

# VIRGINIA POLICE WORK DOG ASSOCIATION

## BYLAWS

### ARTICLE 1:

This Association shall be known as the Virginia Police Work Dog Association.

### ARTICLE 2: OBJECTIVES

To unite and assist all law enforcement agencies and working dog teams in the training and continued improvement of all police and working dogs.

To establish a working standard for all working dogs, handlers and trainers through an accreditation program.

To provide educational material through publications, visual aids and training seminars.

To improve the image of the police and working dog.

### ARTICLE 3: MEMBERSHIP

#### Section A:

The membership of the association shall consist of those persons who have signed the Certificate of Incorporations, together with all persons who are hereinafter received in or elected to membership as hereinafter provided.

#### Section B:

**Regular Members** - Full initial membership in this association shall be open to any active law enforcement officer, military police, federal, state, county, municipal or correction officers who is a canine handler, trainer, canine administrator or person who was a law enforcement canine officer and is now employed full time as a canine trainer or handler for a recognized law enforcement agency. Full membership shall also be open to any retired (vested or collecting a pension) law enforcement officer, military police, federal, state county, municipal or correction officer who was a canine handler who was a canine, trainer or canine administrator at the time of retirement. Regular VPWDA members who are current in their dues at the time they leave their canine unit and remain in a law enforcement officer are still eligible to be a Regular member so long as they remain active in VPWDA and current in their dues. All regular members will be ineligible to vote at the first Executive Committee election following their membership acceptance. If a law enforcement agency pays for the member's membership dues, the agency has the right to reassign that membership to another person anytime during that dues period. The change in membership by the law enforcement agency must be in writing to the membership chairperson. The written change will include the current member's complete information and the new replacement person's complete information on a VPDWA membership application. Accredited Master Trainer's in good standing who have been in VPWDA for 20 years or more are awarded the lifetime memberships.

#### Section C:

**Associate Members** – An associate member shall enjoy all privileges except that he/she shall not have any voting privileges, nor shall serve on the Executive Committee Board. All Associate members must provide a current Criminal History Records Check at the time they initially join and upon renewing yearly. **This records check must be obtained from a law enforcement Agency and cover that person for the entire United States or entire State they live in (not just a city or county level).** Any criminal convictions for crimes are grounds for review by the Membership Committee and can result in denial or revocation of or from Associate membership. All Associate members must be re-sponsored each year with a signature of a sponsoring member.

Associate members may include:

- 1.) Any person who trains canines for an established law enforcement agency and sponsored by a regular member.

- 2.) Any person sponsored by a regular member.
- 3.) An active firefighter who is a canine handler or trainer with their fire department and is assigned arson investigation duties through the use of a trained Accelerant K9 for that department.

Certifications of Associates member's dogs will be determined by the Master Trainer. Associate members dogs can only be certified in: Obedience, Article Search, Area Search, Search and Rescue Area Search, Tracking, Trailing, Building Search, Explosive, Cadaver and Accelerant (**Accelerant – only if the Associate member is an active firefighter who is a canine handler or trainer with their department and is assigned arson investigation duties through the use of the trained Accelerant K9 for that department. This test certification will not be valid for any private or non-Fire/Law Enforcement Department in investigation.**)

#### **Section D:**

**Life Member** – In order for a regular member to receive Life Membership he/she must be nominated by a regular member. The member will be nominated for outstanding service, above and beyond the norm to the VPWDA. The nomination will be made to the Executive Board. The Board will conduct any necessary investigation. The Board will vote for approval, and then it will put to a vote before the general body. If the general body vote is yes, then the member will become a Life member. A Life Member will have all the privileges of a regular member. A Life Member will not be required to pay dues. This will remain in effect unless revoked by vote by the Executive Board and the General Membership. Accredited VPWDA Master Trainers in good standing who have been in VPWDA for 20 years or more are awarded lifetime membership.

**Honorary Member** – In order for anyone to become an honorary member he/she must be nominated by a regular member. The nomination will be made to the Executive Board. If they vote for approval, then the person will become an Honorary Member. This title will remain in effect until such time that the Executive Board votes to remove the Honorary Members title. An Honorary Member will not be able to vote or hold office. Honorary members will not be required to pay dues.

**Retired Member** - In order for a regular member to become a retired member the following will be required. First the regular member must apply to the Executive Board for such a title. Second, he/she has to prove that they are retired from a law enforcement agency, as described in the regular members section of the VPWDA bylaws. Third, the regular member must have been a paid regular member for a period of at least (10) year's prior to applying for the retired membership title. Retired members will have all the privileges of a regular member. Retired members will only be required to pay half (1/2) of the regular members' dues which are applicable for that year. The retired member title will remain in effect, unless revoked by a vote of the Executive Board of the VPWDA.

#### **ARTICLE 4: DUTIES OF DIRECTORS**

No officer, Director or member serving on a committee as such shall receive any salary or compensation for services rendered to the Association. However, Officers, Directors or members may be reimbursed for their out of pocket expenses incurred reasonably and necessary in conducting the affairs of the Association.

#### **EXECUTIVE BOARD:**

The Executive Board consists of the elected VPWDA officers.

**PRESIDENT**

It shall be the duty of the President to call and preside at all regular and special meetings. He/she shall see that the Bylaws and all Rules and regulations are respected and obeyed. He/she shall cast the deciding vote in case of a tie. He/she shall appoint committees and may designate their Chairperson. He/she shall appoint the following committees: Membership, Newsletter, Grievance, Election, Accreditation Committee and any Ad-Hoc committees necessary to conduct the affairs of the Association. He/she shall appoint a Parliamentarian to sit on the Executive Board without voting privileges. He/she shall appoint pro-tempore, officers, in the event of absences. He/she shall perform such duties as are usual and incidental to the office of President. He/she is a member ex-officio of all committees except the Executive Committee.

**VICE PRESIDENT**

The Vice President shall actively assist and support the President in his/her duties and shall be the President pro-tempore in the absence of the President, during which time the Vice President shall assume all the duties and responsibilities of that office. He/she shall be required to attend, with the President, all hearing, committee meeting, conferences, etc., to which the President is required or expected, in the interest of and/or behalf of the membership of this Association in order that he/she may be as informed of all matters concerning the Association as is the President. He/she shall act as liaison between the President and Chairpersons of Committees. In the event of a vacancy in the office of President during the elective term, he/she shall succeed to that office for the remainder of the unexpired term.

**SECRETARY**

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to accurately record the proceeding at meetings, read the minutes of previous meetings and all communications. He/she shall call the roll of Officers and not absentees. He/she shall communicate and correspond with all persons and organizations both within and outside the association relative to Executive Committee business. He/she shall receive all moneys in absence of the Treasurer. He/she shall also keep all paper and electronic records, documents and library materials of this organization.

**TREASURER**

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to collect all monies due to this association, giving receipt thereof. He/she shall keep a suitable set of books of record of same. He/she shall deposit all monies of this Association in a bank designed by the Board of Directors; He/she shall render statements in detail at each meeting of the Association, showing receipts and disbursements in full to date, and the monies in the Treasury. He/she shall draw all checks or other obligations authorized by the President, Executive Committee, and attested to by the Secretary, including payments of all benefits. The account books as well as all papers in his/her custody shall be open for inspection and examination by the Board of Directors. He/she shall not lend or invest any funds except when duly authorized by the Executive Committee.

**MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON**

The Membership Chairperson shall keep a record of all members, the standing of each and their date of admission and termination. The Membership Chairperson shall be an elected office and is a member of the Executive Board with full voting privileges. He/she shall be responsible for mailing cards, dues notices and election ballots.

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Board of Trustees shall consist of three (3) Regular members and one (1) alternate Regular member; all members to be elected every four (4) years by ballot. The Board of Trustees shall act as agents of the Executive Committee in all financial transactions between the Committee and all other institutions and individuals. They shall designate the bank(s) and or other institutions in which the Treasurer shall deposit such monies in the general fund as he/she may have on hand from time to time. They shall, in conjunction with the Treasurer have custody of all bonds and other securities, which shall be deposited in a safety deposit box in some reliable institution and shall not be withdrawn there from except in the presence of the Treasurer and at least one member of the Board of Trustees. The Trustees shall be the custodians of all bonds of Officers and all annual audits of the assets and liabilities of the Executive Committee for the year ending December 31<sup>st</sup> and submit the financial statement at a regular meeting. They are hereby authorized to employ the services of a Certified Public Accountant, at a reasonable fee to prepare this annual audit and report. The alternate member of the Board of Trustees shall attend all meetings of the Board and shall in the absence of a regular member act in his place. They shall cause to be made an audit of all books, accounts, funds, etc., of any and all officers, committees, or members who collect and or disburse funds of this association, not less than once each year or at any time said Board has given just cause to believe such audit should be made. The President of the Association will make sure that the Trustee's understand and perform above duties as defined.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Board of Trustees, Membership Chairperson. This committee shall recommend such rules, regulations, amendments or deletions as may deemed necessary for the governing of the Association. In case of an emergency, the Executive Board, by Quorum vote, may act for the entire membership. A quorum will consist of the majority of the Executive Board members present. Vacancies which occur in any of the association's offices through resignation, death, impeachment or other reasons, with the exception of the President, shall be filled by appointment made by the Executive Board and shall expire at the next elective term. All matters of accreditation are voted upon by the Executive committee. The only persons eligible to vote at an Executive Board meeting are the elected Executive Board (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Chairperson, each of the three (3) Trustees (The alternate Trustee would only vote in the absence of one of the elected Trustees). At the beginning of an Executive Board meeting those in attendance eligible to vote will be temporarily issued a VPWDA voting card which they will display when casting their vote.

## **ARTICLE 5: ELECTIONS**

**SECTION A:** All candidates for the office shall be nominated at the General Membership at the VPWDA meeting on the year of the election. During Membership meeting anyone nominated for an elected office and who accepts that nomination will immediately stand up and address the general membership telling them why he/she wants to be elected, what his/her qualifications are for that office and what he/she will do for this association if elected. The general membership may ask questions of that person at this time. Additionally, the nominated person may write a one (1) page summary of their qualifications for that office, why they want to be elected, what they will do for the association if elected and have it published in the VPWDA Newsletter. At the General Membership meetings U.S. mailed with post mark nominations will be accepted by the Judge of Elections. U.S. mailed (with post marked) in nominations must be accompanied by:

- 1.) Written permission by the nominee.
- 2.) The signature of the Regular Member making the nomination.

**SECTION B:** An appropriate ballot will be mailed by the Membership Chairperson to every Regular Member eligible to vote. An envelope that is marked "Official Ballot" will be used by a member to return the ballot to the Judge of

Elections. Only the ballots received in that envelope will be counted. Any signature or note written on the ballot that would identify the voter will cause that ballot to be considered invalid. Any envelope that is opened before being received by the Election Committee will be declared invalid.

**SECTION C:** Official Ballot envelopes will contain a serial number, starting will be #1 through the total number of Regular members eligible to vote, on the VPWDA mailing list at the time of mailing. Names of Nominees on the ballots shall be placed in alphabetical order for each office.

**SECTION D:** Official Ballot in envelope will be mailed back to the Judge of Elections postmarked no later than two (2) months after nominations. The Judge of Elections will check the serial number and signature on the envelope against the list supplied to him/her by the Membership Chairperson, ensuring that only one (1) envelope with the same number is received.

**SECTION E:** The Judge of Elections will hold all Official Ballot envelopes unopened until meeting with the Election Committee at the Fall Executive Committee meeting.

**SECTION F:** The current President will appoint a committee of three (3) members, not involved in the election. One of the committee members will be appointed Judge of Elections. The committee will open the envelopes and not unfold the ballots. The envelopes will be discarded, and the ballots will then be unfolded and counted, the committee will attest to the correct total. Ballots will be counted at the Fall Executive Board Meeting. The ballots will be destroyed by the VPWDA secretary immediately after the Executive Board meeting of the following the following workshop.

**SECTION G:** A plurality of votes cast shall elect. Members are to be notified as soon as possible.

**SECTION H:** Newly elected Officers shall take office at the Fall Executive meeting.

**SECTION I:** Election of Officers will be held every four (4) years.

**SECTION J:** Anyone elected as a VPWDA Executive Committee Officer shall not hold any elected office with in any other National or International Law Enforcement K9 Association.

#### **ARTICLE 6: OATH OF OFFICE**

Officers elected will repeat after me and say, using your name where I do mine. "I, \_\_\_\_\_, having been duly elected an Officer of this Association in the presence of almighty God and this company assembled, do hereby solemnly and sincerely promise that I will, to the best of my ability in word and deed. Without fear or favor, faithfully, honestly and with strict impartiality, carry out as an Officer of this Association, the principles of this Association. Now by the power vested in me as Installing Officer on this occasion, I do hereby declare the officers elect legally installed and qualified to enter upon the discharge of their duties for the term ending December 31, 20\_\_ or until their successors are duly elected and installed."

#### **ARTICLE 7: MEETING**

A quorum shall consist of the majority of the Executive Committee present. The President shall call at least two (2) regular meetings of the Executive Committee during the calendar year. He/she shall set the dates for such meetings with the approval of the majority of the Executive Committee; there shall be at least one (1) yearly General Membership Meeting, and at least one (1) Association Training Workshop. Meetings shall be conducted according to parliamentary law. Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised, shall be the guide for conducting all meetings. All Executive Committee members shall be notified adequately as to any and all meetings.

#### **ARTICLE 8: BYLAWS**

Amendments, Additions or Deletions: It shall be the duty of the Bylaws Committee, which shall consist of at least three (3) members appointed by the President, to codify all proposed changes, additions or deletions to the Bylaws. All proposed changes must be submitted in writing to the Bylaws Committee. The Bylaws Committee shall present the final form to the Executive Committee with recommendations. Regardless, if any amendment,

addition or deletion is passed unanimously; it shall be null and void if it is in direct conflict with the Articles of Incorporation. All recommended changes to the Bylaws must be presented to the General Membership present at the meeting for their vote of approval before they become official.

#### **ARTICLE 9: DUES**

The yearly dues of the Association will be \$30.00 for Regular Members and \$35.00 for Associate Members. Dues will be collected on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Notices will be mailed out by the Membership Chairperson. After recording the date received and the amount, The Membership Chairperson will forward all monies to the Treasure. Yearly membership cards will be issued by the Membership Chairperson. All members and Chairpersons needing a complete membership list mailing list will be notified by the Membership Chairperson. If the current membership fee is not paid or postmarked by March 31<sup>st</sup> of the due's year, then there WILL BE a late fee of \$5.00 assessed. The membership year is from January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. **(Amended February 18, 2016)**

#### **ARTICLE 10: SERGEANT AT ARMS**

The President shall appoint one (1) member Sergeant at Arms. It shall be his/her duty to preserve order at all meetings, prevent unauthorized persons from attending meetings and perform such other duties as may be directed by the President or Presiding Officer. In the event that the appointed Sergeant at Arms is unable to attend the meeting the President will appoint a temporary Sergeant at Arms for that meeting.

#### **ARTICLE 11: RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Any member desiring the privilege of the floor shall rise and address the Chair. No member shall be allowed to speak until properly recognized by the Chair. No questions can come before the meeting unless the properly moved, recorded and declared upon for discussion by the Chair.

Any member may call for ayes and nays on any question which each member present shall be required to answer to his name on the roll, unless excused by the Chair.

A motion to consider must come from a member who votes with the majority when the motion to reconsider was taken.

No member shall leave the room during a meeting, unless permission is given to that member by the Chair.

When a point of order is raised by any member, a person having the floor shall take his/her seat until the point is decided by the Chair, when, he/she may resume his/her remarks.

No subject laid on the table shall be taken up again during the same meeting unless it was so understood when disposed of. Any member may appeal to the Association from the decision of the Chair when the question shall be stated thus: "Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?" It shall be decided by a majority of the votes cast.

#### **ARTICLE 12: IMPEACHMENT**

Any Officer or member may be removed for any violation of the provisions of the Bylaws, for any personal conduct as defined in Article 12 Section A, VPWDA Code of Ethics. Charges for the impeachment of any Officer or member may be initiated by any member in good standing or a Grievance Committee appointed by the President and shall be presented in writing to the Grievance Committee Chairperson. If the member filing the charges is a member of any Committee or Elected Office, he/she shall abstain from any vote on this matter. The accused Officer or member will be given a copy of the charges against him/her. If the Grievance Committee ascertains that there is enough evidence to warrant a hearing, the accused member will be notified by certified return requested U.S. Postal Service of the meeting and location at which the hearing will be held. Not less than thirty (30) days prior to the hearing date. The accused shall be given the right to present evidence on his/her behalf at the hearing.

Failure to appear on the hearing date without prior authorization from the Committee Chairperson will result in the hearing being held in absentia. Any member filing a complaint will be assessed a \$25.00 fee, returnable upon a true finding.

The Grievance Committee will then decide if the charges are valid and present a recommendation to the Executive Board. If the allegation is found to be valid the Executive Board will decide his/her penalty. If it is decided the charges warrant impeachment, with a majority vote of the Executive Committee present, the accused Officer shall be removed from Office and the accused Officer or member shall never hold any Office in the Association.

### **ARTICLE 13: CODE OF ETHICS**

**SECTION A:** Any elected Officer and/or member of the Virginia Police Work Dog Association may be removed from office and/or expelled from the Association as a member for any violation of the Bylaws or personal conduct which through an impartial investigation, is determined as bringing or will bring discredit upon Virginia Police Work Dog Association.

**SECTION B:** Complaint(s) may be initiated against an elected Officer and/or member by a member in good standing with the Association or the Grievance Committee itself. A Grievance complaint must be filed within 180 days of the date that the action alleged took place.

**SECTION C:** Complaint(s) against those alleged member(s) must be submitted, in writing, to the Grievance Committee Chairperson.

**SECTION D:** The Grievance Committee Chairperson will provide the accused member(s) a written copy of the complaint(s) against him or her. Upon completion of a thorough investigation, the Grievance Committee believes there is sufficient evidence to warrant a hearing, a hearing date will be established.

**SECTION E:** The accused member(s) will then be notified in writing by certified return U.S. Postal Service and not less than thirty (30) days prior to the date of the hearing. Failure to appear on the hearing date without prior authorization from the Committee Chairperson will result in the hearing being held in absentia.

**SECTION F:** The accused member(s) shall be given the right to present evidence in his/her behalf at the hearing. Upon conclusion of the hearing, the Grievance Committee will determine if the charges are valid and present its recommendation to the Executive Board.

The accused shall have the right to present an appeal, in writing by Certified Return Receipt U.S Mail sent to the Grievance Committee Chairperson, posted marked within sixty (60) days of the Grievance Committee's recommendation at this time.

**SECTION G:** If the allegation is found to be valid, the Executive Board will decide the disciplinary action to be taken. Disciplinary action may include but not limited to, temporary suspension of privileges, censure, expulsion or any other appropriate action.

**SECTION H:** An impeached Virginia Police Work Dog Association Officer and/or member(s) shall never hold any future office in this Association. Any expelled member shall not be associated with VPWDA in any official capacity in any future events or functions.

**SECTION I:** Member(s) found by the Executive Board to have initiated baseless complaint(s) against member(s), with other underlying and or vindictive motives in doing so, may have appropriate disciplinary action initiated against them by the Executive Board.

**SECTION J:** No disciplinary action shall be taken against an accused member(s) or the complaint member(s) unless having been afforded the opportunity of a hearing before the Grievance Committee, with the right of appeal to the Executive Board.

**SECTION K:** All member(s) are presumed clear of allegations unless otherwise found to be valid by presented and supported evidence facts which have been adjudicated before the Grievance Committee.