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# CONSTITUTION

## TOWN OF WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT

### **ARTICLE 1: TITLE**

This department shall be known as the Town of Watertown Fire Department, Incorporated, and shall consist of not more than (70) active members at any one time. The Town of Watertown Fire Department Board of Fire Commissioners shall determine the number of members from outside the Town of Watertown limits.

### **ARTICLE 2: PURPOSE**

This department is an organization of volunteers for the purpose of fighting fires, saving lives, property, and the environment.

### **ARTICLE 3: OFFICERS**

#### **SECTION ONE**

The officers of this department shall be: Chief, First Assistant Chief, Second Assistant Chief, Third Assistant Chief, Captains, Truck Foremen, President, Secretary, Treasurer, Training Officer and Safety Officer. These officers are to be elected at each annual meeting for a term of one (1) year, with the exception of the Training Officer, Safety officer and President, who will be appointed by the Chief. In the event the Chief or any Assistant Chief becomes unable to fulfill his/her duties, then there will be an automatic progression up to the next position, of all Chief Officers. If the Third Assistant Chief, Secretary, or Treasurer become unable to fulfill his/her duties for the year elected, the Executive Committee will appoint a member from those eligible from general membership to fulfill those duties until the next election. If the President, Training Officer, Safety Officer, Station Captain, Foreman or Assistant Foreman should become unable to fulfill his/her duties, for the year appointed, the Chief will be empowered to appoint another. The duties of Assistant Chief shall be as follows: 1) Oversee Station Captains and firematic equipment of assigned stations and ensure truck maintenance reports are completed. 2) Each Assistant must conduct 1 training session per year. 3) Attend 75% of all Executive Committee meetings and 3 Commissioners meetings per year (excluding regular employment, illness or Fire/EMS schooling, or at the discretion of the chief). 4) Assist Chief in office duties, including; signing purchase orders, inspecting Fire District bills and oversee apparatus maintenance and repairs.

#### **SECTION TWO**

The Executive Committee will consist of the Chief, First Assistant Chief, Second Assistant Chief, Third Assistant Chief, President, Secretary, Treasurer, Training Officer, Safety Officer, Station Captains, Foremen, and one delegate from the Town of Watertown Board of Fire Commissioners.

45 **SECTION THREE**

46 The Chief shall: preside, or shall have the power to appoint a junior officer, or if a junior  
47 officer is not present, a member to preside in their stead, at all meetings of this department;  
48 preserve order; appoint all committees that are not otherwise appointed; and must, at the  
49 written request of seven members, call extra meetings, vote on all questions, have charge  
50 of all parades, have authority to excuse members from meetings while in session, and  
51 perform all other acts and duties necessary for the good of the department, not otherwise  
52 provided for herein.

53

54 **SECTION FOUR**

55 The First Assistant Chief shall, at the request of the Chief, or in his absence, fulfill the  
56 above duties. He/she shall oversee the completion and filing of NYS Incident Reports.  
57 He/she shall assist the Chief in performing his/her duties and shall complete a NYS officers'  
58 training course within one year.

59

60 **SECTION FIVE**

61 The Second Assistant Chief shall, at the request of the Chief, or in the absence of the Chief  
62 or First Assistant Chief, fulfill the above duties. He/she shall conduct inventory and  
63 inspection of all District owned turn-out gear annually. He/she shall assist the Chief in  
64 performing his/her duties and shall complete a NYS officers' training course within one  
65 year.

66

67 **SECTION SIX**

68 The Third Assistant Chief shall, at the request of the Chief, or in the absence of the Chief,  
69 First Assistant Chief, or Second Assistant Chief, fulfill the above duties. He/she shall  
70 oversee training and oversee members on probation. He/she shall assist the Chief in  
71 performing his/her duties and shall complete a NYS officers' training course within one  
72 year.

73

74 **SECTION SEVEN**

75 The President shall appoint all committees and may serve as a member of same unless  
76 otherwise provided under these bylaws. He/She shall enforce the observance of the  
77 Constitution and Bylaws. He/she shall abstain (when presiding over the meetings) from  
78 any vote of the organization other than in the election of officers and members except in  
79 the case of an equal division of votes and then his/her vote shall decide the issue. He/she  
80 shall appoint a member to the position of Chaplain of the Town of Watertown Fire  
81 Department, Inc., at the Annual Meeting of the department. If this member is a recognized  
82 member of the clergy, the said member can be exempted from fulfilling the duty  
83 requirements of an active member by vote of the general membership. The President shall  
84 serve as manager of all non-firefighting property of the organization, keep an accurate  
85 record of same, and assure that no property of the organization is removed from its place  
86 of use or storage unless he/she has given permission for such removal.

87

88

89

90 **SECTION EIGHT**

91 The Secretary shall record the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee and of  
92 the General Membership meetings. He/she shall notify all members of special meetings,  
93 of Bylaw and Constitution changes, record all incidents as reported by the Chief, and keep  
94 an up-to-date list of members both active and inactive.

95

96 **SECTION NINE**

97 The Treasurer shall be responsible for all monies paid into this Department and keep an  
98 accurate accounting of the same. He/she shall report to the Executive Committee and  
99 General Membership monthly as to monies owed, received, and on hand. He/she shall be  
100 bonded.

101

102 **SECTION TEN**

103 The Safety Officer shall assist all officers in the instruction of proper operation of all  
104 Department equipment.

105

106 **SECTION ELEVEN**

107 The Training Officer shall oversee all department training.

108

109 **SECTION TWELVE**

110 The Chief shall have charge of all firefighting equipment owned by or in the care of the  
111 Department. He/she will, with the assistance of his/her junior officers, be in charge of all  
112 incidents, have full supervision of all members, and report to the Executive Committee,  
113 any member showing disrespect or disobedience at the time of any incident, function, or  
114 any other action unbecoming to the Department, and will suspend any member who refuses  
115 to perform his/her duties, or who is engaging in acts detrimental to the Department. Such  
116 suspension is to be reviewed by the Executive Committee at its next regular meeting, and  
117 then referred to the General Membership for action.

118

119 **SECTION THIRTEEN – STATION CAPTAINS**

120 Station Captains for this department will be elected by the entire fire department for a term  
121 of one year. To be eligible for election one must meet the following minimum  
122 requirements:

- 123
- 124 • -Having successfully served as a Truck Foreman for 2 years
  - 125 • -Have met attendance requirements as per the constitution and bylaws
  - 126 • -Be department qualified on the equipment

127 Their duties will be to assist the Chief, assistant chiefs, or the designated officers at the  
128 time of fires, incidents and department functions. They will be in charge of incidents  
129 utilizing the incident command system until a chief arrives. He/She will report to a Chief  
130 Officer any member showing disrespect, disobedience or a life safety violation at the time  
131 of any incident or function. Captains shall also be required to:

- 132 • -Review Truck Foreman's yearly truck inventory & Item request.
- 133 • -Ensure Truck Foremen are completing truck checks by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each  
134 month
- -Attend 75% of Executive & General Membership meetings (with the

- 135 exception of a valid excuse).  
136 • -Ensure cleanliness and readiness of assigned station and apparatus.  
137 • -Train, document and recommend to the chief new members for  
138 certification to operate vehicles and equipment.

139 Prior to the annual election of officers, a report of each Station Captain's adherence of the  
140 above requirements will be presented to the general membership.

141

#### 142 **SECTION FOURTEEN – TRUCK FOREMAN**

143 A Truck Foreman for this department will be elected by the entire fire department for a  
144 term of one year. To be eligible for election one must meet the following minimum  
145 requirements:

- 146 Having successfully served at least three years in this department.  
147 Having met attendance requirements as per the constitution and bylaws.  
148 Successfully completed New York State Firefighter 1 or equivalent.  
149 Be department qualified on the equipment.  
150 Have completed or complete a New York State course, specifically related to the  
151 equipment as follows:

- 152 Engines-Pump Operations, EVOC  
153 Tankers-Pump Operations, EVOC  
154 Ladder-Ladder Operations, Pump Operations, EVOC  
155 Rescue-Rescue Operation or Auto Extrication, EVOC, Pump Operation  
156 (46-1-1)

157 Duties of a Truck Foreman

- 158 • Complete and submit to designated Station Captain monthly truck reports and  
159 repair requests by the 15th of each month.  
160 • Conduct one training session per year  
161 • Complete an annual inventory of apparatus to be turned into designated Station  
162 Captain.  
163 • Attend at least 75% of department meetings (excluding regular employment,  
164 illness, family emergency or department schooling).  
165 • Train, document and recommend to designated Station Captain - new members for  
166 certification to operate the vehicle and equipment the Truck Foreman is responsible  
167 for.  
168 • Prior to the annual election of officers, a report of each Truck Foreman's adherence  
169 of the above requirements will be presented to the general membership.

170 **Assistant Foreman** of assigned apparatus to complete monthly and annual checks and  
171 inventories. Qualifications: Completion of probationary period. Meet attendance  
172 requirements, completion of BEFO or equivalent.

173

#### 174 **SECTION FIFTEEN**

175 A Firefighter shall not be eligible for election as Assistant Chief, until he/she has served at  
176 least one year as Station Captain, or has shown outstanding service and have the  
177 education/qualifications set forth in the bylaws. A member shall not be eligible to be  
178 elected Chief until he/she has served a minimum of two years as an Assistant Chief.

179

180

181 **ARTICLE 4: COMMITTEES**

182 **SECTION ONE**

183 The Executive Committee shall meet at least once before each general membership  
184 meeting. This meeting will make recommendations for constitutional changes before the  
185 regular general membership meetings. These changes can only be acted on by the general  
186 membership. The Executive Committee will act upon all disciplinary measures prior to  
187 the general membership meeting and make recommendations as to what actions may be  
188 taken. At no time, may this committee make a decision and invoke it without the approval  
189 of the general membership, unless otherwise indicated in the Constitution. They shall  
190 review membership applications, investigate completely, and, if deemed appropriate,  
191 recommend approval to the general membership.

192 **SECTION TWO**

193 The Nominating Committee shall be selected by the President and must have one member  
194 who was a past officer. Recommendations from this committee must be for one  
195 man/woman for each elected office only.  
196

197 **SECTION THREE**

198 Other Committees to be established as needed.  
199  
200  
201

202 **ARTICLE 5: MEMBERS (Introduction)**

203 **Goal:** To develop a dynamic and active membership that allows each person to  
204 provide service to the department and community to the best of their ability,  
205 meeting the mission and goals of the department and the personal goals of the  
206 member.

207 **Structure:** There will be six categories of active membership in the department. These  
208 categories will be based upon the training requirements set forth by the department,  
209 advisory and oversight agencies and legal requirements. Members are encouraged  
210 to select the membership category which best suits their goals, physical ability,  
211 training, personal time commitment and development objectives. During the  
212 course of a career with the department, it is expected that members will move  
213 between categories depending upon their personal circumstances.

214 The Executive Committee will review written requests from members who  
215 wish to be reassigned to a different membership category and approve such  
216 reassignment by majority vote. The Executive Committee reserves the right to meet  
217 with members who request such reassignment in order to assess their request and  
218 ensure that mutual needs are met.

219 **Application:** The membership application process will follow existing protocols.

220 **Probation:** All newly appointed members of the department will be on a probationary  
221 status for at least 12 months, commencing on the date that they have been accepted  
222 into the department.

223 Probationary members are not granted voting privileges.

224 Probationary members will be expected to meet all membership  
225 participation and training requirements for their membership category during the  
226 probationary period.

227 Probationary members will not accept any assignment, duty or work detail  
228 nor perform any function, whether at an emergency scene or otherwise, which they  
229 have not been properly trained to perform.

230 The Executive Board will periodically review the training and participation  
231 of the probationary member at the Executive Board Meetings. Those members that  
232 have not yet achieved the training and/or participation as necessary for their  
233 assigned category will meet with the Executive Board to assess their development  
234 goals. The Executive Board will determine, by majority vote, if the probationary  
235 member should be reassigned to a different membership category of which they  
236 have been properly trained and participated for, if the probationary period should  
237 be extended for a period of six months or if the member should be discharged from  
238 the department.

239 In situations where the probationary period has been extended, the  
240 Executive Board review process will be repeated at the Executive Board Meeting  
241 of the month that the probation extension ends.

242 **Voting:** All members, regardless of category, will be given full voting privileges  
243 following the successful completion of their probationary period.

244 **Physicals:** All members, regardless of category, must have an annual physical on file  
245 with the TWFD office.

246 **Fund Raising:** All members, regardless of category, must participate in a minimum of one  
247 fund raising event each year.

248 **Committees:** All members, regardless of category, shall participate in a minimum of three  
249 committees.

250 **EVOC:** All members, regardless of category, must receive EVOC training prior to  
251 being allowed to drive fire department vehicles.

252 **NIMS:** All members, regardless of category, must complete ICS 100, 200 and 700  
253 within the first year.

254 **Participation in a 2-hour in-service on department procedures (SOGs and protocols)**  
255 **when first becoming a member**

256 **Annually** - 2 hours of OSHA Station House Safety and Scene Safety training

257 **Training** - Initial Training and Annual Training Requirements are determined by the Chief  
258 Officers based on New York State best practices for individuals to the level of their  
259 certification and participation.

260

261 **Membership Categories:**

262 Active

263 Firefighter- Fully trained and active in fire suppression and rescue  
264 activities.

265 Scene Support- Trained in on-scene support operations (i.e. driving,  
266 pumps, ladder placement, hose assistance, accountability, traffic  
267 and water supply).

268 Light Duty Scene Support- Trained in on-scene support operations as  
269 physically able.

- 270 EMS - Certified EMS provider that support rescue efforts within scope of
- 271 training.
- 272 Station Member- Non-emergency responder who provides administrative
- 273 support and minimal on-scene support (i.e. work details, food prep,
- 274 fund raising, committees and assist during major incidents).
- 275 Junior Firefighter- Junior firefighters must be at least 16 years old but not
- 276 older than 18 years old. (For details, see the Junior Firefighter's
- 277 Policy)
- 278 Active Deployed Military
- 279 Associate Member – An active member of another fire department who
- 280 serves TWFD at the discretion of the Chief
- 281 Inactive
- 282 Inactive Medical
- 283 Active Reserve
- 284 Life
- 285 Honorary
- 286 Probationary
- 287

## 288 **SECTION ONE - ACTIVE MEMBERS**

### 289 **a. Firefighter**

#### 290 **Annual requirements:**

- 291 • Categorical requirements (Reference TWFD Training Program
- 292 Standard Operating Guideline)
- 293 • Bi-annual Pulmonary Function Test and mask-appropriate Fit Test
- 294 • Response to at least 10% of alarms (EMS not used to determine total
- 295 calls)
- 296 • Attendance or approved absence from at least 75% of General
- 297 Membership Meetings

#### 298 **Promotional to:**

299 Truck Foreman, Station Captain, Assistant Chief or Chief per guidelines for  
300 each position

### 302 **b. First Responder - EMS**

#### 303 **Annual Requirements:**

- 304 • Response to at least 10% of EMS calls
- 305 • Attendance or approved absence from at least 75% of General
- 306 Membership Meetings

### 308 **c. Scene Support Operations (SSO)**

#### 309 **Annual Requirements:**

- 310 • PPE Fit Test as determined by the Chief Officers
- 311 • Response to at least 10% of alarms (EMS not used to determine total
- 312 calls)
- 313 • Attendance or approved absence from at least 75% of General
- 314 Membership Meetings
- 315 • Participation at 25% of all scheduled work details.

316           **Promotional to:**  
317           Truck Foreman, Station Captain, Assistant Chief or Chief per guidelines for  
318           each position.

319

320 **d. Station Members**

321           **Annual Requirements:**

- 322           • Attendance or approved absence from at least 75% of General
- 323           Membership Meetings
- 324           • Attendance or approved absence from at least 50% of scheduled
- 325           work details
- 326           • Participation at 75% of fund raising events

327

328 **e. Active Deployed Military**

329           The Town of Watertown Fire Department is proud of our members who  
330           serve in the United States Armed Services. In the event that one of our  
331           members who serve in the military is deployed they will be moved to the  
332           “Active Deployed Military” category and their status, credits and standing  
333           will remain unchanged until they return from their deployment. They will  
334           continue to receive points toward their retirement.

335

336 **f. Associate Member**

337           **Initial requirements:**

338           TWFD recognizes that many active firefighters work/live/vacation in the  
339           Town of Watertown, while maintaining active status in their home  
340           departments. Through an arrangement with the home chief and department,  
341           a person may become an Associate Member of TWFD and respond to calls  
342           and activities, as determined by the Chief Officers. Associate Members  
343           would not be required to respond to 10% of our calls, participate in fund  
344           raising events, participate in work details or attend department meetings,  
345           but could attend meetings and serve on committees at the discretion of the  
346           Chief, but would not have voting privileges.

347           **Physicals:** All members, regardless of category, must have an annual physical  
348           on file with the TWFD office.

349           **EVOC:** All members, regardless of category, must receive EVOC training  
350           prior to being allowed to drive fire department vehicles.

351           **NIMS:** All members, regardless of category, must complete ICS 100, 200  
352           and 700 within the first year.

353           **Participation in a 2-hour in-service on department procedures (SOGs and**  
354           **protocols) when first becoming an Associate Member**

355           **Training** - Initial Training and Annual Training Requirements are determined by  
356           the Chief Officers based on New York State best practices for individuals  
357           to the level of their certification and participation.

358           **Annual requirements:**

- 359           • Bi-annual Pulmonary Function Test and mask-appropriate Fit Test,
- 360           either through TWFD or their home department (proof would be
- 361           provided)



- 2 hours of OSHA Station House Safety and Scene Safety training

**Not able to be promoted according to TWFD bylaws**

**Membership**

To be a member of this department (other than Junior members), a person shall be at least 18 years of age. A candidate for membership shall make written application to the department and shall appear in person before the Executive Committee for a personal interview. The purpose of this interview is to inform the candidate of the membership requirements and to evaluate the candidate's potential as a member of the Department. Town residents will have preference over non-residents. Such application shall be approved or disapproved by the Executive Committee before being presented to the general membership. Upon the next available opening, such application shall be presented to the general membership at the regular meeting for review. This application shall be voted on at the next regular meeting following the review and approved by a simple majority of the ballots cast. If an applicant is rejected, the applicant must wait six (6) months before submitting a new application. Once approved, a member must receive a department approved physical exam before responding to any call.

Each member will be evaluated quarterly and must maintain at least 10% of calls.

The Executive Committee can recommend dismissal from the department if a member has less than 10% of calls by June 30 or December 31.

Any member guilty of disorderly conduct or in the discharge of his/her duties as a firefighter, upon good satisfactory evidence of the Executive Committee and a three quarters (3/4) vote of the ballots cast by the members present of the department, shall be dishonorably discharged from the department. Any member not attending six meetings of the previous year (excluding regular employment, illness or Fire/EMS schooling) shall not vote at the Annual Meeting. Any member on probation shall not be allowed to vote on any department issue. Any member not attending a meeting must be excused by the president or their designee, of the department. Each member with a change in the status of their driver's license must notify the chief and district office. To drive the TWFD equipment, a member must have a valid driver's license.

**SECTION TWO - INACTIVE MEMBERS**

a. Inactive Members

Any member shall be eligible to become an inactive member with at least five years of active service. He/she has no rights or privileges of any kind, by reason of fighting fires, driving vehicles, or any other duties. He/she shall have the right upon invitation of the Department, to attend all department functions and to be extended the courtesy to attend general membership meetings with no voting privileges. A request to move to Inactive Membership requires a letter to be written to the Executive Board requesting the change. The Executive Board will pass the request to the General Membership with a simple majority vote needed to approve the change.

b. Inactive Medical

407 TWFD recognizes that at times due to long term illness or non-fire  
408 department related injury an active member may not be able to  
409 complete all the necessary requirements to remain in an active  
410 status. A member may request, in writing, to be moved to the  
411 “Inactive Medical” category. The member can still participate in all  
412 social events and can attend meetings, however they will not be able  
413 to vote on department issues. At the time when they feel able, they  
414 may request, in writing, with doctor’s approval, to be moved to  
415 “Active” member status.  
416

### 417 **SECTION THREE - ACTIVE RESERVE MEMBERS**

418 Active Reserve- Members who have served 20 years of active service are eligible  
419 for Active Reserve status. Active Reserve members are exempt from the annual response  
420 percentage of 10%.

421 An active member may request Active Reserve Status by meeting the following criteria:

- 422 1. Twenty (20) years as an active member of the Town of Watertown Volunteer  
423 Fire Department.
- 424 2. Must attend 50 percent of the regular meetings.
- 425 3. Must be recommended by the Executive Committee.
- 426 4. Active Reserve Status must be approved by a majority vote of the membership  
427 present.
- 428 5. Must make written application requesting active reserve status.

#### 429 **Annual Requirements:**

- 430 • PPE Fit Test as determined by the Chief Officers
- 431 • Attendance or approved absence from at least 75% of General  
432 Membership Meetings
- 433 • Participation at 25% of all scheduled work details.  
434

### 435 **SECTION FOUR - LIFE MEMBERS**

436 Any member 65 or older, meeting inactive membership requirements, may make  
437 application to become a life member in writing to the Executive Board and approval by 2/3  
438 vote of General Membership. A life member shall have the same social benefits as active  
439 members, but may not perform emergency duty, nor vote. This section also applies to  
440 members who have become permanently disabled, and who are members in good standing,  
441 regardless of age.  
442

### 443 **SECTION FIVE - HONORARY MEMBERS**

444 Honorary membership may be bestowed upon any outstanding individual deemed worthy  
445 of this honor by a 2/3 majority vote of the members present. This honorary member has  
446 no rights nor privileges under this membership except upon invitation of the Department.  
447 A recommendation for Honorary Membership may be brought to any regularly scheduled  
448 General Membership meeting and would require a 2/3 vote for approval.  
449

450  
451

452 **SECTION SIX - PROBATIONARY MEMBERS**

453 A new member with the Department shall be on probationary period for one year. They  
454 must attend at least Basic Exterior Firefighting Operations within this time, if the class is  
455 available. A new member shall not be eligible to drive district owned equipment until  
456 authorized by the Chief, Foreman of the vehicle and the Board of Fire Commissioners,  
457 except for training purposes when accompanied by an approved training officer.

458  
459 **SECTION SEVEN - LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

460 A member after one year of service in the department, may request a leave of absence in  
461 writing to the Executive Board for a period up to and not exceeding one year. He/she shall  
462 upon request, be admitted to the department with a majority vote of the members present.

463  
464 **SECTION EIGHT - THE SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM**

465 A year of service shall be credited for one calendar year after establishment of the Award  
466 Program in which an active volunteer member accumulates at least 50 points. Points shall  
467 be granted in accordance with the Service Award Program Point System.

468  
469  
470 **ARTICLE 6: FIRE POLICE**

471 The Chief shall appoint New York State Trained Fire Police. They shall be sworn in before  
472 the Town Clerk to act with general police authorities during the time of fire or incident;  
473 keep unauthorized persons from interfering with the fighting of a fire, or the property  
474 involved, or entering the buildings where the fire is located; prevent all vehicles or  
475 conveyances from blocking the highways or interfering with the movements of the  
476 firefighters, fire apparatus, or equipment; and perform any act or duty naturally developing  
477 on police at the time of a fire or incident.

478  
479  
480 **ARTICLE 7: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

481 SOGs shall be developed and administered by the SOG Committee and shall be approved  
482 by majority vote of members present of the general membership.

483  
484  
485 **ARTICLE 8: AMENDMENTS**

486 This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended only by the amendment to be acted upon  
487 having been approved at one regular meeting and voted upon favorably at the next regular  
488 meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present. This Constitution must be updated  
489 regularly.

490  
491 **BY-LAWS**

492 **TOWN OF WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT**

493 1. The meetings of this department shall be held monthly. The Annual  
494 Meeting shall be held at the regular January meeting. The fiscal year will be the  
495 calendar year.

