

OTTAWA COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

BYLAWS

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Ottawa County Democratic Party BYLAWS

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Ottawa County Democratic Party Bylaws

ARTICLE 1. NAME

This organization shall be known as the Ottawa County Democratic Party.

ARTICLE 2. PURPOSE

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

The Ottawa County Democratic Party shall be a non-profit organization which shall operate under the rules and regulations of the Michigan Democratic Party, the Michigan Campaign Finance Act, and relevant portions of Federal Election Laws. It may vote to make contributions to state and local candidates who are members of the Michigan Democratic Party and for ballot issues. Decisions on money to be given to candidate(s) shall be discussed and approved by the County Committee and shall require approval by a 2/3 majority of the members present, as long as the quorum requirement for the meeting is met. Candidates who will not represent Ottawa County may be given contributions by the Party only after Ottawa County candidates have been given the maximum contributions allowed by the relevant campaign finance laws.

No part of the income or assets of the Party shall be transferred to any of its members except for the reimbursement, if the Party approves, of actual expenses, reasonable compensation for services, or as a contribution for electing the particular member to office. In the event of dissolution of the Ottawa County Democratic Party and its County Committee, all assets of the Party including real and personal property, shall revert to the benefit of the Michigan Democratic Party.

Article 3. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Section 1. Public Meetings

All public meetings of the Ottawa 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, gender identity, physical appearance, or disability.

Section 2. Test of Membership

No tests for allowing membership nor any oaths of loyalty to the Ottawa County Democratic Party, shall be required or used which have the effect of requiring prospective or current members of the 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, ethnic identity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical appearance, or disability.

Section 3. Meeting Notices

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

Section 4. Participation

The Ottawa 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, gender identity, physical appearance, or disability.

Section 5. Notice of Qualifications for Party Officers or Representatives

The Ottawa County Democratic Party shall publicize and give notice to all interested parties a full description of the legal and practical qualifications for selection or appointment as an officer or representative of the Ottawa County Democratic party. Such publication shall be done in a timely fashion so that all prospective candidates or applicants for any elected or appointed position within the Ottawa County Democratic Party or as a public County representative of the Democratic Party will have full and adequate opportunity to compete or apply for the relevant office.

Section 6. Voting

Proportional voting shall be used in the election of delegates and alternates to any Convention, and for election of members of the County Committee.

Section 7. Consistency with MDP Rules

All rules and bylaws of the Ottawa County Democratic Party at all levels shall be consistent with the RULES OF THE MICHIGAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY and shall be either available as an online resource and/or on request in writing to any member of the Ottawa County Democratic Party.

Section 8. Unit Rule

The unit rule is prohibited at all levels of the Ottawa County Democratic Party.¹

¹ The practice of a unit reporting a unanimous vote when the vote within that unit was not unanimous.

Section 9. Rules Contrary to Individual Judgment

No rule shall be adopted by the Ottawa County Democratic Party which would require a person to cast a vote or be recorded as voting contrary to that person's judgment.

Section 10. Parliamentary Authority

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, Newly Revised shall be used.

Section 11. Gender of Officers

The Chair and Vice-Chair of any unit, Committee, Caucus or Convention of the Ottawa County Democratic Party shall be of different genders.

Section 12. No Secret Ballots

Votes shall not be taken by secret ballot at any meeting of the Ottawa County Democratic Party at any level.

Section 13. Submission of Rules to State Central Committee

The bylaws and any rules adopted by the Ottawa County Democratic Party shall be submitted to the State Central Committee within thirty (30) days after adoption.

Section 14. Rules Apply to County Committee

The foregoing principles shall also apply, where applicable, to the County Committee.

ARTICLE 4. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership of the Ottawa County Democratic Party

All members of the Michigan Democratic Party residing in Ottawa County are automatically included as members of the Ottawa County Democratic Party.

Section 2. Precinct Delegates

The number of Precinct Delegates allotted to each voting jurisdiction within the county shall be apportioned and selected in accordance with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party.

Section 3. The County Committee

The County Committee of the Ottawa County Democratic Party² and its officers shall be selected as described in Article 6 of these (Ottawa County Democratic Party) bylaws and in accordance with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party

² As constituted by the procedures specified in Article 6 of these (Ottawa County Democratic Party) bylaws, the County Committee, and its officers, are the equivalent of the "executive committee of the county party" as described in Michigan election laws. As such, the names of the members and officers of the County Committee may be listed, if necessary, for any county, state or federal, election or campaign finance laws as the "Executive Committee of the Ottawa County Democratic Party," where this term is requested and/or appropriate.

ARTICLE 5. MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Ottawa County Democratic Party shall be held not less than six (6) times per year, at the location and time designated in the meeting notice. At least seven (7) days notice shall be given of the date, time, and place of the meeting. Notice may be given by mail, fax or email. In case of inclement weather, the meeting may be canceled and rescheduled at the discretion of the Chair.

Section 2. Quorum

Twenty members (20), two of whom must be officers of the County Committee, must be present in person or virtually to constitute a quorum for County Committee meetings or general membership meetings.

Section 3. Voting Privileges

The County Committee and its officers are empowered to conduct all necessary ongoing business of the county party; however, all qualified members of the Ottawa County Democratic Party are eligible to discuss and vote on any issue before the County Committee, as well as at any general membership meeting. Members of the County Committee and qualified general members of the Ottawa County Democratic Party must be present in person or virtually at a given meeting to vote. An exemption to this rule is allowed for candidates for legislative offices consisting of more than one (1) County who may give a written proxy to any other member of the County Committee.

Section 4. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the County Committee may be called by a simple majority of the members of the Committee. Alternatively, any combination of County Committee members and general Ottawa County Democratic Party members may also call for a special meeting if the number of members issuing the call are equivalent to the simple majority of the County Committee. At least seven (7) days notice shall be given of the date, place, time, and purpose of the special meeting. No business other than what the special meeting was called for can be conducted at that meeting.

Section 5. Rules of Order

Subject to the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party and these bylaws, all meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (latest edition).

ARTICLE 6. THE COUNTY COMMITTEE

Section 1. Duties of County Committee

The duties of the County Committee, include filling the vacancies in nominations as prescribed by law and to support the purpose and principles of the Ottawa County Democratic Party as outlined in Articles II and III of these bylaws.

Section 2. Composition of The County Committee

One third (1/3) of the County Committee shall automatically consist of the most recent nominees for countywide office including for the county commission, State House, and State Senate. Nominees for the US House whose districts include all or part of the county shall also be automatic members of the County Committee. The County Convention shall elect the balance of the County Committee, which shall consist of twice the number of automatic members. Officers and regular members of County Committee must be members of the Michigan Democratic Party residing in Ottawa County (with the exception of candidates for legislative offices consisting of more than one (1) County who may reside in another county within their district).

Section 3. Fall County Convention

Each even numbered year, within twenty (20) days following the November election, delegates to the County Convention shall convene at the call of the county chairperson for the purpose of electing a new County Committee. The call shall be sent to each delegate by mail, fax or email at least fourteen (14) days before the convention.

Section 4. Fall Convention Delegates

Delegates to the Fall County Convention shall be defined as all members of the Ottawa County Democratic Party in attendance at the Convention, who fulfill the requirement of having been members of the Michigan Democratic Party for at least 30 days prior to the convention. Exemption from the 30-day rule for newly elected precinct delegates is allowed, along with an exemption for any nominated candidates. This exemption is qualified by the specification that these delegates/candidates must be members of the Michigan Democratic Party prior to the Convention in order to vote.

Section 5. County Committee Officers

County Committee officers shall be selected in accordance with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party within thirty (30) days of the election of the Committee. The officers are the Chair, a First Vice-Chair of a different gender than the Chair, a Second Vice-Chair of a different gender than the Vice-Chair, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Assistant Treasurer.

Section 6. Expansion of The County Committee

Additional membership on the County Committee may be granted. The nominee who is either a precinct delegate and/or a member of the Michigan Democratic Party, and who has expressed an interest in participating in the activities of the committee, must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the existing members of the County Committee.

Section 7. Vacancies on The County Committee

The County Committee may fill a vacancy in any of its offices and may elect additional officers, who in its judgment are proper to carry out the purposes of the Committee. Where a vacancy subsequently occurs in the position of delegate-elected member of the County Committee, the remaining members of the Committee may fill this vacancy subject to the requirement that nominees for all vacancies must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the existing members of the County Committee.

ARTICLE 7. DUTIES OF COUNTY COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Section 1. Chair

The County Chair shall preside at all County Committee and general meetings. The chair is an ex-officio member (with a voice but no vote) of all standing committees within the county committee. The chair shall have other additional duties as defined elsewhere in these bylaws and such as are usual to the office or that may be required by this organization.

Section 2. First Vice-Chair

The First Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair in the discharge of their duties and shall temporarily assume the duties and responsibilities in the absence of the Chair. It shall be the responsibility of the First Vice-Chair to assure that all committees are formed and meet as necessary. The First Vice-Chair shall also be an ex-officio member (with a voice but no vote) of all standing committees. The First Vice-Chair shall have such other powers and duties as may be granted from time to time by express resolution of the County Committee as provided by these bylaws.

Section 3. Second Vice-Chair

The Second Vice Chair shall assist the Chair and First Vice Chair in the discharge of their respective duties. In the absence of the First Vice Chair, the Second Vice Chair shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the First Vice Chair. In the absence of both the Chair and First Vice Chair, the Second Vice Chair shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the Chair. The Second Vice Chair shall have such other powers and duties as may be granted from time to time by express resolution of the County Committee as provided by these bylaws.

Section 4. Secretary

The Secretary shall keep an accurate record and minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the County Committee. The minutes shall be available to all Party members upon request. The Secretary shall keep and preserve all the books, documents, correspondence, records, minutes, effects, and any other property of this organization. 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. The Secretary shall see that proper notification is given to the County Committee and its membership, of its meetings. Following election of members of the County Committee, the Secretary shall certify the names and addresses of persons chosen to the Michigan Democratic State Central Committee, and if required, to any county, state, or federal agency relative to campaign finance or election law. The secretary shall also notify the Democratic State Central Committee and any other appropriate authority of any changes in the membership of the County Committee or in its officers. The Secretary shall have other such powers and duties as may be granted from time to time by express resolution of the County Committee, as provided by these bylaws. In the absence of the Chair, Vice-Chair and the second Vice-Chair, the Secretary shall conduct an election of the membership present to select a Chair pro tempore.

Section 5. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for the financial receipts and disbursements of the organization, subject to the approval of the County Committee. All bills shall be submitted to the Treasurer. The funds of this organization shall be deposited in banks and shall be drawn upon only by checks. Approved bills shall be paid within a reasonable time after receipt. Any expenditure not pre-approved by the County Committee exceeding five hundred (\$500) dollars shall not be made without written approval of the Chair and the Treasurer of the County Committee. The Treasurer will provide, on a quarterly basis, all material deemed necessary by the Audit Committee for a thorough and complete audit. It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to complete required state and federal campaign finance reporting as it applies to this organization and to submit these reports within the applicable deadlines. When a new Treasurer is elected, the past treasurer shall forthwith deliver to the new Treasurer the funds and all books and records kept during their tenure in office.

Section 6. Assistant Treasurer

The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer in the discharge of the duties of the office. In the absence of the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer shall have such other powers and duties as may be granted from time to time by express resolution of the County Committee as provided by these bylaws.

ARTICLE 8. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Appointment of Committees

Appointment of committees and committee chairs. The First Vice-Chair, subject to the approval of the majority of the County Committee, shall appoint the committees and committee chairpersons necessary for the work of the organization, with the exception of the Audit Committee which is appointed by the Chair [see following].

Section 2. Standing Committees

1) Audit Committee

The Audit Committee shall be appointed by the Chair. This Committee will be composed of no less than three (3) nor more than five (5) members of the County Committee. The responsibility of this committee shall be to audit the books on a quarterly basis and upon the election of a new County Committee.

2) Rules, Resolutions and Bylaws Committee

3) Finance Committee

4) Candidate Recruitment Committee

5) Political Organizing Committee

6) Communications Committee

7) Campaign Committee

These committees may include any appropriate subcommittees.

The County Chair and First Vice-chair shall be ex-officio (with a voice but no vote) members of all standing committees.

ARTICLE 9. APPOINTMENTS

Notice and information shall be given in a timely fashion to the membership, about any County position reserved for Democrats, such as for the County Canvassing Board and the Jury Board, prior to the meeting where the nominees for these positions are to be selected. Any person desiring an appointment to these positions must be a member of the Ottawa County Democratic Party and must notify the Chair of their interest in the position or be present at the meeting. The names of interested parties will be submitted at this meeting and their approval voted upon. In the instance where an urgent need to fill a county position precludes approval at a regular County Committee meeting (e.g., at the actual time of an election where a previously chosen individual is unable to fulfill their duties), the chair may choose a qualified individual to fill the position.

ARTICLE 10. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The business of the organization shall proceed in the following order:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance
- 3) Land Acknowledgment Statement
- 4) Roll Call of Officers
- 5) Approval of Agenda
- 6) Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- 7) Submission of Bills to the Treasurer
- 8) Reports of Officers
 - a. Chair
 - b. Vice Chairs
 - c. Treasurer (financial report)
 - d. Secretary (correspondence)
- 9) Report of Committees
- 10) Unfinished Business
- 11) Postponed Business
- 12) New Business
- 13) Good and Welfare
- 14) Adjournment

ARTICLE 11. RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions may be introduced only by members of the Ottawa County Democratic Party and must be introduced in writing. Except for resolutions reported by standing committees or special committees, all resolutions shall be referred to the Rules, Resolutions, and Bylaws Committee, which shall make recommendations regarding adoption at the next regular meeting.

ARTICLE 12. AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Proposals for Changes

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

Section 2. Amendments to Bylaws

Amendments to the Bylaws shall be presented at two (2) consecutive meetings for reading. Such proposed amendments must be distributed in writing at the first (1st) of the two meetings and notice of intent to amend shall be included in the meeting notices. Immediately following the second reading, the Resolutions and Bylaws Committee shall make recommendation regarding adoption. Adoption shall require two-thirds (2/3) vote of the qualified members present at a meeting where the requirement for a quorum is satisfied.

Section 3. Adoption of Bylaws

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.

Adopted by Ottawa County Democratic Party: 10 May 2023
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