

Bylaws
Small and Beginner Farmers of New Hampshire
Constitution and Bylaws: November 1, 2006

Updated April, 2009, March, 2010, February, 2014

Preamble

Small and Beginner Farmers of New Hampshire is organized to help small and beginner farmers connect, network, share, and access technical information, agricultural education, and markets. Our cooperative and collaborative effort will help small and beginner farmers achieve their goals, strengthen our communities and the agricultural industry, economy, and quality of life in New Hampshire.

Constitution

Article I - Name of Organization

The name of the organization shall be: Small and Beginner Farmers of New Hampshire (SBFNH)

Article II -Purpose of the Organization

The purpose of the SBFNH is to create and support farmer-to-farmer networks that meet members' needs by organizing and promoting programs related to education, marketing, supply, purchase, and other agricultural goals.

Article III - Nature of the Organization

SBFNH is an independent, non-partisan, membership-based agricultural organization.

Article IV - Members

Members include anyone or any organization that wishes to support the purposes and goals of the organization. Article I of the Bylaws further articulates what constitutes a member for organizational purposes.

Bylaws

Article I - Membership

Section 1: Application

The applicant shall immediately become a member entitled to all rights, and privileges afforded any member in good standing.

Section 2: Types of Membership

1. Individual Membership - Member is entitled to have one vote per paid membership, receives all announcements and benefit from all organizational programs and activities in effect during that membership. Regular members from out of state must choose a NH county affiliation.
2. Farm Membership - Two names at one address with each "name" entitled to the same benefits as an individual member but only one set of correspondences will be mailed per address.

Article II - Dues

Section 1

The amount of annual membership (as described in Article I Section 2) dues shall be proposed annually by the State Council and approved by the membership at the Annual Meeting.

Section 2

A member joining or renewing within the last sixty- (60) days preceding the end of the calendar year shall automatically be considered to have paid their dues for the ensuing year.

Section 3

Dues are neither transferable nor refundable.

Article III - County Networks

Section 1: Purpose

County farmer to farmer networks, are the core of the Organization and can be established and supported in each county, where there are members. Members in counties without an active network may partner or join with another active county. County Networks are created to facilitate interaction, dialog and activities between members and others.

Section 2: The duties of the County Network are to:

1. Develop a plan of activities and hold County meetings as deemed necessary by the members
2. Communicate County based activities through media used to keep the total membership informed
3. Create a bank account in the name of the County Network and select a Treasurer to maintain records on all County finances
4. Keep a brief record of all meetings that include financial decisions.
5. State Council Representatives:
 1. Yearly, elect 2 members from each county to serve as that county's State Council Representatives.
 2. The names of those representatives shall be given to the State Council in January or when elected.
 3. Vacancies for State Council Representatives can be filled at any time.
 4. Members from a County without an active Network or State Council representative may represent their County at the State Council.
 5. Alternates:
County Networks can choose alternates to serve on State Council in the absence ... of regular county leaders. Alternates must be a member.
6. Prepare a written annual report of all county based activities and finances to be presented to the State Council & Administrative board in the beginning of the 1st quarter of the fiscal year for the previous fiscal year prior to the annual meeting.

Article IV- State Council

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of the State Council is to: facilitate dialogue between County Networks, to the membership and the public; to seek funding that supports the organization; to manage State organization resources; to develop and implement statewide policies, and to hire and manage staff or contractors that support the State organization.

Section 2: Composition of the State Council

The State Council is composed of the State Council Representatives (Article III section 2.5) and the Administrative Board (Article IV section 4)

Section 3: Duties of the State Council

The State Council acts upon all important issues brought before the Council by the Administrative Board, County Networks, and the membership. Duties of the State Council include:

1. Develop and present a budget for statewide organizational activities and programs that is acted on by the membership.
2. Accept and act on budget requests from County Networks to be included in the organizational budget.
3. Insure that the Bylaws of the Organization are followed.
4. Conduct fundraising for Statewide organizational needs.
5. Hire and manage staff or contractors who work on behalf of the organization.
6. Maintain the Organization's legal structure and filings with the State and federal authorities.
7. Prepare and present an annual report to the membership
8. Form and dissolve committees as required by the bylaws.

Section 4: Administrative Board

The State Council will select an Administrative Board. from the slate of candidates presented to them by the Nominating Committee. (See section 18: Duties of Standing Committees; Nominating Committee).The selection of the Administrative Board for that year will be made prior to the Annual meeting. The Administrative Board will have the following positions: Leader, Co-leader, Secretary and Treasurer. Members of the Administrative Board must be members in good standing of the organization. The Administrative Board will conduct the day to day operation of the SBFNH, oversee the operation of the organization according to the Bylaws.

Section 5: Duties and Powers of Administrative Board Positions

Leader:

1. Presides over all meetings of the State Council.
2. The leader only votes in case of a tie.
3. Performs all acts and duties usually performed by an executive and presiding officer.
4. Signs such papers of the Organization as he/she may be authorized or directed to sign by the State Council.
5. Acts as the point of contact for the Small and Beginner Farmers of NH.
6. As authorized by the State Council to sign contract, checks and other instruments in writing on behalf of the State Council. All financial instruments (checks, contracts obligating SBFNH, etc.) are limited to amounts not exceeding \$500.00.
7. Performs such other duties as may be prescribed by the State Council

Co-Leader:

1. Performs all duties of the leader, in the absence of the leader.
2. Shall serve as chairman of the Finance Committee
3. Performs additional duties as assigned by the State Council.

Treasurer:

1. Receive all Organization funds; keep them in a book or repository approved by the State Council.
2. Keep faithful records of all receipts and expenditures and operates under the standard and accepted accounting principles.
3. Provide the Secretary with written monthly reports.
4. Disburse the organization funds.
5. Prepare financial reports for the State Council and as required by State and Federal statutes.
6. As authorized by the State Council to sign checks and other instruments in writing on behalf of the State Council. Shall be a member of the Finance Standing Committee.

Secretary:

1. Take minutes at all State Council meetings.
2. Distribute minutes to the State Council
3. Maintain the official records file of the Organization which include: minutes of all State Council meetings, County Networks, standing committees, workshops, and any other organized function of Small & Beginner Farmers of NH, to include attendance of meetings. These records shall be an accurate and official record of all business transacted.
4. Maintain current memberships of Small & Beginner Farmers of NH. Keep an accurate roster showing names, addresses, and positions held in the organization of each active member.
5. Shall maintain the notice of upcoming Council Meetings on the website
6. Shall be the Chairman of the Communication committee. See Article IV, section 15, number 4.

Section 6: Financial Constraints

1. Eligible signatories are the Leader, Co-Leader and Treasurer.
2. Spending authority for amounts exceeding \$500.00 requires written authorization from the State Council.

Section 7: Duties of State Council Representatives

1. Be a point of contact and promote Small & Beginner Farmers in their county.
2. Attend State Council meetings.
3. Represent the interests of their county membership at State Council meetings.
4. Process and distribute requests for assistance from their County to the State Council for approval if appropriate
5. Assist the State Council perform its duties
6. Serve on at least one State Council Committee

Section 8: Terms of Service

Administrative Board positions will serve two years terms or until their successors are selected. Their term shall begin the day after being selected by the State Council. No Administrative Board member can serve more than 3 successive terms.

Section 9: Regular Meetings of the State Council

1. The State Council will meet no less than four (4) times per year, preferably once per quarter, and be open to all members, associates, interested parties and the public. Meetings may be held by phone, provided that the conference call is conducted in such a way that all members participating can hear each other at the same time. Conference calls will either be arranged ahead of time in the same way as a face-to-face meeting, or may be used when a meeting is inadvisable due to bad weather.
2. Notice and agenda of regular meetings will be made no less than 21 days prior to the meeting. The Secretary shall publish notification of meetings.

3. Members of Small & Beginner Farmers of NH may request time on the agenda to address the State Council at meetings, through their county's representatives to State Council or to the Administrative Board.

Section 10: Regular State Council Meeting Agenda

Business at all regular meetings of the State Council shall include at least the following:

1. Meeting called to order by the Leader or Chairman.
2. Roll Call by the Secretary.
3. Ascertain if a quorum is present by the Secretary
4. Presentation of the minutes of the previous meeting by the Secretary for acceptance or revision.
5. Treasurer's; Report
6. Committee Reports
7. Reading of Communications
8. Old Business
9. Meeting
10. New Business
11. Adjournment

Section 11: Special Meetings of the State Council

1. Any member of the State Council can call for a Special Meeting.
2. A simple majority of State Council seats filled can approve the calling of a Special Meeting.
3. Telephone polls can be utilized to authorize the calling of a Special Meeting
4. Fourteen (14) days notice is required prior to a Special Meeting.

Section 12: Quorum

The quorum needed to conduct State Council meetings will be all State Council members present and in good standing, with a minimum of 4 members present.

Section 13: Decision-making

All State Council business will be conducted under Roberts Rules of Order. A simple majority of those members present and voting is necessary to pass a motion unless another percentage is called for in the Bylaws. Roberts Rules may be suspended, by a majority vote, for the purpose of conducting business that is better suited to other processes.

Section 14: Record of Decisions/Minutes

Minutes of the State Council will be recorded by the Secretary and available to anyone by visiting the website or contacting the secretary within 14 days of the meeting at which the record was taken. Minutes can be electronically recorded. Minutes will be distributed via land mail; email may be used as well but not as a substitute, to the State Council within 30 days of the last meeting of the State Council. Minutes will be considered "draft"; and subject to change until accepted by the State Council at the next regular meeting. Accepted minutes will be posted on the website within 14 days of acceptance.

Section 15: Committees

1. Standing Committees -; There shall be five(5) Standing committees that shall consist of the Nominating committee, the Finance committee, the Livestock committee, the Equipment and Articles committee, and the Communications committee.
2. Special Committees - The State Council can form any special committee necessary to conduct business.

Section 16: Duties of Standing Committees

1. Nominating Committee shall consist of a Chairman, appointed by the State Council at the Annual Meeting and at least two (2) members appointed by the State Council. The committee will meet on call of the Chairman and will be constantly on the alert for potential Council or Administrative Board material within the membership. At least 6 weeks prior to the Annual Meeting the committee shall submit for their slate of candidates to the Secretary. The presentation of this slate does not preclude nominations from the membership.
- 2.

2. Finance Committee shall consist of a Chairman, who shall be the Co-Leader of the organization and two (2) members appointed by the Chairman, and a fourth member who shall be the Treasurer of the Small & Beginner Farmers of NH organization. The Finance committee shall prepare and present an annual budget for the next fiscal year to the State Council and the Administrative Board by the 4th Quarter meeting. The Finance committee shall hold each year, at least two (2) months prior to the Annual Meeting, a comprehensive audit and inventory of all financial records and assets of the organization.
3. Livestock Committee shall consist of a Chairman who is a member in good standing chosen by the State Council and at least two (2) other members chosen by the Chairman. Manage all livestock funds and payback funds. Process requests for livestock purchase from members. Prepare a Livestock budget for submission to the Finance Committee by the 3rd Quarter meeting of the State Council. Report to the State Council on all activities by the 4th Quarter Meeting of the State Council.
4. Communications Committee shall consist of a Chairman who is the Secretary and at least two (2) additional members chosen by the Chairman. The Communications Committee is responsible for the development and maintenance of the website, newsletter and list serve. The Communications committee will publish the Annual Report of SBFNH
5. Equipment and Articles Committee shall consist of at least 2 members chosen by the Council. The purpose of the Equipment and Articles Committee is to develop and recommend policies and procedures for the acquisition, use, management and liquidation of equipment and other articles that are owned by the organization and exist for the benefit of and use by the membership. The Equipment and Articles Committee will administer agreements with member caretakers of equipment and articles; maintain an inventory of equipment and other articles and monitor the use and status of all equipment and other articles owned by the organization.

Section 17: Reimbursement of Expenses

Administrative Board will reimburse all reasonable and customary expenses related to the business of the SBFNH upon submission of an invoice and approval.

Article V - Annual Meeting

Section 1

An annual meeting will be held every year during the 1st Quarter of the fiscal year to hear reports for the fiscal year just ended.

Section 2

At the Annual Meeting the State Council will, at a minimum:

1. Read and dispose of the Minutes of the previous year's Annual Meeting.
2. Present an Annual Report to include reports from all Standing committees, Special committees and County Networks as well as an end-of-year financial report.
3. Present current and nominated State Council representatives and Administrative Board members to the membership.
4. Present and dispose an Annual Program and Annual Budget.

Section 3: Notice of Annual Meeting

Notice of the Annual Meeting with agenda will be made no less than 28 days prior to the meeting and will be mailed first class to all members in good standing.

Section 4: Quorum

The quorum needed to conduct annual meeting business will be all voting members present and in good standing.

Section 5: Vote/Decision-making

All voting/decision making will follow Roberts Rules of Order. All votes taken will require a simple majority of those present and able to vote, unless another percentage is required in the Bylaws. Absentee ballots can be permitted at the discretion of the State Council for any item needing a vote that was published in the notice of the meeting. Absentee ballots to members must be postmarked at least twenty eight (28) days prior to the date of the Annual Meeting. Absentee ballots may be mailed as specified above or brought to the Annual Meeting where ballots will be accepted until the vote on that item has been taken. The Secretary and one other member in good standing not on the State Council will count all absentee ballots.

Article VI - Fiscal/Program Year

The Fiscal/Program Year will run the same as the calendar year.

Article VII - Amendments to Constitution and Bylaws

The Constitution and Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed at the Annual Meeting of the Organization. All members will sent a copy of the proposed amendment(s) twenty-eight (28) days prior to the Annual meeting. Adoption of Amendments shall require the affirmation vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members present and voting, as well as absentee ballots received until the vote on that item has been taken.

Article VIII - Conflict of Interest

Small & Beginner Farmers of New Hampshire will operate under the conflict of interest policy as recommended by the NH Attorney General.

Article IX - Indemnification

The Small & Beginner Farmers of New Hampshire shall indemnify and hold harmless any member serving in a volunteer capacity for the benefit of the Small & Beginner Farmers of New Hampshire from and against all claims and liabilities to which they may become subjected by reason of being a volunteer member.

Article X - Dissolution

In the event of the liquidation, dissolution or winding up of the organization, whether voluntary, involuntary, or by operation of law, the assets of the organization remaining after payment of all debts and necessary charges and expenses shall be distributed exclusively to any organizations designated by the Small & Beginner Farmers of New Hampshire, provided that such organizations are non-profit organizations that qualify under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and its Regulations as they now exist or are amended.

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