

# **Constitution and Bylaws**

## **Preamble.**

This document creates a federation of working and breed clubs for the working dog breeds in the United States of America. The purpose of our federation is to operate nationally to preserve and protect these working breeds, to educate the public about them, and to establish and foster relations with the international community that shares our goals.

## **Article I. Organization.**

- A. The federation is known as "The American Working Dog Federation."
- B. The official abbreviation of the federation is "AWDF".
- C. The official colors of the organization are red, white, and blue.
- D. The AWDF operates in the United States of America. It is incorporated as a non-profit corporation in New York.
- E. The AWDF will not operate to make a profit. None of the net earnings of AWDF will be used to benefit, or be distributed to, its members, officers, board, or other private persons. However, the AWDF may pay reasonable compensation for services by these persons. It may also make payments and distributions to further its purposes.

## **Article II. Objectives.**

The AWDF

- A. Develops and presents educational programs for our membership, the canine community, and the public about working dogs, their structure and temperament, and their contributions to society.
- B. Promotes preserving our working dog breeds and develops working sport activities to support the objectives listed in this document.
- C. Provides uniform national regulations and promotes working sports suitable for advancing our purposes.
- D. Promotes and coordinates activities that help breeders and users of working dogs, such as formal sport competitions, police service, search and rescue, and assistance to the blind or hearing impaired and other physically challenged persons.
- E. Promotes communication and cooperation on programs of common interest among its members.
- F. Promotes good sportsmanship among all participants in working dog events.
- G. Advocates nationally for our breeds by providing information to the media, the public, and other canine organizations.

- H. With our member clubs, opposes any poor sportsmanship or illegal activity involving dogs, including animal cruelty and dog fighting.
- I. Develops educational programs and other appropriate vehicles to promote and support breeding working dogs with correct structure and working character.
- J. Is a responsible member of the international canine establishment, supporting the Federation Cynologique Internationale (FCI).

### **Article III. Membership in the Association.**

- A. There are three (3) types of membership in the organization.
  - a. One club based in the United States representing one working breed
  - b. Individual members, who are individuals and members in good standing of a Club Member as that term is defined in Subsection 2 of this Article III. The rights, privileges and authority of any individual member may be exercised only through that member's membership in a Member Club, except where otherwise provided in these by-laws.
  - c. Multi-breed clubs based in the United States whose purpose is to support and advance a specific service or sport program, including obedience, IPO, ring sport, law enforcement and military, search and rescue, herding, agility, and hunting.  
Multi-breed clubs must be less than one half of total AWDF club memberships.
  
- A. Each member club must:
  - a. Be national in scope.
  - b. Subscribe to our purposes and objectives as stated in this document.
  - c. Foster a strong and positive public image to support our objectives.
  - d. Maintain a strong and active stance opposing abusive practices such as profit-motivated indiscriminate breeding, dog fighting, and illegal gambling on canine sporting events.
  - e. Implement rules to ensure that commercial considerations do not affect decisions of judges of club events.
  - f. Accept as members all enthusiasts of good character and interest in supporting the breed or activity without regard to sex, race, or national origin.

- g. Advocate and maintain a consistently high level of sportsmanship in all its activities.
- B. Membership application and acceptance
  - a. Clubs wanting to join the AWDF must apply to the Secretary in writing. The application must be in the format designated by the AWDF.
  - b. Applicants must include a check for the first year's dues to the AWDF with the application. The Secretary advises the Executive Committee of the application and, at the Executive Committee's direction, arranges meetings or requests further written information supporting the application.
  - c. Guest Status - Clubs that do not meet the requirements for regular membership in AWDF may be granted Guest Status membership. Guest clubs must pay dues and be afforded all rights and obligations of AWDF membership except they may not vote and members of guest clubs may not hold office.
  - d. Voting for regular or guest status may occur at an AWDF general board meeting or electronically. Applications for regular or guest status must be approved by at least two-thirds of the member clubs.
- C. Member clubs may affiliate with international associations.
  - a. If the rules and regulations of the AWDF and those of an international affiliation conflict, the member club must resolve the conflict immediately by withdrawing from either the other organization or from the AWDF.
  - b. The Executive Committee may grant a time extension, not to exceed one year, to allow the member club to resolve the conflict or poll its members on what action to take.

#### **Article IV. Governance of the Federation.**

- A. The AWDF is governed by a General Board.
- B. The General Board consists of the officers, the three at-large executive committee members, and two delegates from each member club. The delegates of the individual clubs are the President or his or her designee, plus one other person chosen by the club.
- C. The Executive Committee includes the officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) and three at-large executive committee members from three different member clubs. The Executive Committee is elected by the General Board. Members of the Executive Committee may not serve as delegates for a member club.
- D. Day-to-day decisions needed to run the federation between meetings of the General Board are made by the Executive Committee. Decisions of the Executive Committee require a two-thirds vote.

- E. Each club has one vote on matters before the Board. Decisions of the General Board require a majority vote, except where otherwise stated in these bylaws.
- F. The General Board has an annual meeting, the annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the AWDF Championship event.
- G. Executive board members due to single representation may participate by phone at annual meetings bi-annually. Current member clubs are represented by 2 delegates. Delegates may participate at annual meetings by phone by-annually (listed club delegates only not a substitute representative) only if they cannot in any way have a single representation (either the listed delegates or a substitute representative) at an annual meeting
- H. The Secretary must send a notice to all General Board members at least 45 days before the annual meeting. The notice must include a record of all matters voted on by the Executive Committee since the previous annual meeting.
- I. The Executive Committee may call additional General Board meetings. These meetings may be held by phone.
- J. The Secretary informs the General Board in writing at least two weeks before any special meeting. This notice may be electronic and must include an agenda for the meeting.
- K. Two officers plus one delegate each from a majority of the member clubs are needed for a quorum of the General Board. No official business can be conducted without a quorum.
- L. If there is urgent business, the President may call a special meeting of the Executive Committee. The two-week notice requirement does not apply to Executive Committee special meetings.
- M. All members of the Executive Committee must be notified by phone or electronically at least 72 hours before a special meeting and must receive a copy of an agenda for the meeting.
- N. If a member club is absent from two consecutive annual meetings, it is considered not in good standing and may not vote or participate in AWDF events. The club must pay a \$200.00 fine to reestablish its good standing status.
- O. Clubs must be in good standing with AWDF and individuals must be in good standing with their respective clubs to vote and to serve on any AWDF standing or appointed committee, including the Executive Committee and the General Board.

#### **Article V. Dues.**

- A. The General Board determines and adjusts dues and other assessments, as necessary, by majority vote.
- B. A member club is delinquent if its dues have not been paid by the first day of March.
- C. The Treasurer notifies member clubs whose dues are delinquent by certified mail. Once they receive this notice, they are not in good standing, and may not vote or participate in federation activities.

D. Membership in AWDF expires if a club remains delinquent for six months following the notice. The club must follow the new club application process to be reinstated.

## **Article VI. Officers.**

A. The Executive Committee is elected at the annual meeting of the General Board by a majority vote of the current General Board. Any member of a member club is eligible for these positions. These members must be in good standing with their member club as well as with the AWDF. The nominations committee will prepare a slate of candidates for the General Board to consider. All members running for an elected position within the AWDF must have the endorsement of their member organization. A letter from that organization signed by its President will serve as proof of such endorsement. All nominees must fill out a **petition for nomination form** and it must be submitted **45 days prior** to the General Board Meeting. Nominees may submit a resume to the Nomination Committee to be posted on the AWDF website. Nominations from the floor would only be allowed if these positions could not be filled from the above methods. A 2/3 vote from the voting delegates present at the General Board Meeting is required to open the nominations from the floor.

B. Officers and at-large delegates serve two-year terms. The President, Treasurer and two at-large delegates are elected in even years. The Secretary, Vice-President and one at-large delegate are elected in odd years.

C. Should an Executive Committee position other than the President become vacant during the year, the President appoints an interim officer to fill the vacancy. This interim officer may not vote unless confirmed by a vote of the General Board.

D. If a member of the General Board or a standing committee ceases membership in their respective club during their term, he or she must resign their position.

E. Functions of the Officers.

- a. The President is the legal representative and spokesperson for the federation. The President presides over all meetings.
- b. The Vice-President assists the President in all of his or her duties and works closely with the President in all matters pertaining to the AWDF. The Vice-President assumes the role of President in the President's absence or resignation.
- c. The Secretary conducts the correspondence of the association; prepares and distributes minutes of all

meetings, and presides at meetings if the President and Vice President are absent.

- d. The Treasurer proposes an annual budget, oversees receiving and disbursing AWDF monies, and reports on the financial condition and activities of the AWDF to the General Board.

## **Article VII. Committees.**

- A. The AWDF has three standing committees. All standing committee members are elected by majority vote of the General Board. Any member in good standing of any of the member clubs is eligible to serve on a standing committee. Members of all standing committees serve for two years and may be re-elected.
  - a. Nominations Committee: The nominations committee assembles a slate of candidates to fill existing or upcoming vacancies among the officers or at-large Executive Committee members. All nominees must fill out a petition for nomination form and it must be submitted no later than 45 days prior to the general Board Meeting. Nominees may submit a resume to the Nominating Committee to be posted on the AWDF website. The Secretary circulates the slate to the General Board at least 30 days before the annual meeting. This committee is elected on even numbered years. All members running for the nomination committee within AWDF must have the endorsement of their member organization they represent. A letter from the member organization signed by the president will serve as proof if such endorsement.
  - b. Board of Inquiry: The Board of Inquiry hears cases of alleged misconduct and alleged violations of AWDF regulations. The Board of Inquiry has five members and two alternates. Members of the Executive Committee may not serve on the Board of Inquiry. The Board of Inquiry selects one of its members to be its chair. Three members of the Board should be present at the annual championship to serve as a bench committee. This may include alternates. This committee is elected on even numbered years.
  - c. Events Committee: The events committee establishes rules for hosting AWDF events, recommends slates of judges, works with member clubs' working and sport committees to ensure events are run according to AWDF guidelines. This committee is elected on odd numbered years.
- B. The President or the Executive Committee may appoint committees needed to conduct the business of AWDF, such as the Judges

Committee, the Publications Committee, and the FCI Team Selection Committee. Appointed committees expire at the next election of officers, although they may be reappointed.

### **Article VIII. Regulating and Promoting Competitive Events.**

- A. The AWDF promotes and regulates competitive working trial events.
- B. The AWDF may establish and enforce rules of conduct and procedures for sporting and conformation events and for registration. To the extent possible, these rules should prevent commercial considerations from affecting decisions of judges of AWDF events.
- C. Entries to AWDF-sponsored events must be submitted through the member clubs. By submitting an entry for an individual member, member clubs affirm that the individual is in good standing with their club and that the individual's dog meets all the qualifications of the member club.
- D. In general, AWDF and its member clubs may promote and conduct all sport systems recognized by the Federation Cynologique Internationale (FCI).
- E. The AWDF may authorize other appropriate competitive systems or variations in the rules and procedures necessary because of American conditions.
- F. The AWDF and its member clubs recognize titles awarded under FCI rules conducted by FCI recognized entities internationally and by member clubs in the United States.
- G. The AWDF maintains and promotes an educational program open to and, as specified by the Board, required of all active judges, apprentices, and applicants.

### **Article IX. Disciplining Individuals and Clubs.**

- A. Any member club in good standing, any individual member of a member club in good standing, the General Board, or the Executive Committee may submit a charge to the Secretary. Charges must be filed within three months of the alleged violation. Charges may be brought against clubs or individual members of member clubs.
- B. Except for the President or Secretary who may submit charges on behalf of AWDF, anyone bringing a charge must pay a \$100 filing fee to AWDF. If the charge is upheld, the fee is returned.
- C. Charges may include unsportsmanlike conduct, illegal behavior, or failure to uphold the requirements of AWDF.
- D. The Board of Inquiry must give the club or individual at least 30 days to submit written information related to the charge. After reviewing all relevant information, the Board of Inquiry, by majority vote, sustains or rejects the charges and reports its findings to the Secretary, with a suggested sanction.

- E. Suggested sanctions may include suspension from AWDF activities, expulsion from AWDF, or other appropriate sanctions. The Board of Inquiry must submit its report to the Secretary within three months of receiving the charge.
- F. When the Secretary receives a final report from the Board of Inquiry, the Secretary informs the Executive Committee.
- G. The Executive Committee schedules a meeting to review the charges. The meeting may be by phone. The Executive Committee may decide to impose the sanction suggested by the Board of Inquiry, or it may impose a lesser sanction. It may not impose a greater sanction.
- H. If the proposed sanction is expulsion and the meeting is by phone, the Secretary sends a ballot to all Executive Committee members. Voting must be by mail or electronically. Votes must be received by the Secretary within 21 days after the Secretary mails the ballot.
- I. A member of the Board of Inquiry may not hear cases in which the member is the subject, or where the subject belongs to the member's club or immediate family or resides in the same household. The replacement is selected by the other Board of Inquiry members in a written ballot.
- J. Any member of the Board of Inquiry may ask the Chair, in writing, to be excused from hearing a specific case. No explanation is needed.
- K. If charges are sustained against any member of the Board of Inquiry, the recommendation for discipline must include this member's removal from the Board of Inquiry.

#### **Article X. Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws.**

- A. Any member of the General Board may propose an amendment to this document by submitting it, in writing, to the Secretary. The member must explain the rationale for the proposed change
- B. The Secretary submits the proposed amendment to the General Board by mail or electronically.
- C. The Secretary schedules a vote; all members of the General Board must have at least 30 days to consider the amendment before the scheduled vote.
- D. Amendments may be voted on at the Annual Meeting, by mail or electronically.
- E. If the proposal changes as a result of discussion, and all clubs are not represented in the discussion, the Secretary must provide all members of the General Board an additional 30 days to review the new proposal before taking a vote.
- F. Amendments require a two-thirds vote of the General Board to be adopted.

#### **Article XI. Parliamentary Authority**



The current edition of "Robert's Rules of Order" governs AWDF in all parliamentary situations that are not covered in the law, or in these constitution and bylaws, or adopted rules. In case of a conflict between the provisions of these Constitution and Bylaws and the parliamentary provisions of "Robert's" the provisions of these Constitution and Bylaws prevail.

## **Article XII. Dissolution**

The President or Secretary may propose to dissolve the federation.

- A. The Secretary will send the proposal to all member of the General Board in writing or electronically.
- B. All members of the General Board must vote, in writing or electronically, on the proposal. If the Secretary does not receive a written response from a member of the General Board within 30 days, the Secretary records the response as affirmative.
- C. Proposals to dissolve require a two-thirds written vote of the General Board to be adopted.
- D. If the proposal to dissolve is adopted, all assets of the federation must be liquidated and distributed proportionally to the member clubs, based on the dues paid by each club.

*This version of the Constitution and By-laws of AWDF  
dated 10/05/10 supersedes all previous versions.*