GREATER NEW YORK COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

POLICIES

DATED: APRIL 2023

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1. For the purposes of these policies the Greater New York Council of the Blind will be referred to as GNYCB herein.

2. Board: Herein when we refer to the GNYCB Board or the Board in these policies, we mean everyone that is currently on the Board of Directors of the GNYCB.

3. For the purposes of these policies the American Council of the Blind of New York will be referred to as the ACBNY herein.

4. For the purposes of these policies the American Council of the Blind will be referred to as the ACB herein.

5. The purpose of these policies is to establish the parameters and guidelines for Board members and committees by doing the following:

1. Promote clarity among the Board members of policies, procedures, and expectations by having policies readily available in one central location;
2. Promote consistency of the Board’s action;
3. Clarify the Officers, Board members, and Committee Chairs roles;
4. Eliminate the need for instant (crisis) policy making;
5. Give GNYCB membership a clear direction from the Board.

6. Policy Committee: The Policy Committee has the duties of considering and drafting new policies, keeping policies updated, and bringing proposed policies to the Board of Directors for approval. Any Board member or member of the GNYCB can recommend policies to the Board or Policy Committee for consideration.

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7. RESPONSIBILITIES AND CRITERIA FOR THE BOARD

A. The Board is required to do the following:

* Reside in New York State
* Be willing and able to participate fully in all general and Board meetings, stay to the conclusion of the meeting and if they must leave before the end of a meeting, have another person available to fill in and answer questions posed during the meeting
* Be able to respond to e-mail discussions
* Members of the Board must serve on no less than one GNYCB committee
* The Board is responsible for keeping the members informed on any policies, procedures, news, or other items of interest that arise at any given Board meeting
* Always act in a dignified manner and interact respectfully with fellow Directors, Officers, and members
* Work as a team member to maintain and protect the GNYCB and its mission
* Become well versed with the GNYCB Constitution
* Become familiar with the current edition of Roberts Rules of Order
* Be a collaborative participant in the democratic process --respecting the outcome of votes of the membership and votes of the Board
* Possess sufficient computer skills to participate in e-mail work
* Be flexible for scheduling meeting times
* Officers and directors must attend all Board meetings. Any request to be excused from a Board meeting must be made in writing to the President at least 24 hours before the meeting

However, every Board member and Officer may choose to not attend one Board meeting without being excused by the President. Of course, it is expected that your commitment to the GNYCB includes attending Board meetings. Attendance includes in person as well as attendance through digital platforms that the Board has approved for such purposes. It must be noted that pursuant to GNYCB Constitution Article IX if any Officer or Board member is absent from three consecutive Board meetings or three general meetings without notifying the President, then the person automatically forfeits their position.

B. The GNYCB State Delegate is responsible to represent the GNYCB’s Chapter on the New York State level of the ACBNY’s Board of Directors and consult with the GNYCB’s membership prior to the ACBNY Board meetings if a vote is expected.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES AND CRITERIA FOR THE

PRESIDENT POSITION

A. The President must be willing and able to accept the legal, fiduciary and ethical responsibilities for an organizational president, in accordance with standard nonprofit practices and procedures.

B. The President must be a GNYCB member in good standing at least two consecutive years and must be blind or visually impaired and the person must have this condition for at least one year as well as bea resident of New York City for at least one year.

C. The duties of the President are as follows:

* Conduct all general meetings and Board meetings
* If the President is unable to attend, the elected Vice-President must conduct all general meetings and Board meetings
* Propose policies and practices to fulfill the mission of the GNYCB
* Serve as an ex-officio member, or appoints the Vice-President to serve as ex-officio on GNYCB committees (with the exception of the Nominating Committee)
* Monitor the performance of the Directors and Officers
* Submit various reports to the Board and to “other ‘stakeholders’” as necessary.
* Propose the creation of committees or task forces to accomplish needed work
* Appoint Chairpersons for committees and task forces and the chairperson shall choose at least two other committee members
* Perform other duties as the need arises and/or as defined in the GNYCB’s Constitution
* The President ensures that an agenda is planned in advance for the Board meetings. (This may involve periodic meetings with Committee Chairpersons to draft meeting agendas and reporting schedules.)
* The President will oversee and monitor the GNYCB email account and promptly respond to GNYCB emails. Further, the President may direct the emails to another GNYCB member for their review and prompt response to the sender. Overseeing the email account includes, but is not limited to, saving, deleting, placing in folders and archiving emails. The duties of the President with respect to the email account can be delegated by the President to another Board member.
* D. The President presides over meetings of the Board of Directors.

In this capacity, the President:

* Chairs meetings according to the most recent version of Robert’s Rules of Order for the purposes of encouraging all members to participate in discussion

* Facilitates the Board’s work of arriving at decisions in an orderly, timely and democratic manner

* Votes as prescribed in the GNYCB Constitution

E. The President is responsible for ensuring, on behalf of the membership, that the Board of Directors and Officers of the GNYCB:

* Are aware of and fulfill their governance responsibilities
* Comply with applicable laws and GNYCB Bylaws
* Conduct Board business effectively and efficiently in accordance with standard nonprofit policies and procedures
* Are accountable for their performance

F. The President is accountable to the Board and to the GNYCB membership as specified in the GNYCB Constitution and the ACBNY and the ACB Constitutions.

G. The President may delegate specific duties to Board members and/or committees, and to the webmaster, as appropriate; however, the accountability remains with the President. For this reason, the President may take appropriate action to safeguard the interests of the GNYCB.

H. According to the GNYCB Constitution, the President’s involvement in the proceedings of the Nominating Committee is specifically limited; therefore, the President’s accountability, in the specific case of the recommendations or actions

of the Nominating Committee, is accordingly limited.

I. The President serves as an ex-Officio member of all Board committees, except where the President delegates this to the Vice-President, and with the exception of the Nominating Committee. In this capacity, the President's role is to:

* To consult with each Committee Chairperson, and together with each Chairperson establish a schedule that sets forth the timelines by which the Chairperson needs to report to the Board
* Identify problems and assist the Committee Chairperson to resolve them, and bring such problems, if necessary, to the attention of the Board

J. The President ensures that the GNYCB maintains positive and productive relationships with organizations related to the mission of the GNYCB, the ACBNY, the ACB, the media and donors.

K. In this capacity, the President serves as primary spokesperson for the GNYCB, and the President’s duties may include:

* Representing the GNYCB to the media
* Representing the GNYCB on governmental or nongovernmental organizations and committees
* Timely and appropriate reporting of Board decisions and actions to members and/or donors

L. Any of the above duties may be delegated by the President where the President deems it appropriate.

M. The President has signing privileges on all GNYCB accounts. The President may be required to sign bank checks, correspondence, applications, reports, contracts or other documents on behalf of GNYCB.

N. The President ensures that structures and procedures are in place for effective recruitment, training, and evaluation of the Board members.

O. The President ensures that structures and procedures are in place for securing the resources required by the GNYCB.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND CRITERIA

FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT POSITION

A. The Vice President is required to be willing and qualified to take over as President if necessary, in accordance with the GNYCB Constitution.

B. The Vice President must be willing and able to accept the legal, fiduciary and ethical responsibilities of an organizational Vice President, and of a President, in accordance with standard nonprofit practices and procedures.

C. The Vice President may serve as ex-Officio on GNYCB Committees, as designated by the President.

D. The duties of the Vice President are as follows:

* Negotiate reporting schedules
* Identify problems and assist the Committee Chairpersons to resolve them
* Bring such matters, if necessary, to the attention of the President

E. The Vice President is expected to attend all Board meetings and must be willing and able to run regularly scheduled Board meetings, if called upon by the President to do so (in the event that the President cannot be in attendance).

F. The Vice President shall timely inform the President, in advance, if unable to attend a particular Board meeting or general meeting.

G. The Vice President must Be an GNYCB member in good standing. A GNYCB member is in “Good Standing” when the person is current in paying their dues and the person has attended meetings).

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND CRITERIA

FOR THE RECORDING SECRETARY POSITION

A. The Secretary must be willing and able to accept the legal, fiduciary and ethical responsibilities of an organizational secretary, in accordance with standard nonprofit practices and procedures.

B. The duties of the Recording Secretary are as follows:

* Record (in document-form) meeting minutes for all meetings of the Board and all general meetings
* Arrange for the audio-recording of all meetings of the Board and all general meetings if it is the secretary’s desire to take minutes from an audio-recording
* Possess thorough and quick note-taking skills in case an audio-recording of a meeting fails
* Have the ability to use notes and recordings to reproduce accurate accounts of the minutes of all meetings of the Board and all general meetings
* Have excellent writing, proofreading, editing and formatting skills, as well as the ability to exercise discretion, to summarize (or write in detail when appropriate), to create informative meeting minutes for both the Board’s meetings and general meetings
* Attend all Board meetings and general meetings
* The Recording Secretary shall timely inform the President, in advance, if unable to attend a particular Board meeting or general meeting
* Arrange for a competent recorder for any Board or general meeting that the Recording Secretary is unable to attend

C. With respect to Board meetings the Recording Secretary shall submit by email and/or text drafts of Board meeting minutes within fourteen (14) business days of the previous Board meeting to the Board to allow other Board members to submit suggestions/corrections before a final draft is submitted for approval/acceptance at the subsequent Board meeting.

D. With respect to general meetings, the Recording Secretary shall submit a draft of the minutes of the general meeting to the Corresponding Secretary in an accessible format at least fourteen calendar days before the next scheduled general meeting and the Corresponding Secretary is then required to distribute these draft general meeting minutes in an accessible format to the membership in an email and/or text as soon as possible, but no later than at least seven calendar days before the next scheduled general meeting.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND CRITERIA FOR THE

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY POSITION

A. The Corresponding Secretary must be willing and able to accept the legal, fiduciary and ethical responsibilities of an organizational secretary, in accordance with standard nonprofit practices and procedures.

B. The duties of the Corresponding Secretary are as follows:

* Submit a draft of the minutes of the general meeting to the membership in an accessible format as soon as possible, but no later than at least seven calendar days before the next scheduled general meeting
* Must review and put in proper final format all drafts of any document to be sent out under the name of the GNYCB
* The Corresponding Secretary is expected to have excellent writing, proofreading, editing and formatting skills
* Timely distribute information from the national and state ACB as well as from other organizations, where appropriate
* Assist any request by the GNYCB membership for information concerning a prior general meeting by researching and reproducing content from previous minutes as is practical
* Attend all Board meetings
* Serve on the Membership Committee but does not necessarily have to serve as the Chair
* Maintain a complete up to date list of all members in good standing; such a list shall also be maintained by the Treasurer.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND CRITERIA

FOR THE TREASURER POSITION

A. The Treasurer must be willing and able to accept the legal, fiduciary and ethical responsibilities of an organizational treasurer, in accordance with standard nonprofit and general accounting practices and procedures.

B. The membership trusts the Treasurer with the highest level of stewardship and expect he/she will manage the organizational finances with the highest scrutiny for banking, state and federal regulatory matters while always looking out for the best interest of the organizational finances.

C. The duties of the Treasurer are as follows:

* Prepare a budget for the upcoming calendar year in collaboration with the Finance Committee and the budget must be submitted to the Board by email and/or text by September 1, of each year and the President shall schedule a meeting as soon as possible, but no later than September 10, between the members of the Finance Committee and the Board to discuss the budget, make any necessary changes to the budget and either approve or reject it . After the budget for the upcoming calendar year is approved by the Board, the Treasurer must submit the approved budget to the general membership for its approval at the October general meeting.
* If the Board, rejects the proposed budget, the Board must provide one or more reasons, in writing, for the rejection as soon as possible, but no later than September 10. Then, the Finance Committee has ten calendar days to submit a new budget to the Board for its approval. The President shall schedule a second meeting, between the members of the Finance Committee and the Board to discuss the budget, make any necessary changes to the budget and either approve or reject it before the October general meeting. After the budget for the upcoming calendar year is approved by the Board, the Treasurer must submit the approved Budget to the general membership for its approval at the next general meeting.
* If the budget approved by Board, is rejected by the membership, the membership must state at the general meeting the reason or reasons for the rejection. The President must schedule a Board meeting, and with the President’s discretion, may require the members of the Finance Committee to attend. At this Board meeting, the Board will discuss and address the reasons given by the membership for the rejection and either a) keep the budget the Board already approved without any changes and resubmit it to the membership with the Board reasons for not changing the budget, or b) amend the budget to address the reason(s) it was rejected by the membership and vote at the Board meeting on whether to approve or reject the amended budget. If the amended budget is approved by the Board, the amended budget will be submitted to the membership at the next general meeting for their approval or rejection.
* Reconcile all account activities and report to the Board by the tenth of the current month for the preceding month
* Ensure that the financial policies, as set by the Board and recommended by the Finance Committee, are being followed in a timely manner
* Prepare, in a timely manner, any required financial reporting forms to be submitted to the accountants, auditors, IRS, vendors or any such other entity as required by standard accounting procedures, practices and policies
* Maintain all bank and e-commerce accounts in a fiscally prudent manner in keeping with standard accounting practices and procedures
* Oversee all financial transactions while ensuring all fiduciary responsibilities are met and or are in the best interest of GNYCB
* Maintain a complete up to date list of all members in good standing; such a list shall also be maintained by the Corresponding Secretary
* Retain and manage one of the debit cards for fast, easy, distant bill paying.
* The Treasurer will monitor the GNYCB email account and will review and promptly respond to those emails that involve the financial matters of the GNYCB.

D. If the Treasurer is unable to perform the Treasurer’s duties in a timely manner, the Treasurer has an obligation to reach out to other members of the Finance Committee, and to the President to inform them of the issues, so that they can be addressed in a timely manner.

E. The Treasurer is expected to attend all Board meetings but must inform the President if he/she is unable to attend a Board meeting at least 24 hours before the meeting unless it is an unanticipated emergency. If the Treasurer cannot attend a Board meeting, the Treasurer must make arrangements to have some Board member or member of the Finance Committee present the Treasurer’s report to the Board at the Board meeting.

F. If the Treasurer fails to fulfill the responsibilities set forth in these policies for the Treasurer, any member of the Board may make a written request to the President and the Board to hold a meeting at which the Treasurer must appear and be prepared to answer questions regarding the issues presented by the President and the Board. After the questioning of the Treasurer is completed, the Treasurer will be asked to leave the meeting and the President and Board will discuss the issues and vote on whether to terminate the Treasurer or present a remedy to rectify the issue presented and at this or a subsequent meeting inform the Treasurer of the President and Board’s decision which the Treasurer must comply with.

II. GUIDELINES FOR GNYCB COMMITTEE CHAIRS

A. GNYCB Committee Chairs should be knowledgeable, willing, eager to learn, and committed to taking on the responsibility of chairing a committee. It is also important for Committee Chairs to listen and work well with others, while ensuring the work of the committee is accomplished. This document is intended to help Committee Chairs by providing best practices. As each committee is a little different, these guidelines are as broad as possible, and as such, can be a helpful tool for anyone taking on the responsibility of chairing a committee.

B. Committees should generally meet on a monthly basis, except for committees such as Constitution and Nominating Committees, which generally do not need to meet throughout the year. However, for other committees, holding regular calls keeps committee members engaged and provides a forum for discussing items the committee should address.

C. It is recommended that a committee pick a schedule for meetings (such as the first Monday of the month at 7 pm) and try to stick to that schedule.

D. Committee Chairs should ensure a meeting reminder with an agenda and call-in and/or digital platform information are emailed to committee members prior to the meeting. It is best for these reminders to go out a few days prior to the meeting so committee members have confirmation meetings are being held and know what will be on the agenda.

E. Committees should keep minutes during their monthly meetings. Minutes remind everyone later what was discussed, and any actions agreed to at the meeting.

F. It can be difficult to both take minutes and lead a meeting, so it is recommended the Chair find someone willing to take minutes. Another option is to record the meeting and then listen back if needed to provide accurate minutes.

G. Committee Chairs are responsible to facilitate the committee meetings, making sure discussions stick to the agenda as best as possible.

H. It is also important as Chair to ensure all committee members have the opportunity to provide their input.

I. Committee Chairs should include committee members in the development of strategies to accomplish committee goals by sharing and delegating responsibilities.

J. If votes are taken at the committee meetings, Roberts Rules of Order should be followed.

K. The Committee Chair should include the President in all committee correspondence,such as emails and texts.

L. Committee Chairs will be asked to report on committee activities at the Board meetings. If there are items that need Board approval, this is when those issues should be addressed. The President, however, should be made aware if the committee is seeking the Board’s approval in advance of the next Board meeting.

M. Outside of Board meetings, Committee Chairs should keep the committee, Board of Directors, and membership informed of plans and actions taken by sending personal email messages, texts and placing calls when appropriate.

N. Committee Chairs should mentor committee members in an effort to assist the GNYCB in identifying qualified and willing chairpersons for possible future appointments.

III. DEBIT CARD POLICY

To retain the ongoing acceleration of this fast-paced society, the GNYCB has come to understand that GNYCB must maintain and pay its bills using a Debit Card and checks. As there is no need for the GNYCB to maintain a credit account, this policy is being established using the Debit Card to be issued by the financial institution for which the General Fund checking account has been established. This Debit Card should not be used if there are insufficient funds within the account for which the card is assigned and if not previously authorized within the annual budget or otherwise by the Board or membership at a properly held and conducted meeting.

A. The Debit Card shall only be used to satisfy the liabilities of GNYCB that have been approved within the annual budget or otherwise by the Board or membership at a properly held and conducted meeting.

B. The Treasurer upon the creation of the checking account for GNYCB shall request two (2) Debit Cards for the account: one with the name of the Treasurer and the other with the name of the President. This request for Debit Cards shall be part of the joint activity of the President and Treasurer on the same day they sign the signature cards at the financial institution.

C. The President: The President, as the overseer of the organization should, and will have full access to all matters of said organization, including the finances.

For this reason,

1. The President:

* Will have an organizational Debit Card with the President’s name on it
* Shall only use the organizational Debit Card for [Board] authorized purchases when the Treasurer is not available to facilitate an agreed upon payment of properly approved expenses

1. The Treasurer:

* Will have an organizational Debit Card with the Treasurer’s name on it
* Shall only use the organizational Debit Card for authorized purchases to facilitate an agreed upon payment of properly approved expenses
* Shall retain the organizational Debit Card and carry it to all GNYCB events where a properly approved expense may be incurred
* Whenever feasible, shall satisfy all incurred properly approved expenses using the Debit Card
* Shall insure there are sufficient funds within the account a reasonable time before any event is held as well as before the Debit Card is used
* Shall reconcile the charges to and payments by the Debit Card for the month prior by a date that will permit the Treasurer to provide a report concerning the reconciliation as well as the Treasurer’s Report at the next general meeting
* Shall provide a detailed accounting of the Debit Card usage whenever a Treasurer’s report is being provided
* Provide the Finance Committee Chair an electronic list of charges to and payments by the Debit Card for the year prior at the same time the Treasurer submits the budget for the upcoming year. This list should begin the month of the prior year budget was submitted and run through and up to the month of the current month that the upcoming budget is submitted.

IV. PAYPAL

A. The PayPal account is accessed and maintained by the Treasurer.

B. The Treasurer will be the primary point of contact via email for the PayPal account. The PayPal account information also will be forwarded to either the President’s email account or a member of the GNYCB Finance Committee’s email account. The President may delegate the President’s responsibility to oversee the Treasurer’s access to and maintenance of the PayPal account to a member of the Finance Committee who will then have the PayPal account information forwarded to this designated member of the Finance Committee’s email account. If the President should decide to delegate this responsibility, the President must inform the Treasurer and member of the Finance Committee to whom this responsibility has been delegated to through an email to the Treasurer and all the members of the GNYCB Finance Committee.

C. The Treasurer will transfer the balance in the PayPal account on a monthly basis to the designated GNYCB bank account.

D. The Treasurer will keep a detailed record of all transactions in the GNYCB’s PayPal and bank accounts and the Treasurer will give a report of these transactions to the Board of Directors and to the membership at the respective meetings.

E. While the President and immediate Past President will possess the username and password for the PayPal account for accountability, the Treasurer is responsible for transfers, refunds, and other activity connected to the PayPal account.

F. If the public or membership encounter an issue with accessing the PayPal account on the GNYCB website and it is reported to the Corresponding Secretary, the Corresponding Secretary should notify the Treasurer. After receiving a complaint, the Treasurer should report it to the President to determine what steps need to be taken to remedy the issue.

V. AMENDMENTS

A.  To amend these GNYCB Policies, the proposer of the amendment must present the proposed amendment to the Chair of the Policy Committee.

B.  The Chair of the Policy Committee submits it to the members of the Policy Committee for their consideration. The Policy Committee shall submit the proposed amendment with its recommendations to the Board members. The Board shall make its own recommendations, which shall then be submitted to the membership at a general meeting for their vote.

C.  All proposed amendments to be submitted for a vote at a general meeting must be furnished to all Active Members in accessible format at least five days prior to the date of the meeting.

D.   Amendments may be adopted by a majority vote of the Active Members present and voting at a general meeting of this organization.

E.   The voting process is subject to the provisions stated in the GNYCB Constitution in ARTICLE VII: VOTING.

F.  Within one month of the adoption of said amendment, the Corresponding Secretary shall send a copy of the amendment in accessible format to all Active Members along with a revised document containing all of the Policies.

G.  The Policy Committee shall be charged with an annual review of the GNYCB Policies.