

BYLAWS FOR THE NEW JERSEY HUMANIST NETWORK

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization is the New Jersey Humanist Network (hereafter noted by the initials “NJHN”).

ARTICLE II: PURPOSES

The NJHN is a non-profit organization of non-theistic secular Humanists which promotes Humanism.

The members of the NJHN are dedicated to uphold the following principles of Humanism:

Our best guide to truth is free and rational inquiry; we should therefore not be bound by the dictates of arbitrary authority, superstition, tradition or orthodoxy.

We should be concerned with solving human problems with the best resources of human minds and hearts.

If there is to be meaning in our lives, we must supply it ourselves, relying on our own powers, observation and compassion.

It is irrational and ultimately harmful to hang our hopes on gods, the supernatural, and the hidden, which arise out of imagination and wishful thinking.

We must be committed to moral principles, which are derived from critical intelligence and human experience, and we must pursue positive ideals. This means caring for one another, being tolerant of differences and striving to overcome divisive parochial loyalties based on race, religion, gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, creed or class.

We should strive to bring about a genuine world community and nourish an appreciation for global ethics and our planetary interdependence.

Secular humanism aims to bring out the best in people so that all can achieve fullness in life.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERS

Section 1: General

Membership in the organization shall be open to all persons who agree with the purposes of Article II of the Bylaws.

Section 2: Membership

Application for membership shall be made in writing and accompanied by the payment of dues. Individual members are entitled to one vote.

Nonpayment of dues will result in the loss of membership.

Membership may also be terminated if a person behaves continually in a way that disrupts the functioning of the group, or clearly is not in agreement with Article II.

ARTICLE IV: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1: Responsibilities

The Board of Directors (“the Board”) shall be responsible for the organization’s affairs and policy.

The Board shall determine the amount of dues payable for membership and/or subscriptions.

Section 2: Composition

The Board shall consist of not less than seven (7) and not more than twelve (12) members. All Officers of the NJHN except the President are Members of the Board of Directors. Directors are elected to a two (2) year term. Half of the terms of the Directors expire in any given year.

A quorum of the Board shall consist of 60% of the Directors.

Section 3: Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee shall exist for the purpose of proposing a set of candidates to the general membership.

The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Directors for the purpose of proposing a set of candidates for the next Board of Directors to the general membership at the next Annual Meeting. The Nominating Committee will consist of two (2) members and will be selected 3 months before the Annual Meeting. One of the committee members will be a currently serving Board member and the other will not be a Board member.

Vacancies on the Nominating Committee shall be filled by appointment by the Board. The Committee shall present a slate of nominees to the Board five weeks prior to the date of the Annual Meeting of the Membership. Nominations may exceed the number of positions available. Director candidates may be nominated by any member and by any existing Partner organizations.

Section 4: Elections

At the annual election meeting, if the number of nominees does not exceed the number of vacancies, the nominees will be considered elected without a formal vote. If the number of nominees exceeds the number of vacancies, an election shall be held by all NJHN members present at the meeting, the winners being the nominees who receive the highest number of total votes. Votes received by mailed ballots will be included in determining the total votes for each nominee.

Members unable to attend the election meeting may register their vote in writing to the NJHN address at any time prior to the date of the election.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

Section 1: Election

The NJHN shall have the following officers: President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. Officers shall be at least 18 years old and shall have been members for at least six months. They shall be elected by a simple majority of the Directors present at the Annual Meeting of the Board. An officer's term of office is one year. If during the term an office other than President becomes vacant, the Board shall elect a successor to fill the unexpired term.

An officer can be removed or suspended by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Section 2: The President

The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer, coordinating the work of other officers and committees. The President will chair Board meetings and Annual Meetings, and will be responsible for compiling the agenda. Other officers and committee chairpersons shall consult the President about their activities, and one month before the annual membership meeting they shall give the President a written report on their activities. The President may also pay authorized bills of the NJHN when the Treasurer is incapacitated or unavailable. The President shall report regularly to the Board of Directors.

Section 3: The Vice-President

The Vice-President becomes President if the President’s office becomes vacant and assumes the office temporarily if the vacancy is temporary. The Vice-President shall assist the President as requested and assists in arranging the program of general meetings. The Vice-President may also pay authorized bills of the NJHN.

Section 4: The Secretary

The Secretary shall: (1) record the minutes of the Organization and Board meetings; (2) handle the Organization and Board correspondence; (3) maintain a permanent file of the Organization and Board Bylaws and other documents including minutes of the Organization and Board meetings.

Section 4: The Treasurer

The Treasurer shall: (1) pay authorized bills of the NJHN; (2) keep records of financial transactions; (3) safeguard the Organization’s funds; (4) propose an annual budget to the Board one month before the Annual Board Meeting; (5) submit reports to the Board; and (6) keep a record of membership.

ARTICLE VI: LOCAL PARTNERS

Section 1: Formation

Any group of two or more members of NJHN in good standing may petition the Board to form a local Partner organization.

Section 2: Board Representation

Partner organizations are entitled to representation on the Board. If a Partner makes no nominations to the Board, or if a nominee from the Partner fails to be elected to the Board, the Partner may at its discretion designate a non-voting representative to the Board.

Section 3: Details of Relationship

The Board of NJHN and a delegation from the Partner organization shall mutually agree upon a Partnership Agreement which shall determine financial and other details of the relationship between NJHN and the Partner.

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

Section 1: Annual Membership Meeting

The NJHN shall hold an Annual Membership Meeting in June. Members will receive at least one (1) week’s notice of the meeting along with the proposed budget and the approved slate of candidates for officers and Board membership. Any member may propose agenda items, in writing, to the Secretary, in advance of the meeting. A quorum shall consist of at least 25% of the membership. The fiscal year of the NJHN begins July 1.

Section 2: Special Meetings

The President or any member with the President’s approval may call a special meeting. The President shall present the request to the Board. The Board shall decide within three (3) weeks whether, when and where to hold a special meeting. The special meeting shall be held no later than six (6) weeks after the President’s initial receipt of the request.

A quorum shall consist of at least 25% of the membership. The President shall announce the special meeting to all members, as soon as possible.

Section 3: Board of Directors Meetings

The Board shall hold at minimum one annual meeting and at least one other regular meeting during the year to conduct the NJHN’s business. The Board may also hold Special Meetings.

ARTICLE VIII: COMMITTEES

Section 1: Standing Committees

The Standing Committees of the NJHN shall be those specified in these Bylaws and such others as the Board may establish from time to time.

Section 2: Special Committees

The President with the Board’s permission may establish and name from time to time special committees.

Section 3: Appointment

The Chairs of all Standing Committees other than the Nominating Committee shall be nominated by the President and approved by the Board. Vacancies will be filled through appointment by the President.

Section 4: Terms

The Nominating Committee shall serve from the time of its election until the next Annual Meeting of the Membership. All other Standing Committees shall serve from July 1 following their election or appointment through the following June.

ARTICLE IX: TAX CODE PROVISIONS

Section 1: Purposes

The NJHN is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and/or scientific purposes under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Section 2: Prohibitions

No part of the net earnings of the NJHN shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purpose clause hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, the NJHN shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Section 3: Dissolution

Upon dissolution of the NJHN, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501 (c) (3) federal tax code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.

ARTICLE X: RULES OF ORDER

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be used as guidelines to govern the NJHN in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not consistent with these Bylaws or the special rules of the NJHN.

ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS TO THESE BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be amended at an Annual Membership Meeting or special meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those members present and voting. Amendments must be approved by two thirds of the Board, and the general membership must be notified of the proposed amendments at least 40 days before the meeting at which the vote on the amendments will be taken.

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