

## Bylaws of the Benzie County Democratic Party

### ARTICLE I. Name

This organization shall be known as the Benzie County Democratic Party. It shall consist of the County Executive Committee, the County Committee, and all current members of the Michigan Democratic Party and all duly elected Democratic precinct delegates residing in Benzie County.

### ARTICLE II. Purpose

The purpose of Benzie County Democratic Party is to promote the philosophy of the Democratic Party and to elect Democrats who support this philosophy; and further, to unite and to aid in the activities of all Party members, precinct delegates, committees, officeholders, candidates and all other Democrats working to promote wide and active participation in the Democratic Party.

The Benzie County Democratic Party shall be a nonprofit organization and upon its dissolution, all assets and real and personal property of the Party and its committees shall revert to the benefit of the Michigan Democratic Party. No part of the income or assets of the Party shall inure to any of its members except for the reimbursement of actual expenses, reasonable compensation for services, or donations for worthy causes, if the Party approves, or a contribution for electing a member to office if the Party so approves.

### ARTICLE III. Fundamental Principles

**Section 1.** All public meetings of Benzie County Democratic Party at all levels shall be open to all members of the Democratic Party regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, economic status, religion, ethnic identity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, physical appearance or disability.

**Section 2.** No tests for membership in, nor any oaths of loyalty to, the Benzie County Democratic Party shall be required or used which has the effect of requiring prospective or current members of the Democratic Party to acquiesce in, condone or support discrimination on the grounds of actual or perceived race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, economic status, religion, ethnicity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, physical appearance or disability.

**Section 3.** The time and place for all public meetings of the Benzie County Democratic Party on all levels shall be publicized fully and in such a manner as to assure timely notice to all interested persons. Such meetings must be held in places accessible to all Party members and large enough to accommodate all interested persons.

**Section 4.** The Benzie County Democratic Party, on all levels, shall support the broadest possible participation without discrimination on grounds of actual or perceived race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, economic status, religion, ethnic identity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, physical appearance or disability.

**Section 5.** The Benzie County Democratic Party shall publicize fully and in such a manner as to assure notice to all interested parties a complete description of the legal and practical procedures and qualifications for selection of all officers and representatives of the Benzie County Democratic Party. Publication shall be done in a timely fashion so that all prospective candidates or applicants for any elected or appointed position within the County Democratic Party will have full and adequate opportunity to compete for office.

**Section 6.** Proportional voting shall be used in the election of delegates and alternates to any Convention, and members of the County Executive Committee:

**Section 7.** All rules and bylaws of the Benzie County Democratic Party at all levels shall be consistent with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party and shall be available on request in writing to any member of the Benzie County Democratic Party:

**Section 8.** The unit rule is prohibited at all levels of the Benzie County Democratic Party.

**Section 9.** On all questions of procedure not resolved by the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party or these Bylaws, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be used.

**Section 10.** The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of any unit, Committee, Caucus or Convention of the Democratic Party shall be of the opposite sex.

#### **ARTICLE IV. Membership**

**Section 1.** Membership of the Benzie County Democratic Party shall consist of all duly elected Democratic precinct delegates of this county, members of the Michigan Democratic Party residing in this county and the Benzie Democratic Committee, Benzie Executive Committee and Officers, all of whom must be members of the Michigan Democratic Party.

*Section 1a.* The Local Party may also set up a Local Membership to support the Local Party. Local Membership will not constitute membership in the State Party or the Local Party for voting purposes.

**Section 2.** Precinct delegates shall be apportioned and selected in accordance with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party.

**Section 3.** The Officers, Executive Committee and County Committee of the Benzie County Democratic Party shall be selected in accordance with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party.

#### **ARTICLE V. Meetings**

**Section 1.** The regular meetings of the Benzie County Executive Committee shall be on the day of each month, as needed, at the location and time designated in the meeting notice. At least five (5) days' notice shall be given of the date, time and place of the meeting. Notice may be given by mail, telegram, fax or e-mail. A quorum shall exist at an Executive Committee meeting when one third of the Executive Committee members are present.

**Section 2.** The full Benzie County Committee shall meet at least quarterly to review the activities of the Executive Committee. At least five (5) days' notice shall be given of the date, time and place of the meeting. Notice may be given by mail, telegram, fax or email.

**Section 3.** Special meetings of the Executive or County Committee may be called by any member of the Executive Committee. At least five (5) days' notice shall be given of the date, place, time and purpose of the special meeting. In the event of an emergency vote needing to be taken, a poll of the Executive Board members may be taken by e-mail and/or phone by roll call vote being recorded. A quorum of the entire Executive Board must be taken for the vote to be valid.

**Section 4.** Subject to the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party and these Bylaws, all meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition).

#### **ARTICLE VI. Officers, Executive Committee, and County Committee**

**Section 1.** One third (1/3) of the Executive Committee shall automatically consist of the most recent nominees for countywide office and the county commission, and State House, State Senate and U.S. House whose districts include all or part of the county. The County Convention shall elect by ballot the balance of the Executive Committee, which shall consist of twice the number of automatic members. Each even-numbered year within twenty (20) days following the November election the delegates to the County Convention shall convene at the call of the county chairperson for the purpose of electing part of the Executive Committee. If a vacancy occurs in the position of delegate-elected member of the Executive Committee, the remaining delegate-elected members fill the vacancy. The Executive Committee may fill a vacancy in any of its offices: The Executive Committee shall meet monthly, as needed, at a regularly scheduled meeting, and shall keep minutes of all meetings which shall be available to all Party members at County Committee meetings.

**Section 2.** Officers shall be selected in accordance with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party within thirty (30) days of the election of the Executive Committee: The officers are a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson of the opposite sex of the Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer, who shall serve as officers of both the Executive Committee and County Committee.

**Section 3.** Within forty-five (45) days of January 1st of each odd-numbered year the Executive Committee determines the membership of the County Committee. The County Committee can elect additional officers, who in its judgment are proper to carry out the purposes of the County Committee and can fill a vacancy, which may occur in the membership of the County Committee or in any of its additional offices. Between meetings of the County Committee, the Executive Committee has all the powers and performs all the duties of the County Committee, including the filling of vacancies in nominations as prescribed by law.

**Section 4.** The Chairperson shall preside at all Executive and County Committee meetings, shall serve as the CEO and maintain all documents with the exception of the minutes and financial documents.

**Section 5.** The Vice-Chairperson shall be a member of the opposite sex from the Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson in the discharge of his/her duties, and shall temporarily assume the duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson in his/her absence.

**Section 6.** The Secretary of this organization shall keep an accurate record and minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Executive Committee and County Committee. He/She shall keep and preserve all the books, documents, correspondence, records, minutes, effects, and any other property of this organization, and when a new secretary is elected the past secretary shall forthwith deliver to the newly elected secretary all the aforesaid items kept and preserved during his/her tenure of office. He/She shall see that proper notification is given to the Executive Committee and County Committee of their meetings. Notify Michigan Democratic Party and Benzie County Clerk of all changes of officers and By-Laws in a timely manner.

**Section 7.** The Treasurer shall be responsible for the financial receipts and disbursements of this organization subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. The funds of this organization shall be deposited in banks and shall be drawn upon to pay recurring operating expenses in accordance with the budget. The Treasurer shall bring all other payments to the Executive Committee for approval. The Treasurer shall make final reports to the Executive Committee as that Committee so directs and shall make reports to all County Committee meetings. When a new Treasurer is elected, the past Treasurer shall forthwith deliver to the new Treasurer the funds and all the books and records kept during his/her tenure in office. The Treasurer shall also be responsible for timely submission of all necessary State and Federal reports. The Treasurer or Deputy Treasurer shall also be responsible for receipt of all mail from the Post Office Box no less than once a week and distributing it to the necessary recipients.

**Section 8.** The Deputy Treasurer of the Benzie County Democratic Party shall assist the Treasurer with all activities necessary and proper. The Treasurer with the approval of the Executive Board will appoint the Deputy Treasurer to the position.

*Section 8a:* The Treasurer, County Chairperson, Deputy Treasurer shall be required to sign all checks pertaining to the Benzie County Democratic Party. Executive Committee approval is required of any expenditures outside of the budget with the exception of emergency expenditures under \$100 which may be authorized by the Chairperson and Treasurer, then presented for approval at the next Executive Board Meeting.

**Section 9.** Two (2) trustees of the Benzie Democratic Committee, elected by the Benzie County Democratic Party Executive Committee, shall conduct an audit of the books and all financial records of the Benzie County Democratic Committee each year . The audit will be conducted prior to the January meeting and the trustees shall provide a full report to the executive board at the January meeting. The trustees should have a knowledge of book keeping. Trustees should not be officers but may come from the remaining executive board or general membership. Names may be submitted to the executive board and voted on by them.

At the time of a treasurer's resignation an audit will be conducted, by the trustees as part of the transition from one Treasurer to another. The trustee's report will be given to the executive committee not more than two meetings from the date of resignation.

## **ARTICLE VII. Committees**

**Section 1.** Standing Committees shall include the following:

1. Rules and Bylaws Committee
2. Finance/Fundraising Committee
3. Communications Committee/Public Relations Committee
4. Campaign Committee/Candidate Recruitment Committee
5. Membership Committee
6. Issues and Action Committee
7. Blue Tiger Community Service Committee

These committees shall include the appropriate subcommittees. *The Chairperson of the County Party shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees, and shall receive prior notice of all committee meetings and receive reports of the meetings results.*

**Section 2.** Committee Chairs shall appoint a secretary and vice chair of the committee to take notes and assist the committee chair. Committee charges will be as follows:

1. **Rules and Bylaws Committee:** Maintain and update the Official Bylaws of the Benzie County Democratic Party.
2. **Finance/Fundraising Committee:** Broaden and energize our fundraising effort by identifying different interests and types of people and how they would like to contribute. The Finance/Fundraising Committee shall be responsible for developing a budget, which must be approved by the Executive Committee before implementation. The Treasurer shall be a member of this committee.
3. **Communications Committee:** Increase Benzie Democratic Party's visibility with dynamic and creative communications that promote our events, educate about our core values, and articulate our positions. Initiate and maintain internal and external communications, including newsletters, website, Constant Contact, E-mail, news releases and meeting notices. The Secretary shall be a member of this committee. Also, maintain mailing list, precinct lists, phone lists, e-mail lists and making them readily available for authorized persons from the various committees as needed.
4. **Campaign Committee/Candidate Recruitment Committee:** Identify democratic candidates for elected and/or appointed positions in public offices. Recruit and direct the campaign committee, Precinct Delegates will be automatic members of the Campaign Committee. Ad hoc subcommittees of this committee may be formed as necessary.
5. **Membership Committee:** Chairperson. Work in conjunction with other committees in identifying key groups and developing messages about our values to them and how joining us will serve their interests. Maintain State and Local Party rosters and recruit new members.
6. **Issues/Action Committee:** Develop effective ways to keep us informed and educated as a party on key issues, as well as communicating our positions to the community.
7. **Blue Tigers Community Service Committee:** Develop community relationships through outreach, public service, and community organization.

## **ARTICLE VIII. Order of Business**

At meetings, the business of the organization shall proceed in the following order:

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
3. Roll call of officers
4. Minutes of the previous meeting
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Chair's Report
7. Reports of Committees
8. Unfinished Business
9. New Business
10. Announcements
11. Adjournment

## **ARTICLE IX. Amendments**

**Section 1.** Proposals for changes or amendments to these bylaws shall first be referred to the Rules and Bylaws Committee, which shall report its recommendations to the next regular County Committee meeting or special meeting called for that purpose.

**Section 2.** These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members of Benzie County Democratic Committee, present at a meeting, provided that written notice setting forth the proposed amendment has been given to all Party members at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

**Section 3.** These bylaws shall be in full force and effect upon their adoption and shall supersede all bylaws, rules, motions and policies of a contrary nature with the exception of the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party.

Approved by Executive Committee on May 3, 2003

Amended by Executive Committee on January 10, 2009

Amended by Executive Committee on June 18, 2011 (Entire bylaws revised.)

Amended by Executive Committee on November 6, 2011 (Addition of Article VI, Section 9.)

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Jill Kimball, Chair, November 6, 2011

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Doreen Fitzgerald, Recording Secretary, November 6, 2011