

term, the Vice President, in consultation with the chair, will consider the need for a continued consultant for that region, and if the need persists, the Vice President may either reappoint the consultant or solicit a new nomination from the chair. The Vice President shall communicate all changes to the roster of consultants to the Secretary of the society, so that the current names and terms may be posted on the society website.

- 10) Certain types of meteorites may be unilaterally approved by the Editor of the *MetBull* without a NomCom vote. In all cases, the following basic conditions must be met:
 - a. The meteorites have provisional names. Such meteorites, therefore, extend existing numbering systems in dense collection areas.
 - b. The meteorites have routine classifications that do not include designations such as anomalous, ungrouped, intermediate, or ambiguous classifications.
 - c. Type specimen requirements are met or exceeded.
 - d. Classifications were made by widely accepted methods (e.g., polished section for electron microprobe or scanning electron microscope analyses, X-ray diffraction, magnetic susceptibility).
 - e. The person who classified the meteorites has a proven track record in doing such analyses.
 - f. The meteorite falls into one of the classification groups in the NomCom working document (see below).

Approvals made by the *MetBull Editor* shall be reviewed by the *MBDB Editor*, who shall verify that these conditions, and any specific conditions for various types of meteorites in the working document were met.

NomCom shall maintain a separate NomCom working document of requirements for Editor approval and shall update this document notifying council of such updates on an annual basis.

- 11) All of the committee's decisions that result in new, changed, or abolished meteorite names shall be announced at least once per year in the *MetBull*. This publication shall also contain descriptions of important, newly named meteorites and tables containing information about other new meteorites. It may also contain significant new information about existing meteorites. The Editor of the *MetBull* is responsible for the content and format.
- 12) New meteorite names and changes to names should be made public in the *MBDB* within one week of approval, and preferably within 48 hours.
- 13) If a meteorite is rejected, the reasons for the rejection will be communicated to the submitter. Any appeal for reconsideration shall be directed to the NomCom Chair, who will either let the decision stand or review the rejection and request NomCom to reconsider. If the submitter is not satisfied with the results of the appeals process, they can appeal to the Vice President of the Meteoritical Society.

C. Procedures for Type Specimen Repositories

- 1) **Guiding Principle.** According to §7.1f of the *Guidelines for Meteorite Nomenclature*, type specimens of all new meteorites “must be deposited in

institutions that have well-curated meteorite collections and long-standing commitments to such curation.”

- 2) **Requirements for type-specimen repositories.** An acceptable repository shall have the following characteristics:
 - a. A type specimen repository is defined as an institution such as a museum, university, government agency, research institution, or other similar organization, committed to housing permanent scientific collections.
 - b. The institution must have identified personnel responsible for the curation of the meteorite collection.
 - c. The meteorite collection must be owned by the institution or be in the permanent custody of the institution.
 - d. The institution must have a stated intent to make meteorite type specimens available to qualified scientific investigators.
 - e. The institution must demonstrate a long-term commitment toward maintaining or establishing a curated meteorite collection.
- 3) **Approval and rejection of type-specimen repositories.**
 - a. All repositories must provide information to the Nomenclature Committee (NomCom) of the Meteoritical Society describing the nature of the meteorite collection, ownership, contact information, and loan practices. The form of this information will be determined by the committee.
 - b. The Database Editor shall review all submitted information about new repositories for conformance to the requirements in Section D2. The Database Editor will then put the acceptance of the repository to vote by the NomCom. Voting will be done by email, and will follow the procedure outlined in Section C3, with the following exception:
 - i. The announced voting period may be shortened to as little as 24 hours in the event that two-thirds of non-conflicted members vote unanimously either for or against the proposal and no items for general discussion have been offered. A vote shall also be considered valid any time after all non-conflicted members have voted or abstained and no items for general discussion have been offered.
 - c. If an institution is rejected as a type specimen repository, the reasons for the rejection will be communicated to that institution. Any appeal for reconsideration shall be directed to the Vice President of the Meteoritical Society, who will either let the decision stand, review the rejection and request that the NomCom reconsiders, or forward the matter to the Executive Committee of the Meteoritical Society for a final decision.
 - d. At any time, the repositories subcommittee may reconsider the status of any approved repository using the procedure in section 3b.
 - e. NomCom may, from time to time, request updates of information from approved repositories.
- 4) **List of type-specimen repositories.** The Database Editor shall maintain a publicly accessible list of approved repositories on the MetBull Database website.

D. Meteoritical Bulletin Database.

- 1) The *MBDB* Editor is responsible for maintaining and updating the *MBDB*.
- 2) The *MBDB* shall contain all of the information published in the *MetBull*, a complete listing of provisional meteorite names that have been assigned by the NomCom, and information about approved meteorites that have not yet been published in *MetBull*.
- 3) The *MBDB* may also contain other compiled information about meteorites at the discretion of the Editor.
- 4) New information about meteorites with approved names may be accepted for publication in the *MBDB*. This may include revisions, corrections, and amendments to data that have been published in the *MetBull* or entirely new information. All information published in the *MBDB* should be observational in nature, not interpretive. This might include new petrologic descriptions, new information about known masses, discovery of new masses, revised geographic coordinates. Reclassifications are acceptable if they are deemed likely to be noncontroversial. All such information must be reviewed and accepted by the *MBDB* and *MetBull* Editors prior to release. In some cases, the Editors may decide to present information to the NomCom for approval prior to release.