



WESTERN MICHIGAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

Mission Statement

The Western Michigan Genealogical Society (WMGS) is dedicated to gaining knowledge, teaching others genealogy and family history, and preserving genealogical records.

ARTICLE I – Name

The name of this Society shall be WESTERN MICHIGAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC. hereinafter called the Society, a nonprofit organization.

ARTICLE II – Objectives

The objectives and purposes for which the Society is organized are:

1. to preserve and make available for genealogical research the records of our ancestors;
2. to encourage and assist members in genealogical research;
3. to promote the exchange of such knowledge;
4. to encourage the deposit of genealogical records in established libraries and archives;
5. to publish a genealogical newsletter, bulletin, or magazine on a quarterly basis.

The Society will not carry on any political or other activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from taxes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE III – Organization

1. The Western Michigan Genealogical Society shall be conducted as a publicly supported nonprofit corporation, and shall comply with the requirements of a tax-exempt organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
2. Operation of the Society will be governed by these Bylaws, and by the separate publication entitled "Policies and Procedures".
3. The official copies of the Bylaws and Policies will be held by the Recording Secretary and posted on the WMGS web site.
4. The operating expenses of the society shall be covered by membership dues, service charges, sales, and donations.
5. Each member in good standing shall have an equal share and interest in the property of the Society. Records and data compiled by the Society shall be accessible to members in the genealogical collections of the Grand Rapids Public Library, or at whatever location the Society will use in the future.

ARTICLE IV - Officers

1. The Officers of the Society shall be a President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and Immediate Past President.
2. Officers shall be elected for a two-year term.
3. Any vacancy occurring on the Board of Directors, with the exception of the President, may be filled until the next Annual Meeting, by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Board.

ARTICLE V - Board of Directors

1. The Board of Directors shall:
 - a. be composed of the elected Officers of the Society and all Heads (Chairmen, Coordinators, Masters or Editors, hereinafter called Chairmen) of standing committees as listed in Policies and Procedures.
 - b. each person, regardless of the number of positions held, in attendance at a business meeting shall be entitled to one vote;
 - c. plan the work of the Society;
 - d. determine policies to be adopted;
 - e. transact general business;
 - f. advise the President in filling Board vacancies;
 - g. vote on all disbursements for necessary expenses;
 - h. remain in good standing throughout their term;
 - i. meet at least 6 times per year.
2. Special board meetings may be called by the President or upon the request of three Board members. The call for a special board meeting must state the business to be transacted and no business other than the one specified shall be transacted.
3. A quorum shall be defined as a majority of all Officers and Board Members as listed in the Policies.
4. The Board of Directors will approve all projects that will be accomplished by the volunteers and said projects will become the property of the Society, with distribution determined by the Board. The project leaders shall agree to the terms of this policy by signing a Project Agreement Form.

ARTICLE VI - Membership

1. Any applicant interested in furthering the objectives of this Society shall be eligible for membership upon submission of completed application form and payment of dues.
2. Honorary membership may be conferred upon any person whose name is proposed at a membership meeting and elected without a dissenting vote.
3. Exchange agreements may be entered into with other genealogical groups, whereby there is an exchange of publications. These agreements may be made by the Editor and Officers of the Society.
4. The membership list is the property of the Society. It shall not be distributed to any individual or legal entity without signed written permission of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VII – Dues

1. Any proposed change in the amount of annual dues will be determined at the September Board meeting.
2. Payment is due January 1 of each year; a member's name will automatically be removed from the mailing list if payment is not received by the February membership meeting.
3. The dues for the year will entitle the member to four issues of the quarterly publication. A household may join for the price of a single membership if only one quarterly is mailed to them.

ARTICLE VIII – Meetings

1. The membership meeting in October of each year shall be the Annual Meeting.
2. Membership meetings shall normally be held the first Saturday of each month from January to December, excluding the months of July and August.
3. Thirty members of the Society shall represent a quorum at a Membership meeting.

ARTICLE IX - Revisions or Amendments to Bylaws

These Bylaws may be amended only at the Annual Meeting by a two-thirds majority of the members present, using the following procedures:

1. Proposals must be submitted in writing by any member to the Board of Directors at least 4 months prior to the Annual Meeting
2. All such proposed amendments, together with the recommendations of the Executive Board must be submitted in writing by the Board and mailed to the members at least one month prior to the date set for the vote.

ARTICLE X – Procedures and Policies

1. The Policies consist of actions approved by the Board of Directors that determine the operations of the Society and are not covered in the Bylaws.
 - a. The Policies of the Society must include the following documents:
 - i. Listing of Standing Committee Heads and their responsibilities;
 - ii. Data and Record storage and backup;
 - iii. Meeting times and dates;
 - iv. Member and non Member submission of genealogical data;
 - v. Distribution of Publications;
 - vi. Open Board meetings;
 - vii. Determination of fees;
 - viii. Other items as determined by the Board of Directors.
 - b. These Policies can only be changed by three fourths vote of the Board of Directors.
2. The Procedures are guidelines for day to day operations of the Society. Changes to them can be made by the current Chairman.

ARTICLE XI - Election of Officers

1. Preceding the expiration of the two year term of office, the Board of Directors shall appoint a Nominating Committee to prepare and present a slate of officers.
2. The Nominating Committee can not include any current or intending Board Member.
3. The Nominating Committee shall present a list of at least one nominee for each office being vacated, to the Board of Directors before the Annual Meeting and to the General membership at the Annual Meeting.
4. Each nominee must give their consent to serve if elected.
5. Nominations may be made by the general membership from the floor at the Annual Meeting, provided each nominee is present or has given written consent to serve if elected.
6. Eligibility. All members in good standing (those members whose dues are currently paid in full) may vote in Society elections.
7. Voting shall be by voice, provided there is only one candidate for office. If more than one candidate is running for any one office, the voting shall be by written ballot. Majority vote elects.
8. New officers shall take office January 1 following the election.

ARTICLE XII - Duties of Officers

1. The PRESIDENT shall:
 - a. preside at all meetings of the Society and meetings of the Board of Directors;
 - b. appoint all standing committee Chairmen and delegates as needed with approval by a two thirds vote of the Board of Directors present at the first Board meeting after the appointment is made;
 - c. appoint ad hoc committees as the need arises;
 - d. attend meetings of these committees as a member ex-officio at will.
2. The VICE-PRESIDENT shall:
 - a. perform the duties of the President in his or her absence or inability to serve;
 - b. be responsible for programs.
3. The RECORDING SECRETARY shall:
 - a. record and preserve minutes of all meetings of the Society;
 - b. record and preserve minutes of the Board of Directors and see that they are properly filed.
4. The TREASURER shall:
 - a. maintain a simple bookkeeping journal;
 - b. collect dues and all monies collected for the Society and deposit same to the credit of the Society in a bank designated by the Board of Directors;
 - c. pay all bills and check bank balances at the end of each month;
 - d. make out a written report monthly from September to June;
 - e. put on file itemized reports; available to the Board and Members at all times.

5. The IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT shall:
 - a. support the activities of current Board members;
 - b. act as a resource person to them.

ARTICLE XIII - Standing Committees

1. Standing Committees are defined in the List of Standing Committees in the Policies. There must be no less than 15 and no more than 20 Standing Committees.
2. Standing Committees may only be created, deleted, or renamed by a three fourths vote of the Board of Directors. Proposed changes require at least 30 days notice before the meeting at which they will be discussed.
3. Committee goals, objectives, and budget shall be reported at the first Board of Directors meeting of the new year, in January, by the Chairmen, at which time the budget for the society shall be reviewed.
4. Standing Committee Heads shall:
 - a. be responsible to the President;
 - b. present an annual report in writing before the January Board meeting;
 - c. keep an adequate backup of files and data as described in Policies.

ARTICLE XIV - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall govern the Society in all cases in which they are applicable, and which are not inconsistent with these Bylaws and Policies.

ARTICLE XV - DISSOLUTION OF SOCIETY

Upon dissolution of the Society, all saleable assets shall be converted to cash. The monies of the Society shall be used to purchase genealogical materials for a public genealogical repository. All other assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code 47 of 1986.

Date of this revised Constitution: 1 October 2005.