

ARTICLE I – Name

The name of this organization shall be the Democratic Party of Jefferson County, hereafter referred to as the “County Party.” This is the legal name under which the County Party has filed with the Wisconsin State Elections Board. The County Party may decide to use variations of the organization name for general purposes (e.g., “JeffDems”), so long as all disclaimers and legal documents contain the official name of the party.

ARTICLE II – Purpose

The purpose of the County Party is to serve the people of Jefferson County by recruiting and supporting Democratic candidates for elected offices through the active engagement of County Party members; to promote and enact the platform of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin and resolutions of the State and County Parties; and to work actively with other groups who have similar goals.

The responsibilities of the County Party are as follows:

1. Develop the fullest possible membership in the county.
2. Hold regularly scheduled meetings.
3. Encourage Democratic candidates for all elected offices in Jefferson County.
4. Form and maintain an effective campaign organization.
5. Make recommendations to the Democratic Party platform.
6. Promote the interests of the Democratic Party in the county.

ARTICLE III – Membership

Any resident of Jefferson County, at least 14 years of age, who subscribes to the principles of the Democratic Party, is eligible for voting membership and shall become a member upon payment of dues and receipt of such dues by the County Party treasurer or the state Party headquarters. Such a person is automatically a member of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin and the Democratic Party of the congressional district in which the member resides.

Individuals attending school in Jefferson County shall be considered residents for the purpose of membership.

Individuals who reside in adjoining counties contiguous with Jefferson County, and who are not members of any other county party, shall also be eligible for membership in the Jefferson County Party, provided they meet all other membership requirements and meet the governing provisions contained in the bylaws of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin.

ARTICLE IV – Organization and Election of Officers

Section 1. Organization

- a. The elected officers of the county shall include a Chair, up to two Vice-Chairs, a Secretary and a Treasurer. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined. The office of Chair and Vice-chair can be combined and elected as Co-Chairs.
- b. Collectively, these elected officers shall serve as the Executive Committee (also referred to as “the Board”).
- c. Officers shall be elected for a two-year term at the annual meeting to be held not earlier than November 1, and no later than December 31, of even number years.
- d. Officers must be dues-paying members of the County Party and be residents of Jefferson County.
- e. The County Party may provide for such additional officers as desired, at the determination of the Chair, in accordance with Article IV, section 2.
- f. The elected officers agree to the sharing of their names in all official County Party communications, including, but not limited to, notifications, correspondence, website and social media.

Section 2. Duties of County Party Officers

The *Chair* shall be the presiding officer at all meetings and shall act as administrative head and leader of the organization.

With the consent of the Executive Committee or Board, the Chair shall have the power to appoint or remove committee chairs, special project chairs, and any other persons to the Board as may be necessary for the effective operation of the County Party. Such special project chairpersons shall serve until the project is completed or upon the request of the Chair.

Absent cause for earlier replacement, all appointed members of the Board may serve until the next election of County Party officers, at which time all appointed members of the Board shall be subject to replacement or re-appointment at the discretion of the Chair. The duties of the Chair are as follows:

- i. Ensure the County Party is performing its purpose.
- ii. Act as a proactive media contact.
- iii. Preside at Executive Committee or Board meetings and membership meetings.
- iv. Enforce the observance of this Constitution and bylaws.
- v. Call all special meetings, as needed.
- vi. Appoint County Party members to standing committees.
- vii. Appoint County Party members to join the Board.
- viii. Appoint committees not otherwise provided for.
- ix. Perform other such duties as the office may require.
- x. Develop working relationships with like-minded community groups or delegate to the appropriate elected officer or Board Member as needed.

The *Vice Chair(s)* shall be responsible for the executive direction of the County Party in the event of the Chair's absence or incapacitation. The duties of the Vice Chair(s) are as follows:

- i. Coordinate membership recruitment and retention efforts, in collaboration with the Chair, Treasurer and other elected officers, as needed.
- ii. Arrange speakers and programs for membership meetings.
- iii. Provide information on likely volunteers and new volunteers.
- iv. Provide other such operational duties as the office may require.
- v. Develop working relationships with like-minded community groups or delegate to the appropriate elected officer or Board Member as needed.

The *Secretary* shall maintain records of the organization in accordance with all Democratic Party of Wisconsin guidelines, and ensure meeting notices are issued. The duties of the Secretary are as follows:

- i. Take minutes of all meetings of the Executive Committee or Board and all general meetings, and for the distribution of the minutes.
- ii. Maintain the documents and papers of the County Party.
- iii. Schedule spaces for meetings.
- iv. Assist in correspondence for the County Party.

- v. Distribute notices of Executive Committee or Board meetings.

The *Treasurer* shall be the custodian of the funds of the organization and shall make financial reports in writing (e.g., in PDF format), at each Executive Committee or Board meeting, and shall expend funds only in accordance with the directives of either the Executive Committee or Board or the majority vote of the members. In addition, the duties of the Treasurer are as follows:

- i. Prepare such financial statements as are required by law and forward them to the proper county, state and/or federal officials.
- ii. Review records of all paid memberships from the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, as appropriate.
- iii. Keep the financial records of the County Party.
- iv. File all reports required by federal and state law.
- v. Issue all checks for, and on behalf of, the County Party, with appropriate signatures.
- vi. Submit a financial report at every meeting of the Executive Committee or Board.
- vii. Upon request of the Executive Committee or Board, submit financial records annually for audit to an auditor or to an auditing committee appointed by the Chair.
- viii. Prepare a draft budget in conjunction with the Chair.

All officers shall endeavor to keep and protect the property and records of the County Party to the best of their ability, in a secure manner according to the best practices established by the County Party, the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, and any government oversight agency. At the end of their term, all vacating officers shall turn over records and property, including but not limited to, minutes, government reports, leases, keys, passwords of all online accounts, security codes and bank accounts to new officers within fifteen (15) days.

Section 3. Election of Officers

The elected officers of the county shall be elected for a two-year term at the annual meeting to be held not earlier than November 1, and no later than December 31, in even number years.

Any member of the County Party whose membership has been in force for a period of at least one (1) month immediately prior to the elections shall be eligible to hold

any office of the County Party.

Nominations of officers shall be made at the general membership meeting prior to the biennial election. Each nomination must also have a second. Nominees must consent to have their names placed on the ballot.

Election of a County Party officer shall require a majority of the members present and voting. Elections shall be determined by a majority vote. If two or more candidates are nominated for an office, the election shall be by secret ballot when requested by any member.

If a secret ballot is requested, the votes shall be tallied by a committee appointed by the Chair and shall include one representative chosen by each candidate for the office in question.

To be eligible to vote, a person must meet the membership criteria set forth in Article III and whose dues have been paid at least thirty (30) days prior to the election. Any new members are eligible to vote after receipt of their dues.

Pursuant to Robert's Rules, election to office shall take effect immediately.

By a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, an elected officer may be removed for cause, which includes but is not limited to, neglect of duties or misuse of County Party property, funds, or resources.

Before any removal vote by the County Party membership, the Executive Committee or Board shall afford the officer an opportunity to be heard.

Written notice shall be sent by regular mail to the membership at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which removal of an officer will be voted upon.

In order to vote on an officer's removal, a member must be present at such meeting. In the event of unexcused absences from three consecutive meetings at which the vote for removal is to be taken, the elected officer shall be considered removed.

Notice of election of officers shall be sent to all eligible voting members at least ten (10) days prior to the election or according to the County Party's established notification routine, as long as it is sent at least five (5) days prior to the date of the meeting where officers will be elected.

ARTICLE V – Executive Committee or Board

Section 1.

The Executive Committee or Board shall consist of the elected officers of the County Party and such appointed party members as the Executive Committee or Board shall ask to serve. In addition, the outgoing Chair shall serve on the Executive Committee or Board for two years.

Section 2.

The Chair of the County Party shall be the Chair of the Executive Committee or Board.

Section 3.

- a. The Executive Committee or Board shall establish its own rules for the organization, frequency and conduct of all its own meetings, and shall be responsible for the conduct of all County Party business between meetings.
- b. In the event of a decision to be rendered prior to the regular County Party meeting, the Chair shall call, as soon as possible, a meeting of the Executive Committee or Board.
- c. A quorum shall be fifty percent (50%) of elected and appointed members of the Executive Committee or Board.
- d. Decisions made by a majority vote of the Executive Committee or Board may be reversed by a majority vote of the general membership.

Section 4.

Concerning any matter needing timely action, the Executive Committee or Board may act on behalf of the County Party, and may take such action without a meeting and, instead, vote by email, subject to the policies developed and approved by the general members. Decisions so made will be final.

Section 5.

If a vacancy, other than the Chair occurs, it shall be filled by appointment of the Executive Committee or Board for the remainder of the term. If the Chair becomes vacant, it will be filled by a Vice Chair for the remainder of the term.

Section 6.

Appointed Executive Committee or Board members shall serve two-year terms and shall make all reasonable efforts to attend both Executive Committee or Board meetings and member meetings. Unexcused or unexplained absences from three (3) consecutive meetings of the Executive Committee or Board by an elected or appointed member may be considered a resignation, as determined by a majority vote of the Executive Committee or Board.

Section 7.

The Executive Committee or Board will meet as necessary, as decided by the Chair. An Executive Committee or Board meeting also may be called by request of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Executive Committee or Board.

ARTICLE VI – Dues and Finance

Section 1.

Membership dues shall be determined by the Democratic Party of Wisconsin.

Section 2.

A portion of the annual dues collected by the Democratic Party of Wisconsin's State Party Treasurer will be distributed to the County Party. The portion of the membership dues deposited to the County Party may be used as the County Party determines, in accordance with all finance regulations of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin and applicable state and federal law.

Section 3.

Funds for the County Party treasury may be solicited from sources other than membership dues. Any fundraising and spending must be done in accordance with county, state and federal rules governing political fundraising and spending.

Section 4.

A budget shall be approved by the Executive Committee or Board at the October Executive Committee meeting and by the County Party membership at the January general membership meeting for use in the upcoming calendar year, or at other

reasonable times as determined by the Chair. The Executive Committee or Board may, from time to time, submit amendments to the budget for the current fiscal year, which may be adopted by a majority vote of the membership at a general membership meeting.

Section 5.

The County Party will not assume the debts of any candidate for office.

ARTICLE VII – Meetings

Section 1.

Unless otherwise ordered by the County Party or its Executive Committee or Board, regular meetings shall be held once per month at a time and place agreed upon by the members. Email or other notice of regular meetings shall be sent to the members at least three (3) days before each meeting.

Section 2.

Upon a request by any member present, Robert's Rules of Order, current edition, shall be the parliamentary authority for meeting agenda items or business actions or motions. Otherwise, actions and discussion will follow normal generally accepted meeting practices.

Section 3.

Ten (10) members shall constitute a quorum for conducting business at any membership meeting. In the absence of a quorum, should there be a majority of the executive Committee or Board present, necessary business may still be conducted under that authority.

Section 4.

The order of business shall be determined by the County Chair, and new business shall be in order at every general membership meeting.

Section 5.

The County Party will meet once per month for its regular membership meeting, unless otherwise directed by the Executive Committee or Board. When three (3) months elapse without a general membership meeting of the County Party organization, ten percent (10%) of members, based on the most recent membership list available, or ten (10) members, whichever is smaller, may petition the Congressional District Chairperson or the State Party Chairperson, who shall call a meeting of the County Party, provided a ten (10)-day notice is given to County Party members.

Section 6.

The biennial County Party meeting held for the purpose of nominating officers and other business shall be held not earlier than November 1, nor later than the following December 31. Notification of the meeting for the election of officers shall be sent at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting to each member entitled to vote. Only those people meeting the definition of member (under Article III) and whose dues have been paid at least thirty (30) days prior to the election are eligible to vote.

Section 7.

In the event that the County Chair shall fail to call the biennial election meeting within the period specified herein, the State Party Chairperson shall be authorized to call such a meeting as soon as practicable, provided always that the provisions of this Constitution with respect to notice are observed.

Section 8.

Special meetings may be called by the Chair or by the Executive Committee or Board or upon request of ten (10) members of the County Party. A request made by ten (10) members of the County Party must include the purpose for the meeting. Only business included in the written request by the members can be discussed at a meeting called in this manner. Written notice shall be sent to members at least three (3) days prior to the meeting and shall contain the purpose of the meeting.

ARTICLE VIII – Endorsements

Section 1.

The County Party shall not endorse nor support any candidate for any elective office in any primary election unless the County Party recommends an endorsement because of unusual circumstances to the Democratic Party of Wisconsin Executive Committee, and the Executive Committee approves said recommendation. Upon such a request from Democratic Party of Wisconsin Executive Committee, the endorsement shall then require approval by majority vote of the members of the County Party.

Section 2.

No candidate for the Wisconsin state Senate or Assembly or any candidate for municipal or county office shall receive a monetary contribution or the benefit of any other County Party resources unless that candidate is endorsed.

Section 3.

To be considered for endorsement, a candidate for the Wisconsin State Senate or Assembly or any candidate for municipal or county office must be a member of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. The candidate must also notify the Executive Committee or Board, or any individual member, of their interest in being considered for endorsement.

Section 4.

To receive County Party endorsement, a candidate for the Wisconsin State Senate or Assembly or any candidate for municipal or county office must first interview with the Executive Committee or Board and receive a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Committee or Board for endorsement recommendation to the membership. An Executive Committee or Board endorsement recommendation must then receive a majority vote at a general membership meeting in order for the state or local candidate to receive an official County Party endorsement.

ARTICLE IX – Amendments

Section 1.

This Constitution may be amended after two readings at either regular County Party meetings or meetings especially called for the County Party, provided as follows:

- a. The proposed amendment is presented in writing to all members eligible to vote at least ten (10) days before it is to be voted upon.
- b. Such notice shall describe the nature of proposed amendments and shall identify the article to be amended.
- c. A majority of those present and eligible to vote approve the amendment, provided a quorum is present.

Section 2.

No proposal to amend this Constitution shall be submitted to the membership unless it has been first approved by the Executive Committee or Board or endorsed in writing by at least 15 members of the County Party.

Section 3.

A quorum for the purposes of this article shall be no fewer than 15 members or 10% of the current membership, whichever is greater.

Section 4.

The Constitution, bylaws, and amendments hereto shall be submitted to the State Party Constitution Committee prior to becoming effective.

ARTICLE X – Constitutional Precedence

Section 1.

This Constitution shall supersede any previous motions or rules to the contrary made by the County Party, as well as any prior versions of this Constitution.

Section 2.

If and when it shall appear that this Constitution is in conflict with the Constitution of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, the latter shall prevail.

ARTICLE XI – Interpretation

In the event of a dispute or doubt over the interpretation or construction of this Constitution, the Executive Committee or Board may issue an interpretive decision in writing. Any members aggrieved by such decision or by the failure of the Executive Committee or Board to act may present their grievance to the Constitution Committee of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, which shall be the final judge of the meaning of the language of this Constitution.