

CONSTITUTION
ODD FELLOW LODGES
WITHIN THE JURISDICTION
OF THE GRAND LODGE OF MAINE
INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS

ARTICLE I – Name

SEC 1 – Name

A - The name of this lodge shall be _____ Lodge # _____, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, located in _____, Maine; and shall be hereafter governed by the following laws.

ARTICLE II – Authority, Objects and Purposes

SEC 1 – Authority

A – The authority of said Lodge is derived and accountable to the Grand Lodge of Maine, Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

- 1) Said Lodge possesses the right to enact any law not contravening the customs and usages of the Order, not altering the work of the Order or any of the several degrees belonging thereto, nor in conflict with the laws of the land; and do all such other acts as are promotive of the interest of the Order.
- 2) Said Lodge was instituted on _____ in _____, Maine.

B – Charter

- 1) A Lodge shall be organized upon receipt of a signed petition (set of forms supplied by the Grand Secretary) for a charter by five (5) or more members of the Third Degree (no more than two-fifths (2/5) of these can be associate members) or a minimum of fifteen (15) persons qualified to become members.
- 2) The petition, accompanied by a refundable fee of \$_____.00, shall be sent to the Grand Secretary; who shall make copy for the permanent file and then forward the original to the Grand Master. If satisfied, the Grand Master may issue the charter or reserve action and present it to the Grand Lodge in regular session.
- 3) The Charter shall be inviolate and may not be altered or amended without the consent of the Grand Lodge; except that a photocopy may be used. Said photocopy

must be at least eight and one-half inches by eleven inches (8 ½" x 11") and a copy thereof must be furnished to the Grand Lodge for its archives.

- 4) Five (5) members of the Third Degree in good standing, of which two-fifths (2/5) may be associates, shall be required to keep the Lodge charter active.
- 5) Should the Lodge fail to forward the required dues and returns for two terms, or fail to hold regular meetings for a period of six months, or should its membership fall below the legal number or ratio; its charter would be suspended for a period of not less than six months. During that time, their property and funds would be under the control of the Grand Lodge. A committee of the Grand Lodge would work with the Lodge to remediate the infraction(s). At the end of the six months, the Grand Lodge would either return the charter to the Lodge or suspend it permanently.

SEC 2 – Objects

- A) To promote the principals of Friendship, Love and Truth.
- B) Seek to elevate the character of man and woman.

SEC 3 – Purposes

- A) To have general supervision over Odd Fellowship in its area.
- B) To make recommendations to the Grand Lodge for legislation and such other matters that will improve the Order.

ARTICLE III – Members

SEC 1 – General Rules

- A) A person of good moral character, at least sixteen (16) years of age, who believes in a Supreme Being, the Creator and Preserver of the Universe, shall be eligible for membership.
- B) No member shall hold membership in more than one lodge and one Grand Body except as provided by associate membership.
- C) Continued rejection of women may result in revocation of an Odd Fellow Charter after notice and hearing.
- D) A member of an Odd Fellow Lodge may drop membership (for other than “cause”) in an Odd Fellow Lodge without losing membership in a Rebekah Lodge; membership in the Encampment and Patriarchs Militant (Canton) shall be terminated.

SEC 2 – Associate Membership

- A) The Grand Lodge of Maine provides for Associate Membership as outlined in Chapter III, Sec 12 of the Code of General Laws.

SEC 3 – Applications, Interviewing and Voting

- A) Applications for membership by initiation, card or transfer shall be made to the Lodge through a sponsoring member of the Order.
- B) Applications shall be accompanied by the appropriate fees and dues as outlined in your By-Laws.
- C) An Interviewing Committee is then appointed to examine the black book and inquire as to the health and character of the applicant.
- D) After the Interviewing Committee reports, a ballot shall be taken as outlined in Chapter III, Section 2, Sub-section B in the Code of General Laws.
- E) One's membership and their liability to pay dues shall commence either at the close of the initiatory ceremony or when they sign the members register. Dues shall be paid annually and in advance.
- F) Non-Contributing Membership/Non Dues Paying Members
 - 1) A member who has been a contributing member for forty (40) consecutive years or a minimum age of seventy-five (75) with at least ten (10) consecutive years of contributing membership, and is unable to pay dues, may be transferred to non-contributing status without the loss of benefits.
 - 2) Any member residing in the Odd Fellows Home of Maine or similar institution would automatically be transferred to non-contributing status without loss of benefits.
 - 3) A member who has been a contributing member for a minimum of fifty (50) consecutive years would be classified as a Veteran Life Member and be transferred to non-contributing status without loss of benefits.
 - 4) The Lodge would be exempt from paying per capita tax on non-contributing members.
 - 5) Non-contributing membership must be approved by the Lodge and the circumstances documented in the Lodge minutes.
 - 6) The Grand Lodge of Maine does not provide for Life Membership.
- G) For other membership topics or questions not covered above, refer to the Code of General Laws (Chapter III - Membership).

ARTICLE IV – Representatives

Sec 1 – The Grand Lodge of Maine does not use the representative system.

ARTICLE V – Officers

Sec 1 – Elective Officers

- 1) The elective officers of the Lodge shall be those specified in the Odd Fellows Lodge Ritual – Noble Grand, Vice Grand, Secretary, Financial Secretary (optional) and Treasurer.
- 2) If the Lodge chooses not to fill the position of Financial Secretary, the duties of that officer would be performed by the Secretary.
- 3) The Lodge shall provide for, in its By-Laws, Trustees as needed.

- 4) The By-Laws shall state the duties of the elective officers.
- 5) The By-Laws shall state the terms of office.

Sec 2 – Appointive Officers

- 1) The appointive officers of the Lodge shall be those officers noted in the Odd Fellows Lodge Ritual – Warden, Conductor, Right and Left Supporters of the Noble Grand, Right and Left Supporters of the Vice Grand, Chaplain, Inside and Outside Guardians, Musician, Color Bearer, and Right and Left Scene Supporters.
- 2) The Lodge may provide for, in its By-Laws, additional appointed officers with their respective duties.

ARTICLE VI – Impeachment

Sec 1 – An officer may be impeached and removed from office; and a member may be suspended or expelled from membership in the Lodge. A motion to impeach or expel requires a majority vote for passage. Charges with specifications may be filed with the Secretary at any time; but no action to impeach or expel shall be taken until the accused has received three (3) days prior written notice. A member under impeachment or expulsion shall be afforded the opportunity to be heard and present evidence. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present is required for conviction and punishment.

ARTICLE VII – Meetings

Sec 1 – Regular meetings of the Lodge shall be held at a predetermined place on predetermined dates as specified in the By-Laws of the Lodge.

Sec 2 –. Special meetings shall be held in accordance with the By-Laws of the Lodge.

ARTICLE VIII – Rules and Practices

Sec 1 – Quorum for the opening of the Lodge shall be five (5) members of the Third Degree (one of whom is qualified to preside) in good standing in the Lodge that is meeting. Should the Lodge, at any time during the meeting, be left without a quorum; it shall cease to transact business and close without ceremony

Sec 2 – The lodge may determine, in its By-Laws, its own Rules of Order; otherwise Robert’s Rules of Order shall prevail.

Sec 3 – Voting

- A) Method – The methods of voting shall be by the voting sign, written ballot, the ballot box or acclamation.
- B) Required to vote – Every qualified member present is required to vote on all questions unless excused by the presiding officer.
- C) Illegal Vote – An illegal vote shall not invalidate a ballot unless it changes the result. In that event, a new ballot shall be taken.
- D) Conflict of interest – A member shall not be eligible to vote on any matter relating to the fiscal affairs of the Lodge in which the member has personal interest.

Sec 4 – To prohibit its members from resorting to civil courts, prior to exhausting the tribunals of the Order, concerning:

- A) The construction of the laws of the Order
- B) Matters pertaining to its affairs.
- C) Directives or orders.

ARTICLE IX – Revenues

Sec 1 – Revenues shall come from per capita dues, assessments adopted in regular meetings, profits from sales of supplies, investment income, bequests and from any lawful source.

Sec 2 – The Lodge shall collect sufficient per capita tax to meet its fraternal obligations.

ARTICLE X – Lodge Property and Funds

Sec 1 – The Grand Lodge must grant approval prior to the Lodge disposing of property or funds. In the event the Lodge ceases to exist, all property and funds revert to the Grand Lodge.

Sec 2 – The property and funds of this Lodge shall be held exclusively as a Trust Fund – to be devoted to no other purpose than the charitable use of the Order, expenditures legitimately made for Lodge purposes and the advancement of the interests of Odd Fellowship.

ARTICLE XI – Amendments

Sec 1 – A proposition to amend this Constitution must be approved by the Lodge – after having been read at three consecutive meetings. The amendment(s) shall be submitted (in duplicate) to the Grand Secretary in writing. At the next annual session of the Grand Lodge, the Committee on Legislation shall report on the amendment(s). A vote shall then be taken of the voting members of the Grand Lodge; an affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the voting members present is required for passage. The amendment(s) shall not be in force until approved by the Grand Lodge.