

# **BYLAWS OF THE POLK COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**Amended February 17, 2016**

**Previously amended February 18, 2015**

*(Note: Any reference to notice being given by "mail" may include notice via delivery by U. S. Mail or by e-mail.)*

## **ARTICLE I**

### **General**

#### **Section 1: Name**

This organization is incorporated under the laws of the State of Georgia and shall be known as the Polk County Chamber of Commerce Incorporated.

#### **Section 2: Purpose**

The Polk County Chamber of Commerce is organized to advance the general welfare and prosperity of Polk County so that its citizens and all of its business community shall prosper. All necessary means of promotion shall be provided and particular attention and emphasis shall be given to the economic, civic, commercial, cultural, industrial and educational interest of the area.

#### **Section 3: Limitation of Methods**

The Polk County Chamber of Commerce shall observe all local, state and federal laws which apply to a non-profit organization as defined in Section 501 (c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **Membership**

#### **Section 1: Eligibility**

Any person, association, corporation, partnership or estate having an interest in the objectives of the organization shall be eligible to apply for membership.

#### **Section 2: Application and Acceptance for Membership**

Applications for membership shall be in writing, on forms provided for that purpose, and signed by the applicant. Acceptance for membership shall be by the Board of Directors at any meeting thereof. Any applicant approved by the Board for membership shall become a member upon payment of the regularly scheduled dues as provided in Section 3 of Article II.

#### **Section 3: Dues**

Membership dues shall be at such rate or rates, schedule of formula as may be from time to time prescribed by the Board of Directors, payable in advance.

#### **Section 4: Termination of Membership**

- (a) Any member may resign from the Chamber upon written request to the Board of Directors; (b) Any member shall be expelled by the Board of Directors by a two-thirds vote for nonpayment of dues after ninety (90) days from the date due by letter, unless otherwise extended for good cause; (c) Any member may be expelled by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors, at a regularly scheduled meeting thereof, for conduct unbecoming a member prejudicial to the aims or repute of the chamber, after notice and opportunity for a hearing are afforded the member complained against. An exit interview shall be performed upon termination.

#### **Section 5: Voting**

In any proceeding in which voting by members is called for, each member person shall be entitled to one vote and each member firm, association or corporation shall be entitled to one (1) vote.

#### **Section 6: Exercise of Privileges**

Any firm, association, corporation, partnership, or estate holding membership may nominate individuals whom the holder desires to exercise the privileges of membership covered by its subscriptions, and shall have the right to change its membership nomination upon written notice.

## **Section 7: Orientation**

At regular intervals, orientation on the purposes and activities of this organization shall be conducted for the following groups: new directors, officers and directors, committee Chairperson, committees and new members. A detailed outline for orientation of each of these groups shall be a part of this organization's standing procedures manual.

## **Section 8: Honorary Membership**

Distinction in public affairs shall confer eligibility to honorary membership. Honorary members shall have all the privileges of members, except the right to vote, and shall be exempt from payment of dues. The Board of Directors shall confer or revoke honorary membership by a majority vote.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **Meetings**

#### **Section 1: Annual Meeting**

The annual meeting of the corporation, in compliance with state law, shall be held within forty-five (45) days of the close of the fiscal year. The time and place shall be fixed by the Board of Directors and notice thereof sent to members using their preferred method of contact at least ten (10) days before said meeting.

#### **Section 2: Additional Meetings**

General meetings of the chamber may be called by the Chairperson at any time, or upon petition in writing of any twenty-five (25) members in good standing: (a) Notice of special meetings shall be mailed to each member at least five (5) days prior to such meetings; (b) Board meetings may be called by the Executive Director or by the Board of Directors upon written application of three (3) members of the Board. Notice (including the purpose of the meeting) shall be given to each director at least one (1) day prior to said meeting; (c) Committee meetings may be called at any time by the Chairperson, respective department directors, or by the committee's Chairperson.

#### **Section 3: Quorums**

At any duly called general meeting of the chamber, twenty-five (25) members shall constitute a quorum; at Board meeting, a majority of directors present shall constitute a quorum; at a committee meeting, a majority shall constitute a quorum. In that case, five (5) shall constitute a quorum.

#### **Section 4: Notices, Agenda, Minutes**

Written notice of all chamber meetings must be given at least ten (10) days in advance unless otherwise stated. An advance agenda and minutes must be prepared for all meetings. A detailed outline for preparation of both shall be a part of this organization's procedures manual.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Board of Directors**

#### **Section 1: Composition of the Board**

The Board of Directors shall be composed of following members to wit:

- a. Fourteen (14) Members, seven of whom shall be elected annually by the membership to serve for a term of two (2) years, or until their successors are elected and have qualified.
- b. The duly elected and appointed Chairperson or designee of: The Polk County Board of Commissioners; the City of Cedartown Board of Commissioners; the of Rockmart City Council; the Aragon City Council; and the Polk School District. The Chairperson or designee is appointed to the Board of Directors in a capacity that will allow a flow of information from the Chamber to each respective governmental entity and from the governmental entity back to the Chamber. However, the Chairpersons or designee shall serve in a non-voting ex-officio capacity.
- c. The past Chairperson is not elected to the Board; he/she will be an additional member of the Board following his/her term of office as Chairperson.

Residency or location of business requirements as they relate to the composition of the Board of Directors, is specified in detail in the Chamber's Policy Manual, but generally requires equal representation from all areas of Polk County.

The government and policy-making responsibilities of the Chamber shall be vested in the Board of Directors, which shall control its property, be responsible for its finances, and direct its affairs.

#### **Section 2: Selection and Election of Directors**

**A. Nominating Committee.** No later than the regular August Board meeting, the Chairperson shall appoint, subject to approval by the Board of Directors, a Nominating Committee of not less than three (3) members of the Chamber. The Chairperson-Elect shall serve as the chair of the committee.

Prior to September 1, the Nominating Committee shall present to the Chairperson a slate of candidates to serve two-year terms to replace the directors whose regular terms are expiring. Each candidate must be an active member in good standing and must have agreed to accept the responsibility of a directorship. No Board member who has served two consecutive two-year terms or up to five years is eligible for election a third time. A period of one (1) year must elapse before the eligibility is restored.

**B. Publicity of Nominations.** Upon receipt of the report of the Nominating Committee, the Executive Director shall immediately notify the membership by U. S. Mail or via E-Mail of the names of persons nominated as candidates for directors and the right of petition.

**C. Nomination by Petition.** Additional names of candidates for directors can be nominated by petition bearing the genuine signatures of at least ten (10) qualified members of the chamber. Such petition shall be filed with the Nominating Committee within ten (10) days after notice has been given of the names of those nominated. The determination of the Nominating Committee as to the legality of the petition(s) shall be final.

**D. Determination.** If no petition is filed within the designated period, the nominations shall be closed and the nominated slate of (number of vacancies) candidates shall be declared elected by the Board of Directors at no later than their regular October Board meeting.

If a legal petition shall be present additional candidates, the names of all candidates shall be arranged on a ballot in alphabetical order. Instructions will be to vote for (number of vacancies) candidates only. The Executive Director shall mail (U. S. Mail or E-Mail) this ballot to all active members at least fifteen (15) days before the next regular Board meeting and no later than fifteen (15) days before the regular October Board meeting.

The ballots shall be marked in accordance with instructions printed on the ballot and returned to the chamber office with ten days. The Board of Directors shall at its next regular Board meeting (no later than October) declare the (number) candidates with the greatest number of votes elected.

**E. Judges.** The Chairperson shall appoint, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors, at least three (3) but not more than five (5) judges who are not members of the Board of Directors or candidates for election. One will be designated Chairperson. Such judges shall have complete supervision of the election, including the auditing of the ballots. They shall report the results of the election to the Board of Directors.

### **Section 3: Seating of New Directors**

All newly-elected and appointed Board members shall be seated at the next regular Board meeting after elections but no later than the Annual Chamber Board Retreat and shall be participating members thereafter. Retiring directors shall continue to serve until the end of the program year.

#### **Section 4: Vacancies**

A member of the Board of Directors who shall be absent from three (3) consecutive regular meetings of the Board shall automatically be dropped from membership of the Board unless confined by illness or other absence approved by a majority vote of those voting at any meeting thereof.

Vacancies on the Board of Directors, or among the officers, shall be filled by the Board of Directors by a majority vote.

#### **Section 5: Policy**

The Board of Directors is responsible for establishing procedure and formulating policy of the organization. It is also responsible for adopting all policies of the organization. These policies shall be maintained in a policy manual, to be reviewed at least annually and revised as necessary.

#### **Section 6: Management**

The Board of Directors may appoint an Executive Director and shall fix the salary and other considerations of employment as identified by the executive committee.

#### **Section 7: Indemnification**

The chamber may, by resolution of the Board of Directors, provide for indemnification by the chamber of any and all current or former officers, directors, and employees against expenses actually and necessarily incurred by them in connection with the defense of any action, suit, or proceeding in which they or any of them are made parties, or a party, by reason of having been officer, directors, or employees of the chamber, except in relation to matters as to which such individuals shall be adjusted in such action, suit or proceeding to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of duty and to such matter as shall be settled by agreement predicted on the existence of such liability for negligence or misconduct.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Officers**

#### **Section 1: Determination of Officers**

The Board of Directors (new and retiring) at no later than its regular November meeting shall reorganize for the coming year. The Nominating Committee for Directors shall also nominate officers each year. At this meeting, the Board shall elect the Chairperson, Chairperson-elect, as many directors as is deemed necessary to conduct the activities of the chamber, and the treasurer. Officers will be elected from members of the new Board. All officers shall take office on the first day of the new fiscal year and serve for a term of one (1) year or until their successors assume the duties of office. They shall be voting members of the Board of Directors.

The residency or business location of the nominee of Chairperson-elect shall rotate annually between all areas of Polk County so as to assure all of Polk County is equally represented.

#### **Section 2: Duties of Officers**

**A. Chairperson.** The Chairperson shall serve as the chief officer of the Chamber of Commerce and shall preside at all meetings of the membership, Board of Directors and Executive Committee.

The Chairperson shall, with the advice and counsel of the Executive Director, assign directors to divisional or departmental responsibility, subject to Board of Directors approval.

The Chairperson, shall with advice and counsel of directors and Executive Director, determine all committees, select all committee Chairperson, assist in the selection of committee personnel, subject to approval of the Board of Directors.

**B. Chairperson-Elect.** The Chairperson-elect (Vice-Chairperson) shall exercise the powers and authority to perform the duties of the Chairperson in the absence or disability of the Chairperson. The Chairperson-elect shall also serve as head of the Strategic Planning Committee of the chamber. As such, the Chairperson-elect and committee will be responsible for determining that the program activities of the chamber are of such duration as is required, at all times being alert to assure that the activities of the chamber are directed toward achieving business and community needs in the area served by the chamber.



**C. Directors.** The duties of the directors shall be such as their titles by general usage would indicate, and such as required by law, as well as those that may be assigned by the Chairperson and Board of Directors. They will also have under their immediate jurisdiction all committees pertaining to their general duties. The standing committees established by these by laws shall be: Executive Committee, Finance and Resource Development Committee, Business Development Committee, Government Affairs Committee and Education and Workforce Development Committee. Specific and general duties associated with these divisions are outlined in the Chamber's Policy Manual.

**D. Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall be responsible for the safeguarding of all funds received by the Chamber and for their proper disbursement. Such funds shall be kept on deposit in financial institutions, or invested in a manner approved by the Board of Directors. Checks are to be signed by the treasurer and the Executive Director, or in the absence of either or both, by any two officers. The Treasurer shall cause a monthly financial report to be made to the Board.

**E. Executive Director.** The Executive Director shall be the chief administrative and executive officer. The Executive Director shall serve as secretary to the Board of Directors, and cause to be prepared, notices, agendas and minutes of meetings of the Board.

The Executive Director shall serve as advisor to the Strategic Planning Committee on program planning, and shall assemble information and data and cause to be prepared, special reports as dictated by the program of the Chamber.

The Executive Director shall be a member of the Executive Committee and all committees. The Executive Director shall not be a voting member of the Board.

With assistance of the divisional directors, the Executive Director shall be responsible for administration of the program of work in accordance with the policies and regulations of the Board of Directors.

The Executive Director shall be responsible for hiring, discharging, directing and supervising all employees.

With the cooperation of the Executive Committee, the Executive Director shall be responsible for the preparation of an operating budget covering all activities of the Chamber, subject to approval of the Board of Directors. The Executive Director shall also be responsible for all expenditures with approved budget allocations.

### **Section 3: Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee shall act for and on behalf of the Board of Directors when the Board is not in session but shall be accountable to the Board for its actions. It shall be

composed of the Chairperson, Past Chairperson, Chairperson -Elect, Treasurer and the Executive Director. The Chairperson will serve as Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

#### **Section 4: Past Chairperson's Council**

The Past Chairperson's Council shall consist of all past Chairperson of the Chamber. The immediate Past Chairperson shall serve as chair of the council. This council shall serve in an advisory position to the Board of Directors and may be called upon from time to time, at the discretion of the Board, to serve as a task force or committee with short duration for a specified purpose. The Council shall be invited to all meetings or retreats designed to establish its plans of action or agendas. The Council shall be provided notice of all meetings of the Board but shall not have the right to vote unless such past Chairperson also serves as a duly elected member of the Board.

#### **Section 5: Indemnification**

The Chamber may, by resolution of the Board of Directors, provide for indemnification by the Chamber of any and all of its officers or former officers as spelled out in Article IV, Section 7 of these bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Committees and Divisions**

#### **Section 1: Appointment and Authority**

The Chairperson, by and with the approval of the Board of Directors, shall appoint all committees. The Chairperson may appoint such ad hoc committees and their Chairperson as deemed necessary to carry out the program of the Chamber. Committee appointments shall be at the will and pleasure of the Chairperson and shall serve concurrent with the term of the appointing Chairperson, unless a different term is approved by the Board of Directors.

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

#### **Section 2: Limitation of Authority**

No action by any member, committee, division, employee, director or officer shall be binding upon, or constitute an expression of, the policy of the chamber until it shall have been approved or ratified by the Board of Directors.

Committees shall be discharged by the Chairperson when their work has been completed and their reports accepted, or when, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, it is deemed wise to discontinue the committees.

#### **Section 3: Testimony**

Once committee action has been approved by the Board of Directors, it shall be incumbent upon the committee Chairperson, or in their absence, whom they designate as being familiar enough with the issue, to give testimony to, or make presentations before, civic and governmental agencies.

#### **Section 4: Divisions**

The Board of Directors may create such, committees divisions, bureaus, departments, councils, or subsidiary corporations as it deems advisable to handle the work of the Chamber.

The Board shall authorize and define the powers and duties of all divisions, bureaus, departments, councils, and subsidiary corporations. The Board shall annually review and approve all activities and proposed programs of such divisions, bureaus, departments, councils, or subsidiary corporations, including collection and disbursement of funds.

No action or resolution of any kind shall be taken by divisions, bureaus, departments, councils, or subsidiary corporations having bearing upon or expressive of the Chamber, unless approved by the Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Finances**

#### **Section 1: Funds**

All money paid to the Chamber shall be placed in a general operating fund. Funds unused from the current year's budget will be placed in a reserve account.

#### **Section 2: Disbursements**

Upon approval of the budget, the Chairperson is authorized to make disbursements on accounts and expenses provided for in the budget without additional approval of the Board of Directors. Disbursements shall be by check.

#### **Section 3: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the Chamber shall close on December 31.

#### **Section 4: Budget**

As soon as possible after election of the new Board of Directors and Officers, the Executive Committee shall adopt the budget for the coming year and submit it to the Board of Directors for approval.

#### **Section 5: Annual Tax Return**

The accounts of the Chamber of Commerce shall be reviewed annually as of the close of business on December 31 by a certified public accountant. The tax return shall at all times be available to members of the organization.

#### **Section 6: Bonding**

The Chairperson and such other officers and staff as the Board of Directors may designate shall be bonded by a sufficient fidelity bond in the amount set by the Board and paid for by the chamber.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Dissolution**

#### **Section 1: Procedure**

The Chamber shall use its funds only to accomplish the objectives and purposes specified in these bylaws and no part of said funds shall insure, or be distributed, to the members of the Chamber. On dissolution of the Chamber, any funds remaining shall be distributed to one or more regularly organized and qualified charitable, educational, scientific or philanthropic organizations to be selected by the Board of Directors as defined in IRS Section 501 (c) (3).

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Section 1: Parliamentary Authority**

The current edition of Roberts Rules of Order shall be the final source of authority in all questions of parliamentary procedures when such rules are not inconsistent with the charter or bylaws of the Chamber.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **Amendments**

#### **Section 1: Revisions**

These bylaws may be amended or altered by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors, or by a majority of the members at any regular or special meeting, providing the notice for the meeting includes the proposals for the amendments. Any proposed amendments or alterations shall be submitted to the Board of the members in writing, at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting at which they are acted upon.

These bylaws shall become effective on the 8th day of September, 1992 as an amendment to bylaws dated the 20th day of June 1991.

And, as further amended February 18, 2015

\_\_\_\_\_(2015)  
Secretary  
Polk County Chamber of Commerce, Inc.