

Portland General Membership Branch Bylaws

*As approved by branch referendum
July 1st, 2020*

Article 1: Name and Purpose

1. The name of this chartered body of the IWW is the Portland General Membership Branch (GMB).
2. The GMB shall nurture workplace and industry organizing efforts within Portland, OR, and its surrounding metropolitan area in order to build worker power toward creating a free society.
3. Branch delegates provide a copy of the bylaws to new members. Bylaws are made available upon request to any member in good standing.

Article 2: Membership

1. Membership in the GMB is open to all IWW members. Ability to participate in meetings, including the right to vote is determined by the dues status of a member.
2. IWW members who are at large, from other Industrial Union Branches or General Membership Branches are allowed voice in the affairs of the GMB, if they are approved by a majority of GMB at a regularly scheduled business meeting. Non-members may also be allowed voice at a meeting if approved by a majority of members at the meeting.
3. IWW members who are not members of Portland GMB can become GMB members by meeting with a branch delegate and having their dues processed through the Portland branch secretary.
4. Members pay dues and dues are shared between the branch and the North American Regional Administration in accordance with the IWW Constitution.

Article 3: Branch Business Meetings

1. Portland GMB business meetings occur at least once every month at a well advertised time and place to be determined either at a previous branch meeting or by the branch secretary if no meeting time/place was previously set or an extreme circumstance arises.

2. A quorum of five members in good standing must be present to conduct any business meeting.

3. Decisions at GMB business meetings are made by majority vote of members present who are in good standing with dues and registered members of the branch. Anyone more than two months behind on their dues will not be able to vote, unless approved by those present at the meeting.

4. Before the conclusion of each meeting, the following things must be decided, or a plan to determine them:

- a. Location and time of next business meeting;
- b. Who will compile and distribute the agenda for the next meeting;
- c. Meeting roles for the next meeting (such as chair, note taker);

5. Submitting items (motions, proposals, or reports) for a branch business meeting follows the following process:

- a. Send an email with the full text of the item and any relevant information to the branch email discussion list at least five days prior to the business meeting;
- b. A written agenda of all items submitted by the deadline is created by the designated person, compiled into a full agenda, and distributed over the branch email list;
- c. Any items submitted after the five day deadline can be added to the agenda by a majority vote of the voting members present at the beginning of the meeting;
- d. The member bringing any late items is responsible for ensuring they are adequately distributed to the membership over the email list and print outs are made for the meeting.

Article 4: Annual Special Sessions

1. The Portland GMB conducts two (2) Annual Planning Sessions held in conjunction with and immediately following the January and February GMB business meetings. Members are encouraged to use these sessions as an opportunity to reflect on the challenges of the previous and upcoming years. Officers, committees, and the general membership are encouraged to bring drafted proposals and topics for discussion to the Planning Sessions.

2. At the December branch business meeting a motion is made to empower a committee responsible for planning and ensuring the execution of the two special sessions.

3. The January special session is meant as a time to reflect on the previous year and discuss vision going forward. At the end of January special session nominations are opened for branch officer positions.

4. The February special session is empowered to accomplish the following things:

- a. Discuss and vote on annual goals, priorities, or vision;
- b. Close nominations for branch officer positions.

Items wished to be considered for the February special session follow the same timing requirements outlined in “Branch Business Meetings” Article for business meeting items.

Article 5: Branch Referenda

1. The branch holds an annual referendum by mail ballot for all members of the branch.

2. The referendum ballot is created and mailed by the branch secretary or someone they designate. The results of the ballot are affirmed by the April Branch Business Meeting in accordance with a process outlined in the “how we do things” document.

3. The following timeline outlines the steps for the referendum:

January Branch Business Meeting

- Nominations are opened for all elected officers on referendum ballot
- The branch is notified that all by-law amendments or other matters for the ballot must be submitted to the March Branch Business Meeting

February Branch Business Meeting

- Nominations are closed for all elected officers on referendum ballot
- All by-law amendments and other referendum proposals must be submitted with the support of either 10 members or a vote at the February branch meeting

During the month of March the branch secretary or their designee will compile and mail the referenda to the entire branch.

April Branch Business Meeting

- Final ballots are collected in person
- Results of the annual referendum are affirmed

4. Special referenda can be called for specific matters including:

- 1) Recalling branch officer in accordance with “Officers” Article below
- 2) Amending these by laws in accordance with “Amendments” Article below

- 3) Other matters that merit the voice of the entire branch by mail ballot. Matters can be brought to referendum with the support of 10 members in good standing or a vote at a regular branch business meeting. Matters decided by special referendum will have the same authority as matters decided at branch business meeting.
4. All ballot elections conducted by the branch will be in accordance with any relevant legal requirements such as the U.S. Department of Labor.

Article 6: “How we do things” document.

1. The branch maintains a document titled, “How We Do Things,” attached to these by-laws. This document explains the processes used to do the work of the branch.
2. The “How We Do Things,” document can be changed at a branch business meeting.
3. Anything that is not specified in the “How We Do Things” document but is required to be so by these by-laws will be decided by majority vote at a regular business meeting as needed.

Article 7: Unions, Campaigns, and Projects

1. The branch can create, authorize, or accept the affiliation of unions in workplaces, organizing campaigns, or projects by majority vote. The specific meanings of these terms will be spelled out in the “How We Do Things” document.
2. Official branch unions, campaigns and projects have autonomous control over their own affairs and public appearance provided their actions do not contradict the decisions of or harm the branch. They are expected to be responsible affiliates of the branch and understand that the branch will in most cases bear the final legal liability for their actions.
3. The branch can authorize budgeted branch funds for these bodies and hold any funds collected by them in the branch bank account. If branch funds are budgeted for unions, campaigns or projects they must be spent in accordance with the approved allocated budget, but these bodies can determine their own internal policies regarding spending authorization (i.e. a project might allow people who aren’t members of the IWW to vote on how branch funds are used). Any spending authorized must be noted in written meeting notes that the branch treasurer has access to.
4. Official branch unions, campaigns and projects must report to the branch regularly and provide an explanation to the branch secretary of their internal decision making structures.

Article 8: Safer Space

1. The branch strives to be a safer space than the broader society for marginalized and oppressed people and those who have experienced trauma.
2. One tool to support the branch being a safer space is a “Safer Space Policy” maintained as part of the attached “How We Do Things” document.
3. Violations of the “Safer Spaces Policy” will be treated as violations of these by-laws and subject to the enforcement article of these by-laws.

Article 9: Finances

1. The branch has a bank account on which the treasurer and any assistant treasurers are authorized. Members may be authorized on the bank account in addition to the treasurer and assistant treasurer(s) by a majority vote at a branch business meeting.
2. The branch maintains a budget of projected expenses on a fiscal year from July 1st to June 30th. The budget is approved at the June branch business meeting. Projects such as campaigns, committees, or shop unions included in the branch budget cannot spend more money than is authorized in their budget.

The budget can be amended by majority vote at a branch business meeting.

3. Any unbudgeted funds above \$50 must be approved by a majority vote at a branch business meeting.
4. The Portland GMB will appoint an Audit Committee annually of at least three members to audit the branches finances over the previous year in compliance with the Department of Labor’s standards for an audit.

Article 10: Officers

1. The branch elects and empower certain members as officers to fulfill specific responsibilities and be authorized to take certain actions.
2. Officers in addition to those listed below may be created along with instructions for their elections in the “How We Do Things” document.

3. All Officers are subject to recall by referendum through a vote conducted by mail ballot. To initiate recall of a GMB Officer to be approved for referendum, a written motion for that officer's recall must be endorsed by at least 10 GMB members in good standing, or endorsed by a regular monthly branch meeting. In order to recall a GMB Officer, a simple majority of the respondents to the referendum must vote in favor of recall.

4. *Secretary*

A branch secretary is elected by all member referendum to serve a term from April 1st to April 30th of the next year (a thirteen month term).

The branch secretary is responsible for ensuring the following is accomplished:

- a. Complete and submit the monthly branch secretary treasurer report to General Headquarters;
- b. Administer internal branch communication systems (e.g. branch email lists)
- c. Ensure all internal branch documents and records (including these by-laws) are accurate, up to date, and accessible to the membership
- d. Maintain all official communications between the branch and outside parties.
- e. Provides accurate information of current membership in good standing at each monthly branch business meeting.
- f. Working with the treasurer to ensure all governmental regulations and requirements are complied with.
- g. Submit monthly report to the branch business meeting regarding activities.

The branch secretary is authorized to do the following:

- a. Have access to membership information of all branch members;
- b. Release public communications on behalf of the branch;
- c. Change the time and place of branch business meetings in cases where there are legitimate concerns about the safety of member;
- d. Know the login information for any branch services.

No member may serve as Secretary for more than two (2) consecutive terms. A member may run for Secretary again at the end of their second term only if no alternative candidate is found.

One or more assistant secretaries can be elected either by referendum or at a branch business meeting to support the secretary and have the same authorization and responsibilities as the secretary.

At the end of the branch secretary's term, it is required that the current secretary conduct onboarding with the incoming secretary, including ensuring new secretary has access to all accounts, has an understanding of the reports needing to be filed with GHQ and how to file them, and any and all other tasks required of the secretary.

3. Treasurer

A branch treasurer is elected by all member referendum to serve a term from April 1st to April 30th of the next year (a thirteen month term).

The branch treasurer is responsible for ensuring the following is accomplished:

- a. Disbursal of branch funds;
- b. Accurate accounting for branch funds;
- c. Ensuring all funds disbursed are properly authorized and are in accordance with the approved budget;
- d. Making branch finances available to inspection in a reasonable amount of time upon request of any member in good standing.
- e. Working with the secretary to ensure all governmental regulations and requirements are complied with;
- f. Supporting the branch audit committee;
- g. Submission of a Projected Annual Budget, with the help of the budget committee if needed, at the June GMB of each year. The Budget should include details of expected income and expenses for the following fiscal year, July 1st through June 30th;
- h. Submitting monthly reports to the branch business meeting regarding activities.

The branch treasurer is authorized to do the following:

- a. Sign checks from branch bank account;
- b. Manage branch bank account(s);
- c. Disperse funds up to \$50 without prior approval from the branch, which must be reported at the next business meeting;
- d. Know the login information for any branch services and subscriptions.

No member may serve as treasurer for more than two consecutive terms. A member may run for treasurer again at the end of their second term only if no alternative candidate is found.

One or more assistant treasurers can be elected either by referendum or at a branch business meeting to support the treasurer and have the same authorization and responsibilities as the treasurer.

At the end of the branch treasurer's term, it is required that the current treasurer conduct onboarding with the incoming secretary, including ensuring new secretary has access to all accounts, has an understanding of the reports needing to be filed with GHQ and how to file them, and any and all other tasks required of the treasurer.

4. Delegates

The branch elects delegates in accordance with the IWW constitution for purposes of signing up new members and collecting dues and other funds from existing members.

Delegates are elected either by branch referendum or at a branch business meeting and serve for a term of twelve months.

One delegate is elected either by referendum or at a branch meeting to serve as Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Delegate and given appropriate authorization with the branch bank account to collect dues electronically from members who agree to the EFT system administered by the bank.

Delegates have the authority to:

- a. See branch member information;
- b. Collect money on behalf of the branch.

5. Website Admin

A Website Admin is elected to either by referendum or at a branch business meeting to ensure that the branch web presence, including Portlandiww.org, is maintained. The Website Editor will be granted access to all appropriate login information to accomplish these duties.

6. Replacing Officers Mid Term

An officer can leave voluntarily mid term by informing the branch of their resignation. An officer can also be recalled by a majority vote at a branch business meeting. If an officer leaves, either by resignation or recall, a new member can be elected to complete the term by majority vote at a branch business meeting.

Article 11: Branch Communication Systems

1. The branch maintains various means of internal communication as outlined in the "How We Do Things," document.

2. Branch communications platforms will be treated as branch spaces and subject to the Safer Space Policy and non-branch members may be barred from them.

Article 12: Jr. Wobblies

1. The branch maintains a program called Jr. Wobblies in order to be able to run kid focused activities and supervise children in order to support parents participation in the union. The Jr. Wobblies program is conducted in accordance with the guidelines found in the “How We Do Things” document.

Article 13: Legal Bargaining Units

1. Shop steward systems may be established by unions in workplaces.
2. Grievances in collective bargaining agreements are to be handled in accordance with the processes described in the “How We Do Things” document.
3. No grievance on the part of a worker covered by a collective bargaining agreement between an employer and the Portland GMB that intends to protect said worker from discipline for an act of gendered, racial, or other kinds of dehumanizing harm (this includes but is not limited to sexual harassment, sexual assault, racist language, and racist violence), will be pursued by the union or any of its bodies.
4. Efforts to make the Portland GMB the legally certified exclusive bargaining representative at a workplace (through NLRB election or voluntary recognition) must be approved by a majority vote at a branch business meeting. This authority may be delegated from the branch business meeting in accordance with the “How We Do Things” document.

Article 14: Enforcement and accountability

1. Violations of these by-laws are subject to the complaints process outlined in the IWW Constitution or the process to place restrictions to branch membership detailed in these by-laws.

Article 15: Restrictions to Member Rights

1. In the “How We do Things” document a procedure is outlined to restrict the rights of GMB members. This process must not be in violation of any applicable laws regarding the rights of union members such as the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act. This process must also prioritize justice and healing for branch members and strive to minimize the harm done in its enactment.

2. Members may have their rights restricted in ways including but not limited to the following:

- a. Barring from union spaces including meetings, events, actions, and communication platforms;
- b. Barring from holding a branch office or presenting themselves as representatives of the branch;
- c. Barring from taking on certain roles such as specific actions roles or child supervision;

3. A member's rights can be restored through a two-thirds majority vote of a branch referendum.

Article 16: Amendments

1. Any part of these bylaws may be amended through a majority vote of the branch membership through a referendum vote conducted by mail ballot.

2. For a proposed amendment of these bylaws to be approved for referendum, a written motion stating the amended articles must be endorsed by at least 10 GMB members in good standing, or endorsed by a regular monthly branch meeting.

3. Once amendments are passed by referendum, the newly edited bylaws will be approved before first printing at a regular monthly branch meeting. Before approval, the bylaws will be reviewed at this meeting to ensure amendments were correctly made by the Secretary and there are no grammatical or general formatting errors.

Article 17: Conflicting Parts

1. All parts of the GMB bylaws conflicting with the IWW Constitution are null and void.

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## **How We Do Things**

The purpose of this document is to describe the ways that we do things in the branch to keep a record and help with institutional memory.