

# The VTU's Bylaws –Plain Language Summary

## Part 2 – Members

Anyone who agrees to uphold the VTU's purpose and objectives as stated in the Constitution can join the VTU. The VTU works for people who don't own the property they live in or are without shelter.

To join the VTU a person must pay dues of at least \$1.00. If you can't afford this, you can ask a member of the Steering Committee to join without paying.

To renew your membership, you can pay your dues annually in July. If you can't afford this or you joined the VTU shortly before July you can ask a member of the Steering Committee to renew your membership without paying.

Members can only vote if they're 'in good standing.' The point of this rule is to prevent the VTU from being infiltrated by people who want to harm it.

In order to be 'in good standing,' members have to have been members for at least 65 days with their dues paid.

The Steering Committee has the power to take someone's membership away if they are harming the VTU. For this to happen, two thirds of the Steering Committee have to be in agreement. There is another rule that lets members challenge this decision if they do not agree.

## Part 3 – General Meetings of Members

Every 15 months there has to be an Annual General Meeting ("AGM").

At the AGM the Steering Committee will present reports to the members that summarize what they did during the year. They will also present a financial report to tell members how much money was spent and how much money the VTU has.

At the AGM members will elect a new Steering Committee. The end of this summary explains how the election process works.

The Steering Committee has to notify the members at least two weeks before an AGM happens. They can do this by emailing all the members and putting it on the VTU's website.

At least 5% of members have to attend the AGM in order for any votes to pass or a new Steering Committee to be elected.

Every year there has to be at least 5 regular General Meetings ("GMs"). At these GMs the Steering Committee or the Working Groups will update members on the work they are doing.

At least 20 members have to be at an RGM for any votes to pass.

**Special Resolutions** are items that can be brought forward by members at a GM or AGM that require a vote by the membership. They can include challenging a decision of the Steering Committee; endorsing a political campaign, candidate or coalition; or making changes to the Constitution or Bylaws.

Anyone can make a 'Special Resolution' to be voted on at the next GM or AGM by giving a written draft of the special resolution to the Steering Committee. This draft has to be signed by at least two other members of the VTU. This will then be sent to the entire membership.

At the next General Meeting, the membership votes on whether they agree or not. A Special Resolution passes when at least two thirds of the membership vote in favour of it.

#### **Part 4 – Steering Committee**

There are up to 15 members of the Steering Committee. Some of them are elected, but every Working Group gets one representative on the Steering Committee. If more Working Groups are created, the size of the Steering Committee grows to include their representatives.

Working Groups can choose their representative on the Steering Committee however they like.

No one can be a member of the Steering Committee for more than 4 years in a row.

If someone steps down from the Steering Committee and creates a vacancy, the position can be filled by a vote at the next General Meeting. If the date of the next AGM has already been announced, the Steering Committee can appoint someone to temporarily fill the spot.

One member of the Steering Committee is the Treasurer. They're in charge of the finances of the VTU. Another member is the Secretary. They're in charge of things like taking notes and setting up meetings. The Treasurer doesn't change until there is a new Steering Committee, but the Secretary changes every so often.

At least 5 Steering Committee members have to be at a meeting in order for it to happen. They have to take notes about what happens at the meeting and any VTU member can request to see these notes at any time.

The Steering Committee has to follow a vote of the membership before making important decisions like spending more than \$1000 or taking a position on a political issue. This doesn't apply if the decision has to be made immediately, but the Steering Committee still has provide the membership with the opportunity to vote on their decision at the next General Meeting.

## **Part 5 – Working Groups**

The Steering Committee has to allow 3 or more VTU members to start a new Working Group unless the Working Group goes against the VTU's objectives and purposes. You can start a Working Group by sending a written statement of the purpose of the Working Group to the Steering Committee.

Working Groups can do their work however they want to, but they have to explain their activities and how they do them to the Steering Committee.

There can also be Temporary Working Groups, who can work on short-term campaigns.

## **Part 6 — Public Statements**

Any time a member speaks or acts on behalf of the VTU (like showing up to an event as a VTU representative or talking to the press) they have the responsibility of staying true to the purpose and interests of the VTU.

## **Part 7 – Conflict Resolution**

The Bylaws include a process for conflict resolution. Both the offended person and the offending person choose 2 VTU members to be part of a conflict resolution committee. Together, those 4 people decide what should be done to resolve the conflict.

The conflict resolution committee can decide to hire a professional mediator if they think it's necessary.

Either of the members involved in the conflict can opt out if they want to.

## **Appendix A – Steering Committee Election Process**

Each Working Group gets a representative on the Steering Committee. The rest of the Steering Committee is elected. If at least 2 candidates have lived experience with homelessness, SRO tenancy, or living in social housing, then the top 2 vote-getters with that lived experience are elected. After that, as long as there are enough candidates, at least half of the elected Steering Committee members must self-identify as part of an equity-seeking group.

Members will vote using a ranked ballot. That means they will rank candidates for the Steering Committee in order from most preferred to least preferred.