

## **MT. VERNON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE POLICIES**

The Mt. Vernon Area Chamber of Commerce aspires to be an open and welcoming organization working in service for its members first, and the community second. Through a focus on planned and strategic business and community growth, the chamber will achieve these goals.

The Chamber will work to provide the best service possible, without favoritism, prejudice, or unwarranted delay. The Chamber's existence depends upon its members who deserve and expect professional service from the staff.

The Mt. Vernon Area Chamber of Commerce has several governing documents. The Articles of Incorporation describe how the organization was created; bylaws identify how the organization exists; these policies will describe how the organization behaves. In case of conflict between these documents, Articles, Bylaws and Policies are the proper order of priority.

These policies may be reviewed by the Board of Directors on an annual basis, or as they see fit. Policy amendments are best referred to a committee formed for that purpose, or a standing committee delegated for that task. Once the committee has identified the pros, cons, and potential ramifications of any policy changes, it should be reported to the full board for approval as per their standard process.

### **AGENDA REQUESTS**

The Chamber's Board of Directors welcomes discussion and presentation of any subject within the Chamber's sphere of activity and operations. Whenever practical, all matters requiring a stand or policy vote, should allow one month for referral to committee. Written requests for agenda items should be presented no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled Board meeting. The President and Executive Director shall establish the agenda for Board meetings.

### **COMMITTEES**

Committees are the support structure of the Chamber. The President of the Board, with counsel of Executive Director, may appoint such committees and their leaders as deemed necessary to carry out the programs of the Chamber.

The Board of Directors shall have the authority to create and dissolve committees as needed, with the exception of standing committees outlined in the bylaws, which cannot be dissolved without amending the same document. These standing committees include Executive, Budget & Finance, and Nominating.

It shall be the function of the committees to conduct studies and hearings and make recommendations to, and to carry out such activities as may be delegated to them by the Board of Directors.

### **COMMITTEES – APPLE BUTTER MAKIN' DAYS**

The Apple Butter Makin' Days (ABMD) committee oversees the main fundraiser and largest event of the Chamber, making this an integral part of operations. The ABMD committee meets almost year around to work on the planning, execution and follow-up of this event that takes place the second weekend of October on an annual basis.

### **COMMITTEES - AUTHORITY**

No action by any member, committee, employee, Director or Officer shall be binding upon, or constitute an expression of the policy of the Chamber until it has been approved or ratified by the Board of Directors.

## **COMMITTEES - CHAIRMAN**

Committee chairs should oversee their respective committees, attend committee meetings, and ensure reports are provided back to the Board regarding discussions and any proposed actions or activities.

## **COMMITTEES – CHRISTMAS ON THE SQUARE**

Christmas on the Square is focused on the holiday activities that are held around the historic Mt. Vernon Square. These activities include several different areas including the Christmas parade, entertainment, food and gift donations, holiday decorations, and community fellowship.

## **COMMITTEES –NEIGHBORS WELCOMING NEIGHBORS**

The welcome team's goal is to be a friendly face to new people moving to the Mt. Vernon Area. The committee accomplishes this goal by getting information through utility connections about who is new to town, and then sends them a welcome packet that contains several pieces of valuable information about the community and the Chamber.

## **COMMITTEES - EVENTS**

The Events Committee functions as the social and fundraising group for the chamber with the goal of hosting events that are entertaining and profitable for the Chamber. The Board of Directors identifies annual events through the budget and approval process.

Prior to submitting any new events for Board approval, a plan should be prepared which outlines event details including a tentative budget, potential sponsors, and the role that volunteers will provide during the event planning and execution.

## **COMMITTEES – MEETINGS**

Committee meetings may be called at any time by the President of the Board, Executive Director or by the Committee Chairman. The Chairman with counsel and advice from the Executive Director will set the date, time and meeting location for their committee meetings to discuss and plan any activities which may fall under their oversight.

## **COMMITTEES – MEMBERS**

Members of committees shall be individuals who have a desire to serve and improve the Chamber with the community's best interest in mind. All who serve on committees must uphold the same standards as presented in this policy manual.

## **COMPLIANCE POLICY**

If any member is found to be outside the rules and parameters of the bylaws and policies, they shall be disciplined. On a member's first offense, a verbal warning and a review of the appropriate policy will be given. On a member's second offense, a written warning will be given after review by the chamber Chairperson. Any further offenses will be subject to expulsion from the Chamber.

Prior to any member being expelled, they shall have the opportunity to meet with the Board of Directors at any regular or special meeting called for that purpose. In the event of expulsion from the Chamber under this provision, the member shall not be entitled to any reimbursement for any dues or other funds paid to the Chamber relating to membership or upcoming Chamber events.

The Board of Directors can choose to skip steps in this process if they feel appropriate do so, provided the member is allowed the opportunity to attend a regular or special meeting called for this purpose at which point their membership continuity shall be discussed.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Board and committee members will have access to a variety of private and confidential items regarding the Chamber, which may include its business strategy, future plans, financial information, contracts, suppliers, customers, personnel information or other information that the Chamber considers proprietary and confidential.

Board Members and other volunteers may only use private and confidential items described above for the business of the Chamber and disclose only when authorized to do so and those who have a legitimate business need to know. This duty of confidentiality should be applied to all matters learned through their role as a Chamber volunteer.

## **DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT**

The Chamber is committed to providing an environment free of sexual or any form of unlawful harassment or discrimination. Harassment or unlawful discrimination against individuals on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, physical or mental disability, genetic information, marital status or any other classification protected by local, state or federal laws is illegal and prohibited by Chamber policy.

Any such conduct will not be tolerated. Prohibited harassment includes (but is not limited to) unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and lewd, vulgar, or obscene remarks, any unwelcome touching, or other physical contact. Other forms of unlawful harassment or discrimination may include racial epithets, slurs and derogatory remarks, stereotypes, or jokes based on race, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or other legally protected categories.

An individual who makes a complaint or provides information will be protected against retaliation. Confidentiality of the complaint will be protected to the greatest extent possible. Complaints will be handled with prompt, thorough and impartial investigation. The Chamber will take immediate and appropriate corrective action when it determines that harassment has occurred.

## **FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Board of Directors has a moral and legal responsibility for prudent oversight of the financial affairs of the chamber and must exercise fiduciary care of the funds entrusted to the organization's use. Directors have responsibility for exercising prudence in fiscal planning, controlling, and reporting.

Evidence of fiduciary care includes approving the budget, calling for regular financial reports and audits, insisting on appropriate policies and controls for deposits, expenditures, purchasing and investments, and avoiding self-serving policies and conflicts of interest.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Memberships will all become due the last day of June. During a member's first year, the dues may be prorated or extended for a period longer than twelve months to sync up with this schedule. Members must be current on all dues to be eligible to hold office. A member's investment may vary, according to the Investment Schedule set annually by the Board of Directors.

## **OPEN RECORDS**

The chamber bylaws, accounting information, records of membership, and minutes of proceedings of the members, Board of Directors and Committees shall be open to inspection by any member at any reasonable time during usual business hours for a purpose reasonably related to such holder's interests as a member.

No copies shall be made at this time. Non-members shall be granted no such access.

## **PARTISAN POLITICS**

Officers, Directors, Committee Chairpersons, or employees shall not use the name of the Mt. Vernon Area Chamber of Commerce or any of its committees when making political or other endorsements. This policy is not intended to be construed as an effort to limit or discourage political activity of any member in any way.

Nor is the policy intended to mean that political candidates are prohibited from using the Mt. Vernon Area Chamber of Commerce name as part of civic activities or organization memberships in campaign literature, advertising or editorial matter.

## **PRIVACY POLICY**

The Mt. Vernon Area Chamber of Commerce will protect the contact and personal information of the members of this organization. Releasing reports containing members' mailing addresses, email addresses and phone numbers for the purpose of solicitation is prohibited to protect members. Chamber members can retrieve contact information for other members of the chamber through their Chamber account. The Chamber may provide non-member individuals, businesses, or other entities contact information for the purposes of promoting our members' services for recommendation purposes.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Since the Chamber is supported by many businesses that are in competition with each other, it does not make recommendations or endorsements of specific products, services, or companies. When individuals or firms ask the Chamber for names of local businesses supplying materials and services, complete lists of such members will be supplied in order that the inquirer may negotiate with any or all such members with no recommendations from the Chamber. In that way, Chamber members are promoted equally.

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

The Chamber will, for some projects, issue an RFP for purchase of supplies, equipment, programs or services. Bids are accepted from both members and non-members. Preference is given to members in good standing.

Bidding to a sufficient number of businesses ensures adequate competition and assures that the Chamber is obtaining the best possible value. Recurring costs do not require annual bidding. For all bids, price and quality should be considered. Any purchase in excess of \$1,500 should, whenever possible, have a minimum of three pricing proposals received.

Executive Committee will review all bids. The lowest price bid is not necessarily the one that is selected.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Mt. Vernon Area Chamber of Commerce is committed to utilizing social media to enhance its profile and reputation, to listen and respond to customer opinions and feedback, and to drive revenue, loyalty and advocacy. Board and Chamber members are encouraged to interact in all the channels that are utilized.

Social media and networking refer to the use of web-based and mobile applications for social interaction and the exchange of user-generated content. Social media channels can include, but are not limited to: Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, review sites, forums, online communities, and any similar online platforms.

In addition to employees, Board and Chamber members are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to respect the views and opinions of others. Individuals associated with the Chamber should be committed to behaving in accordance with best industry practices in social

networking, to being responsible citizens and community members, to listening and responding to feedback, and to communicating in a courteous and professional manner. Behavior and content that may be deemed disrespectful, dishonest, offensive, harassing or damaging to the Chamber's interests or reputation are not permitted.

Individuals must not disclose private or confidential information about the Chamber, its employees, clients, suppliers or customers on social networks.

### **SOLICITATION POLICY**

The chamber prohibits solicitation and the distribution of materials at events, meetings, fundraisers, and at the Chamber office, unless previously approved or as part of a sponsorship benefit package. This policy does not, however, exclude the exchange of business cards/brochures within the range of personal and one-on-one networking.

An individual, organization or member who fails to follow this policy will be informed of this policy and asked to immediately remove their materials from the event and/or cease solicitation. A representative of the chamber will immediately remove all such materials if the individual, organization, or member refuses or fails to comply with the request or is not present to remove the materials.

### **SPONSORSHIP**

Sponsoring any activity outside of the operations of the Mt. Vernon Area Chamber of Commerce must have approval of the Board of Directors prior to any active Mt. Vernon Area Chamber of Commerce participation. This policy should not interfere with an employee's willingness to support outside events or organizations themselves.

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The Executive Committee shall propose a strategic plan outlining the objectives, goals and anticipated activities for the Chamber of Commerce for the upcoming year at the President's first meeting acting as President. If a strategic plan is already established, it may be reviewed. Upon approval by the Board of Directors, the strategic plan shall be adopted.

The Executive Committee should work with the Executive Director for the creation of this plan to confirm availability of staff and fiduciary commitments.

Adopted March 2024