

## BRITISH COLUMBIA HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

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## MEMBER-LED POLICY DEVELOPMENT

*“Humanism supports democracy and human rights...It holds that democracy and human development are matters of right. The principles of democracy and human rights can be applied to many human relationships and are not restricted to methods of government.”*

Amsterdam Declaration 2002

This policy sets out a process to promote membership involvement in the development of new positions for the BC Humanist Association (BCHA).

Using a members-only portion of the BCHA website, current members will be able to propose policy suggestions and add their support to other proposals. Regular policy committee meetings will be open to all members (in person or via web/teleconference) where proposals with the greatest support will be considered, debated and voted upon. Approved proposals will be presented to the Board for consideration.

### The Chair

1. The policy committee chair (the Chair) will be appointed by the Board of Directors.

### Proposed policy positions

2. Any current member may propose a new policy position on the members' website. The member is called the sponsor and the position the proposal.
3. Proposals should include a brief rationale (WHEREAS) and a clear position (RESOLVED).
4. Additional members may consent to cosponsor a proposal.
5. Any member may add support to proposals by tagging it on the website.
6. Any member may flag a proposal as out of order. The Chair will review flagged proposals. The sponsor will be given the opportunity to argue for the existing proposal, to redraft it or withdraw it. A proposal is out of order if it:
  - o Takes a partisan position in support or opposition to specific political parties, candidates or elected officials;
  - o Conflicts with the law or BCHA bylaws;
  - o Is effectively identical to another proposal (sponsors should agree to cosponsor or support such proposals) or to a proposal that has been rejected by the policy committee or board in the past year;

- Conflicts with a previously adopted policy (such a proposal should repeal or amend existing policy first);
  - Is outside the scope or purposes of the BCHA;
  - Appears dilatory, incorrect, frivolous or rude;
  - Represents a personal opinion about an issue rather than provides guidance to what position(s) the BCHA should take; or
  - Requires the BCHA take specific action, or amends the BCHA constitution or bylaws.
7. A sponsor can withdraw their proposal by contacting the Chair. All cosponsors must agree to withdraw their support for a proposal (otherwise only the names of those who want to withdraw their support will be removed).

### Policy committee meetings

8. The Chair is responsible for scheduling policy committee meetings. Meetings should be held at least once per quarter and not more than once per month. Meetings will be posted on the members' section of the website and should be announced at least one week in advance.
9. Any current member may attend a policy committee (held by teleconference) but they must RSVP in advance through the website.
10. Proposals with the most support one week before a scheduled policy committee meeting will be put on the meeting's agenda. The agenda will be posted on the event and circulated to everyone who RSVPs for the meeting.
11. Meetings will follow the rules of order, set out below.
12. The Chair will record minutes for the meeting, indicating: who was in attendance, what proposals were debated, the results of any votes.
13. Proposals approved by the policy committee will be presented to the Board at the next subsequent Board meeting by the Chair. The Board reserves the right to approve or defeat any proposal by majority vote.

### Policy Committee Rules of Order

These rules of order are loosely based on *Robert's Rules in Plain English*, 2e. Refer to this reference when these rules are silent.

#### Brief rules

1. Do not speak until recognized by the Chair
2. Each person may speak for up to two minutes at a time.
3. Each person may only speak once until everyone who wishes has spoken.
4. Each person may speak to a motion twice.
5. The Chair will pause debate after five speakers or ten minutes to see if debate should continue or the issue should be voted upon. A two-thirds majority is required to call the vote.
6. **Voting:** The Chair calls each person's name and asks how they vote. The Chair can vote.
7. Meetings are adjourned after one hour unless everyone agrees to continue the discussion in 10 minute intervals.

## Full rules

1. The Chair begins by briefly reviewing these procedures and the agenda (see below).
2. Everyone briefly introduces themselves at the start of the meeting. This allows the Chair to record attendance, which will be used to recognize speakers and to record votes.
3. Do not speak until recognized by the Chair.
4. Any proposal still under debate from the previous meeting shall be dealt with first.
5. The chair will recognize the sponsor of a proposal to introduce it and speak to it. If the sponsor or any cosponsors are not at the meeting, the proposal will be postponed until the next meeting. If a sponsor is unable to attend three meetings in a row and cannot find a cosponsor, the proposal will be considered withdrawn.
6. The chair will ask if there are any who want to debate the proposal; if not, the chair asks if any are opposed to the proposal; if there are none the motion is adopted unanimously.
7. Only the position (RESOLVED) of a proposal is debated.
8. The chair then asks each person in attendance, one-by-one, to speak for or against the proposal, people are free to decline to speak.
9. Debate is limited to five minutes per speaker, who shall not speak more than twice on the same proposal. No member shall speak more than once to the same proposal unless everyone who wishes has spoken.
10. After every four speakers or every 20 minutes of debate, the chair will ask if the committee wants to continue debate. Debate will continue if more than one third of committee members are in support or until everyone has who wishes to speak has spoken twice.
11. The chair will ask each attendee for their vote orally; the chair is not required to abstain.
12. Any member may propose an amendment. Amendments must be germane (closely related) to the proposal. Debate on the amendment follows the same procedures 6-11. For simplicity, there are no amendments to amendments (friendly amendments may be made for clarity with unanimous consent).
13. Any member may move that discussion be postponed to the next meeting. Postponing business requires a majority vote.
14. Meetings shall adjourn after one hour or earlier if moved by any member and approved by majority vote. Debate can be continued in fifteen minute increments for longer than an hour with unanimous consent. Any unfinished business will be postponed until the following meeting.