

WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM
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MODEL BYLAWS FOR SISTERHOODS

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I: NAME

This organization shall be known as _____ (**name of sisterhood and synagogue**) and shall be affiliated with Women's League for Conservative Judaism.

ARTICLE II: MISSION

The mission of _____ (**name of sisterhood**), affiliated with Women's League for Conservative Judaism, is to strengthen and unite the women of the synagogue and support them in efforts to understand and perpetuate Conservative/Masorti Judaism in the home, synagogue, and community; and to reinforce their bonds with Israel and with Jews worldwide.

As a religious organization affiliated with Women's League for Conservative Judaism and with the Conservative/Masorti Movement, _____ (**name of sisterhood**) recognizes its responsibility to its membership to formulate ideals of leadership that can serve as a standard toward which all members can strive.

In this spirit, the following cornerstones of commitment and observance, consistent with the *halakhah* of the Conservative Movement, are set forth:

- o *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*
- o *Kashrut*
- o Synagogue
- o Jewish Study
- o *Tzedakah*
- o Israel

The ultimate goal for _____ (**name of sisterhood**)'s membership is ascending achievement in personal Jewish development. It is the express hope that our leadership will provide the paradigm for others to emulate.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

(Select one (1) of the following options)

Option #1:

Any Jewish woman agreeing to the above mission is eligible to become a member upon payment of dues.

Option #2:

Any woman agreeing to the above mission is eligible to become a member upon the payment of dues.

****Note: The rabbi of the synagogue is the *mara d'atrah* (religious authority) for each sisterhood and must be consulted before instituting option #2.**

ARTICLE IV: DUES - FISCAL YEAR

Section 1: Dues

- A. The annual dues is \$_____, plus the per capita dues of Women's League for Conservative Judaism.
- B. The fiscal year is from July 1 to June 30.

Section 2: Per Capita

The per capita dues of Women's League shall be added to the amount of annual dues, entered separately upon the books of the organization, regarded at all times as the property of Women's League, and is to be forwarded to Women's League in full, upon collection.

Section 3: Arrears

Any member in arrears for one year's dues shall be subject to suspension if, after written notice from the financial secretary, her dues remain unpaid for thirty days.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1: Eligibility

- A. To be eligible to serve as an officer or member of the board of directors a member must be Jewish.
- B. To be eligible to serve as an officer, a member must have been a member of the organization for at least one year, and a member of the congregation.
- C. To be eligible for the presidency, in addition to #1 and #2 above, a woman must be a member of the board of directors of the organization for at least one year.

Section 2: Officers

The officers shall consist of a president, _____ vice presidents, recording, communication/corresponding and financial secretaries, treasurer, and such additional officers as may be needed to carry out effectively the work of the organization.

A. Terms

Officers shall be elected for a term of two years and shall hold office until their successors are elected and installed. No officer shall be eligible for more than two successive terms in the same office, or a total of four years.

B. Vacancies in Office

1. Vacancy in the office of president shall be filled for the unexpired term through appointment, by majority vote of the executive committee, after consideration of the candidates proposed by the nominating committee. A vice president calls the executive committee meeting. The chair of the Nominating Committee announces the appointment.
2. Vacancies in any other office shall be filled by appointment for the unexpired term by the president, on recommendation of the standing nominating committee, and approval of the executive committee.
3. For the purpose of determining when an officer or a board member has served a term of office, service for one-half a term shall be regarded as a full term, provided the written resignation is for valid reasons, as determined by the executive committee.

Section 3: Executive Committee

- A. The executive committee shall consist of the president, who is its chair, the immediate past president, vice presidents, secretaries, and the treasurer.
- B. The president may invite to executive committee meetings, at her option, any member whose presence may be necessary or helpful in forwarding the specific business for which a meeting is called.
- C. The executive committee shall have power to authorize emergency expenditures not to exceed \$ _____ and shall report such action to the board of directors.

Section 4: Board of Directors

The management of the sisterhood shall be vested in a board of directors, which shall consist of all the officers and directors, with the president as chair, as follows:

A. Members

1. Ex-Officio Members

- a. A past president shall be an ex-officio member of the board with voice and vote, for the immediate 5 years following service as president. After the immediate five years, in order to be a board member, if asked to serve, the past president must indicate to the _____ **(president or nominating committee)** a desire to serve, and accept the full rights and responsibilities of a director.

- b. Women serving as the rabbi, cantor or education director and/or wives of those in these positions shall be ex-officio members, with full power of voice and vote as long as they hold such positions.
- c. Members of Women's League board and region board of directors shall be ex-officio members of the board with voice and vote as long as they hold such positions.

2. Elected Directors

- a. The elected directors shall be elected for a term of two years, the number to be _____ (**10-15% of the members in good standing**).
- b. No elected directors shall serve more than two consecutive terms, or four consecutive years. One year must elapse before she is eligible for re-election.

3. Presidential Appointments to the Board

The president may appoint, with approval of the executive committee, additional board members to the board of directors in numbers **not exceeding** _____. Appointees serve to the end of the president's term.

B. Absences

If a member of the board of directors is absent from three consecutive board meetings, without sufficient excuse sent to the corresponding secretary or president, her position shall be declared vacant, provided she is contacted by the corresponding secretary after the second absence takes place.

ARTICLE VI: DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1: The president shall:

- Preside at all meetings, conduct the business prescribed by the bylaws, preserve order and see that the officers fulfill their duties properly.
- Designate a vice president to serve and preside in her absence.
- Appoint committees and delegates with approval of the executive committee unless otherwise provided.
- Sign and countersign all official documents, checks and vouchers with a financial officer.
- Supervise elections.
- Act as an ex-officio member of all committees, except the nominating committee.
- Represent the organization on the board of the congregation.

- Serve as an official delegate to the Women's League biennial convention, region meetings and conferences, all expenses to be paid by the sisterhood.

NOTE: In the event of the inability of the president to attend the biennial convention or region meetings, she shall appoint an alternate, preferably a vice president, to attend in her stead. Sisterhood shall pay the alternate delegate's expenses.

- Deliver all property of the organization to her successor before installation.

Section 2: The vice presidents shall:

- Assist the president in the management of the organization and preside in her absence, if designated by her.
- Be responsible for the administration of an area of activity, such as membership, education, etc.
- Deliver all property of the organization to her successor before installation.

Section 3: The recording secretary shall:

- Keep true and correct minutes of proceedings of all regular, board, executive committee and special meetings.
- Submit copy of minutes to the president at least one week in advance of the next meeting.
- Collect all documents and reports for filing.
- Keep the policy book, sending a duplicate to the parliamentarian.
- Deliver all property of the organization to her successor before installation.

Section 4: The communication/corresponding secretary shall:

- Send the correspondence required of secretaries, including notices and letters. All outgoing mail is to be submitted to the president for approval prior to mailing.
- Submit membership list to Women's League, when asked.
- Deliver to successor all property of the organization before installation

Section 5: The financial secretary shall:

- Keep correct records of all monies received from membership dues and other sources.
- Collect all dues and turn them over to the treasurer, who issues a receipt for the money.
- Keep the financial records in such a manner that all accounts between the organization and its members be known at once.
- Notify members of delinquency as stated in Article IV.
- Maintain a separate record of the Women's League per capita dues, which are payable to the League by the treasurer upon collection.
- Correct and update membership printouts from the League.
- Serve on the budget committee.
- Deliver to successor all property of the organization before installation..

Section 6: The treasurer shall:

- Receive from the financial secretary all monies of the organization and shall issue receipts for same.
- Pay all vouchers signed by the president.
- Keep a strict accounting of all receipts and disbursements.
- Remit the League's per capita dues upon collection.
- Submit books for audit before June 30.
- Serve on the budget committee.
- Deliver to successor all property of the organization before installation.

Section 7: Board of Directors

Each member of the board of directors shall:

- Implement the bylaws and adopt policy.
- Approve the budget.
- Notify the president or recording secretary if unable to attend meetings.
- Serve on committees in capacity of chair, secretary, or committee member as appointed.
- Support fundraising and cultural projects.
- Cooperate with the membership committee to recruit and retain members.
- Represent the standards of the sisterhood in the community.
- Attend Women's League training programs.
- Attend region/area meetings and events.
- Participate in the Women's League Torah Fund campaign.
- Deliver to successor all property of the organization before installation.

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

Section 1: Regular Meetings

The regular meetings of the organization shall be held _____ times a year.

Section 2: The Executive Committee

The executive committee, at the call of the president, shall convene at least four times during the fiscal year.

Section 3: Board Meetings

- A. The board of directors shall meet _____ times a year.
- B. A special directors meeting for the newly elected officers and board members shall be held no later than 30 days after installation and include training provided by the League.

Section 4: Special Meetings

- A. The president may call special meetings, if she deems it necessary.

- B. A written request by five members may be made to the president for a special board meeting, stating the nature of the call for the special meeting.
- C. At special meetings only the business mentioned in the call may be transacted.

Section 5: Quorum

- A. _____ members of the executive committee shall constitute a quorum at executive committee meetings.
- B. _____ members of the board of directors shall constitute a quorum at board meetings.
- C. _____ members shall constitute a quorum at general meetings.

ARTICLE VIII: STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1: Establishment

_____ (The board of directors or executive committee) shall establish standing committees, special committees, and/or task groups as it deems necessary.

Section 2: Composition and Appointment

At the beginning of her administration, the president shall appoint the chair and members of all committees with the approval of the board of directors.

NOTE: Unless committee chairs are nominated by portfolio

ARTICLE IX: NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1: Nominating Committee

- A. At the beginning of her term, the president shall appoint a nominating committee consisting of its chair and _____ (**4 or 6**) members, which shall include _____ **from the board of directors and _____ from the general membership.**
- B. No alternates shall be appointed.
- C. The nominating committee proposes the slate of officers and elected directors.
Note: Elected directors can be nominated with or without portfolio
- D. The nominating committee functions throughout the administration and submits names to fill vacancies as required.

NOTE: The committee shall always consist of an uneven number, the majority of whom shall come from the board of directors.

Section 2: Submission of the Slate

In _____ (**March or April**), the nominating committee shall, at least 30 days before elections, inform the board of directors of its proposed slate, and at the same time, submit in writing the proposed slate to the general membership and to the region nominating committee chair.

Section 3: Nominations by Petition

Nominations may also be made by a written petition from five or more members in good standing and submitted to the chair of the nominating committee, not later than 15 days after the report of the nominating committee is circulated to the general membership, provided the written consent of the person nominated is included.

Section 4: Notice of Election

- A. The report of the nominating committee plus the nominations by petition shall be sent to the membership at least seven days before elections, and immediately to the region nominating committee chair.
- B. If there is more than one candidate, names are listed alphabetically.
- C. The president conducts the meeting.

Section 5: Voting

In the absence of additional nominations, the report of the nominating committee shall become the electoral ballot. In the event of more than one candidate for any office, voting shall be by closed ballot. The president announces the results of the vote.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS**Section 1: Amend/Alter/Repeal/Adopt**

The members of the sisterhood have the power to amend, alter or repeal these bylaws and to adopt new bylaws by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting.

Section 2: Presentation

- A. Amendments to these bylaws shall be submitted in writing to the board of directors, by the bylaws revision committee, chaired by the parliamentarian.
- B. Petition to the board of directors for amendment or revision shall be submitted in writing by no fewer than five members in good standing.
- C. Amendments to these bylaws shall be submitted to the region parliamentarian for evaluation before being voted upon by the membership.

Section 3: Distribution

Amendments recommended by the board of directors and evaluated by the region parliamentarian shall be sent to each member of the sisterhood. Following this notice, the amendment shall be voted upon at a regular meeting.

ARTICLE XI: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The proceedings of all meetings shall be governed by these bylaws, the parliamentary policy recommendations of Women's League, the bylaws of the _____ **Region of Women's League**, and in all points not covered thereby, by Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised in its most recent edition.

Adopted _____ **Date** _____ **President**
_____ **Parliamentarian**

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROCEDURES**Refer to Women's League Parliamentary Materials**

1. Updated bylaws are to be furnished to all members of the board of directors at the beginning of each term, together with updated policy which is based on *Women's League Policy for Sisterhoods*.
2. Standing committee chairs, vice chairs, and committee members are appointed by the president (unless nominated by portfolio) immediately after installation of officers, for one term only. Each appointment automatically expires in its entirety at the close of the term, and a new committee is appointed for the ensuing term. This includes all chairs, as well as committee members. No committee chairs or members may be considered to function other than from term to term, and all appointments automatically expire at installation. All materials are to be transferred to successors before installation.
3. Notices of board meetings are to be sent via mail or email and include the agenda together with the bylaws provisions regarding absentees, using the wording in Article V, Section 4b.
4. In deliberations of the nominating committee, the candidate for the office of president should be selected as the first order of business. All business of this committee is confidential. The parliamentarian should instruct the nominating committee at its first meeting. If not a member of the committee, she does not remain.
5. The budget should provide for the president's expenses to enable her to represent the organization at public functions and Women's League events, to cover the cost of telephoning, and to defray such necessary expenses as she may incur in the performance of her duties as president, and as a member of the region board of directors.
6. The budget should include money for expenses of delegates to attend region conferences, meetings, workshops, and the Women's League biennial convention.
7. The parliamentarian is automatically the chair of the bylaws revision and policy committee. It is suggested that the region parliamentarian be consulted before a sisterhood takes any action.
8. **Policy Book Procedure:** The recording secretary writes to the parliamentarian, stating the exact wording of all motions that pass, noting the date adopted. These motions are policy, and are inserted in the proper place within the *Women's League Policy for Sisterhoods*.
9. Honorary office or life membership, once conferred, can never be rescinded. Therefore, it should be conferred very sparingly, if at all. The sisterhood is obliged to pay the annual per capita to Women's League for such members. The League does not recommend honorary or life membership.
10. Officers and chairs are expected to respond to mail, email and telephone calls from the region, area and Women's League.