

# **Northland Group of Alcoholics Anonymous**

## Group Bylaws

*Ratified May 20, 2013*

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# Contents

GROUP CONSCIENCE.....	1
STEERING COMMITTEE .....	2
QUORUM: .....	2
MEMBERSHIP:.....	3
TERMS AND ELECTIONS: .....	3
POSITIONS AND DUTIES: .....	4
AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS .....	6
CHANGES TO MEETINGS.....	6
PURPOSE.....	7
INUREMENT of INCOME.....	7
LEGISLATIVE OR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES .....	7
OPERATIONAL LIMITATIONS.....	7
DISSOLUTION CLAUSE.....	7
Appendix A .....	8
Appendix B.....	10
Helpful Definitions: .....	11

## **GROUP CONSCIENCE**

Purpose - Spiritual in nature, the purpose of the Northland AA Group Conscience is rooted in AA Tradition Two and is the collective conscience of the Northland AA group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity, via voting, on an issue before definitive action is taken. The Northland AA group conscience has the responsibility to ensure that pertinent information has been studied and all views, for and against, have been heard before Northland AA group members vote on issues. The Northland AA group conscience shall consist of any and all AA members who declare the Northland AA Group to be their home group.

Group Conscience meetings will be held quarterly on the third Sunday of March, June, September, and December at 10:45AM. Group Conscience meetings will be called and facilitated by the Northland AA Group Steering Committee.

Notice of quarterly Group Conscience meetings including agenda information shall be posted on the Group bulletin board as well as in two prominent places by the Steering Committee Secretary for at least two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled Group Conscience meeting. Group Conscience meeting notices shall also be placed in the meeting binders to be announced by meeting chairpersons.

Additional Group Conscience meetings may be called by the Northland AA Group Steering Committee, as warranted, to address significant issues that immediately affect or concern the Northland AA Group. The Northland AA Group Steering Committee Secretary will post notice for any non-scheduled group conscience meeting on the Group bulletin board as well as in two prominent places for at least two weeks prior to that meeting.

Individual Northland AA members may also request a Group Conscience meeting by notifying the Steering Committee with their concern or issue. When an individual Northland AA member requests that an issue be brought before the Northland AA Group Conscience for a vote, that member (known as the “sponsor”) must be in attendance at the scheduled group conscience meeting to present the issue to the Northland AA Group Conscience. If the sponsor of the issue is not present, the issue will not be brought before the Northland AA Group Conscience for a vote. No proxies for the sponsor will be accepted.

The Chairperson of the Northland AA Group Steering Committee shall preside over Group Conscience meetings and will recognize and facilitate all Northland AA Group members' right to speak, especially those of the minority opinion. Group Conscience meetings will be conducted in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order and will honor the principles of the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. Membership and participation in Northland Group Conscience meetings require no application, but discussing and voting on issues will require that any and all potential voters declare the Northland AA Group to be their home group.

All Group Conscience agenda items requiring a vote shall require a 2/3 majority to pass.

Once an item has been approved by the Northland AA Group Conscience, that approval is binding for a minimum of six (6) months and cannot be changed before the six (6) months period has passed.

Matters and issues brought before the Group Conscience shall be referred to as “Items”. Items shall be classed as Discussion Items or Voting Items. Discussion Items require only discussion by the Group

Conscience (however, Voting Items may result from Discussion Items). Voting Items require voting action by the Group Conscience and will be addressed as outlined in Appendix A.

See Appendix A for Group Conscience meeting procedures (from Robert's Rules of Order).

## **STEERING COMMITTEE**

The Steering Committee handles day-to-day or routine operations of the group in a manner deemed, in accordance with Tradition Nine, to be in the best interest of the group as a whole.

Routine business includes, but is not limited to, cooperating with the Suburban Alcoholic Foundation (SAF) in providing an environment conducive to Twelve Step Recovery and to preserve the integrity of the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Steering Committee will be responsible for reporting to the Northland AA Group (Northland) at all Group Conscience meetings and to the SAF Board of Directors at their meetings.

Steering Committee meetings will be held monthly. The chairperson may also call emergency meetings with forty-eight (48) hours' notice to all Steering Committee members. Each Steering Committee may determine the date, time and place of all its meetings. The Group Secretary will post notice of meetings on the Group bulletin board prior to every meeting.

The Steering Committee may act upon any matters of minor importance; those of major importance must be submitted to the Group Conscience for a vote. The Steering Committee shall use a simple majority when voting. The Steering Committee will accept recommendations and suggestions from members of the Northland AA group at all Steering Committee meetings. The discrepancy between what is major and what is minor should be for the Steering Committee to decide. The counsel of "elder statesman" of the group, who has more experience, wisdom, and knowledge of the group's historical tradition, should be taken to assist in questions of this and or any other matter.

## **QUORUM:**

A quorum will exist when a majority of current voting Steering Committee members is present for a scheduled meeting. Only voting Steering Committee members may make and vote on motions at Steering Committee meetings. Proxy votes are not allowed. (Example: 4 of 7 voting Steering Committee members must be present to conduct Steering Committee business.)

## **MEMBERSHIP:**

The Steering Committee will consist of eight members:

TWELVE (12) At-Large Voting Members

ONE (1) Voting General Service Representative (GSR)

ONE (1) Non-Voting Alternative GSR

## **TERMS AND ELECTIONS:**

From the twelve at-large members, six (Secretary, Treasurer, Intergroup Rep, PI/CPC Rep, Treatment Facility Rep and Member at Large) are elected each March and take office in April of that year; six (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Literature Rep, Correctional Facility Rep, Grapevine Rep and Member at Large) are elected in September and take office in October of that year. Each member serves a one-year term.

The GSR and Alternate GSR are elected in September of every odd year for a two-year term which takes effect the following January.

After serving a full term, a group member may not seek election for one year to facilitate "The Principle of Rotation". Vacancies occurring among the at large members of the Steering Committee will be filled by appointment of the remaining Steering Committee members. That appointee will complete the duration of the vacated term. An appointee wishing to continue service after that term expires must stand for election.

Suggested requirements to serve on the Steering Committee are as follows:

One year of continuous sobriety.

Northland AA Group is considered your "HOME" group.

Member is willing and able to serve for one full year.

Nominations for the Steering Committee will be made by a three member panel of non-Steering Committee members who will submit a slate of willing candidates for election. All members of the panel must consider Northland their home group. Additional nominations for the Steering Committee will be taken from the floor at the Group Conscience meetings on those days that elections are taking place.

After elections have concluded, the Steering Committee will elect a Chairperson and appoint other Steering Committee members as appropriate. The Steering Committee can also designate Group members to hold other positions or to perform specific duties.

The Steering Committee can consider removal from the Steering Committee if a member has two unexcused absences from the Steering Committee and/or Group Conscience meetings. Additionally, a Steering Committee member can be removed from office, for just cause, by a two-thirds vote of present Steering Committee members, provided they make a quorum.

## **POSITIONS AND DUTIES:**

NOTE: ALL members of the Steering Committee are expected to attend ALL meetings of the Steering Committee and Group Conscience.

All members of Steering Committee are to pass their experience and knowledge of their resigning position to the successor when term is expiring.

### **CHAIRPERSON (1 Voting Position)**

Preside over all Steering Committee and Group Conscience meetings.

Acts as voice of Steering Committee on matters between Steering Committee and Group Conscience.

Acts as a voting member in Steering Committee matters in a “tie-breaker” only.

Acts as voice of Northland AA Group at SAF Board of Directors meetings.

### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON (1 Non-Voting Position)**

Assumes the Chair responsibilities in absence of Chairperson.

### **SECRETARY (1 Voting Position)**

Records the minutes of all Steering Committee and Group Conscience meetings.

Posts the meeting minutes within forty-eight (48) hours of each meeting's conclusion.

Posts the notice of the Group Conscience meeting AND its agenda on the Group bulletin board as well as (2) prominent places in the building at least two weeks prior to the Group Conscience meeting.

Post the notice of all Steering Committee and emergency Group Conscience meetings.

Reminds all members of the Steering Committee of next meeting date for the Steering Committee as a courtesy. This should be done via e-mail, and or phone call.

Maintains contact information of all Steering Committee members.

Updates and maintains group announcements in binder.

#### TREASURER (1 Voting Position)

Maintains financial records of the Northland AA Group.

Prepares and presents financial report to be presented at each Steering Committee and Group Conscience meeting.

Disburses funds, as needed, when approved by the Steering Committee and or the Group Conscience. All checks written by the treasurer shall have a total two signatures. The signatures can be obtained from the Treasurer, the Chairman, and or the GSR

Prepares an annual budget for approval by the Northland AA Group to be presented at the November Group Conscience meeting for the following year.

#### MEMBER-AT-LARGE (2 Voting Positions)

Meets necessary responsibilities in service to the Northland AA

Group as suggested by the Steering Committee.

Serves as a voice of the members of the Northland AA Group.

It is suggested that Member-At-Large have prior Steering Committee experience.

Is responsible for finding chairpersons for birthday night, and picks up the cake for birthday night.

#### GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (GSR) (1 Voting Position)

Acting as the voice of Northland AA Group, attends District and Area meetings as well as appropriate workshops; reports to Northland AA Group the business of AA at the District, Area and National Levels.

#### Alternate GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (GSR) (1 Non-Voting Position)

Assumes GSR's responsibilities in GSR's absence whether for one meeting or for the remainder of the GSR's two-year term.

#### Literature Representative (1 Voting Position)

Maintains an inventory of all on-hand literature at Northland AA Group.

Reports any necessary literature orders and coordinates purchase with a check received by the treasurer.

#### Correctional facilities Committee Representative (CFC Rep) (1 Voting Position)

Acting as the voice of Northland AA Group, attends all District CFC Meetings and reports to Northland any pertinent information gathered there.

#### Grapevine Representative (Gv Rep) (1 Voting Position)

Acting as the voice of Northland AA Group, attends all District Grapevine Meetings and reports to Northland any pertinent information gathered there.

Intergroup Representative (IG Rep) (1 Voting Position)

Acting as the voice of Northland AA Group, attends all Intergroup Meetings and reports to Northland any pertinent information gathered there.

Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community Representative (PICPC Rep) (1 Voting Position)

Acting as the voice of Northland AA Group, attends all District PICPC Meetings and reports to Northland any pertinent information gathered there.

Treatment Facilities Committee Representative (TFC Rep) (1 Voting Position)

Acting as the voice of Northland AA Group, attends all District TFC Meetings and reports to Northland any pertinent information gathered there.

## **AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS**

Amendments to these By-Laws can ONLY be made as follows:

Proposed amendment must be posted on the Group Bulletin Board for a minimum of four weeks prior to the Group Conscience meeting at which it will be resolved.

Any amendment that carries must be posted on the Group Bulletin Board within one week of its resolution.

Resolved amendments may not be submitted for reconsideration for six months after their enactment.

## **CHANGES TO MEETINGS**

Proposed changes to meeting formats require the Steering Committee to notify each affected meeting a minimum of four weeks prior to the Group Conscience meeting at which the proposal will be resolved.

LANGUAGE INSERTED FOR LEGAL PURPOSES ON 01/20/03



## **PURPOSE**

Northland AA Group is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes within the meaning of section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

## **INUREMENT of INCOME**

No part of the net earnings of Northland AA Group shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, trustees, officers or other private persons except that Northland AA Group shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered.

## **LEGISLATIVE OR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

No part of the activities of Northland AA Group shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation and Northland AA Group shall not participate in or intervene (including the publishing or distribution of statements for any political campaign) on behalf of any candidate for public office.

## **OPERATIONAL LIMITATIONS**

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, Northland AA Group shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an association exempt from Federal Income Tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) or (b) by an association whose contributions are deductible under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

## **DISSOLUTION CLAUSE**

Upon the dissolution of Northland AA Group, the "GROUP CONSCIENCE" shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all liabilities of Northland AA Group, dispose of all the assets of Northland AA Group exclusively for the purposes of Northland AA Group in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes as shall, at the time, qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the "GROUP CONSCIENCE" shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the court of competent jurisdiction of Travis County, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

## Appendix A

Northland AA Group Conscience Meetings shall be conducted in the following manner and order:

Chairperson calls meeting to order and opens with a prayer. Chairperson states they are in control of the floor at all times during the meeting to ensure impartiality, focus, and order. Chairperson should remind the floor that Group Conscience meetings are spiritual in nature and that practicing the principles of our AA program during the meeting will help to ensure that God's will is expressed in a loving manner.

Chairperson states the order of events (i.e. Steering Committee reports, agenda for the meeting, old Group Conscience business, new Group Conscience business, discussion, voting).

Chairperson states they will recognize those members wishing to speak by directly acknowledging them. Members wishing to speak should raise a hand and wait to be acknowledged. Any member continuing to speak out of order or unacknowledged by the Chairperson will be asked to leave.

Reports from the most recent Steering Committee meeting are read aloud by the Steering Committee Secretary. However, if time may be an issue, a motion may be made from the floor to skip the reading of the Steering Committee reports. The motion must be seconded and pass by a simple majority.

Old Group Conscience business (usually discussion items that were tabled or otherwise not addressed at the previous meeting).

New Group Conscience business:

### Posted Agenda Items (Discussion or Voting)

Chairperson reads the posted agenda item(s) and asks the “sponsor” of the item to address the floor. If the “sponsor” of the item is not present the item may be tabled for next Group Conscience meeting.

If the item is a discussion-only item, the Chairperson then presides over the discussion according to Robert’s Rules of Order after the “sponsor” has addressed the floor.

If the item is a voting item and the “sponsor” has made a motion that has been seconded (see Appendix B), the Chairperson restates the motion and presides over the debate making sure all voices, pro and con, are heard in an orderly manner. Chairperson has the responsibility to keep the debate focused on the motion on the floor and to keep order and organization (one person speaking at a time in order). After debate, the Chairperson requests that members from the floor who intend to vote raise hands to be counted in order to calculate the required 2/3 majority. A member of the Steering Committee will count the hands and report to the floor how many votes will be needed for the item to pass. The Chairperson

requests that no-one enter or leave the room from this point on in order to get an accurate vote. The Chairperson then restates the motion on the floor and puts it to a vote. A 2/3 majority is required for a motion to pass. Sometimes, a motion may be “tabled” until a later date.

New Group Conscience business from the floor

Members may bring new issues to the attention of the Group Conscience for discussion (if time) or to be tabled to a later date.

Close with prayer

## **Appendix B**

### How A Motion Is Made And Acted Upon:

The Chairperson acknowledges a member (usually the sponsor of the voting item).

The member/sponsor presents the item to the floor.

The motion is seconded by another voting member.

The Chairperson restates the motion.

Discussion among the floor commences (presided over by the Chairperson).

Discussion continues as long as members wish to discuss the motion UNLESS a motion has been made, seconded, and voted on (2/3 majority to pass) to limit or close discussion.

6. Chairperson facilitates counting up the voting members on the floor in order to determine the number of votes that will constitute a 2/3 majority. Chairperson also asks members on the floor not to enter or leave the room.
7. Chairperson restates the motion and puts it to vote (2/3 majority required to pass)

## **Helpful Definitions:**

Motion – A motion is a proposal that a certain action be taken.

Friendly Amendment – Allows a motion on the floor to be altered slightly, usually rewording for clarity. A Friendly Amendment may not significantly alter the motion to which it is applied. The person who made the motion is free to accept or decline a Friendly Amendment; it is not voted on but needs to be seconded before consideration.

Point of Order – A query in a formal debate or meeting as to whether correct procedure is being followed.

Tabling – Postpone consideration of: "I'd like the issue to be tabled for the next few months".

Minority Right of Appeal – After voting, the losing side may claim the opportunity to speak their position once again if desired. At this point, if any member of the winning side has been swayed to the losing side, this member ONLY can request a re-vote on the Voting Item. The request must be seconded (by anyone who voted). However, the Voting Item may not be altered in any way before a re-vote is performed. Full debate may be resumed. At this point, any Voting Item successfully put to a re-vote requires only a simple majority to pass.

## **Approval**

The Bylaws as written were approved by the Northland Group Conscience on May 20, 2013.