

# The Bylaws of the- HUMANISTS OF WEST FLORIDA

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The Mission of the Humanists of West Florida is to facilitate the advancement of humanist thought and action in Pensacola and surrounding areas by interconnecting groups of humanists, atheists, agnostics and non-religious. We will strive for equal participation in government and societal life through building strategic partnerships with other humanist and freethought organizations and with our religious neighbors to advance the greater good of humanity.

**VISION STATEMENT:** We are building a community of individuals, families and organizations who desire to work together to foster an ethical lifestyle through compassion and reason. Together we will create an atmosphere where non-religious people can work toward their greatest potential. We will build our network through social and support opportunities. This will be accomplished through community service projects, human rights work, promotion, awareness, events, and education.

**HUMANIST STATEMENT:** Humanism is a rational philosophy informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by compassion. Affirming the dignity of each human being, it supports liberty and opportunity consonant with social and planetary responsibility. Free of theism and other supernatural beliefs, humanism thus derives the goals of life from human need and interest rather than from theological or ideological abstractions, and asserts that humanity must take responsibility for its own destiny.

## BYLAWS

**1. Name and Affiliation:** This association shall be called "Humanists of West Florida" and shall be a Charter Chapter of the American Humanist Association (AHA). The provisions of these Bylaws will be congruent with the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation of the American Humanist Association. Nothing herein shall be interpreted in any manner to be in conflict with the Constitution of the United States of America, the laws of our land required to maintain a tax exempt, nonprofit educational organization, or with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

**2. Purpose:** Our purpose is to provide education, service opportunities, and to create a sense of community for humanists, atheists, agnostics and other non-religious persons.

**3. Organization Type:** Non-Profit

**4. Contact Information :** Mail Address: Humanists of West Florida, P.O.Box 11930, Pensacola, FL 32524

### **5. Membership/Sponsorship:**

**A. General Membership/Sponsorship** shall be made available to all individuals, groups, organizations and corporations who are in general accord with the philosophy of humanism and interested in working towards the mission and goals of Humanists of West Florida.

**A1. Regular Supporting Membership:** Any person shall be eligible for voting membership who is in general accord with the above stated purpose and a member in good standing with Humanists of West Florida.

Members in good standing pay annual membership dues and may participate in planning and implementing affiliate groups and relevant activities. Membership runs from July 1st to June 30th. All memberships to be renewed July 1 regardless of when the individual becomes a Humanists of West Florida member. Members are encouraged to volunteer to assist and organize affiliate groups and activities which work towards the mission and purpose of Humanists of West Florida.

**A2. Student/Low \$ Membership:** Any person with a valid student ID or other financial instability is eligible for the student/low \$ membership and the same rights apply as for Regular memberships.

**A3. Associates:** A member can be included on the membership forum as an associate backer of Humanists of West Florida in order to learn about non-religious opportunities, ask questions, post links and other information, and join in **Team and Crew** activities. Associates will be encouraged to become supporting Regular Members. Associates may not have voting privileges on board or chapter matters.

**A4. Organization and Corporation Sponsorship:** Sponsorship is available and encouraged for all organizations, groups, businesses and corporations which desire to support the mission of Humanists of West Florida set forth in the bylaws. Organization and Corporate sponsorships include the benefit of recognition as a supporter of HWF. Organization and Corporate sponsorships do not include voting rights.

**A5. Distinguished Donor Membership:** Distinguished Donors shall be in full regular membership in good standing each year they participate in the program at two levels. Gold DD will pay \$ 200/year. Silver DD will pay \$ 100/year.

**B. Dues or assessments:** Due annually on July 1, dues are required to be considered a regular member in good standing and help Humanists of West Florida to financially support its mission. Regular Membership dues shall be \$20 per year and Student/Low \$ Membership dues shall be \$10 per year. Organization/Corporate Sponsorships shall begin at \$100 per year. The BOD has the right to change the dues amount each year as needed.

**C. AHA Memberships:** The American Humanist Association requires all AHA chapters to maintain an ongoing democratic governance, **have five AHA members in good standing**, provide an updated list of local members and have the word "humanist" somewhere in the group name in order to maintain status as an AHA chapter.

**Members, or those considering membership, of Humanists of West Florida should be aware** that *contact information will be given to AHA in order for Humanists of West Florida to comply with AHA requirements*.

**Humanists of West Florida nor AHA will never sell or share this information** with any other individual, organization or corporation for any reason.

**D. Expulsion:** Humanists of West Florida reserve the right to deny and/or terminate memberships if necessary to preserve the mission of the group. A complaint may be made in writing to the board. The board may make a preliminary decision whether the incident merits expulsion by a four of six vote of the board. The notice of intent of expulsion shall be brought before the general membership for comments and feedback to be due within two weeks of notice. The member in question shall be informed and invited to present their information to the board during the same two weeks. After feedback is received and considered the BOD meets again and takes a final vote with four of six board members in agreement of the decision to expel the individual from the group. The board shall inform the member of the results. An expelled member may become a member again after two years if approved by a majority of the board.

**6. Government:** Humanists of West Florida shall be governed by its membership and an elected Board of six Directors consisting of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and two additional Directors all elected by the general membership (see "ELECTIONS"). Board members who, unexplained without notice, miss two consecutive regularly scheduled board meetings may be removed from the Board.

The President and one other officer shall be required to be a member of the AHA during their term of office. The President or Vice President shall be responsible for presiding at general meetings of Humanists of West Florida, at meetings of the Board of Directors, and at other Humanists of West Florida events. The President shall be the chief public spokesperson for Humanists of West Florida, or the board may designate a spokesperson. An out-going President shall assist a new President with training and assistance through the first two quarterly Board meetings.

The Vice President shall serve on the Communications, Connections & Promotions Committee (CCP).

The Secretary shall be responsible for the taking of the minutes during Board Meetings by self or by designation, and maintaining the written record for the Humanists of West Florida. The Secretary, along with the Treasurer, shall be responsible for maintaining the general membership list, maintaining board applications and nominations and keeping the board informed of these matters.

The Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining the Humanists of West Florida accounts, collecting and tracking annual dues, providing a hard copy of the annual budget for the Humanists of West Florida, and ensuring that the Board is kept up to date with the financial standing of the group. The Treasurer shall also be responsible for auditing, and filing appropriate tax returns. Treasurer's job is that of a bookkeeper, collector of funds, and disbursement of funds as agreed to by finance policy set by the board. The Treasurer shall also assist the Secretary with and use the Membership list to account for dues payments.

**A. Replacement of an Officer:** The Board of Directors shall fill by appointment any vacancy occurring on the Board between elections.

**B. Board of Advisers:** The Board of Directors may appoint yearly or allow consecutively, three (3) persons to advise the Board on a serious matter of internal conflict or outside legal concern. At least two (2) shall be past Presidents, and the other to be a professional of legal knowledge if attainable. Past Presidents serve because they understand the chapters organization and operations. This BOA would be available to assist in resolving a current Board of Directors stalemate, or to seek legal advice for the current Directors, or to assist the current President. If a past President member of the BOA is in some way connected to the issue they must recuse oneself and another outside professional sought as a replacement.

**Addendum** added July 13, 2019, 6-0.

**7. Elections:** A nominating committee consisting of four voting members, at least two of whom shall be a prior or current Officer, and a current Director, shall be appointed by the President and approved by the Board by January 31st. Notice of open nominations is announced March 1st by email. The committee shall nominate voting members for open Board vacancies and will accept recommendations from the general membership, due no later than March 31st. They will invite members, interview potential candidates, and narrow down the slate of candidates. The nominating committee has the option to decline a candidate's application if the candidate's views are found to not support the mission of the chapter. The committee shall nominate at least as many voting members as there are open Board positions, but may nominate as many candidates as they choose. The committee shall report to the Board no later than April 14th. The nominations shall be emailed to all voting members no later than April 30. Elections shall be held during the full month of May by email ballot or at the regular May chapter meeting no later than May 31. Results of the election shall be reported to the membership on June 1st and at the June general membership meeting. The top candidates, in order of most votes won, will fill open positions until all Board vacancies are filled. The new Board (newly elected Board members plus any Board members starting the second year of their term) will conduct a meeting to vote amongst themselves to determine who will assume officer positions. The remaining Board members will be considered Members at large. The new Board members will assume full duties of those positions beginning the first board meeting of July.

Board member positions will be elected for two year terms, three members each other year. Officers will serve in their positions for one year. The other year of their two year term may be served as a member at large, another officer position, or the same officer position. A person can re-apply for any of the officer positions, except the same person can be a President for a maximum of four consecutive years. The board member can also re-apply immediately if their term is ending.

The minimum number of board members required shall be four. If a Board position is made vacant during the year, the Board may recommend a voting member to fill the position to the Nominating Committee, and if accepted the Committee will present the nomination at the next Humanists of West Florida regular board meeting for confirmation by the full board. The newly appointed Board member will immediately assume full responsibilities of the position and will finish out the remaining time that position was originally elected for (until the end of the current year or the following year).

**8. Meetings:** Board Meetings shall be scheduled in accordance with the times and places set by the Board with at least four meetings per year.

A quorum for the transaction of business at Board meetings shall be a majority of Board members at four.

Regular meetings of the General Membership shall be scheduled in accordance with the times and places set by the Board or membership with at least one meeting per year.

Chapter meetings, special meetings, social events, public programs, etc. may be scheduled by the Board, or by a Committee or Team it appoints. Times and locations of all meetings shall be announced to the membership no later than one week prior to the meeting.

**9. Finances:** The chapter must operate with a balanced budget set by the board.

The board of directors will decide who is authorized to make expenditures and write checks.

The board, unless approved by general membership, cannot take out a loan without approval of general membership.

**10. Bylaw Amendment:** These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the membership by email ballot, or in attendance at the yearly June general membership meeting. All proposed bylaw amendments must be submitted to the Board of Directors at least two months before the June meeting at which they will be considered. The Board will make a preliminary vote on the merit of the proposed changes at the board meeting prior to Junes.

The Board shall email a report on each proposed change (preliminarily voted yes for recommendation) to the voting membership, along with the Board's considered recommendation for approval or rejection, to the membership by May 1st prior to the June meeting at which they will be considered.

**11. Dissolution:** A resolution to dissolve the association of the Humanists of West Florida shall only be voted on at a regular or emergency meeting provided all voting members have been advised through the website or by email of the proposed resolution to dissolve at least 1 month prior to the meeting at which the vote is to take place. The resolution to dissolve must be approved by at least three quarters ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) of voting members present. The dissolution shall take effect from the date of the resolution and the Board of Directors shall be responsible for the disposition of the assets and liabilities of the association. Any property and/or funds remaining after the discharging of debts and liabilities of the association shall be given to The American Humanist Association.

**Approved by the HWF Founding Task Force November 19, 2012**

**Accepted by the American Humanists Association January 30, 2013**

**Amended: July 1, 2017**

**Addendum: July 13, 2019**

**Amended: July 8, 2023**