



## THE BYLAWS OF TEMPLE OF HMONGISM

1001 Johnson Parkway, Suite 26  
Saint Paul, MN 55106-3400

Web: [www.hmongism.org](http://www.hmongism.org)

Tel: 651-338-7443

Established on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, 2012

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### PREAMBLE

In order to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, to protect the liberties of each individual member, to provide uniformly efficient spiritual and religious services at low cost to its members, to ensure freedom of action of independence from any religious group, clan or organization, to provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and of governing its members, the Temple of Hmongism faithfully adopted these Bylaws of Temple of Hmongism.

### ARTICLE I: NAME, LOCATION, DEFINITION, AND PURPOSE

#### SECTION 1 – NAME AND LOCATION:

The name of this organization shall be the Temple of Hmongism, hereafter may simply refer to as Temple or Hmongism, located in the City of St. Paul, County of Ramsey, and State of Minnesota.

#### SECTION 2 – DEFINITION:

The religion of the Hmong, in English, shall be Hmongism or, in Hmong, Dab Qhuas Hmoob (pending more research). Hmongism is the common beliefs and practices of the Hmong people with a complete life cycle of the wholeness of body and soul, the heavenly journey to paradise and reincarnation of the soul, though it may contain some elements found in Daoism, Animism, Buddhism or Confucianism.

#### SECTION 3 – PURPOSE:

- (1) The primary purposes of the Temple of Hmongism are (1) to revise and simplify the traditional Hmong religion into the so-called Hmongism, (2) to centralize Hmongism out of the houses into the Temple of Hmongism where its members can worship and perform spiritual and religious rituals, (3) to reduce the cost of Hmong religious rituals, especially funeral expenses, (4) to recruit people to become members of Hmongism in order to save our people from religious and financial burdens, and (5) to provide the best and most cost effective services to its good standing members regarding their spiritual and religious needs.
- (2) Temple of Hmongism shall train its own priests, or txiv plig or txiv coj dab, and only those men or women properly trained in Hmongism may perform marriage, shamanism, spiritual and religious rituals for its members within the intended guidelines of Hmongism (or for non-members at higher cost to be set by the Board of the Temple of Hmongism).
- (3) Temple of Hmongism is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law). These charitable, religious, and educational purposes include, but are not limited to, establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building, maintaining and operating of temples, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, social medias, day care centers, and other projects deemed appropriate to the practices of Hmongism.



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### ARTICLE II: STATEMENT OF FAITH

The fundamental teachings and practices of Hmongism are reflected in the following statements of faith. Our purpose in stating these basic beliefs is to establish a doctrinal foundation for those choosing to affiliate with the Temple of Hmongism.

- (1) We believe in the inspiration and teaching of Hmongism and that Hmongism is a religion that has been practiced by the Hmong for thousands of years;
- (2) We believe that being Hmong also means that we have our own religion that offers its own uniqueness of Hmong;
- (3) We believe that all Hmong, regardless of clans, dialects and regions, have a common, national religion of Hmongism, and that those practices that are different from clan to clan or within a clan are not national religions but cultural or local practices that should or can be confined within the families or clan;
- (4) We believe that the centralization of Hmongism where members have a place to worship and hold their religious rituals is the best idea to preserve and practice Hmongism in today's modern world, and that it has nothing religiously wrong against it;
- (5) We believe that our traditionally lengthy, repetitive, at times controversial, and very costly rituals have not produced any obvious rewards or blessings but burdens for the living family members, and thus they should be revised and simplified to cut down time and cost, and that this reform shall be handled by scholars, practitioners, and well informed individuals;
- (6) We believe that we should not put so much emphasis and money on a funeral, that a funeral does not have to be a burden to the living members of the family, and that the living spouse, if there is one, and the children of the deceased have full authority and responsibility for the funeral of the deceased;
- (7) We believe that the reform of Hmongism will prevent young, educated Hmong from converting to other religions or become non-religious completely;
- (8) We believe that Hmongism in its simplified form, offering more effective services at much lower cost, will lead us forward, individually or collectively, toward a more financially prosperous and independent future;
- (9) We believe that, while we are still researching for more information, Ntxwg Nyoog is not as bad a figure as our ancestors have made Him to be, and we believe that Ntxwg Nyoog might be the Hmong word for God;
- (10) We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the temple, and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God;
- (11) We believe that every member of Hmongism, as a steward of the wealth entrusted to him, should give cheerfully to the support and growth of the Temple of Hmongism; and
- (12) We believe that the priests or txiv plig or txiv coj dab of the Temple of Hmongism are to guide and provide all spiritual and religious needs to its members, and we believe that the excellent and cost effective services provided by the Temple are what draw people to become members of the Temple of Hmongism.



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### ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

All decent persons of 18 years of age or older, or under the parent(s), interested in and faithful toward Hmongism are eligible to become members of the Temple of Hmongism. Membership is granted after completion and receipt of a membership application and annual dues. Membership may be denied if the membership committee decides that this person may be detrimental to the Temple and Hmongism.

#### SECTION 1 – QUALIFICATIONS:

- (1) Be 18 years of age or older or under the parent(s);
- (2) Believe in Hmongism's Statement of Faith in Article II;
- (3) Have good moral and humble character, not seeking personal gain;
- (4) Live within serviceable area of the Temple of Hmongism and those living outside of serviceable area shall pay for traveling expenses;
- (5) Returning membership of a person who had not been serviced by the Temple before leaving the Temple of Hmongism;
- (6) Returning membership of a person whose family had been serviced by the Temple before leaving the Temple of Hmongism has to pay his or her fee(s) set by the Temple of Hmongism, which is equaled to the current non-member servicing fee, in order to regain full membership of the Temple of Hmongism, and/or his or her application will be decided on a case by case basis by the membership committee; and
- (7) Other qualification(s) to be determined by the Board.

#### SECTION 2 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- (1) Members are not expected or required to attend the Temple on every Sunday or on a regular basis. They can come to the Temple during business hours to worship at their own free will;
- (2) Only members whose membership is paid for the current year will be members in good standing. Membership dues and privileges are determined by the Board of the Temple of Hmongism;
- (3) Members in good standing are entitled to attend general and special meetings, to vote on all questions coming before the membership, and to hold office and serve on standing or special committees;
- (4) Members are welcome to attend meetings of the Board and to participate in discussions on matters before the Board, but without a vote on matters before the Board;
- (5) The Board may, at its discretion, terminate the membership of any person deemed detrimental to Hmongism at any time by returning that person's remaining current dues;
- (6) An annual meeting of the membership shall be held each year on the second weekend of the month of October for the election of Officers and Board members at large and the transaction of any necessary business. If there is no election held, or a failure, to elect the next term of Officers and Board members, the current term shall continue to serve the Temple until the new Board is elected;
- (7) Special meetings of the membership may be called by the President at his or her discretion, or at the direction of the Board, or at the written request of at least 10% of the membership. Notices of special meetings shall state the matters to be considered;
- (8) At least one month's notice of the annual or any special meeting shall be given;
- (9) A majority vote of those voting is necessary to transact any business brought before the



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- membership, including the election of officers, except as otherwise noted in these Bylaws;
- (10) Any members of the Temple of Hmongism, once signed the application and disclaimer on the form can not and shall not bring any legal claim against the Temple of Hmongism or any of its members so long as the Temple and its officials conduct the Temple's business within the guidelines spelled in the Bylaws and other guidelines or practices that the Temple officially adopted; and
  - (11) Any non-member of the Temple of Hmongism can not and shall not bring any legal claim against the Temple of Hmongism or any of its member on behalf of his/her spouse, siblings or family members who is/are members of the Temple of Hmongism.

### SECTION 3 – BENEFITS:

Members in good standing of the Temple of Hmongism would enjoy the following privileges and benefits.

- (1) Member(s), after twelve months from the date of acceptance of his/her or their membership or within twelve months in the case of death as a result of an accident occurred after the date of acceptance, shall receive full funeral services provided free of charge by the priests or txiv plig of the Temple of Hmongism. If a death occurred within six months from the date of acceptance, member(s) shall pay an amount equal to one half of the servicing fee for non-members (see membership policies for details). And if a death occurred between six months and a year from the date of acceptance, member(s) shall pay an amount equal to one fourth of the servicing fee for non-members (see membership policies for details);
- (2) Services for shamanism, khawv koob, wedding, and other non-funeral rituals shall be paid by the member(s), and their servicing fees are reduced and standardized (see chart for details);
- (3) Member(s) can have peace of mind, no longer have to wait for, kowtow to, or please relatives (kwv tij neej tsa) and traditional religious practitioners (thawj lwm tub ncig) to help them with the rituals in line (1) above;
- (4) As long as they remain good standing members by paying their dues, when in need, they simply notify the Temple and full services will be performed for them free of charge (in the case of a funeral);
- (5) While services are provided by the Temple, members have to pay for (1) food, animal(s), spiritual papers, incense, candle, and small service fee in the case of rituals of birth, shamanism, and wedding, and (2) funeral home and related expenses (before we have our own), food, spiritual papers, incense, candles, coffin, vault, grave, fee in line (1) above if applicable, and others in the case of a funeral;
- (6) If we have our own facilities, members can use the facilities free of charge;
- (7) While the Temple's facilities are open to non-members who have to pay non-membership cost (to be set by the Board), members of the Temple always enjoy the first priority;
- (8) The Temple will help document and preserve the history, lineage or family tree, both print and digital, of each member, and, if needed, help produce eulogy and visual documentary for its members in the case of death;
- (9) Members shall receive print, electronic or digital copies of materials of Hmongism;
- (10) Members are welcomed and respected as one religious denomination;



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- (11) Members are guaranteed to save more time and money with Hmongism;
- (12) With the huge savings of both time and money with Hmongism, members can better invest their time and money toward life, not death;
- (13) A member, who is the head applicant, and his or her spouse, after paying for his/her/their membership fee(s) for twenty years, shall become permanent member(s) of the Temple, and thereafter payment of membership shall be no longer required. In the case of separation or divorce, both spouses shall be treated with equal seniority that is transferable to include his or her new spouse should they choose to remain with the Temple; and
- (14) Other privileges and benefits deemed appropriate as the Temple grows in the future.

### SECTION 4 – TERMINATION:

Membership in the Temple of Hmongism ends when one or more of the following occur.

- (1) A written or verbal request by the member;
- (2) Member has left the Temple of Hmongism or is attending another temple or church on a regular basis;
- (3) Membership has been suspended in accordance with Article 3, Section 2 (5);
- (4) Member no longer meets the qualifications for membership listed in Article 3, Section 1;
- (5) Member no longer believes in and is not faithful toward Hmongism's Statement of Faith in Article II;
- (6) Membership is not renewed by paying annual dues when due;
- (7) Death; and
- (8) Member who either cancels his or her membership or being removed by the Temple shall receive his or her remaining current dues.

### SECTION 5 – DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER:

Conduct contrary to the beliefs of Hmongism shall be sufficient grounds upon which any person may be disqualified as a member.

- (1) There shall be a discipline committee consisting of the member(s) of the Board and member(s) of the general membership. This committee shall have the authority to correct the members of the Temple where acts of immoral or improper behavior occur, doctrinal error, heresy, or promoting division in the Temple. If a member is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he or she shall not sit as a member of the discipline committee. He or she shall be entitled to the same steps as other Temple members and be subject to the same discipline;
- (2) Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he or she should not share the offense with others. He or she is to go alone to the offended party and seek to restore the matter with a spirit of humility;
- (3) If reconciliation is not reached, a second member is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be done in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration;
- (4) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in sections (2) and (3) have been taken, the



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discipline committee, as the Temple representative responsible for settling disputes, shall hear the matter. If the matter is not resolved during the hearing before the discipline committee, the committee shall bring the matter before the Board that the Board may speak to the person and seek that member's restoration. The purpose is not to judge or condemn him or her, as a trial in court, but to win him or her. It is not to humiliate, but to reconcile that member;

- (5) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in sections (2), (3), and (4) have been taken, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of the Temple and treated as unbelievers;
- (6) If an unrepentant person is removed from the Temple membership, all contact with him from that point forward must be for the sake of restoration (except for family members);
- (7) No matter may be heard by the discipline committee or the Board unless the steps outlined above have been taken.

The purpose of discipline is restorative and remedial. However, if a person is separated from the Temple, they may not be re-instated until there has been genuine repentance and reconciliation, which will be attested to by the head of the discipline committee and confirmed by the Board of the Temple.

### ARTICLE IV: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The responsibility for all business matters lies with the Board of Directors, or simply refer to as the Board, which consists of the Officers and any Board members at large.

A person interested in serving on the Board of Directors of the Temple of Hmongism must be a member of Hmongism and serve on committee(s) or subcommittee(s) of Hmongism for at least six months before he or she shall be eligible as a candidate for becoming a board of director of the Temple.

Chairperson(s) of committee(s) or subcommittee(s) of the Temple shall be an active member of Hmongism, provided that he or she meets the qualifications stipulated under the Bylaws of the Temple of Hmongism.

- (1) The Board, namely the first Board, is to carefully research and respectfully simplify our spiritual and religious rituals for future generations in order to preserve our religion and at the same time reduce time and cost;
- (2) The Board has sole authority to set schedules and dates for the year; to set dues and fees at rates which will cover costs of operation; to set honoraria paid to priests and other workers, rental of necessary facilities, and other incidental expenses; to engage facilities for classes and special programs; to approve engagements and/or other special activities undertaken in the name of Hmongism;
- (3) The Board shall determine the need for and the responsibilities of standing or special committees to carry out projects or special programs;
- (4) Priests, whether or not they are members of Hmongism, or chairpersons of standing or special committees, may attend meetings for the purposes of advising or receiving suggestions from the



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Board concerning the programs of Hmongism;

- (5) In the event of a vacancy among the Board, the remaining Board members may exercise the powers of the full Board until the vacancy is filled at the next regular election or by a majority vote may appoint a member to temporarily fill the vacancy until the next election;
- (6) A member of the Board may be removed from office after reasonable notice and opportunity to be heard by a majority vote of the membership of the Temple of Hmongism or by two-thirds majority vote of the entire Board;
- (7) There may be 7 to 25 Board members at large. The actual number will be set by the Board and may be changed from time to time by majority vote of the Board;
- (8) The Board shall meet monthly;
- (9) The quorum for transaction of business is at least half of the Officers and Board members at large;
- (10) A majority of those Board members present is necessary to transact any business brought before the Board;
- (11) If a Board member has three consecutive unexcused absences from regular board meeting, or six absences out of twelve meetings of the year, he or she shall be notified by the Board and if failed to respond or correct promptly may result in his or her termination; and
- (12) The Board, Officers in particular, shall be accountable to all activities of the Temple of Hmongism and be free from any and all corruptions. Any misuse of the Temple's funding, however big or small, will not be tolerated, will be reported to appropriate authorities, and will be punished by applicable laws, and his or her membership be terminated from the Temple of Hmongism.

### ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

The Officers of the Temple of Hmongism are the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Term of office is two years. One must have served on the Board for at least one full term before he or she is eligible to run for any officer position. Officers may not serve more than two consecutive terms, but may be reelected after the lapse of two years. Duties of Officers are:

#### SECTION 1 – PRESIDENT:

The President is the executive officer responsible for the operation of the group. He or she presides at meetings, calls regular or special meetings of the Board or membership as needed, appoints the Chairpersons of standing or special committees.

#### SECTION 2 – VICE PRESIDENT:

The Vice President acts as President in the absence or illness of the President and in the event of the President's resignation or incapacity to serve shall succeed to the office until the next regular election of officers. The President may delegate to the Vice President such official or other duties as may be necessary for the conduct of business.

#### SECTION 3 – SECRETARY:

The Secretary keeps records and minutes of meetings, maintains an up-to-date list of members,



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attenders and subscribers, sends notices and flyers, receives and distributes information from other groups and organizations.

### **SECTION 4 – TREASURER:**

The Treasurer is responsible for the collection of dues and charges, for depositing money to and monitoring bank account(s), for the disbursement of fees to priests or txiv plig and workers and for payment of authorized expenditures. The Treasurer advises the Board about the finances of the organization and assists in formulating the budgets for the regular and special activities. The Treasurer also prepares a yearly financial statement of operations.

The Treasurer and any officer are empowered to sign checks.

### **SECTION 5 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE:**

Officers and Board members at large are elected at the Annual Meeting of the Membership and take office on January 1 of the new year.

- (1) The Officers are elected every two years;
- (2) One third of the Board shall be up for election every two years (provided that the original Board will set which one third is up for election consecutively);
- (3) Two months before the annual meeting, the President appoints a Nominating Committee of three or more members of the Temple of Hmongism, one of whom should be a member of the Board of Directors;
- (4) The Nominating Committee reports its slate of nominees for existing vacancies to the membership one month prior to the annual meeting;
- (5) Additional nominations may also be made by written petition of five members or from the floor at the annual meeting, provided the consent of the nominees has been obtained; and
- (6) A majority of those voting is required for election to office. In the event of a contested election, paper ballots shall be used and tellers appointed to tally the results.

## **ARTICLE VI: PRIESTS, TXIV PLIG, OR TXIV COJ DAB**

### **SECTION 1 – PRIEST:**

Priests or txiv plig or txiv coj dab shall oversee and govern the ministry of the Temple of Hmongism and demonstrate leadership by personal example under the direction of the Board. They shall meet the spiritual and religious needs of the Temple through studying, preaching and performing only the simplified version of Hmongism and providing full spiritual and religious services to their members.

If a priest becomes unqualified to serve, he or she shall no longer be considered a priest or txiv plig or txiv coj dab, and shall no longer have the authority and responsibility of a priest or txiv plig or txiv coj dab.

### **SECTION 2 – QUALIFICATIONS FOR PRIESTS OR TXIV PLIG OR TXIV COJ DAB:**

- (1) A priest or txiv plig or txiv coj dab must be a strong believer in the simplified Hmongism and





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- must agree with the Statement of Faith, Policies and Bylaws of the Temple of Hmongism;
- (2) A priest is called to lead by example. Therefore, we believe that the men or women who are selected to this position should be those who have a firm conviction and understanding of leadership by service to others;
  - (3) A priest shall be a person of outstanding moral character, temperate, prudent, honest, gentle, not self-willed, self-controlled, just, devout, and not covetous;
  - (4) A priest shall be a person who conducts himself or herself with integrity, is hospitable, has a good reputation in his or her community and business relations, is not given to drunkenness, is not belligerent, is not contentious or quarrelsome; and
  - (5) A priest shall be a mature believer who is knowledgeable in the general, long history, culture and religion of the Hmong, has deep understanding of the simplified Hmongism, and is able to service, teach, exhort, and convince others with great passion.

### SECTION 3 - AGENTS OF THE TEMPLE:

When the priests or txiv plig and the staff lack the specific skills necessary to accomplish required objectives of the Temple such as building projects that require architectural or construction expertise, equipment purchases, or specialized knowledge and experience, an agent may be appointed to represent the Temple.

The agent of the Temple is selected and approved by unanimous vote of the Board of Directors, and shall remain in the position only as long as it takes to complete his or her assigned tasks. The agent of the Temple may have certain powers of decision making, or purchase authority, if agreed to by the Board of Directors and only for the duration of the assigned task or tasks. These powers must first be approved unanimously by the priests.

Once appointed and approved, the agent may carry out his or her duties as required, make decisions or purchases as necessary on behalf of the Temple. Once the agreed upon task (or tasks) has been completed, all such privileges and authority are revoked.

### ARTICLE VII: FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Temple of Hmongism is January 1 through December 31.

Any single financial transaction over \$50,000 shall require a two third (2/3) approval of the Board and a two third (2/3) of the active members presented at the annual conference or at a special conference.

### ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

Amendments to these Bylaws may be made upon one month's written notice to Board members, and this notice must state the proposed changes.



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Any changes to the Bylaws shall require a two thirds (2/3) approval from the Board and a two thirds (2/3) of the active members presented at the annual conference or at a special conference.

**ARTICLE IX: TAX-EXEMPT PROVISIONS**

**SECTION 1 – PRIVATE INUREMENT:**

No part of the net earnings of the Temple shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, officers, or any other private persons, except that the Temple shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in the furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article I Section 2.

**SECTION 2 – POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT:**

The Temple shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office (including the publishing or distributing of statements). No substantial part of the activities of the Temple shall be political in nature.

**SECTION 3 – DISSOLUTION:**

Upon the dissolution of the Temple, the Board shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all liabilities of the Temple, distribute all of the assets of the Temple to organizations operated exclusively for religious purposes that are tax exempt under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as the Board shall determine.

**SECTION 4 – RACIAL NONDISCRIMINATION:**

The Temple shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin.

**SECTION 5 – TRANSLATION/INTERPRETATION OF THESE BYLAWS IN HMONG OR OTHER LANGUAGES (If applicable).**

If requested by the applicant(s), these Bylaws have been translated into his/her or their native language \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_, relationship \_\_\_\_\_, today’s date \_\_\_\_\_ . I/we fully understand and agree to all the terms of the Bylaws.

Signature of applicant(s) \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of translator/interpreter \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**ARTICLE X: INDEMNIFICATION**

Member, or family or relative of member, of the Temple of Hmongism shall, to the extent permitted by law, investigate, defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Temple of Hmongism, its officers, agents and employees from and against any and all loss, damage, liability, claims, demands, detriments, costs,



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charges and expenses (including attorney's fees) and causes of action of whatsoever character which the Temple of Hmongism may incur, sustain or be subjected to on account of loss or damage to property or loss of use thereof, or for bodily injury to or death of any persons (including but not limited to property, employees, subcontractors, agents and invitees of each party hereto) arising out of or in any way connected with the work to be performed by member pursuant to these Bylaws.

**ADOPTION**

These Bylaws of Temple of Hmongism, in the City of St. Paul, County of Ramsey, and State of Minnesota, were adopted by the Board of Directors present and voting at a business meeting of the Temple of Hmongism.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and seal this 3rd day of March, 2013.

\_\_\_\_\_ President

\_\_\_\_\_ Vice President

\_\_\_\_\_ Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_ Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_ Board

\_\_\_\_\_ Board

\_\_\_\_\_ Board