

# **By-laws of the Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch of the Industrial Workers of the World**

Originally adopted January 2011, Updated Feb 2021

## **1. General**

(a) The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch (GMB) constitutes a General Membership Branch for the Ottawa-Outaouais, Ontario and Gatineau, Quebec region with all the rights and responsibilities entitled by the IWW constitution.

(b) A copy of these by-laws shall be kept on the GMB website, and provided to all new members within 60 days of their initiation and first month's dues by the Secretary or their designate.

(c) The Secretary is responsible for ensuring this document is up-to-date as per decision made at monthly meetings.

(d) All members of the Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch shall pay dues through their branch delegates, and not directly to General Headquarters.

(e) The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch is affiliated with the Canadian Regional Organizing Committee. (Effective October 3, 2009)

## **2. Meetings**

(a) The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch shall meet on a monthly basis, as determined at each membership meeting.

(b) Meetings shall be open to all Ottawa-Outaouais GMB members in good standing. Members of other branches or at-large members may attend with voice but no vote. Non-IWW members may sit in on the meeting, provided that their presence be announced in the beginning of the meeting, and GMB members vote to allow them to attend. Such persons may attend with voice but no vote.

(c) Membership cards shall be checked for good standing in accordance with the Constitution of the IWW. Members who are not in good standing and who are not able to be vouched for by an attending delegate will not be permitted a vote and shall not be counted in determining quorum.

(d) Consistent with the IWW constitution, all decisions shall be made by a majority vote.

(e) If there is a need for an emergency decision before the next scheduled meeting, decisions may be made over email. The decision must be one that could not have been reasonably foreseen at the previous GMB meeting. Emergency motions cannot overrule decisions made at a branch meeting. Process as follows:

- i. A clear proposal be made by a member in good standing over the official Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch mailing list.
- ii. At the time of proposal, a time period of a minimum of 72 hours must be specified by which time on-line voting will be closed.
- iii. Only members in good standing may vote. Each member may vote only once and votes must be received before the stated deadline.
- iv. A minimum of five members must vote, and the motion requires two-thirds majority to pass.
- v. Motions made in this way are to be entered into the minutes at the next meeting of the Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch meeting.

### 3. GMB Officers

(a) No individual may speak for, or act as a public representative of, the Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch, without a mandate to do so from the Branch.

(b) No member may hold more than two officer positions at any time

(c) Exceptions to this rule need to be voted on by the branch membership on a case by case basis, by members in good standing.

(d) **Secretary**

- i. The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch shall elect a GMB Secretary.
- ii. The Secretary shall be responsible for the preparation of agendas for meetings, shall ensure that meeting minutes are taken and distributed in a timely way prior to the next meeting, and managing branch correspondence that has not been otherwise delegated to another member.
- iii. The Secretary shall also collect new membership information from delegates, and be a point of contact for verification of membership information and status for General Headquarters without unduly exposing the contact details of any person publicly.
- iv. The Secretary shall be responsible for coordinating monthly GMB meetings. The Secretary shall be responsible for the safekeeping of the GMB's charter.

(e) **Treasurer**

- i. The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch shall elect a GMB Treasurer.
- ii. The Treasurer shall be responsible for collecting delegate reports and turning them over to Headquarters, depositing branch funds, writing and mailing cheques, making monthly financial reports to the branch, and reimbursing approved expenses.

(f) **Delegates**

The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch shall elect branch delegates at the February GMB meeting. Additional delegates may be elected at any GMB meeting, and job branches may appoint a delegate at any time by majority vote.

(g) **Literature Department Liaison (LDL)**

- i. The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch shall elect a Literature Department Liaison at the February GMB meeting.
- ii. The LDL is responsible for selling and maintaining stock and ordering literature for fundraising and educational purposes.
- iii. The LDL will present financial and stock reports at each monthly GMB meeting.
- iv. The LDL will consult with the branch for approval of each order.

**(h) Regional Organizing Committee (ROC) Representative**

- i. The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch shall elect a ROC Representative at the February GMB meeting.
- ii. A ROC Liaison is elected by a branch to be the voice and vote of its members on the ROC. A ROC representative is subject to recall only by the members of the branch that elected the representative.
- iii. It is the responsibility of the ROC representative to consult one's branch and receive instructions on how to vote. It is the responsibility of the branch that elected the representative to provide timely and adequate instructions.

**(j) Organizing Department Liaison (ODL)**

- i. The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch shall elect an ODL at the February GMB meeting.
- ii. The ODL will be responsible for reporting on Organizing Department activities to the branch and subscribe to the Organizing Department Board mailing list.
- iii. The ODL will be responsible for reporting to the Organizing Department on their branch's organizing.

**(k) Chair of Technical Committee**

- i. The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership branch shall elect a chair to convene the Technical Committee to coordinate its activities at the February GMB meeting.
- ii. Activities of the Technical Committee will include creating, if these do not already exist, and maintaining the following: a website, a suite of e-mail list services, emails for General Membership Branch delegates, officers and committee use, social media accounts, a digital archive of branch materials in coordination with the archivist, and private, secure communication methods.

**(l) Undersecretary**

- i. The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch shall elect an Undersecretary at the February GMB meeting.
- ii. The Undersecretary shall be responsible for acting as the main point of contact for members looking to perform work for the branch, to ensure that officers and chairs have the support they need to complete their objectives, and to act as an ombudsperson for members of the branch.
- iii. The Undersecretary shall report back on the morale and capacity of the branch at each meeting.
- iv. The Undersecretary will collect, organize, and catalogue printed and electronic materials pertaining to the Ottawa-Outaouais IWW, as well as any other materials (buttons, stickers, etc.) relevant to establishing and preserving the institutional memory of the branch. Examples would include newspaper clippings, copies posters and handbills. Where possible, the Undersecretary will convert hard copies of materials to electronic format for greater archival longevity and security/back-up.

**(k) Chair of Gender/Sexuality Equity Committee (GSEC)**

- i. The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership branch shall elect a chair to convene the Gender/Sexuality Equity Committee and to coordinate its activities at the February GMB meeting.
- ii. The GSEC chair will hold at least one committee meeting every 3 months.
- iii. The GSEC chair will present a list of concrete objectives to the GMB at least every 3 months, as well as a timeline within which these objectives will be accomplished.

**(m) Other positions**

- i. The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch may create other representative positions apart from the Secretary, Treasurer and Delegate as required.
- ii. A statement of duties shall be included for any additional representative positions.

**(n) Terms**

- i. All representatives shall serve one-year terms to begin on March 1st.
- ii. Any representative may resign or be recalled at any time, and resignations and recall should be recorded in GMB minutes.
- iii. If any representative resigns or is recalled, nomination to replace that representative shall take place at the next meeting and a special elected representative's term shall begin immediately following their election. The branch may appoint a member to temporarily fill any vacant representative.

**(o) Elections**

- i. Nominations for representatives shall take place in January, one business meeting before the February election. All members shall be notified of nominees by the GMB Secretary.
- ii. Ballots are to be prepared by the Secretary or by their designate, at least seven days prior to the election. In this way they can be printed out and placed in an envelope for voting by proxy. The outside of the envelope must have written on it the individual's name, card number and the last month for which they paid dues. All ballots must be printed on a letter-sized piece of paper.
- iii. All elections will be by secret ballot at a GMB meeting. Each member in good standing has one vote. Members can also vote in absentia by submitting a ballot to a delegate or representative in a sealed envelope.

## **4. Finances**

(a) Whenever possible, expenses related to GMB work should be anticipated by those who will need use of the funds and allocated in advance by the GMB.

(b) No financial proposal allocating one-time grants exceeding \$100 or involving ongoing expenditures of any amount shall be adopted by the Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch unless it is submitted in writing to a meeting.

## **5. Committees**

(a) The Ottawa-Outaouais General Membership Branch may establish committees, and these committees may establish their own by-laws provided that these do not contradict the GMB by-laws or the IWW Constitution.

## 6. Safer Space Policy

The Industrial Workers of the World is a union committed to the emancipation of the working class. The working class is diverse and as a union we recognize that oppression is many layered. As such, we strive to keep our common places free from oppressive action, behavior, and language.

These oppressive actions and words include but are not limited to: racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and any expression of disrespect and/or intolerance of size, gender identity, sexual identity/expression, (dis)ability, age, educational level, and cultural background. Because we want to learn from and educate each other, we will each be responsible for addressing these issues in ourselves and others. This policy is not about censorship, but rather opening a dialog in a respectful way that can result in all members feeling safe and free to fully participate in their union's activities.

If a member feels this policy is being/has been violated, the following steps should be taken:

1. Reference the policy to the whole group: for example, "In the IWW, we have a 'Safer Space Policy' that all members are mutually responsible to uphold. I feel this policy has been violated by talk of '[comments made].'. Please keep the Safer Space Policy in mind."
2. If the policy is still being violated, the issue should be brought up to the person in violation directly and/or the chair, an officer, a delegate, or a member whom you would like to act as an advocate on your behalf so that an effective plan of action can be instituted.
3. If you have no allies locally and invoking the 'Safer Space Policy' fails, reach out to the Gender Equity Committee for assistance at [GEC@IWW.org](mailto:GEC@IWW.org).

If a member feels like this policy is being violated and is uncomfortable bringing this up personally, they are encouraged to seek an ally of their choosing to advocate for them. In a meeting, a person can ask for a point of personal privilege to take a break and discuss this with the necessary parties. Meeting chairs, officers, delegates, and members should be conscious of this policy and address issues as they arise.

Further, space shall be defined as any office, meeting, event (including trainings, celebrations, social gatherings, etc.), internet platform (including listservs, facebook, we.riseup, twitter, etc.) that is IWW sponsored, which includes any body formally recognized by the IWW, such as General Membership Branches, Regional Organizing Committees and Regional Administrations, Industrial Union Branches, other committees, and any accountable sub-formation of the aforementioned bodies.

## 7. Amendment of By-laws

(a) By-laws may be added or amended by making a written proposal to a meeting, putting notice of the proposal in the meeting minutes, and then taking a vote at the following meeting.