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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, Medical 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, Medical 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, Medical 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

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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 • -Having successfully served as a Truck Foreman for 2 years, or has shown
124 outstanding service, as determined by the Executive Board.
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 15th of each
134 month

- 135 • -Attend 75% of Executive & General Membership meetings (with the
- 136 exception of a valid excuse).
- 137 • -Ensure cleanliness and readiness of assigned station and apparatus.
- 138 • -Train, document and recommend to the chief new members for
- 139 certification to operate vehicles and equipment.

140 Prior to the annual election of officers, a report of each Station Captain's adherence of the

141 above requirements will be presented to the general membership.

142

143 **SECTION FOURTEEN – TRUCK FOREMAN**

144 A Truck Foreman for this department will be elected by the entire fire department for a

145 term of one year. To be eligible for election one must meet the following minimum

146 requirements:

- 147 • Having successfully served at least three years in this department, or has shown
- 148 outstanding service, as determined by the Executive Board.
- 149 • Having met attendance requirements as per the constitution and bylaws.
- 150 • Successfully completed New York State Firefighter 1 or equivalent.
- 151 • Be department qualified on the equipment.
- 152 • Have completed or complete a New York State course, specifically related to the
- 153 equipment as follows:
 - 154 Engines-Pump Operations, EVOC
 - 155 Tankers-Pump Operations, EVOC
 - 156 Ladder-Ladder Operations, Pump Operations, EVOC
 - 157 Rescue-Rescue Operation or Auto Extrication, EVOC, Pump Operation
 - 158 (46-1-1)

159 **Duties of a Truck Foreman**

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

172 **Assistant Foreman** of assigned apparatus to complete monthly and annual checks and

173 inventories. Qualifications: Completion of probationary period. Meet attendance

174 requirements, completion of BEFO or equivalent.

175

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180 **SECTION FIFTEEN**

- 181 • A Firefighter shall not be eligible for election as Assistant Chief, until he/she has
182 served at least one year as Station Captain, or has shown outstanding service, as
183 determined by the Executive Board and have the education/qualifications set forth
184 in the bylaws.

185
186
187 **ARTICLE 4: COMMITTEES**

188 **SECTION ONE**

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

198
199 **SECTION TWO**

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

203
204 **SECTION THREE**

205 Other Committees to be established as needed.
206
207

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

209 **Goal:** To develop a dynamic and active membership that allows each person to
210 provide service to the department and community to the best of their ability,
211 meeting the mission and goals of the department and the personal goals of the
212 member.

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

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

- 225 **Application:** The membership application process will follow existing protocols.
- 226 **Probation:** All newly appointed members of the department will be on a probationary
227 status for at least 12 months, commencing on the date that they have been accepted
228 into the department.
- 229 Probationary members are not granted voting privileges.
- 230 Probationary members will be expected to meet all membership
231 participation and training requirements for their membership category during the
232 probationary period.
- 233 Probationary members will not accept any assignment, duty or work detail
234 nor perform any function, whether at an emergency scene or otherwise, which they
235 have not been properly trained to perform.
- 236 The Executive Board will periodically review the training and participation
237 of the probationary member at the Executive Board Meetings. Those members that
238 have not yet achieved the training and/or participation as necessary for their
239 assigned category will meet with the Executive Board to assess their development
240 goals. The Executive Board will determine, by majority vote, if the probationary
241 member should be reassigned to a different membership category of which they
242 have been properly trained and participated for, if the probationary period should
243 be extended for a period of six months or if the member should be discharged from
244 the department.
- 245 In situations where the probationary period has been extended, the
246 Executive Board review process will be repeated at the Executive Board Meeting
247 of the month that the probation extension ends.
- 248 **Voting:** All members, regardless of category, will be given full voting privileges
249 following the successful completion of their probationary period.
- 250 **Physicals:** All members, regardless of category, must have an annual physical on file
251 with the TWFD office.
- 252 **Fund Raising:** All members, regardless of category, must participate in a minimum of one
253 fund raising event each year.
- 254 **Committees:** All members, regardless of category, shall participate in a minimum of three
255 committees.
- 256 **EVOC:** All members, regardless of category, must receive EVOC training prior to
257 being allowed to drive fire department vehicles.
- 258 **NIMS:** All members, regardless of category, must complete ICS 100, 200 and 700
259 within the first year.
- 260 **Participation in a 2-hour in-service on department procedures (SOGs and protocols)**
261 **when first becoming a member**
- 262 **Annually** - 2 hours of OSHA Station House Safety and Scene Safety training
- 263 **Training** - Initial Training and Annual Training Requirements are determined by the Chief
264 Officers based on New York State best practices for individuals to the level of their
265 certification and participation.
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Membership Categories:

Active

- Firefighter- Fully trained and active in fire suppression and rescue activities.
- Scene Support- Trained in on-scene support operations (i.e. driving, pumps, ladder placement, hose assistance, accountability, traffic and water supply).
- Light Duty Scene Support- Trained in on-scene support operations as physically able.
- EMS - Certified EMS provider that support rescue efforts within scope of training.
- Station Member- Non-emergency responder who provides administrative support and minimal on-scene support (i.e. work details, food prep, fund raising, committees and assist during major incidents).
- Junior Firefighter- Junior firefighters must be at least 16 years old but not older than 18 years old. (For details, see the Junior Firefighter’s Policy)
- Active Deployed Military
- Associate Member – An active member of another fire department who serves TWFD at the discretion of the Chief

Inactive

- Inactive Medical
- Active Reserve
- Life
- Honorary
- Probationary

SECTION ONE - ACTIVE MEMBERS

a. Firefighter

Annual requirements:

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

Promotional to:

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

b. First Responder - EMS

Annual Requirements:

- Response to at least 10% of EMS calls

315

- 316 • Attendance or approved absence from at least 75% of General
- 317 Membership Meetings

318

319 **c. Scene Support Operations (SSO)**

320 **Annual Requirements:**

- 321 • PPE Fit Test as determined by the Chief Officers
- 322 • Response to at least 10% of alarms (EMS not used to determine total
- 323 calls)
- 324 • Attendance or approved absence from at least 75% of General
- 325 Membership Meetings
- 326 • Participation at 25% of all scheduled work details.

327 **Promotional to:**

328 Truck Foreman, Station Captain, Assistant Chief or Chief per guidelines for

329 each position.

330

331 **d. Station Members**

332 **Annual Requirements:**

- 333 • Attendance or approved absence from at least 75% of General
- 334 Membership Meetings
- 335 • Attendance or approved absence from at least 50% of scheduled
- 336 work details
- 337 • Participation at 75% of fund raising events

338

339 **e. Active Deployed Military**

340 The Town of Watertown Fire Department is proud of our members who

341 serve in the United States Armed Services. In the event that one of our

342 members who serve in the military is deployed they will be moved to the

343 “Active Deployed Military” category and their status, credits and standing

344 will remain unchanged until they return from their deployment. They will

345 continue to receive points toward their retirement.

346

347 **f. Associate Member**

348 **Initial requirements:**

349 TWFD recognizes that many active firefighters work/live/vacation in the

350 Town of Watertown, while maintaining active status in their home

351 departments. Through an arrangement with the home chief and department,

352 a person may become an Associate Member of TWFD and respond to calls

353 and activities, as determined by the Chief Officers. Associate Members

354 would not be required to respond to 10% of our calls, participate in fund

355 raising events, participate in work details or attend department meetings,

356 but could attend meetings and serve on committees at the discretion of the

357 Chief, but would not have voting privileges.

358 **Physicals:** All members, regardless of category, must have an annual physical

359 on file with the TWFD office.

360 **EVOC:** All members, regardless of category, must receive EVOC training

361 prior to being allowed to drive fire department vehicles.

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

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

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

369 **Annual requirements:**

- 370 • Bi-annual Pulmonary Function Test and mask-appropriate Fit Test,
371 either through TWFD or their home department (proof would be
372 provided)
- 373 • 2 hours of OSHA Station House Safety and Scene Safety training

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

375

376 **Membership**

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

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

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

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

403

404 **SECTION TWO - INACTIVE MEMBERS**

405 a. Inactive Members

406 Any member shall be eligible to become an inactive member with
407 at least five years of active service. He/she has no rights or

408 privileges of any kind, by reason of fighting fires, driving vehicles,
409 or any other duties. He/she shall have the right upon invitation of
410 the Department, to attend all department functions and to be
411 extended the courtesy to attend general membership meetings with
412 no voting privileges. A request to move to Inactive Membership
413 requires a letter to be written to the Executive Board requesting the
414 change. The Executive Board will pass the request to the General
415 Membership with a simple majority vote needed to approve the
416 change.

417 b. Inactive Medical

418 TWFD recognizes that at times due to long term illness or non-fire
419 department related injury an active member may not be able to
420 complete all the necessary requirements to remain in an active
421 status. A member may request, in writing, to be moved to the
422 "Inactive Medical" category. The member can still participate in all
423 social events and can attend meetings, however they will not be able
424 to vote on department issues. At the time when they feel able, they
425 may request, in writing, with doctor's approval, to be moved to
426 "Active" member status.
427

428 **SECTION THREE - ACTIVE RESERVE MEMBERS**

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

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

- 433 1. Twenty (20) years as an active member of the Town of Watertown Volunteer
434 Fire Department.
- 435 2. Must attend 50 percent of the regular meetings.
- 436 3. Must be recommended by the Executive Committee.
- 437 4. Active Reserve Status must be approved by a majority vote of the membership
438 present.
- 439 5. Must make written application requesting active reserve status.

440 **Annual Requirements:**

- 441 • PPE Fit Test as determined by the Chief Officers
- 442 • Attendance or approved absence from at least 75% of General
443 Membership Meetings
- 444 • Participation at 25% of all scheduled work details.
445

446 **SECTION FOUR - LIFE MEMBERS**

447 Any member 65 or older, meeting inactive membership requirements, may make
448 application to become a life member in writing to the Executive Board and approval by 2/3
449 vote of General Membership. A life member shall have the same social benefits as active
450 members, but may not perform emergency duty, nor vote. This section also applies to
451 members who have become permanently disabled, and who are members in good standing,
452 regardless of age.
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SECTION FIVE - HONORARY MEMBERS

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

SECTION SIX - PROBATIONARY MEMBERS

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

SECTION SEVEN - LEAVE OF ABSENCE

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

SECTION EIGHT - THE SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM

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

ARTICLE 6: FIRE POLICE

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

ARTICLE 7: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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

ARTICLE 8: AMENDMENTS

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

BY-LAWS

TOWN OF WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT

1. The meetings of this department shall be held monthly. The Annual Meeting shall be held at the regular January meeting. The fiscal year will be the calendar year.
2. The Assistant Chiefs, Station Captains, Truck Foremen, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected at the December Meeting by separate ballots for a term of one year, or until a successor is chosen. The Assistant Chiefs and Station Captains shall be elected by TWFD members who have responded to 10% or more of the fire calls through the end of October. The determination as to who has the privilege of voting will be announced at the November meeting preceding the December election. A majority of the votes cast constitutes election. Once elected, the names will be submitted to the Town of Watertown Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners for their approval and if approved, their terms of office would begin at the January meeting after they are sworn in.
3. Three tellers shall be appointed by the Chief at each election and shall receive, count, and report on all votes in an open meeting. The first appointed, shall be the Chair and conduct the election.
4. 40% of total membership shall constitute a quorum at any regular or special meeting for the transaction of any business of the department.

Revised and adopted
August 7, 2024

ACCEPTANCE

The Bylaws shall be a part of this Constitution and new bylaws made as necessary by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular meeting. The Bylaws must be updated regularly.

I hereby agree to and find myself to abide by this Constitution and Bylaws and amendment or additions that may hereafter lawfully be made hereto.

Name-Printed _____

Signed _____

Date _____