

Saint George's Greek Orthodox Church and Community Centre



Bylaws

December 2006

Approved by General Assemblies in years
2005 and 2006



INTRODUCTION

The bylaws of a community are the rules that describe how the basic operations of the community should be conducted. These rules should represent the views of a significant majority of the General Assembly and they should be determined by the community members. In particular, any bylaw must be approved by a 2/3 majority of those present in a General Assembly. This is standard parliamentary procedure according to article 17 of the Nova Scotia Religious Congregations and Societies Act, Chapter 395 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, <http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/legc/statutes/religcon.htm>

This document contains the set of bylaws of our community as of 2006. These bylaws were composed using the following process:

1. A bylaws committee was struck in 2004 by the General Assembly.
2. The bylaws committee read the minutes of all past General Assemblies (1948-2004) and identified decisions that have the effect of bylaws. These decisions were compiled and distributed to the community.
3. Every community member had the chance to propose (with a seconder) bylaws, including any of the past General Assembly decisions.
4. The proposed bylaws were approved one by one in the course of four General Assemblies.

Evidently the above process was open and allowed any community member to participate by proposing, amending, and approving bylaws. As such the process was lengthy, but in the end it was completed. Any member of the community can look at the administration part of the community's website to find more details about the above process. It is important to note that any of these bylaws can be amended, or a new bylaw can be added. Again for this, a 2/3 majority is required of those present in a General Assembly.

The bylaws committee wishes to thank all community members who participated in the above lengthy, but worthy, process.

Sincerely yours,

Evangelos Milios
Stavros Konstantinidis
Takis Kostopoulos
Dimitris Matsrodimitropoulos
Dimitris Procos

The members of the bylaws committee, December 2006.

1. GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 The number of members for quorum is 35.
- 1.1.2 There are two regular General Assemblies per year, one in the spring and one in the fall.
- 1.1.3 For all transactions with the community and church, including sacraments and voting rights in general assemblies, the member must be up to date for the current year. (assembly 2006-01-29).
- 1.1.4 The membership fee covers a family membership and covers the spouses and the non-adult children. Paid member can be either spouse, and only one of them has the right to participate actively in the General Assemblies or as a member of the Council, unless spouses have paid each their own separate membership, in which case they are both entitled to participation. The spouse who signs the book of members present in a general assembly has the right to participate and vote in that assembly.

1.2 Agenda

- 1.2.1 The agenda of the General Assemblies is compiled by the Council and includes:
 - a. Items brought forward by the Council
 - b. Items brought forward by Community members for discussion.
 - c. The Council and members can bring forward motions related to agenda items.
 - d. Items and motions by members must be submitted in writing to the Council and signed by at least two members of the Community, for them to be included into the agenda in advance and published in it.
 - e. The last item of the agenda is “Other business”.

1.3 Announcement

- 1.3.1 Together with the announcement and the agenda of a General Assembly, the following are also published in the Community web site, if possible, which currently is at <http://www.halifaxgreeks.ca/>:
 - a. The minutes of the previous General Assembly (regular or special).
 - b. The motions on the agenda and their rationale, where necessary.
 - c. Budget, financial statement. They must be detailed concerning regular and special expense items.
- 1.3.2 The minutes of the General Assemblies and the motions brought forward must be distributed in both English and Greek.

1.4 Ensuring the legality

- 1.4.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring the legality of the General Assembly, i.e. that only paid-up members are active participants. The associated duties of the Treasurer are described in Article 2.3.7 of these bylaws.
- 1.4.2 Paid-up members are given a special coupon for participation and voting during the assembly, to be displayed during these activities. Others present are not entitled to vote or to participate in the discussion.

1.5 Parliamentary procedure

- 1.5.1 The General Assemblies follow the formal parliamentary procedure. They are being conducted on the basis of motions put forward by the Council and the Community members. All motions must be seconded, unless they come from a committee.
- 1.5.2 The General Assembly must have simultaneous translation in English and Greek, when requested by at least one member, so that all members can participate in the language they feel most comfortable with.
- 1.5.3 Discussion takes place only about motions. Free discussion or brainstorming takes place in committees or ad-hoc groups of members before the assembly.
- 1.5.4 Any member (with a seconder) can propose a motion at any point during the assembly. If the motion is outside the current agenda item, the assembly decides in an open vote whether to accept the motion for discussion at that point instead of at the end under “Other business”. Majority of 2/3 of those present is required to discuss the motion at that point.
A motion not in the agenda is considered for discussion only, not voting.
- 1.5.5 Open voting takes place by raising the hand, and count of all votes in favour, against the motion and abstentions. Voting is open by default. A secret ballot must be decided by 2/3 of the present in an open vote.
- 1.5.6 The result of each vote must be included in the minutes.
- 1.5.7 The Chair of the General Assembly must know the Community Bylaws and the Parliamentary procedures.
- 1.5.8 Cases not covered by these Bylaws must follow the manual “The a-b-c’s of Parliamentary Procedure” by Channing L. Bete Co., Inc., or other manual that contains the “Robert’s Rules of Order”.

2. COMMUNITY COUNCIL

2.1. General

- 2.1.1 The Council includes 9 members and the priest

2.2 Structure

- 2.2.1 The structure of the Council has the following officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer Assistant Secretary, Assistant Treasurer, Vice President building, Vice President Festival, Vice President business development
- 2.2.2 The Council can modify its structure (not its size) according to the needs of the Community.

2.3 Duties of Officers

- 2.3.1 Each Sunday and days of major holiday church services at least two members of the Council must be present in the Church to collect the funds from the candles and the trays.
- 2.3.2 The Council proposes the annual membership fee for the following year, to be approved by the General Assembly. The Council determines the tuition of the Greek School in consultation with the Parent-Teacher Association.
- 2.3.3 The duties of individual officers are described in the following paragraphs. Additional duties may be assigned according to the needs of the Community.
- 2.3.4 **President:** has the general oversight of the Council and the Community. Responsible for the smooth functioning of the committees and the Council. Calls and Chairs Council meetings.

- 2.3.5 **Vice President:** Helps the President in his/her tasks. Performs the duties of the President, when he/she is away.
- 2.3.6 **Secretary:** Keeps the minutes of the meetings of the Council and the General Assemblies in both English and Greek. Makes the announcements of the General Assemblies to the Community members. Collects motions from members and committees and distributes them to the Community members. Responsible for the correspondence of the Community with the Metropolis and the Provincial, Federal and Greek governments. Responsible for the maintenance of the Community archives (except the financial). Responsible for the information of the Community members through the Community web site. Allows each interested member to view the Community archives. In case the Secretary does not possess both official languages or Web skills, he/she should seek help from community members who are.
- 2.3.7 **Treasurer:** responsible for the financial affairs of the Community. Maintains the financial archive. Maintains the list of paid-up members. Responsible for ensuring the voting eligibility of members attending General Assemblies. Prepares and distributes the budget and the financial statements. Is the contact person with the Community accountant. Responsible for collecting the tuition from the parents of Greek School students. Prior to each General Assembly, the treasurer is prepared to collect membership fee payments from members willing to participate in the assembly. The collection of fees stops when quorum is achieved and the Assembly starts. The Treasurer checks against the list of paid-up members to ensure that those present are valid members of the Community and provides them with the special coupon for voting.
- 2.3.8 **Assistant Secretary:** Helps the secretary in his/her tasks. Performs secretary duties when the secretary is away.
- 2.3.9 **Assistant Treasurer:** Helps the treasurer in his/her tasks. Performs treasurer duties when the treasurer is away.
- 2.3.10 **Vice President Building:** Responsible for facilitating all approved building matters such as maintenance, cleaning, repairs, modifications, extensions. Chair of the building committee, defined in article 5.4.3 of the present bylaws). Responsible to collect the required number of offers for every building work that is not an emergency.
- 2.3.11 **Vice President Greek Fest:** Responsible for organizing the Festival. Chair of the main Festival committee, which coordinates the various Festival subcommittees.
- 2.3.12 **Vice President Business Development:** Responsible for the identification and promotion of activities that promote the financial viability of the Community (exploitation of the Community hall and other property, prediction/estimation of income from proposed investment actions).

3. ELECTIONS

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 Elections shall be held once a year.
- 3.1.2 In the regular General Assembly of the fall the Election Committee is elected, and the date of the Elections and the deadline for submission of candidacies are decided. The Election committee mails the form for the submission of candidates to all paid Community members (in the current year).

3.2 Lack of candidates

- 3.2.1 If there are not sufficient candidates (50% + 1 of the Council size from article 2.1 of the present

bylaws) to have elections by the set deadline, the Council calls a special General Assembly with first item the recruitment of sufficient candidates to hold elections.

4. COMMUNITY PROPERTY

4.1 Projects

- 4.1.1 For projects on the real estate, the Council must obtain (in 2005 dollars):
Three estimates for projects between \$3000 and \$20000. The estimates are announced in the monthly bulletin. For projects over \$20,000 approval of a General Assembly is required. The Council is responsible for selecting the best estimate, and for justifying its selection to the next General Assembly if requested.
- 4.1.2 Emergency repairs are exempt from the above regulation. Emergency repairs are defined as those repairs for which the damage from the delay of the repair exceeds the cost of the repair, or will create a serious disruption to the normal functioning of the Community or it will involve the violation of the Building Code.
- 4.1.3 The above amounts are adjusted every 5 years based on the change in the Canadian Consumer Price Index of the Bank of Canada, currently available at:
http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/inflation_calc.htm

4.2 Use of the Community Hall

- 4.2.1 The Community Hall can be rented to Community members, as well as non-Community individuals or organizations, on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- 4.2.2 The rental requires a written contract, which explicitly mentions the duties and obligations of the renters and the Community.
- 4.2.3 The rent is set by the Council and is mentioned for information in the General Assembly and updated annually. There are different rates for Community members and non-members.

5. GOOD FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMUNITY

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 The good functioning of the Community relies on the work of various committees, to the transparency of operations, to the information of members by the Council, to the information of the Council by the various committees and in general to the mutual respect of all members and groups within the Community.

5.2 Two official languages

- 5.2.1 The Community has two official languages, English and Greek.

5.3 Transparency and information dissemination

- 5.3.1 The meetings of all committees and the Council are open to all Community members, who have the right to participate as listeners (no voting and no participation in the discussion).
- 5.3.2 The day and time of the Council meetings is announced in the Community Website <http://www.halifaxgrees.ca/> and the Monthly bulletin. The Council reserves the right to have

special meetings depending on the needs of the Community and the professional obligations of its members.

- 5.3.3 The minutes of the General Assemblies are published in the Monthly bulletin of the following month and the Community Website, in a password-protected area. Password is available to community members.
- 5.3.4 The minutes of the Council meetings are published in the Community Website in the same password-protected area as in the previous paragraph.
- 5.3.5 The membership of committees is published in the Monthly bulletin and the Community Website.

5.4 Permanent committees

- 5.4.1 **Auditing committee.**
- 5.4.2 **Election committee.**
- 5.4.3 **Building committee:** Consists of volunteer Community members appointed by the Council. Helps the VP Building.
- 5.4.4 **Festival committee:** Consists of volunteer Community members appointed by the Council. Helps the VP Greek Fest.
- 5.4.5 **Business development committee:** Consists of volunteer Community members appointed by the Council. Helps the VP Business Development.
- 5.4.6 **Bylaws committee:** Consists of volunteer Community members appointed by the General Assembly. Responsible for the compilation/maintenance of the bylaws based on decisions by General Assemblies. The members of this committee must attend the General Assemblies.
- 5.4.7 **School committee (PTA):** Consists of Community members who have children in the School, a Teacher of the School, and a Council member. Appointed by the General Assembly of parents. It can establish its own constitution which must be approved by the Community Council.

5.5 Ad-hoc committees:

- 5.5.1 The Council or the General Assembly can constitute ad-hoc committees for specific projects or tasks.

6. FINANCIAL ORGANIZATION

6.1 General

- 6.1.1 The financial organization of the Community is the responsibility of the Council.
- 6.1.2 The Community is a non-profit charitable organization, which, according to Canadian laws, is not allowed to have profits. The remainder of profits after the replenishing of the funds (defined below) will be directed to charitable purposes.

6.2 Funds

- 6.2.1 The financial resources of the Community are organized into funds.
- 6.2.2 **Building fund:** This is a financial reserve, the exclusive purpose of which is the financing of ongoing capital improvements of the building. The target for this fund is set at 10% of the value of the building, as appraised professionally every 5 years.

- 6.2.3 **School fund:** This is intended to cover the School needs, e.g. instructional material, furniture, technological equipment for improving the learning process, consumables.
- 6.2.4 **Church fund:** this is intended for the church needs, e.g. new liturgical and catechetical texts, attire, technological equipment to support the Church services.
- 6.2.5 **Special funds:** With approval of a simple majority of a General Assembly funds can be established for special projects, for the financing of which the funds are not immediately available.
- 6.2.6 **Scholarship Fund.** A scholarship fund will be establish to provide for two scholarships to students of Hellenic descent, one for a student entering University, and one for a student continuing University studies.
- 6.2.7 The level of all funds except the building fund are decided by a 2/3 majority of a General Assembly.

7. CHANGES TO BYLAWS

7.1. General

- 7.1.1 The present bylaws can only be changed by a General Assembly.
- 7.1.2 For approval or change of bylaws a 2/3 majority of those present is required.

8. SCHOOL COMMITTEE

8.1. Purpose. The purpose of the School committee is to promote activities that enhance the experiences the School offers and to support and upgrade the School infrastructure. The School operates under the umbrella of the Community, and obeys the Community rules. The activities of the School must be coordinated with the Community's programs and events.

8.2. Finances of the School committee.

- 8.2.1. The School committee deposits the funds it raises in its own account, from which it spends for the needs of the School. At the end of the School year the balance of the account is transferred to the Council. The School committee keeps detailed records of its income and expenses, which must be provided to the Community treasurer to be included in the financial statements of the Community.
- 8.2.2. The School committee requests in the beginning of the School year a budget for the following School year. The School budget is presented for approval in the first regular General Assembly of the year. The Council transfers the requested amount to the School committee account. The amount comes from the operating account of the Community for regular School expenses and from the School fund for special projects.

8.3. General Assembly of parents

- 8.3.1. The General Assembly of parents operates under the same principles as the General Assembly of the Community. Announcements of General Assemblies are distributed to parents through the School children, and by the School committee by electronic mail, and announced in the School web site 10 workdays in advance. The School committee operates like the Community Council.

- 8.3.2. The General Assembly of parents has quorum when 25% of the parents of the Greek School are present. The secretary of the School committee keeps minutes of the School committee meetings and the General Assemblies of parents, which are published in the School web site, <http://www.halifaxgreeks.ca/School/>
- 8.3.3. The General Assembly of parents has the right to change the agenda that the School committee has prepared with 2/3 majority. General Assembly of parents can be called on any topic related to the School with a letter to the School committee signed by 10% of the parents. A topic can be added to the agenda of a General Assembly of parents with a letter submitted to the School committee signed by 10% of the parents.
- 8.3.4. The decisions of the General Assembly of parents that have financial consequences beyond the funds raised by the School committee must be approved by the Community Council.

8.4. Tuition

- 8.4.1. The tuition of the Greek School is set by the Community Council in consultation with the School committee so that the expenses of the teachers' salaries are covered. If the tuition does not cover the teachers' salaries in full, the balance is covered by the Community.
- 8.4.2. There are two tuition scales, one for students whose parents are paid community members, and another for students whose parents are not community members.
- 8.4.3. The deadline for payment of tuition for the full year is September 30. Unpaid tuition is charged interest at a rate of 2% per month on the current amount owing (compound interest). If tuition is not paid by postdated cheques by Dec. 31 of the current School year, students will not be allowed to continue their study.
- 8.4.4. Students whose parents are unable to pay School tuition can have their tuition waived based on a letter from the priest to the Community treasurer confirming the inability of the family to pay its tuition. Both the priest and the Community treasurer are bound to preserve the confidentiality of this information. These letters are not kept in the archive of the Community, only in the files of the Priest.
- 8.4.5. The Community Council is responsible for collecting the tuition of the School.

8.5. Regular external review of the School.

- 8.5.1. Every 3 years the School will be reviewed by the educational expert of the Metropolis. The travel and local expenses of the expert are covered by the Community. The recommendations of the review are binding for the Council, the Teachers and the School committee.

9. CONTENTS OF THE MINUTES BOOK

The minutes book of the Community shall contain the following:

- 9.1 **The minutes of all general assemblies**, regular and special, in strict chronological order. The minutes must be signed by the chair of the assembly, the secretary of the assembly and the priest. The minutes include:
 - the agenda of the assembly
 - all motions made, including the name of the mover and seconder, the type of vote (open or secret), and the result of the vote (in favour/against/abstentions).
 - the gist of the discussions about the motions, with names of speakers, where practical.

- financial statements and budgets.
- letters read to the assembly.
- reports of committees, where practical.

9.2 **Protocol of transfer.** When the Council changes, the protocol of transfer of the Community from the old council to the new council is compiled, which lists the following (in the book of minutes of General Assemblies – Article 10.1):

- the outgoing council (naming the officers)
- the incoming council (naming the officers)
- the name of the priest
- the real estate property of the community, including mortgages and debts
- the monetary instruments of the community (bank account balances, shares, GIC's etc.)
- keys, books, official stamp

The protocol of transfer is signed by both the outgoing and incoming council members and the priest

9.3 **Record of election.** At election time, the election committee enters a record of the election, including the candidates, the election date and time, the list of names of those who voted, and the result of the vote. The record is signed by the election committee members and the priest.

9.4 **Corrections of the minutes.**

1. Official version. Independently of whether or not computer copies exist, there is one official archival version of the minutes in a bound minutes book with prenumbered pages. This is the version that the secretary prepares based on the notes he kept during the meeting M1. Copies of this version are circulated for approval in the next meeting M2. Corrections on the minutes M1 are discussed during M2 and therefore these corrections should be written in the minutes of M2. The only change permitted in the minutes M1 is the addition of a sentence at the end stating "see the minutes of M2 for corrections", and the required signatures. In case of discrepancies between the official paper version and electronic versions that may be accessible, such as on web sites, the official paper version is considered as the correct one.

2. Electronic preparation of minutes. In case minutes have been prepared electronically, the paper version is printed and glued (not stapled or taped) to the official minutes book. The paper version should be signed as if it were written directly into the book, in the spaces above the typed names of the officials required to sign it.

3. Manual recording of minutes. In case the secretary writes the minutes by hand (whether real time or not), and minor corrections (such as typographical) are required, the corrections should be initialed and dated, and the original text simply crossed with one line, so that it remains clearly readable.

4. Unacceptable ways of changing the minutes. The following are not permitted under any circumstances: tearing off of pages from the minutes book; use of white out liquid or tape, eraser, or any other physical means of covering up or altering the original text.

5. Timing of official minutes. The official minutes, either handwritten or computer printed, shall be entered into the minutes book and signed as soon as possible after the general assembly recorded. Amendments made by the following general assembly approving the minutes will be recorded as previously indicated.