

Swiss Benevolent Society of Philadelphia

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Charter

(Obtained December 4, 1865. Last Amended April 2, 1969)

The Constitution of the Swiss Benevolent Society of Philadelphia (In French “La Society Suisse de Bienfaisance;” in German “Die Schweizerische Unterstuezungs-Gesellschaft”).

1. The object of this Society is to assist, so far as its means will permit, deserving natives of Switzerland and their descendants by gift, grants or loans of money. Should its resources permit, similar assistance may be accorded to agencies or individuals not of Swiss provenance or derivation.
2. Every applicant for admission to the Society must be proposed and voted for at the meeting of the Board of Directors, and, if elected, must pay such dues as may be from time to time provided for by the By-Laws.
3. The Society may be managed by its President and a Board of Directors, consisting of not less than eight (8) members, elected annually by the membership at the Annual Meeting. At their first meeting called by the new President, the Directors shall elect from their number a Vice President, a Recording Secretary, a Financial Secretary, a Treasurer, and such additional officers as may be provided by the By-Laws.
4. No By-Laws which may be made by this Society shall be contrary to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or that of the United States, or to the Charter of the Society.

BY-LAWS

MEMBERSHIP

1. Every applicant for admission to the Society, if elected, shall pay a yearly contribution as determined by the Annual Meeting, which, each year, shall also determine the one-time contribution to become a new life-member.

MEETINGS

2. The Annual Meeting of the Society shall be held during the last week of January in each year, and the Recording Secretary shall mail a notice thereof to each member at least one week before the meeting.
The President shall call a Special Meeting of the Society on the written request of five (5) members of the Society.
At the Annual and Special Meeting eleven (11) members, among whom there must be at least four (4) Directors shall constitute a quorum.
3. At the Annual Meeting of the Society a report on the business and affairs of the past year shall be given by the President, and the President and the Board of Directors shall be elected for the ensuing year.
The election of the President and the Directors may be of voice vote or by ballot.

4. The President shall call a meeting of the Board of Directors within one week after the Annual Meeting for the election of the officers mentioned in Section 3 of the Charter. All officers shall hold office for the term of one year and until their successors are elected and qualified.
5. The Board of Directors shall meet at least five (5) times per year at such intervals as they shall decide and direct. Five (5) members must be present to form a quorum.
6. At the meeting of The Board of Directors in November of each year, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee of at least three (3) members to select nominees for the office of President and members of the Board of Directors. This committee shall report its findings to the Annual Meeting.
At the November meeting, the President also shall appoint a committee of two (2) members-at-large to examine and audit the Securities, and also the accounts, books, vouchers, checks, etc., of the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer, and report on them at the ensuing Annual Meeting. At the Annual Meeting the members of the Society, as well as the Board of Directors, shall have the right to have laid before them all the books kept by the officers of the Society.
7. At the Annual Meeting of the Society the order of the business shall be:
 1. Reading of the minutes or the last Annual and of any Special Meetings of the Society.
 2. Report of the President.
 3. Report of the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer.
 4. Report of the Auditing Committee.
 5. Unfinished business – termination of the fiscal year.
 6. Election of President.
 7. Election of Board of Directors.
 8. Annual contribution and life membership.
 9. Other new business.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

8. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Society and the Board of Directors, and in case of an equal division shall have the right to cast the deciding vote. He also shall have the general supervision of the business and finances of the Society. He may call a meeting of the Board of Directors whenever he considers it desirable to do so. He shall give a general report of the business and affairs of the Society at the Annual Meeting.
9. The Vice-President, in the absence of the President, or in case of his inability to act, or in the case of his death or resignation, shall have and exercise all the rights, powers and duties of the President.
10. In case of death, resignation or inability of both the President and the Vice-President, the Board of Directors shall elect a successors for the balance of the term, and in case of a vacancy for any cause, in any of the other offices, or among the Directors, the Board of Directors shall fill the same for the balance of the term.
11. The Recording Secretary shall have charge of the Charter, Seal and all the documents, records and correspondence, keep the minutes of the meeting of the Society and of the Board of Directors, in the English language, also a correct list of the members, with their addresses and shall, if possible, be acquainted with both the French and German languages.

12. The Financial Secretary shall keep a book of all the financial transactions of the Society, and render accounts at each meeting of the Board of Directors and at the Annual Meeting. He also shall keep a record of the cantonal citizenship of each person assisted as well as date and manner of assistance.
13. The Treasurer shall keep the current cash not exceeding in amount the sum of Three Thousand (3000) Dollars and all money beyond this amount shall be safely invested as soon as practicable, as the Board of Directors shall decide and direct.
All investments, securities and title papers shall be safely kept by him. He shall give security for the faithful performance of his duties, the amount and character of which security shall be fixed by the Board of Directors.

ASSISTANCE

14. The Board of Directors shall take cognizance of all applications for pecuniary assistance, and if they are granted, shall give orders to the Financial Secretary for the amount.
The assistance granted to any applicant at one time shall not exceed Fifty (50) Dollars without the concurrence of the Board of Directors.

INVESTMENTS AND TRANSFERS

15. All investments, securities and title papers of the Society shall be made in the corporate title of the same.
16. No investment or loan shall be made, and no sale or transfer of any investment, security or property of the Society shall be valid until the same shall have been authorized at a meeting of the Board of Directors.

AMENDMENTS

17. These By-Laws shall not be added to, altered or amended except upon motion made at the Annual Meeting of the Society, which motion shall lie over until the next Annual Meeting, or until a Special Meeting called for that purpose by the Annual Meeting, not less than thirty days thereafter, and the Recording Secretary in his notices shall state the special business of said meeting.

DISSOLUTION

18. An affirmative vote of three-quarters of the members present at an Annual Meeting, or at a Special Meeting called for the purpose, is required to pass on the question of Dissolution of the Society. In case of dissolution of the Society, its archives, funds and other possessions shall be given to the local or otherwise competent Consulate of Switzerland in trust. All income from this trust is to be used for benevolent purposes in accord with the Charter of the Society. It is expected that the President and the Board of Directors serving at the time of Dissolution will formulate a detailed program to be followed by the Trustee.