

GOVERNANCE POLICIES MANUAL



INTRODUCTION

This manual includes Governance Policies endorsed by BC Humanist Association (BCHA). These are policies related to the organization itself. Policies related to humanist positions which BCHA may take or campaigns it may develop are not included. These governance policies are reviewed and updated regularly.

Policies describe WHAT to do. Procedures describe HOW to do it.

A POLICY CAN BE: a governing principle, a guideline or framework for carrying out work, a way for the board to delegate authority and still maintain control, or a definition of the values and the philosophies of the organization.

A GOOD POLICY:¹

- Is based on the values of the organization
- States what is believed, valued and desired
- Is a general statement of a board's beliefs on a certain matter
- Tells what and why certain things are wanted
- Forms a clear basis for the development of and implementation of regulations and procedures
- Provides direction but does not prescribe methods for arriving at the result
- Permits board and staff to interpret it in such a way as to adjust for changing conditions without making basic changes in policy
- Provides a standard for evaluating the performance of the board and staff
- Is explicit and uses plain language

This governance policy manual ensures that policies are available to those who will be implementing them. For example, the board will ensure that board members and the Executive Director have copies or access to all policies, and that staff and volunteers carrying out the work of BCHA have access to policies that affect their work. BCHA also makes its governance policies available to all members and welcomes suggestions and comments.

¹ Adapted from the Tool Boxes in Governance and Management for Canadian Community Foundations (Community Foundations of Canada) and Dalhousie University Continuing Education.

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1.0 POLICY TYPE: FOUNDATIONAL POLICIES

1.1 MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

The British Columbia Humanist Association has been providing a community and voice for Humanists, atheists, agnostics, and the non-religious of Metro Vancouver and British Columbia since 1982. We support the growth of Humanist communities across BC, provide Humanist ceremonies, and campaign for progressive and secular values.

We are a registered charitable organization. Our mission is:

- to promote the ideas and philosophy of secular humanism by all available means of education and communication;
- to serve the educational needs of its members and others of humanistic, scientific and naturalistic outlook, in a democratic, non-dogmatic manner free from authoritarian doctrine;
- to provide opportunities for fellowship, study and service at all levels of humanistic endeavour, and to advance the values and welfare of humanity in dedication to the continuing enhancement of human life through human effort and understanding;
- to offer and provide meaningful ceremonies to members and non-members at significant times such as marriage and death; and
- to elaborate and to express publicly Humanist positions on issues of concern to people, including values, morality and ethics.

1.2 CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Documents are available at www.bchumanist.ca/governance

2.0 POLICY TYPE: BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS

2.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS

Adopted: January 18, 2017

Latest amendments: January 27, 2020

As a member of the Board of the BCHA, I agree to:

1. **Attend** all board and committee meetings
2. **Stay informed** about the BCHA's mission, policies, campaigns and programs
3. **Review the agenda** and relevant materials prior to board meetings
4. **Join a committee** or volunteer to lead a task force
5. **Donate** to the BCHA
6. **Ask others** to join and donate to the BCHA
7. **Suggest possible candidates** for the board
8. **Keep up-to-date** on developments in Humanism
9. **Observe** the BCHA's policies
10. **Refrain** from making special requests of staff

All members of the Board will:

- Hire and set compensation of the executive director to run the day-to-day management activities of the organization and evaluate the performance of the executive director;
- Ensure all bylaws, policies and acts relating to the activities of the BCHA are adhered to in accordance with ethical practice;
- Decide by consensus or majority vote which actions and uses of resources best serve the interests of the BCHA and what changes, if any, need to be made to the its stated purposes;
- Ensure that the BCHA adheres to its stated purposes, and that its activities advance its mission;
- Ensure prudent use of all assets, including facility, people and good will of the BCHA;
- Provide foresight, oversight and insight into the day-to-day activities of the BCHA;
- Bring issues and concerns to the Board as a motion and discussion as needed;
- Be involved in fundraising events and volunteer their time and/or recruit volunteers for such events;
- Participate in board meetings and email discussions of issues facing the organization;
- Adjudicate any disagreements as to which activities are prudent, advance the mission, are ethical and are in the interests of the BCHA;
- Make decisions in the best interest of the BCHA;
- Treat discussions on the board email list or at board meetings as confidential, in order to ensure board members and staff are able to speak freely and

- Maintain the confidentiality of discussions with other board members and staff after retiring from the board.

The President:

- Ensures that the Board of Directors and its members are aware of and fulfill their responsibilities and comply with applicable laws and bylaws;
- Chairs the meetings, and along with other Board members, proposes policies and practices; hires and directs the Executive Director.
- Reports to members of BCHA, as required, and performs other duties as the need arises and/or as defined in the bylaws;
- Ensures that an agenda is planned for board meetings, chairs meetings and encourages all members to participate in discussion, arrives at decisions in an orderly, timely and democratic manner and
- Ensures that periodic performance reviews of the executive director are conducted and participates in the hiring and evaluation of the Executive Director.

The Vice President:

- Assumes the role of the president as needed.

The Treasurer:

- Oversees the financial matters of BCHA with good practice and in accordance with the bylaws and legal requirements;
- Reports on the current financial position to the board of directors at each board meeting, which includes an update on funds received and spent since the last report;
- Assumes a leadership role on board committee or initiatives related to financial matters and ensures that proper accounts and records are kept, ensuring financial resources are spent and invested in line with BCHA policies;
- Ensures that the charity's annual accounts are compliant with the CRA guidelines and returns are filed in a timely manner and
- Attends and take part in discussions related to matters of the BCHA.

The Secretary:

- Is responsible for maintaining accurate documentation of board meetings, reviewing and updating minutes as necessary;
- Ensures the minutes of meetings are approved and a copy is maintained in the BCHA records;
- Ensures that sufficient documentation exists to meet legal requirements;
- Ensures the availability of the minutes of meetings as required;
- Ensures copies of the minutes of meetings are distributed to all board members;
- Ensures safe storage of minutes of meetings and that they are readily accessible as necessary;

- Ensures that minutes of meetings include date, time, location of meeting; those present and absent, list of items discussed, list of reports presented, and motions presented and disposition;
- Signs a copy of the final, approved minutes and ensures that this copy is maintained in the corporate records and
- Attends and take part in discussions related to matters of the BCHA.

The Members at Large

- Attend meetings, take part in all discussions, vote motions set forward and take on assigned jobs as required.

2.2 BOARD ELECTIONS

Approved: March 6, 2018

Latest amendments: February 23, 2019

1. Prior to sending out notice of the Annual General Meeting (AGM), the board will appoint one director who is not standing for re-election as the Elections Officer; if no board member is available, any member in good standing may be appointed instead.
2. Contact information for the Elections Officer and the number of vacancies on the Board shall be included with the notice of the AGM.
3. Members wanting to stand for election to the Board must apply by email to the Elections Officer at least one week prior to the AGM. The application should include the member's full name, email address and a brief biography (under 250 words) to include on AGM notice on the BCHA website.
4. Nominations will not be accepted from the floor at the AGM.
5. The Elections Officer will ensure that all members who have applied to stand for the board are eligible according to the BCHA bylaws. Applicants must be:
 - a. At least 18 years of age, where one director aged 16 or 17 may be elected as a youth representative;
 - b. A member of the BCHA in good standing for at least six months prior to election; and
 - c. Not ineligible according to Section 44(3) of the *Societies Act* (see Appendix).
For purposes of interpreting (b), a member must be current at the time of the AGM and must have first become a member at least six months prior. A lapse in membership during that time is not counted against a member's eligibility to stand for the board.
6. **Elections:** If there are more nominees than vacancies, the Elections Officer shall
 - a. prepare ballots for the AGM listing candidates alphabetically by surname;
 - b. prepare a current membership list for the AGM;
 - c. distribute ballots only to current members in attendance at the AGM, members will vote for as many candidates as there are vacancies;
 - d. count the completed ballots, such that:
 - i. Blank ballots and ballots for more candidates than there are vacancies shall be deemed invalid and excluded from the count.
 - ii. Any candidate may request a recount by the Elections Officer and an independent scrutineer. There may only be one recount.
 - iii. The candidate(s) who receive the most votes are elected.
 - e. repeat the above steps in the event of a tie;
 - f. make a motion at the AGM to certify the results of the election; and
 - g. destroy the ballots within one month of the AGM.
7. The Elections Officer shall ensure all newly elected board members sign a copy of the Board Roles and Responsibilities document.

2.3 BOARD MEETINGS

Approved: January 27, 2020

Adapted from the Ontario Library Association¹

Definitions

Consent agenda: To maximize meeting time and to move business along, a consent agenda contains routine or uncontroversial matters that do not require discussion and can be voted/approved in one motion. Should a question arise about an item on the consent agenda a meeting participant may ask for this to be ‘lifted’ for discussion at the meeting. The item would then be added to the meeting agenda.

In-camera: While transparency is important for the work of any board, there may be times when a portion of the meeting is conducted in privacy or ‘in-camera’. The minutes and business of this portion is recorded and kept separately from the meeting minutes. Staff may be asked to leave the meeting during an in-camera session. A motion must be presented to move the meeting in-camera, and out of camera.

Quorum: A majority of 50% of the Directors of the Board shall form a quorum for the transaction of business.

Rules of Order: Rules of Order ensure that meetings run effectively and fairly, ideas are discussed and debated, and important business is documented. The level of formality in use of rules of order can vary from board to board. The BCHA refers to *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11ed* when needed.

Procedures

Chairing the meeting

The president shall preside over all meetings of the members of the Association, the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee (if any). During the absence or inability of the President, these duties and powers may be exercised by the Vice-President. In the event the President and Vice-President are absent or unable to preside, the members of the body present, provided a quorum is present, may elect or appoint another to preside.

BCHA committees and task forces have assigned chair positions as per their terms of reference.

During meetings, the chair should:

- Encourage participation by all members.
- Allow time for all views and sides of an issue to be heard and discussed before a vote.

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<https://www.accessola.org/web/Documents/OLA/About/Policies/G2.3%20Board%20Meeting%20Policy.pdf>

- Ensure members understand the discussions and terms of an issue by asking for clarification when necessary.
- Summarize discussions before voting or moving on to the next item.
- Keep the meeting on schedule by adhering to the agenda and keeping board members on topic.
- Manage conflicts that arise during the meeting.
- Ensure decisions are made clearly and explicitly (by vote or consensus) so that there is no room left for misunderstanding or misinterpretation.
- Read or call for motions, call for votes on an issue, ensure votes are counted and recorded in the minutes (if required).
- Ensure that the recorder of minutes reflects attendance, motions and votes.

Here are the essential rules of order meetings follow:

- **Obtaining ‘the floor’:** the chair will acknowledge Directors who raise their hand to participate. The chair will call upon those members participating electronically to solicit their comment, if any. This process is helpful and orderly when multiple members wish to comment on an item. All members of the meeting should have the opportunity to comment before the discussion closes.
- **Motions:** Motions ensure that any business or actions that are important are put forth for discussion and decision and are recorded in the minutes. In the interests of time, a motion need not be seconded. Moving a motion puts the business on the table for discussion. This does not mean the mover endorses the particular item.
- **Vote on a motion:** After debate/discussion usually a show of hands for yes/no or a statement of abstention at which point the motion is carried or defeated.

Agenda

Effective agenda development ensures Board members understand the process for the development of, and have an opportunity to have input into, the agenda.

- It is the responsibility of the President, with support from the Executive Director, to develop the agenda for board meetings. This includes requesting board members to submit any items in advance.
- For BCHA committees, it is the responsibility of the chair to develop the agenda in consultation with committee members.
- A board or committee member who wishes to add an item to the agenda or to be provided with additional information should contact the chair in advance, or may put forth an item at the time of the meeting.
- Agendas are to be provided no less than 5 days before a meeting to the board or committee members.
- The chair will advise if an item should be discussed as part of the agenda, or to be provided in advance as a consent agenda item.
- Sample standard and non-traditional agendas are provided on the next page. The President or committee chair may adapt these as needed.

Standard Board Meeting Agenda

1. *Call to order*
2. *Approval of agenda*
3. *Consent agenda*
 - a. *Acceptance of previous meeting minutes*
 - b. *Acceptance of the Executive Director's Report*
 - c. *Acceptance of any Committee Reports*
 - d. *Acceptance of reports of any other directors*
 - e. *Acceptance of correspondence*
 - f. *Approval of any previously vetted motions*
4. *Unfinished business from previous meeting*
5. *Treasurer's Report*
6. *Reports requiring discussion*
7. *Motions arising from any reports*
8. *New business*
9. *Adjournment*

Non-traditional Board Meeting Agenda¹

1. *Welcome and call to order*
2. *Context for the meeting*
 - *Reading of the mission statement and/or president's remarks*
3. *Board member briefing and Q&A*
 - *Take 15 minutes each meeting to rotate among board members sharing any life experiences or professional knowledge that might be helpful to the Board. Equal time should be given for the briefing and Q&A (7 minutes each).*
4. *Upcoming campaigns, events or program planning*
 - *Substantive discussion of the current work of the organization*
5. *Open-ended discussion on outside factors*
 - *Include a strategic discussion at every meeting*
6. *Minutes and commitments review, including consent items*
 - *Review what people committed to do and check on progress.*
7. *Treasurer's report*
8. *Discussion with the Executive Director*
 - *An opportunity to ask about the ED report, limited to 10 minutes*
9. *Reflections (optional)*
 - *A quick sentence from each Board member on how the meeting went*
10. *Adjournment*

¹ Adapted from <https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/nonprofit-board-meeting-agenda-sample/> which is drawn from <https://blueavocado.org/board-of-directors/and-now-for-a-different-type-of-board-agenda/>

Minutes

Minutes reflect the intent of an action item without providing all the discussion details. Minutes are legal documents of the BCHA, and should be recorded in a manner to be read in the future and by people who may not have been present at the meeting. While it's important that all motions, decisions and action items are recorded, it's equally important that there be some context to how the decisions were made but not detail discussions leading to that decision.

- Minutes of board meetings shall be recorded and maintained by the Secretary, with support from the Executive Director.
- Minutes of BCHA committees shall be recorded and maintained by the secretary of that committee.

At a minimum, minutes need to include:

- The date and location of the meeting
- Members who were present for voting
- Motions put forth
- Amendments to motions
- The outcome of the motion (carried or not) and may include upon demand record of the vote including dissenters and those who voted in abstention or by proxy.

Frequency and Location

- Board meetings shall be held every six to eight weeks.
- The President will develop a calendar of meetings annually by January 2. The calendar will include all board meetings and the Annual General Meeting.
- The calendar will be published to the members' site.
- The board shall meet at such location it determines and pending budget constraints. Members may also participate remotely. It is at the discretion of the President to schedule additional meetings.
- All committee meetings are to be scheduled with a minimum of one week's notice.
- At the discretion of the chair, committee meetings may be held partially or completely virtually and must be organized so that all participants can communicate with each other adequately and simultaneously. Persons participating virtually are deemed to have attended that meeting.

Participation and Attendance

Upon request, members in good standing may be permitted to attend board meetings in person or remotely as non-voting observers. Members and interested parties are welcome to contact the president or the committee chair to make a request or bring forth an issue for discussion at a meeting prior to the preparation of the agenda.

In-Camera

Upon completion of the items on the agenda of a regularly scheduled board meeting, the Board will move into a closed, or, in-camera session to discuss confidential or sensitive items.

- All matters brought before an in-camera session remain confidential until they are moved by the board to an open session; a resolution should be passed with respect to those items that are to be moved to an open session.
- During an in-camera session, all persons who are not meeting members shall be excluded from the meeting unless otherwise approved by the chair.
- A separate agenda shall be prepared for in-camera sessions indicating the items to be considered during the session. The agenda and any supporting materials shall be clearly marked confidential and shall be handled and secured in a manner that respects the nature of the material.
- Voting during an in-camera session shall take place according to the regular provisions governing meetings.
- Minutes of in-camera sessions shall be recorded and shall be marked confidential and shall be secured in a manner that respects the nature of the material.
- Minutes of an in-camera session shall be presented for approval at a subsequent in-camera session.

Board Meetings without Staff

- The board shall meet without staff from time to time, as determined by the president, for the purpose of evaluating the board's relationship with staff, as well as its oversight of, and the quality of, information provided by staff.
- Such meetings shall not be considered to be meetings of the Board but rather will be information meetings only.
- The president shall immediately communicate with the Executive Director any relevant matters raised during the meeting.

Staff Support for Meetings

Staff can assist with:

- Scheduling meetings
- Preparing the agenda and meeting packages (together with the president or chair)
- Arranging online or teleconference access
- Booking meeting space

Unless otherwise delegated, staff are not responsible for taking minutes.

3.0 POLICY TYPE: ORGANIZATION AND MEMBERS

3.1 MEMBERSHIP

Approved September 8, 2015

Amended: August 23, 2018, April 19, 2019

Membership Applications

1. Any individual who agrees to uphold the constitution, bylaws, the Statement of Values and Principles and policies of the BC Humanist Association may apply for membership in the BCHA. By submitting an application, an individual attests to having read and agreed to these documents.
2. Applications must be made in writing either online or by a completed application form (see Appendix) mailed to the BCHA's registered address. Applications must be accompanied by the relevant membership dues.
3. The executive director will present a list of recent applications for membership to the Board at each regular board meeting during an *in-camera* session. The Board will decide by majority vote whether to accept or reject membership applications.
4. Until a membership application is accepted by the Board, it is pending. An individual with a pending membership does not have any of the rights or privileges of a member.
5. After being accepted by the Board, the membership will be considered to have started on the application date.

Membership Dues

6. Membership dues may be paid annually or monthly.
7. A membership paid annually is current for 12 months from the date it is accepted. A membership paid monthly is current until one month after the last payment is received. A Life membership does not expire.
8. Minimum membership dues, effective April 19, 2019, are \$10 annually or \$3 per month.
9. Applications for life memberships are closed.
10. The Board may consider a request in writing to waive dues in cases of financial hardship.
11. If an individual's membership is rejected, the BCHA will refund any dues paid within 15 days.

Membership Rights and Privileges

12. By joining the British Columbia Humanist Association, members will receive:
 - a copy of the BCHA's Constitution, Bylaws, Statement of Values and Principles and links to current policies by email;
 - access to the BCHA members' site;

- a BC Humanist Association email, free to use in accordance with the members' email policy;
- email updates from the BCHA (otherwise available free of charge);
- the right to notice of, and attendance at, general meetings of the BCHA;
- consistent with the BCHA's bylaws and policies, the right to vote at members' meetings and in elections for the Board of Directors;
- a tax receipt for the full value of any membership dues paid; and
- the knowledge that they are helping build the Humanist community in BC and supporting campaigns for secular and progressive values.

Membership Termination

13. Memberships are automatically terminated if not paid within six months of their renewal date. After a membership is terminated, an individual may make a new application membership.
14. The Board may terminate an individual's membership in accordance with the bylaws.

3.2 CODE OF CONDUCT

Approved: September 27, 2017

Latest amendments: July 15, 2019

Adapted from the Washington Area Secular Humanists

The BC Humanist Association (BCHA) is committed to providing an open and welcoming community that respects every member's personal integrity and reasonable participation. BCHA activities, whether organized or informal, should be fun, friendly and informative.

1. This policy covers conduct by persons attending BCHA-sponsored events or in BCHA-sponsored printed or electronic media or when formally representing BCHA at other venues. It also covers all staff and volunteers in the performance of their duties and members' interactions with staff and volunteers.
2. The consequences of violation can include but are not limited to loss of membership and participation privileges with BCHA and its hosted and co-hosted activities, as well as with collaborating organizations (at their discretion).
3. The general rule of conduct is friendly interactions without harassment.
4. Discussion and disagreement are encouraged as part of free inquiry, but must not take the form of personal attacks, and must respect each member's right to withdraw from debate and organizers' authority in managing events.
5. When possible, members should give each other the benefit of explaining behaviour found offensive or unwelcome. But explanations do not redeem violations, and those asked to stop any prohibited conduct — non-consensual or harassing — are expected to comply immediately.
6. Prohibited conduct may include but is not limited to:
 - harassment¹ related to gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, age, ancestry, nationality, familial status, marital status, military status, pregnancy, socioeconomic status, or religion;
 - sexual images or displays in public spaces (except as appropriate to announced presentations or activities);
 - threats, abuse, or deliberate intimidation;
 - stalking;
 - harassing photography or recording;
 - sustained disruption of talks or other events;
 - inappropriate physical contact;
 - unwelcome sexual attention; or

¹ Harassment, as defined by the BC Human Rights Clinic, is generally “conduct or comment that a reasonable person would consider to be objectionable or unwelcome. The conduct or comment typically humiliates, intimidates, excludes or isolates individuals and is often accompanied by threats or promises regarding opportunities and conditions. Harassment can be a single, serious incident or a series of repeated incidents.” via <http://www.bchrc.net/harassment>

- any form of unwanted attention initiated or continued without reasonable grounds for mutual interest or consent.
7. In addition to the above prohibited conduct, as a registered Canadian charity, we are required to remove any partisan comments on our social media platforms that endorse or oppose a politician or political party.
 8. In general, members should seek explicit consent prior to directly messaging another member unless sender and recipient already know each other personally or it is an appropriate continuation of an BCHA conversation or activity.
 9. Promotion of other organizations and/or distribution of any promotional materials at a BCHA event or in any BCHA online forum requires prior approval from an BCHA organizer. Also please do not promote BCHA at any other organizations without first obtaining approval from that organization.
 10. Where video recordings and photographs are used for BCHA publicity or documentation of events, members may request that they not be tagged by name, or that photos and videos be modified to remove them, with no specific justification required.
 11. It is incumbent upon all employees, volunteers and members engaged with the BCHA not to condone or tolerate behaviour which constitutes **workplace harassment**. There is a duty upon all individuals to prevent workplace harassment by discouraging inappropriate activities and reporting all incidents of harassment including when such incidents may be by third parties.
 12. The BCHA takes a zero-tolerance approach to any acts of harassment perpetrated against or by employees for any reason. An employee that subjects another person to harassment may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination for just cause.
 13. Please report potential offenses to the relevant online or event organizer or to any BCHA staff or coordinator. Organizers may ban offenders from their activity at their sole discretion and shall inform BCHA staff as soon as possible for further action. BCHA staff may at their sole discretion ban offenders from any specific activity or suspend them from membership and future activities. Reports, bans and suspensions shall be recorded and shared with the full BCHA Board within seven days, and be handled at all levels with confidentiality and with anonymity of the complainant preserved unless otherwise agreed. Potential offenses may also be reported by phone (604-265-9298) or email (info@bchumanist.ca). Such reports must include return contact information.
 14. Suspension from membership and participation in events must be resolved by the BCHA Board within three months, by reinstatement, probation as defined by the board, or expulsion according to the BCHA by-laws, or else the suspension ends. Appeals, whether for further investigation of potential offenses or for reinstatement, can be initiated by contacting any member of the BCHA Board. Appeals will be resolved by the full BCHA Board, or delegated to a non-leadership investigative committee, as appropriate to ensure a fair process and safe BCHA community.

15. BCHA prohibits retaliation against any staff or member who reports or participates in an investigation of a possible violation of this Code, policies or the law.

3.3 COMMUNICATIONS AND COMPLAINTS

Adopted: March 8, 2016

Latest amendments: September 13, 2016

1. The primary point of contact for the BC Humanist Association (*BCHA*) is the Executive Director at exdir@bchumanist.ca, (604) 265-9298 or to the Association's mailing address. General inquiries directed to individual members or members of the Board of Directors should be forwarded to the Executive Director.
2. The BCHA's external statements and positions will be made by the Executive Director in line with the BCHA's charitable purposes, its Declaration of Principles, its Statement of Values and Principles (the Amsterdam Declaration), its policies and positions, its past campaigns or following the lead of other prominent Humanist organizations.
3. All BCHA board members and employees must act in the interests of the organization and are therefore to refrain from criticizing statements made by the BCHA or its staff in public forums or with third parties.
4. BCHA board members or employees with concerns about statements made by the organization should first bring those concerns directly to the Executive Director for a timely response. If the response is deemed inadequate, the issue can be brought to the President of the Board of Directors for a board discussion and, if necessary, a revised position will be decided by a majority vote.
5. Formal complaints about the performance or activities of the Executive Director should be made in writing to the President of the Board of Directors. The complaint shall be kept in confidence among the Board of Directors and the Executive Director will be made aware of and given a chance to respond to the complaint. Following the Executive Director's response, the Board will agree its response, including any censure of the Executive Director, by a majority vote at a board meeting. Following that decision, the President will respond to the complainant.

3.4 LOCAL GROUPS

Adopted: August 16, 2017

Latest amendments: March 6, 2018

Purpose

The Humanist community across British Columbia consists of numerous groups of diverse composition and structures. In its effort to fulfill its mission to serve the educational needs of Humanists and to provide opportunities for fellowship, study and service, the Board of the BC Humanist Association (BCHA) agrees the following local group policy to support Humanist groups in communities across the province.

Guidelines

Local Groups shall conduct their affairs so as not to conflict with any provisions of the law, the policies or the bylaws of the BCHA. Local Groups may be legally distinct from BCHA but shall publicly identify their relationship with the BCHA.

Formation

Any group of five or more members of BCHA in good standing may petition the Board to form a Local Group. The petition shall include the names of the members forming the group, the name of the member to be designated as Local Group Coordinator, and the proposed name of the group. The Board will review and act upon Local Group petitions as soon as possible. A simple majority vote of Directors is required to authorize formation of a Local Group. Group names shall be appropriate to the group's normal meeting location and include the word "Humanist" unless otherwise approved by the Board.

Benefits

The BCHA will provide Local Groups with:

- Event listings on its website, bchumanist.ca, and in BCHA email newsletter
- Model bylaws, should the Local Group choose to incorporate
- Advice and support on building a membership and hosting events
- Connections with local media
- Promotion of local events & news on BCHA social media channels
- Opportunities to raise local campaign issues
- Opportunity to apply for BCHA grants and funding (at the future discretion of the Board)

Operations

Local Groups will establish their own rules and procedures, including the method of choosing the Local Group Coordinator and the establishment of other officer positions. The Local Group Coordinator shall be responsible for ensuring that the Group's activities

conform to the bylaws of the BCHA and to other policies and procedures established by the Board. The Coordinator's primary point of contact with the BCHA is the Executive Director or their delegate. Whenever the Local Group Coordinator is replaced, the incoming Coordinator will inform the Executive Director of the BCHA of their acceptance of the position.

A Local Group may, at its discretion, appoint any member to be that Group's representative to the Board. If the appointee is not a Director, the Board shall invite them to attend all open Board meetings as a non-voting representative.

Dissolution

Local Groups can discontinue their relationship with the BCHA:

- According to their democratic procedures, if any, or else through a petition signed by a majority of BCHA members in the geographic area; or
- By a majority vote of the BCHA Board.

3.5 MEMBER-LED POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Adopted: March 6, 2018

“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:
 - Takes a partisan position in support or opposition to specific political parties, candidates or elected officials;
 - Conflicts with the law or BCHA bylaws;
 - 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 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.

3.6 MEMBERS EMAIL

Adopted: March 26, 2019

To recognize the contribution of members to the BC Humanist Association (BCHA), and to protect members' privacy when the board is required to disclose the Register of Members, the BCHA is pleased to provide every current member with a BCHA email address. Emails are of the format firstname.lastname@bchumanist.org.

This email usage policy helps members use their email addresses appropriately, while protecting the BCHA's confidential data from breaches and safeguard the BCHA's reputation.

Scope

This policy applies to all members who are assigned a BCHA email. Members must adhere to this policy at all times while using a BCHA email address. Members are responsible for also upholding the BCHA's Privacy Policy.

Inappropriate use of emails

Members must not:

- Use their email in a way that suggests they represent the BCHA.
- Use their email for illegal or unlawful purposes, including copyright infringement, libel, slander, fraud, defamation, plagiarism, harassment, intimidation, forgery, impersonation, soliciting for illegal pyramid schemes, and computer tampering (eg spreading of computer viruses).
- Send unauthorized marketing content or solicitation emails.
- Intentionally spam other people's emails, including other members.
- Exceed storage limits (30GB).

The BCHA has the right to monitor and archive emails.

Appropriate use of email

Members are allowed to use their BCHA email for any other reasonable purposes without limitations. For example, members can use their email to:

- Forward incoming messages to their personal email account.
- Give their email address to people they meet at BCHA events.
- Sign up for newsletters, platforms and other online services.

Email security

Email is often the medium of hacker attacks, confidentiality breaches, viruses and other malware. These issues can compromise our reputation, legality and security of our equipment.

Members should:

- Select strong passwords with at least eight characters (capital and lower-case letters, symbols and numbers) without using personal information (eg birthdays).
- Remember passwords instead of writing them down and keep them secret.
- Change their email password regularly.

Also, members should always be vigilant to catch emails that carry malware or phishing attempts. Members should:

- Avoid opening attachments and clicking on links when content is not adequately explained (eg “Watch this video, it’s amazing”).
- Be suspicious of clickbait titles.
- Check email and names of unknown senders to ensure they are legitimate.
- Look for inconsistencies or style red flags (eg grammar mistakes, capital letters, excessive number of exclamation marks).

If you aren’t sure that an email you received is safe, it’s better to delete it. Please also keep your anti-malware programs updated.

Email signature

As a condition of using a BCHA email, all outgoing messages from members’ emails will be appended with:

“This email address is provided by the BC Humanist Association to its members. Any views or opinions presented in this email are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the BCHA.”

Disciplinary action

Members who don’t adhere to the present policy will face disciplinary action that may include (but is not limited to) one or more of the following:

1. Temporary or permanent revocation of email access;
2. Discipline in accordance with the BCHA’s bylaws;
3. Expulsion from the BCHA; and/or
4. Legal action according to applicable laws and contractual agreements.

3.7 PRIVACY

Adopted: September 8th, 2015

This policy has been adapted from the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association.

The BC Humanist Association (BCHA) is committed to protecting the privacy of visitors to our website, as well as our members and supporters. BCHA has established this Privacy Policy to explain what information we collect through our websites and at are events and how it is used. BCHA aims to comply with *Personal Information Protection Act* of BC.

In this policy, “BCHA” refers to BCHA staff, interns, volunteers, and consultants, as well as BCHA-affiliated local communities and student groups, all of whom are bound by law or contract to keep confidential information they receive as part of their assistance to BCHA.

Information Collected

a. Website Visitors

Like most website operators, BCHA collects non-personally-identifying information of the sort that web browsers and servers typically make available, such as the browser type, language preference, referring site, and the date and time of each visitor request. BCHA’s purpose in collecting non-personally identifying information is to better understand how BCHA’s visitors use its website.

BCHA’s site also provides links to a wide variety of third-party websites, including interactive links to sites like Twitter or Facebook. We also allow our website to interact with other services, like social networking and video hosting websites. BCHA is not responsible for, and does not have any control over, the privacy practices or the content of such third parties. We encourage users to read the privacy policies of any website visited.

b. Contact Information

Certain visitors to BCHA’s websites choose to interact in ways that require our site to gather personally-identifying information. The amount and type of information that BCHA gathers depends on the nature of the interaction. For example, we ask visitors who sign up for our e-newsletter to provide their first and last name, along with a valid email address. Those who engage in transactions with BCHA – by purchasing a membership or an event ticket, for example – are asked to provide additional information, including as necessary the personal and financial information required to process those transactions.

Use of Information

a. Aggregated Website Statistics

BCHA collects statistics about the behavior of visitors to its websites. For instance, the BCHA uses analytics software to collect information about which pages and posts are

most commonly visited and for how long. We will not publicly display this information, but we may share it with our website developers in order to improve our web presence.

b. Member and Donor Information

We use member and donor information to process and manage your membership or contribution. If you opt in, we will use your contact information to send you updates and alerts about our work. We retain primary control over our server-hosted contact information.

Disclosure of Your Information

While BCHA endeavors to provide the highest level of protection for your information, we may disclose personally identifiable information about you to third parties in limited circumstances, including: (1) with your consent; or (2) when we believe it is required by law, such as pursuant to a subpoena or other judicial or administrative order.

If we are required by law to disclose the information that you have submitted, we will attempt to provide you with notice (unless we are prohibited) that a request for your information has been made in order to give you an opportunity to object to the disclosure. We will attempt to provide this notice by email, if you have given us an email address, or by postal mail if you have entered a postal address. If you do not challenge the disclosure request, we may be legally required to turn over your information.

In addition, we will independently object to requests for access to information about users of our site that we believe to be improper.

Changes to Our Policies

BCHA's Privacy Policy may change from time to time. However, any revised privacy policy will be consistent with BCHA's mission. If we make any substantive changes to our policies, we will post notice of changes on this page.

Updating or Removing Your Information

You may choose to correct, update, or delete the membership information you have submitted to us by sending an email requesting changes to info@bchumanist.ca

Third Party Service Providers

The BCHA makes use of several third party service providers. Our relationship with these providers governs our privacy policy based on the kind of interaction individuals are undertaking with the BCHA. The privacy policies of our third party providers can be found here:

- Website and member database: [NationBuilder](#)
- Analytics: [Google Analytics](#)
- Social Media: [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Donations: [CanadaHelps](#)

3.8 ACCESS TO RECORDS AND PROACTIVE PUBLICATION

Adopted: October 7, 2019

Purpose

“Humanism supports democracy and human rights...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

The BCHA is a democratic organization, with an elected Board of Directors accountable to its members. Accountability requires transparency behind its decision-making processes and a respect for the privacy of the personal information of its members.

This policy sets out which BCHA documents will be published and accessible to the public, members or by request. It aims to balance multiple competing interests:

- Maximizing the amount of information disclosed to the public
- Members’ desire to engage in policy development
- Directors’ and members’ interests in confidentiality during internal policy debates, so as to give them the freedom to speak as freely as possible
- Protecting the personal information of members
- The Board’s fiduciary duty to protect the reputation of the BCHA

To this end, generally those policies that have formally been agreed by the Board will be made public, those in development will be available to members and every effort will be made to protect the private information of members.

With this policy, the BCHA aims to significantly exceed non-profit disclosure standards. Often organizations will only provide these documents on request. By publicly providing more information about our operations, the BCHA seeks to embody the democratic values that underpin Humanism.

This policy codifies and expands on many existing practices.

Proactive disclosure to the public

The following records will be made publicly available on the BCHA website:

1. The Constitution
2. The Bylaws
3. Statement of Values and Principles
4. Current governance policies
5. Approved position statements
6. Minutes of Annual General Meetings
7. The names of members of the Board of Directors

Proactive disclosure to members

The following records will be made available to members via the BCHA members' site:

1. Contact information for each director, typically their assigned @bchumanist.org email address;
2. The minutes of each meeting of members, including the text of each resolution passed at the meeting;
3. Any ordinary or special resolution passed by members not included in meeting minutes;
4. The financial statements presented to the members at the Annual General Meeting and the auditor's report, if any, on those financial statements;
5. The minutes of each meeting of directors, including:
 - a. a list of all of the directors at the meeting,
 - b. copies of any written staff or committee reports presented at the meetings (excluding any *in camera*¹ reports),
 - c. the text of each resolution passed at the meeting with any recorded vote,
 - d. a note if any items are discussed *in camera* (without identifying the items themselves);
6. Dates for any scheduled directors' meetings; and
7. A copy of any agreed consent resolution of directors.

Other records

The following records, required by the *Societies Act* and the BCHA bylaws, will be maintained by the Executive Director:

1. A copy of the written consent to act as director and each written resignation of a director;
2. A copy of each record evidencing a disclosure by a director or senior manager; and
3. Any records listed in section 3.1 of the BCHA Bylaws not otherwise mentioned, with the exceptions below.

Any member may contact the Executive Director for an electronic copy of these records.

Register of Members

The Register of Members shall include first and last names of all members and the @bchumanist.org email addresses provided by the Association.

The BCHA recognizes that members have reasonable expectation that any personal information they provided to the organization will be kept confidential. For some members, there could be serious consequences were their affiliation with a Humanist group made public. As such, the Board aims to vigorously protect the confidentiality of

¹ *In camera* items may include issues relating to human resources, litigation or other legal advice, membership application approvals, complaints under the Code of Conduct and other items deemed necessary to be discussed confidentially.

member's personal data, including the information contained within the Register of Members.

To create a space for democratic debate among members on society business, the BCHA will proactively provide space on the Members Site for members to communicate with one another on a voluntary basis. Committees of the Board will be encouraged to publish draft policies for feedback from members.¹ For other society business, members will be able to publish posts on a forum.² Links to new posts on the Members Site will be shared with members via the weekly email newsletter.

The Board is of the opinion that inspection of the Register of Members would be harmful to the society and against the interests of on or more of our members. Therefore, the Board will deny all requests to access the Register of Members except under the following circumstances:

1. The request must be:
 - a. Be made in writing to the BCHA's registered address,
 - b. Include the applicant's full name, and
 - c. Detail the purpose of the request.Incomplete requests will be denied.
2. Requests can only be for one of the following purposes:
 - a. Requisitioning or calling a general meeting,
 - b. Submitting a proposal for a general meeting, or
 - c. An effort to influence the voting of members on a resolution at a general meeting.

Any other requests to access the Register of Members will be rejected. This includes requests relating to requisitioning a general meeting that has already been called, submitting a duplicate proposal for a general meeting or proposals that are not on the agenda for a general meeting. Further, if a proposal or resolution is deemed out of order, the request will be denied.

3. To give the Board sufficient time to review and respond to a request, it must be made more than 14 days prior to a general meeting if it relates to submitting a proposal or to influence voting at that general meeting.
4. The applicant must sign an agreement confirming that information received in the Register of Members will only be used for the originally stated purpose, following which the copy will be destroyed. Consequences for violating this agreement include the immediate termination of the applicant's membership and possible legal action by the Board.
5. The Board may impose reasonable restrictions on the time and location during which the member may inspect the Register.

¹ Comments may be made on the Members Site itself or by emailing them to the respective committee chair for circulation among committee members.

² Posts will be moderated to ensure they are related to society business and in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

6. To receive a copy of the Register, the applicant must pay a fee as set out by the maximum amount specified by the *Societies Regulations*.¹
7. Copies of the Register will only be provided by mail.
8. The copy will be sent within 14 days of payment of the fee.

If the Board rejects the request, the President will provide the applicant with written reasons by email within 14 days of the request.

Accounting records

Requests by a member to inspect detailed accounting records should be directed to the Treasurer. The Treasurer must respond to requests within 14 days and should arrange a reasonable time in which the requested records may be inspected. All third party information should be redacted. Inspections should occur in the presence of the Treasurer.

Copies will only be provided following an inspection in the presence of the Treasurer and after the requester has signed a non-disclosure agreement.

Timelines

In general, the BCHA aims to proactively disclose records on the website or members site within one week of their creation. Minutes will be marked “draft” until approved at a subsequent Board meeting.

Records are kept at least until they are:

1. No longer relevant to the activities or internal affairs of the society and
2. 10 years have passed since the record was created or last altered.

Only those records generated after final approval of this policy are subject to the provisions herein.

¹ \$0.50 per page at the time of the adoption of this policy.

4.0 POLICY TYPE: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

4.1 LOBBYISTS CODE OF CONDUCT

Approved: June 1, 2020¹

Definitions

Lobbyists refers to any volunteers acting in an official capacity and all staff of the BC Humanist Association who communicate with public office holders for the purposes of influencing government in any way.

Public office holder includes all those persons named in federal and provincial lobbying acts, including senators, MPs, MLAs and their staff, ministers and their staff, officers and employees of federal and provincial departments and agencies, Governor and Lieutenant Governor in Council appointees, and members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Principles

Respect for democratic institutions

Lobbyists should act in a manner that demonstrates respect for democratic institutions, including the duty of public office holders to serve the public interest.

Integrity and honesty

Lobbyists should conduct with integrity and honesty all relations with public office holders.

Openness

Lobbyists should be open and frank about their lobbying activities.

Professionalism

Lobbyists should observe the highest professional and ethical standards. In particular, lobbyists should conform fully with the letter and the spirit of the *Lobbyists' Code of Conduct* as well as with all relevant laws, including the *Lobbying Act* and its regulations.

Rules

Transparency

Identity and purpose

1. A lobbyist shall, when communicating with a public office holder, disclose the identity of the person, organization or corporation on whose behalf the

¹ Based on the *Lobbyists' Code of Conduct* developed by the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada, December 1, 2015. Available at: <https://lobbycanada.gc.ca/en/rules/the-lobbyists-code-of-conduct/lobbyists-code-of-conduct/>

communication is made and the nature of their relationship with that person, organization or corporation, as well as the reasons for the approach.

Accurate information

2. A lobbyist shall avoid misleading public office holders by taking all reasonable measures to provide them with information that is accurate and factual.

Duty to disclose

3. A consultant lobbyist shall inform each client of their obligations as a lobbyist under the *Lobbying Act* and the *Lobbyists' Code of Conduct*.
4. The responsible officer (the most senior paid employee) of an organization or corporation shall ensure that employees who lobby on the organization's or corporation's behalf are informed of their obligations under the *Lobbying Act*, the *Lobbyists' Code of Conduct* and the *Lobbyists Transparency Act*.

Use of information

5. A lobbyist shall use and disclose information received from a public office holder only in the manner consistent with the purpose for which it was shared. If a lobbyist obtains a government document they should not have, they shall neither use nor disclose it.

Conflict of interest

6. A lobbyist shall not propose or undertake any action that would place a public office holder in a real or apparent conflict of interest.

In particular:

Preferential access

7. A lobbyist shall not arrange for another person a meeting with a public office holder when the lobbyist and public office holder share a relationship that could reasonably be seen to create a sense of obligation.
8. A lobbyist shall not lobby a public office holder with whom they share a relationship that could reasonably be seen to create a sense of obligation.

Political activities

9. When a lobbyist undertakes political activities on behalf of a person which could reasonably be seen to create a sense of obligation, they may not lobby that person for a specified period if that person is or becomes a public office holder. If that person is an elected official, the lobbyist shall also not lobby staff in their office(s).

Gifts

10. To avoid the creation of a sense of obligation, a lobbyist shall not provide or promise a gift, favour, or other benefit to a public office holder, whom they are lobbying or will lobby, which the public office holder is not allowed to accept.