

CONSTITUTION OF

THE WINCHESTER CHAPTER

OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

Revised November, 2020

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be “The Winchester Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind, Inc.”, hereafter referred to as “The Chapter”.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of The Winchester Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind shall be to advance the general welfare of the blind of the Northern Shenandoah Valley area, of the state of Virginia, and of the nation; to function as an integral part of the National Federation of the Blind; to serve as a vehicle for collective action by the blind of the Northern Shenandoah Valley area; to operate as a mechanism through which the blind and interested sighted persons can come together to plan and carry out programs to improve the quality of life of the blind; to provide a means of collective action for parents of blind children; to forward the interests of blind students and provide them with a means of joint action and expression; to promote the vocational, cultural, and social advancement of the blind; to achieve the integration of the blind into society on a basis of equality with the sighted; and to take any other action which will improve the overall condition and standard of living of the blind.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

It is the policy of The Chapter to prohibit discrimination in membership or other Chapter activities on the basis of race, religion, gender, or national origin, or sexual orientation.

Section One—Member’s Standing and Duties

Members of The Chapter shall consist of persons of good moral character and who demonstrate a sincere interest in the welfare of the blind of Winchester and the Northern

Shenandoah Valley. Members of The Chapter shall perform duties as prescribed in the Constitution. Any member of The Chapter shall return all requested Chapter property in his/her possession within ten (10) days or be subject to legal action.

Section Two—Active Members

At least sixty percent (60%) of the active members of The Chapter must be legally blind. Any person may become an active member of this organization by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting and shall have the right to vote, serve on committees, and speak on the floor. Sighted active members shall become associate members when The Chapter's active membership is lowered below the 60/40 legally blind to sighted active member ratio (least senior, sighted active members shall be affected first). Any sighted membership applicant that would lower the legally blind membership ratio to below sixty percent (60%) shall be eligible for an Associate Membership.

Section Three—Associate Members

Any person may be elected to associate membership in The Chapter by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting. Associate members shall have all the rights and privileges of active members, except that they shall not vote, hold office, or serve on the Board of Directors. A sighted associate member, who becomes legally blind, shall automatically become an active member. A sighted associate member shall not be eligible to become an active member until such time as the 60/40 legally blind to sighted active member ratio can be maintained.

Section Four—Honorary Members

Anyone in the general public may be elected to an honorary membership in The Chapter by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting. An honorary member has helped The Chapter or visually impaired in some significant way. Honorary members shall have all the rights and privileges of active members, except that they may not vote, hold office, or serve on the Board of Directors.

Section Five—Affiliation

Membership in this organization automatically establishes membership in the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia and the National Federation of the Blind.

Section Six—Expulsion

Any member may be expelled for violation of this Constitution or for conduct unbecoming to a member of the Federation by a majority vote of the active members present and voting at any regular business meeting of this organization. The state convention of this organization may reinstate any person who has been expelled unless such expulsion has been confirmed by the National Convention or by the Board of Directors of the National Federation of the Blind, in which event the person may not be reinstated except by the National Convention or by the National Board. Any person who feels that he/she has been unjustly expelled from this organization may appeal to the Board of Directors of the National Federation of the Blind, which may (in its discretion) consider the matter and make a binding decision.

ARTICLE IV. Officers and Their Duties

There shall be elected annually a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, and a Treasurer. A qualified nominee shall have served as an active member in good standing for one calendar year prior to nomination. The terms of these officers shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected and qualified. The President, the Vice President, and a majority of the Officers must be blind.

Section One—Annual Election Voting

A. Voting Members.

All Active Members of The Chapter who are in good standing; who have not been suspended; who are not under any form of censure; who have attended one of the previous three consecutive meetings.

B. Determining Annual Election Winners.

Officers shall be elected by a majority vote (greater than 50%) of the Active Members who are present and voting. The election shall be by secret ballot. If no nominee receives a majority vote (greater than 50%) on the first ballot, the name of the person receiving the fewest votes shall be dropped from the list of nominees, and a second ballot shall be taken. This procedure shall continue until one of the nominees has received a majority vote (greater than 50%) from the Active Members present and voting.

Section Two—Filling Vacancies

A vacancy of an Officer shall be filled by election at the next regular meeting of The Chapter. The vacancy shall be reported to the Corresponding Secretary for dissemination to the Active Members of the Chapter prior to the election.

Section Three—President's Duties

The duties of the President shall be those ordinarily associated with that office, including but not limited to, opening the meeting at the time at which The Chapter is to meet, by taking the chair and calling the members to order; to announce the business before The Chapter in the order in which it is to be acted upon; to recognize members entitled to the floor; to state and to put to vote all questions which are regularly moved, or necessarily arise in the course of the proceedings, and to announce the result of the vote; closing the meeting.

Section Four—Vice-President's Duties

The duties of the Vice-President shall be those ordinarily associated with that office, including but not limited to, in the case of the absence of the President the Vice-President will preside over the Chapter meeting.

Section Five—Recording Secretary's Duties

The duties of the Recording Secretary shall be those ordinarily associated with that office, including but not limited to, keeping true and impartial minutes of the proceedings of The Chapter at all Regular and Special meetings; keep a register, or roll, of the members and to call the roll when required; record the attendance of Active and Associate Members, and record excused and unexcused absences; keep a list of all standing committees, and such special committees as are in existence at the time; shall be custodian of the Corporate Seal and of the Archives of The Chapter.

Section Six—Corresponding Secretary's Duties

The duties of the Corresponding Secretary shall be those ordinarily associated with that office, including but not limited to, sending out proper notices, five (5) business days in advance, of all called meetings, and of other meetings when necessary; conduct the correspondence of The Chapter, except as otherwise provided.

Section Seven—Treasure's Duties

The Treasure shall be bonded. The duties of the Treasure shall be those ordinarily associated with that office, including but not limited to, receive all monies and make deposits and disbursements as prescribed in Article X. The Treasurer shall submit a written report each month of all receipts and disbursements, a copy of which shall be filed with the Recording Secretary to become part of the minutes of the meeting.

ARTICLE V. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of The Chapter shall consist of the five (5) Constitutional Officers, and four (4) additional members. The four (4) Board Members shall be elected at the same time and in the same manner as that prescribed for the election of Constitutional Officers. A qualified nominee shall have served as an active member in good standing. A majority of the Board must be blind.

Section One—Board of Director Meetings

The Board of Directors shall meet annually on a date to be determined by the Board of Directors. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the President or on written call signed by any five (5) of the Constitutional Officers / Board Members. At least a majority of the members of the Board must be present at any meeting to constitute a quorum to transact business. Voting shall be held by secret ballot.

Section Two—Duties of Board of Directors

The Board shall advise the President; shall have charge of the affairs of the organization between meetings; shall regulate the use of The Chapter's property. The Board may be polled by telephone or mail/e-mail ballot on any question.

ARTICLE VI. Meetings

Section One—Regular Meetings

The Chapter shall hold regular meetings at a time and place to be determined by the membership. At least one-third (1/3) active members must be present to constitute a quorum to transact business.

- A. The order of business at each regular meeting shall be: Call to Order; Pledge to the Flag; Roll Call; Reading of Minutes of the previous Chapter Meeting; Treasure's Report; all other Reports (Correspondences, Committees, etc.); Old Business; New Business; Adjournment.
- B. "Robert's Rules of Order, Revised" (current edition) shall govern procedure in all cases in which they are not inconsistent with The Chapter's Constitution.
- C. If a member cannot attend a meeting, they shall contact the Corresponding Secretary who then, in turn, shall notify the President.
- D. If a leave of absence is desired by a member due to illness or other reason, they shall notify the Corresponding Secretary, who then, in turn, shall notify the President. When the leave of absence is over, they shall perform this action again.

Section Two—Special Meetings

The President of The Chapter may call a special meeting of the body at any time he/she, or a majority of the Board of Directors, deems such action to be necessary. Special Meetings shall follow all the guidelines of the above described Regular Meetings.

ARTICLE VII. Committees

The President may appoint such committees as he/she or The Chapter deems necessary. Each committee shall make written and verbal reports at Regular Meetings to the President or as otherwise directed by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VIII. Affiliation

The Winchester Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind shall be an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia and the National Federation of the Blind and shall furnish to the President of the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia annually, on or before January 1, a list of the names and addresses of its members and elected officers. A copy of the Constitution of the Winchester Chapter and of all amendments to the Constitution shall be sent for review to the President of the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia and the National Federation of the Blind without delay.

The Winchester Chapter shall not merely be a social organization but shall formulate programs and actively work to promote the economic and social betterment of the blind. This organization shall comply with the provisions of the Constitution of the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia and the provisions of the contract appearing on the back of the Charter of Affiliation issued to state affiliates by the National Federation of the Blind. Policy decisions of the National Federation of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia (whether made by the National Convention or the National Board of Directors or the State Convention or the State Board of Directors) are binding on this organization, and this organization shall participate affirmatively in carrying out such policy decisions. As a condition of affiliation, it is agreed by this organization that the National Federation of the Blind (whether by action of the National Convention or the National Board or the State Convention or State Board) has the power to expel or discipline an individual member and to expel or reorganize a state affiliate or local chapter. In the event of reorganization, the assets of this organization shall belong to the reorganized chapter or if no reorganization occurs for a period of two years, to the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia and the former chapter shall dissolve and cease to exist. The name National Federation of the Blind, Federation of the Blind, or any variant thereof, is the property of the National Federation of the Blind; and this organization, if it ceases to be a part of the National Federation of the Blind, (for whatever reason) shall forfeit the right to use the name National Federation of the Blind, Federation of the Blind, or any variant thereof.

ARTICLE IX. Dues

The dues of The Chapter shall be five dollars (\$5) per year, payable prior to the election of Constitutional Officers and Board Members. A lifetime membership may be secured for a fee of \$100.00, or bestowed on an Active Member by a vote of the majority of the Active Members of The Chapter. No person may vote or hold Office who is delinquent in the payment of his/her dues.

ARTICLE X. Disbursement of Funds

The funds of this organization shall be deposited in a bank to be selected by the Treasurer with the approval of the President. All financial obligations of this organization shall be discharged by check, from monies on hand; authorized by vote of the Active Members of The Chapter or as directed by the President; signed by the Treasurer, President or Vice-President. Both the Treasurer and the Recording Secretary shall keep a faithful record of all transactions.

ARTICLE XI. Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of this organization, or if (for whatever reason) it ceases to be an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia, its assets shall be given to the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia to be held in trust for a reorganized chapter in the area. In the event that no Chapter is reorganized in the area for a period of two (2) years from the date this organization ceases to be an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia the assets become the property of the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia.

ARTICLE XII. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of this organization by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the active members present and voting, provided the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing and read at a previous business session and provided it is in compliance with the provisions of the Charter of Affiliation received by the state affiliate from the National Federation of the Blind and with the policies of the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia and the National Federation of the Blind. This Constitution was adopted in Winchester, Virginia, July 15th, 1961; July 24th, 1966; August 19th 1970; September 4th, 1974; November 18th, 1994; February 15th, 2006; January 18th 2017, November 11th 2020.