



## **Bylaws of the Benzie County Democratic Party**

### Preamble

We, the members of the Benzie County Democratic County Committee, a progressive community-based organization of volunteers working to improve the lives of our county's people, hereby establish and adopt these rules and bylaws for our organization.

Our goals are to:

- Serve the needs and aspirations of all people.
- Work for equal opportunity for all in politics, government, education, housing, and business.
- Include in our efforts people of color, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, and all others who add to our country's magnificent diversity.
- Elect people who share our values to all levels of government.

We do this by engaging like-minded people and building a grassroots coalition of community members who support and work together for positive change.

## ARTICLE I. NAME

This organization will be known as the Benzie County Democratic Party.

## ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the 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 will be a non-profit organization and upon its dissolution, all assets and real and personal property of the Party and its committees will revert to the benefit of the Michigan Democratic Party. No part of the income or assets of the Party will benefit 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 the Benzie County Democratic Party at all levels will be open to all members of the Democratic Party regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, gender identity, age, nation of 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 will be required or used that 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, gender identity, age, national origin, economic status, religion, ethnic identity, 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 will be publicized in ways 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, will support the broadest possible participation without discrimination on grounds of actual or perceived race, color, creed, gender identity, age, national origin, economic status, religion, ethnic identity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, physical appearance, or disability.

Section 5. The Benzie County Democratic Party will publicize fully and in such a manner as to assure notice to all interested parties a copy of the Bylaws, a 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 a full and adequate opportunity to compete for office.

Section 6. All rules and Bylaws of the Benzie County Democratic Party at all levels will be consistent with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party and will be available on request in writing to any member of the Benzie County Democratic Party.

Section 7. The unit rule is prohibited at all levels of the Benzie County Democratic Party.

Section 8. 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 9. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of any Unit, Committee, Caucus or Convention of the Democratic Party shall be of a different gender identity.

#### ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership of the Benzie County Democratic Party shall consist of the Executive Committee, all who have applied for membership to the Benzie County Democratic Party, all current members of the Michigan Democratic Party residing in Benzie County, and all duly elected Democratic precinct delegates residing in Benzie County.

Section 1a. The Local Party may also set up a Local Membership Committee 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 will be apportioned and selected in accordance with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party.

Section 3. The County Executive Committee and officers, precinct delegates, and Democratic candidates must all be members of the Michigan Democratic Party and 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 will be held monthly on the day of each month, as needed, at the location and time designated in the meeting notice. At least five (5) days' notice will be given of the date, time, and place of the meeting. Notice may be given by mail, social media, or e-mail. A quorum will exist at a County Executive Committee meeting when one third of the County Executive Committee members are present.

Section 2. The Benzie County Democratic Party will meet at least twice a year to review the activities of the Executive Committee. At least five (5) days' notice will be given of the date, time, and place of the meeting. Notice may be given by mail, social media, or email.

Section 3 The Benzie County Democratic Party will meet monthly, as needed, on the third Saturday of every month to present speakers, hear community announcements, and recruit members for party activities.

Section 4. Special meetings of the County Executive Committee may be called by any member of the County Party. At least five (5) days' notice will be given of the date, place, time, and purpose of the special meeting. If an emergency vote needs to be

taken, a poll of the County Executive Committee members may be taken by e-mail and/or phone by recorded roll call vote. A quorum of the entire Executive Committee must be present for the vote to be valid.

Section 5. Subject to the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party and these Bylaws, all meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition).

## ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS, COUNTY COMMITTEE

Section 1. The County Executive Committee will automatically consist of the most recent nominees for countywide office and the County Commission, 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 at least twelve (12) additional members.

Within twenty (20) days following the November election in each even-numbered year, the delegates to the County Convention will 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 will fill the vacancy. The Executive Committee may fill a vacancy in any of its offices. The Executive Committee will meet monthly, as needed, at a regularly scheduled meeting, and shall keep minutes of all meetings which shall be available to all county Party members.

Section 2. Officers will 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:

Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson of a different gender identity than the Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer.

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

Section 4. The Chairperson will perform all functions/duties attributed to this office or that may be required by this organization. The Chairperson will:

- Preside over monthly and other meetings of the County Board and general membership
- Set the agenda for meetings
- Appoint Chairpersons to Committees and helping those persons find members for their Committees
- Represent the Benzie Democratic Committee to the public
- Interface with candidates and campaigns
- Work with the Treasurer and the finance committee to create a two (2)-year budget and present the budget to the Committee for approval
- Prepare a slate of incoming Board Members at the end of each cycle, per procedure outlined in a separate document authored by Mary Robling.
- Ensure that announcements of meetings are given in a timely fashion in accordance with our Bylaws, call special meetings or cancel meetings when necessary
- Participate as an ex officio member of all standing committees and create ad hoc committees when necessary.
- Collect all mail from the party post office box and distribute to proper recipients.

The Chairperson may take a vote by email if there is not enough time to convene the executive committee in person or on zoom. The Secretary will keep a record of the email vote.

The term of the Chairperson is two (2) years.

Section 5. The Vice-Chairperson will temporarily assume the duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson in their absence and as assigned, shall assist the Chairperson in the discharge of their duties. The term of office for the Vice-Chairperson is two (2) years.

Section 6. The Secretary will keep an accurate record and minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Executive Committee. They will keep and preserve the books, documents, correspondence, records, minutes, effects, and any other property of this organization for seven (7) years. 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 their tenure of office. They will see that proper notification is given to the Executive Committee of their meetings and notify the Michigan Democratic Party and Benzie County Clerk of all changes of Officers and Bylaws in a timely manner.

Section 7. The Treasurer will be responsible for the financial receipts and disbursements of this organization subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. The funds of this organization will be deposited in banks and will be drawn upon to pay recurring operating expenses in accordance with the budget. The Treasurer will bring all other payments to the Executive Committee for approval. The Treasurer will make final reports to the Executive Committee as that Committee so directs and will make reports at all Executive Committee meetings. When a new Treasurer is elected, the past Treasurer will forthwith deliver to the new Treasurer the funds and all the books and



records kept during their tenure in office. The Treasurer will also be responsible for the timely submission of all necessary State reports.

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

8a: The Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, and County Chairperson shall register their signatures for the County Party's checking/bank accounts and any other related financial or fiduciary documents, upon their election to those offices. Either the Treasurer or Chairperson is required to sign any checks pertaining to the Benzie County Democratic Party. The check writer must have written approval from the other officer before writing the check.

8b: Approval by the vote of the Executive Committee is required for any expenditure exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100) that is not already part of the approved budget.

Section 9. The Benzie County Democratic Party County Committee will elect two (2) Trustees for the Benzie Democratic County Committee, who will audit the books and all financial records of the Benzie County Democratic Party annually. The audit will be conducted before the January meeting so the Trustees can provide a full report to the Executive Committee at the January meeting. The Trustees should have a knowledge of bookkeeping. Trustees should not be Officers but may come from the remaining County Board or general membership. Names may be submitted to the Executive Committee and voted on by them.

## ARTICLE VII. COMMITTEES

Committees—either standing or ad hoc—are established and maintained by the Executive Committee, which may, by majority vote, also dissolve any committee at any time. The Party Chairperson appoints each Committee head, who then serves at the Party Chairman's pleasure. The Chairperson may create an ad hoc committee as the need arises. Committee Chairs shall recruit their own Committee's Members.

The Chairperson is a member of each committee but doesn't necessarily meet with all committees all of the time. The Chair selects the Committee Chairs. The committees meet at a time and date decided by them to conduct their business. It is recommended that they have a note taker or Secretary to create a summary of the meeting. The summary is given to the Executive Committee at the monthly meeting. The summary should discuss what the committee is doing and where they might need support.

Committees find their own members and let the County Chairperson know what their needs are so that an email can be sent to the general membership requesting volunteer help. Traditionally all Committee Chairs serve on the Executive Committee.

Standing committees for the Benzie County Democratic Party are:

1) Finance Committee: Consists of the Treasurer, Deputy Treasures and three (3) Trustees, who shall support, monitor, and report to the Executive Committee regarding budgeting, fundraising goals, and bookkeeping, as pursuant to Article 6, Sec. 7, 8 and 9.

2) Special Events Committee: Create, organize, and staff Party and community events that build the Party; raise money for the Party, our candidates, and, at times, other

community organizations; and promote the Party throughout Benzie—such as, but not limited to, the Scholarship Dinner, Holiday Party, and Movie Nights.

The Special Events Committee will also develop effective ways to keep the membership informed and educated on key issues. This can be accomplished through forums, movies, speakers, and other events or distributions.

3) Communications Committee: Includes oversight/creation of Social Media of many types—such as Facebook and similar platforms—letter-writing, and Constant Contact email. Ad hoc committees of this committee may be formed as necessary, for example, Pop Up project, Lookout project, web design and content.

4) Data Committee: Works with the Voter Activation Network (VAN) to maintain mailing lists, precinct lists, phone lists, email lists, membership lists, and volunteer lists, and will make them available, by prior arrangement, to other committees to support their projects.

5) Campaign Committee: Includes candidate recruitment and management of campaign functions i.e., data, walks, phone banks and Get Out The Vote (GOTV), interfaces with Chairperson, various campaigns and all other related committees.

6) Membership Committee: Works with other committees to create messages about our values and goals and uses them to re-enroll current members and recruit new members to the Benzie County Democratic Party. Maintain State and Benzie County Party membership rosters. All subcommittee Chairs, Precinct Delegates and candidates must be members of both the MDP and the Benzie County Democrats.

7) Blue Tiger Committee: Dedicated to building the Democratic Party through civic engagement and community participation. This will be accomplished essentially through programs that deal with people's specific needs in their communities and will involve the Party in addressing those needs. The Blue Tiger Committee will make the Party matter in people's lives by solving community problems such as the food drive, road clean-up, scholarships, Close Up contributions, among others.

8) Hospitality Committee: Responsible for monthly meeting set up and refreshments and keeping the office clean and organized.

9) Rules and Bylaws Committee: Works with the Executive Committee to maintain, monitor, and update rules and bylaws as necessary.

## ARTICLE VIII. ORDER OF BUSINESS

At meetings, the business of the organization will 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 must first be referred to the Rules and Bylaws Committee, which will report its recommendations at the next regular Executive Committee meeting or at a 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 the Executive Committee present at a meeting, provided that at least two (2) weeks written notice setting forth the proposed amendment has been given to them. Additionally, the proposed Bylaws require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of all Benzie County Democratic Committee members present at the next general meeting, no less than two (2) weeks after the amended bylaws are posted on the Party web site.

Section 3. These Bylaws will be in full force and effect upon their adoption and will supersede all Bylaws, rules, motions, and policies of a contrary nature apart from the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party.

Amended/Approved by Executive Committee on Oct.2, 2023

Amended/Approved by County Committee on xxxxxx

Amended by County Committee, via Email ballot, on xxxxxx

Jim Dulzo, Chairperson

Mary Robling, Chair of the Bylaws Committee