

# Ridgefield Board of REALTORS®

*Incorporated 1961*

## BYLAWS

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## **ARTICLE I - NAME**

**Section 1. Name.** The Name of this organization shall be the Ridgefield Board of REALTORS®, Incorporated, hereinafter referred to as the "Board".

**Section 2. REALTORS®.** Inclusion and retention of the Registered Collective Membership Mark REALTORS® in the name of the Board shall be governed by the Constitution and Bylaws of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® as from time to time amended.

## **ARTICLE II - OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Board are:

**Section 1.** To unite those engaged in the recognized branches of the real estate business for the purpose of exerting a beneficial influence upon matters affecting the real estate business and related interests.

**Section 2.** To promote and maintain high standards of conduct in the real estate profession as expressed in the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

**Section 3.** To provide a unified medium for real estate owners and those engaged in the real estate profession whereby their collective and individual interests may be safeguarded and advanced.

**Section 4.** To further the interests of home and other real property ownership.

**Section 5.** To unite those engaged in the real estate profession in this community with the Connecticut Association of REALTORS® and the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, thereby furthering their own objectives throughout the state and nation, obtaining the benefits and privileges of membership therein.

**Section 6.** To designate, for the benefit of the public, individuals authorized to use the term(s) REALTOR® and REALTORS® as prescribed and controlled by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

**Section 7.** To perform any other act that a non-stock corporation can perform according to the Connecticut Non-Stock Corporation Act not inconsistent with any federal income tax exemption which may be granted the Board.

## **ARTICLE III – JURISDICTION**

**Section 1.** The territorial jurisdiction of the Board as a member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® shall include the Town of Ridgefield, Connecticut.

**Section 2.** Territorial jurisdiction is defined to mean:

- (a) The right and duty to control the use of the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS®, subject to the conditions set forth in these Bylaws and those of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, in return for which the Board agrees to protect and safeguard the property rights of the National Association in the terms.

#### **ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1.** There shall be six classes of Members as follows:

(a) **REALTOR® Members.** REALTOR® Members, whether primary or secondary, shall be:

- (1) Individuals who, as sole proprietors, partners, corporate officers, or branch office managers, are engaged actively in the real estate profession, including buying, selling, exchanging, renting or leasing, managing, appraising for others for compensation, counseling, building, developing or subdividing real estate, and who maintain or are associated with an established real estate office in the State of Connecticut or a state contiguous thereto. All persons who are partners in a partnership, or all officers in a corporation who are actively engaged in the real estate profession within the State of Connecticut or a state contiguous thereto, shall qualify for REALTOR® Membership only, and each is required to hold REALTOR® Membership (except as provided in the following paragraph) in a Board of REALTORS® within the state or a state contiguous thereto unless otherwise qualified for Institute Affiliate Membership as described in Section 1 (b) of Article IV.

In the case of a real estate firm, partnership, or corporation, whose business activity is substantially all commercial, only those principals actively engaged in the real estate business in connection with the same office, or any other offices within the jurisdiction of the Board in which one of the firm's principals holds REALTOR® membership, shall be required to hold REALTOR® membership unless otherwise qualified for Institute Affiliate Membership as described in Section 1 (b) or (d) of Article IV.

NOTE: REALTOR® Members may obtain membership in a "secondary" Board in another state.

- (2) Individuals who are engaged in the real estate profession other than as sole proprietors, partners, corporate officers, or branch office managers and are associated with a REALTOR® Member and meet the qualifications set out in Article V.
- (3) Franchise REALTOR® Membership. Corporate officers (who may be licensed or unlicensed) of a real estate brokerage franchise organization with at least one hundred fifty (150) franchisees located within the United States, its insular possessions and the commonwealth of Puerto Rico, elected to membership pursuant to the provisions in the NAR Constitution and Bylaws. Such individuals shall enjoy all of the rights, privileges and obligations of REALTOR® membership (including compliance with the Code of

Ethics) except: obligations related to Board mandated education, meeting attendance, or indoctrination classes or other similar requirements; the right to use the term REALTOR® in connection with their franchise organization's name; and the right to hold elective office in the local board, state association and National Association.

(4) **Primary and Secondary REALTOR® Members.** An individual is a primary Member if the Board pays State and National dues based on such Member. An individual is a secondary Member if State and National dues are remitted through another Board. One of the principals in a real estate firm must be a Designated REALTOR® Member of the Board in order for licensees affiliated with the firm to select the Board as their "primary" Board.

(5) **Designated REALTOR® Members.** Each firm (or office in the case of firms with multiple office locations) shall designate in writing one REALTOR® Member who shall be responsible for all duties and obligations of Membership including the obligation to mediate and arbitrate pursuant to Article 17 of the Code of Ethics and the payment of Board dues as established in Article X of the Bylaws. The "Designated REALTOR®" must be a sole proprietor, partner, corporate officer or branch office manager acting on behalf of the firm's principal(s) and must meet all other qualifications for REALTOR® Membership established in Article V, Section 2, of the Bylaws.

(b) **Institute Affiliate Members.** Institute Affiliate Members shall be individuals who hold a professional designation by an Institute, Society, or Council affiliated with the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® that addresses a specialty area other than residential brokerage or individuals who otherwise hold a class of membership in such Institute, Society or Council that confers the right to hold office. Any such individual, if otherwise eligible, may elect to hold REALTOR® membership, subject to payment of applicable dues for such membership.

(c) **Honorary Members.** Honorary Members shall be individuals not engaged in the real estate business who have performed notable service for the real estate business, for the Board, or for the public.

(d) **Affiliate Members.** Affiliate Members shall be ~~real estate owners~~ and other individuals or firms who, while not engaged in the real estate profession as defined in paragraph (a) of this section, have interests requiring information concerning real estate, and are in sympathy with the objectives of the Board.

(e) **Public Service Members.** Public Service Members shall be individuals who are interested in the real estate profession as employees of or affiliated with educational, public utility, governmental or other similar organizations, but are not engaged in the real estate profession on their own account or in association with an established real estate business.

(f) **Student Members.** Student Members shall be individuals who are seeking an undergraduate or graduate degree with a specialization or major in real estate at institutions of higher learning, and who have completed at least two years of college and at least one

college level course in real estate, but are not engaged in the real estate profession on their own account or are not associated with an established real estate office.

## **ARTICLE V - QUALIFICATION AND ELECTION**

### **Section 1. Application.**

- (a) An application for membership shall be made in such manner and form as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors and made available to anyone requesting it. The application form shall contain among the statements to be signed by the applicant (1) that applicant agrees as a condition to membership to thoroughly familiarize him/herself with the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, the Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules and Regulations of the Board, the State and National Associations, and if elected a Member, will abide by the Constitutions and Bylaws and Rules and Regulations of the Board, State and National Associations, and if a REALTOR® Member, will abide by the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® including the obligation to mediate and arbitrate controversies arising out of real estate transactions as specified by Article 17 of the Code of Ethics, and as further specified in the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® as from time to time amended, and (2) that applicant consents that the Board, through its Membership Committee or otherwise, may invite and receive information and comment about applicant from any other Member or other persons, and that applicant agrees that any information and comment furnished to the Board by any person in response to the invitation shall be conclusively deemed to be privileged and not form the basis of any action for slander, libel, or defamation of character. The applicant shall, with the form of application, have access to a copy of the Bylaws, Constitution, Rules and Regulations, and Code of Ethics referred to above.
- (b) An application for any other form of membership, except for Institute Affiliate Membership, shall be made in such manner and form as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors.

### **Section 2. Qualification.**

- (a) An applicant for REALTOR® membership who is a sole proprietor, partner, corporate officer, or branch office manager of a real estate firm shall supply evidence satisfactory to the Board, its Membership Committee or otherwise that he is actively engaged in the real estate profession and maintains a current valid real estate broker's or salesperson's license or is licensed or certified by an appropriate state regulatory agency to engage in the appraisal of real property, has a place of business with the state of Connecticut or a state contiguous thereto (unless a secondary member), has no record of recent or pending bankruptcy\*, has no record of official sanctions involving unprofessional conduct\*\*, agrees to complete a course of instruction covering the Bylaws and Rules and Regulations of the Board, the Bylaws of the State Association, and the Constitution and Bylaws and Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and shall pass such reasonable and nondiscriminatory written examination thereon as may be required by the Committee, and

shall agree that if elected to membership, he will abide by such Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, and Code of Ethics.

\* *No recent or pending bankruptcy* is intended to mean that the applicant or any real estate firm in which the applicant is a sole proprietor, general partner, corporate officer, or branch office manager, is not involved in any pending bankruptcy or insolvency proceedings or has not been adjudged bankrupt in the past three (3) years. If a bankruptcy proceeding as described above exists, membership may not be rejected unless the Board establishes that its interests and those of its members and the public could not be adequately protected by requiring that the bankrupt applicant pay cash in advance for Board fees for up to one (1) year from the date that membership is approved or from the date that the applicant is discharged from bankruptcy (whichever is later). In the event that an existing member initiates bankruptcy proceedings, the member may be placed on a "cash basis" from the date that bankruptcy is initiated until one (1) year from the date that the member has been discharged from bankruptcy.

\*\* *No record of official sanctions involving unprofessional conduct* is intended to mean that the Board may only consider: (a) judgments within the past three (3) years of violations of (1) civil rights laws, (2) real estate license laws, or (3) other laws prohibiting unprofessional conduct against the applicant rendered by the courts or other lawful authorities; (b) criminal convictions if (1) the crime was punishable by death or imprisonment in excess of one year under the law under which the applicant was convicted, and (2) no more than ten years have elapsed since the date of the conviction or the release of the applicant from the confinement imposed for that conviction, whichever is the later date.

NOTE 1: One or more of the requirements for REALTOR® Membership set forth above in Article V, Section 2 (a) may not be deleted at the Board's discretion. However, Boards may NOT adopt membership qualifications more rigorous than specified in the Membership Qualification Criteria for REALTOR® Membership approved by the Board of Directors of the National Association.

NOTE 2: Article IV, Section 2, of the NAR Bylaws prohibits Member Boards from knowingly granting REALTOR® or REALTOR-Associate® membership to any applicant who has an unfulfilled sanction pending which was imposed by another Board or Association of REALTORS® for violation of the Code of Ethics.

- (b) Individuals who are actively engaged in the real estate profession other than as sole proprietors, partners, corporate officers, or branch office managers in order to qualify for REALTOR® membership, shall at the time of application, be associated either as an employee or as an independent contractor with a Designated REALTOR® Member of the Board, or a Designated REALTOR® Member of another Board (if a secondary member) and must maintain a current, valid real estate broker's or salesperson's license or be licensed or certified by an appropriate state regulatory agency to engage in the appraisal of real property, has no record of official sanctions involving unprofessional conduct\*, shall complete a course of instruction covering the Bylaws and Rules and Regulations of the Board, the Bylaws of the State Association, and the Constitution and Bylaws and Code of Ethics of the

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, shall pass such reasonable and nondiscriminatory written examinations thereon as may be required by the Membership Committee, and shall agree in writing that if elected to membership he will abide by such Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, and the Code of Ethics.

- (c) The Board will also consider the following in determining an applicant's qualifications for REALTOR® membership:
1. All final findings of Code of Ethics violations and violations of other membership duties in any other association/board within the past three (3) years.
  2. Pending ethics complaints (or hearings).
  3. Unsatisfied discipline pending.
  4. Pending arbitration requests (or hearings).
  5. Unpaid arbitration awards or unpaid financial obligations to any other association/board or association/board MLS.
  6. Any misuse of the term REALTOR® or REALTORS® in the name of the applicant's firm.

If a member resigns from another association with an ethics complaint or arbitration request pending, the Board may condition membership on the applicant's certification that he/she will submit to the pending ethics or arbitration proceeding (in accordance with the established procedures of the board/association to which the applicant has made application) and will abide by the decision of the hearing panel.

- (d) An applicant for Affiliate Membership shall supply to the Membership Committee evidence that applicant: is engaged in a specialty of the real estate profession other than brokerage of real property; is not associated with a firm engaged in brokerage of real property; and shall agree, if elected to membership, to abide by the Constitution, Bylaws and Rules and Regulations of the local Board, the State Association, and the National Association, and further, is encouraged to abide by the principles established in the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® but is not subject to disciplinary authority of the local Member Board with regard to conduct inconsistent with the Code of Ethics.
- (e) Application for membership must be accompanied by the fees provided for in Article X of these Bylaws.

### **Section 3. Election**

The procedure for election to membership shall be as follows:

- (a) The Chief Staff Executive (or duly authorized designee) shall determine whether the applicant is applying for the appropriate class of membership.
- (b) The Board of Directors shall review the qualifications of the applicant and the recommendations of the Chief Staff Executive (or duly authorized designee) and then vote on the applicant's eligibility for membership. If the applicant receives a majority vote of the



Board of Directors, he shall be declared elected to membership and shall be advised by written notice. If the board of directors determines that the individual does not meet all of the qualifications for membership as established in the association's Bylaws, or, if the individual does not satisfy all of the requirements of membership (for example, completion of a mandatory orientation program) membership may, at the discretion of the board of directors, be terminated. In such instances, dues shall be returned to the individual less a prorated amount to cover the number of days that the individual received association services and any application fee.

- (c) The Board of Directors may not reject an application without providing the applicant with advance notice of the findings, an opportunity to appear before the Board of Directors, to call witnesses on his behalf, to be represented by counsel, and to make such statements as he deems relevant. The Board of Directors may also have counsel present. The Board of Directors shall require that written minutes be made of any hearing before it or may electronically or mechanically record the proceedings.
- (d) If the Board of Directors determines that the application should be rejected, it shall record its reasons with the Chief Staff Executive (or duly authorized designee). If the Board of Directors believes that denial of membership to the applicant may become the basis of litigation and a claim of damage by the applicant, it may specify that denial shall become effective upon entry in a suit by the Board for a declaratory judgment by a court of competent jurisdiction of a final judgment declaring the rejection violates no rights of the applicant.

#### **Section 4. New Member Code of Ethics Orientation**

Applicants for REALTOR® membership and provisional REALTOR® members (where applicable) shall complete an orientation program on the Code of Ethics of not less than two hours and thirty minutes of instructional time. This requirement does not apply to applicants for REALTOR® membership who have completed comparable orientation in another association, provided that REALTOR® membership has been continuous, or that any break in membership is for one year or less.

Failure to satisfy this requirement within 60 days of the date of application will result in denial of the membership application.

Note: Orientation programs must meet the learning objectives and minimum criteria established from time to time by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

#### **Section 5. Continuing Member Code of Ethics Training**

Effective January 1, 2017, through December 31, 2018, and for successive two year periods thereafter, each REALTOR® member of the association (with the exception of REALTOR® members granted REALTOR® Emeritus status by the National Association) shall be required to complete ethics training of not less than two (2) hours and thirty (30) minutes of instructional

time. This requirement will be satisfied upon presentation of documentation that the member has completed a course of instruction conducted by this or another association, the State Association of REALTORS®, the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, or any other recognized educational institution or provider which meets the learning objectives and minimum criteria established by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® from time to time.

REALTOR® members who have completed training as a requirement of membership in another association and REALTOR® members who have completed the New Member Code of Ethics Orientation during any two (2)-year cycle shall not be required to complete additional ethics training until a new two (2)-year cycle commences.

Failure to satisfy the required periodic ethics training shall be considered a violation of a membership duty. Failure to meet the requirement in any two (2)-year cycles will result in suspension of membership for the first two months (January and February) of the year following the end of any two (2)-year cycle or until the requirement is met, whichever occurs sooner. On March 1 of that year, the membership of a member who is still suspended as of that date will be automatically terminated.

## **Section 6. Status Changes**

(a) A REALTOR® who changes the conditions under which he/she holds membership shall be required to provide written notification to the Board within thirty (30) days. A REALTOR® (non-principal) who becomes a principal in the firm with which he/she has been licensed or, alternatively, becomes a principal in a new firm which will be comprised of REALTOR® principals may be required to satisfy any previously unsatisfied membership requirements applicable to REALTOR® (principal) Members but shall, during the period of transition from one status of membership to another, be subject to all of the privileges and obligations of a REALTOR® (principal). If the REALTOR® (non-principal) does not satisfy the requirements established in these Bylaws for the category of membership to which he/she has transferred within sixty (60) days of the date they advised the Board of their change in status, their new membership application will terminate automatically unless otherwise so directed by the Board of Directors.

A REALTOR® (or REALTOR® Associate, where applicable) who is transferring their license from one firm comprised of REALTOR® principals to another firm comprised of REALTOR® principals shall be subject to all of the privileges and obligations of membership during the period of transition. If the transfer is not completed within sixty (60) days of the date the Board is advised of the disaffiliation with the current firm, membership will terminate automatically unless otherwise so directed by the Board of Directors.

(The Board of Directors, at its discretion, may waive any qualification which the applicant has already fulfilled in accordance with the Board's Bylaws.)

Any application fee related to a change in membership status shall be reduced by an amount equal to any application fee previously paid by the applicant.

Dues shall be prorated from the first day of the month in which the member is notified of

election by the Board of Directors and shall be based on the new membership status for the remainder of the year.

## **ARTICLE VI - PRIVILEGES AND OBLIGATIONS**

**Section 1.** The privileges and obligations of Members, in addition to those otherwise provided in these Bylaws, shall be specified in this Article.

**Section 2.** Any Member of the Board may be reprimanded, fined, placed on probation, suspended, or expelled by the Board of Directors for a violation of these Bylaws and Board Rules and Regulations consistent with these Bylaws, after a hearing as provided in the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®. Although Members other than REALTORS® are not subject to the Code of Ethics or its enforcement by the Board, such Members are encouraged to abide by the principles established in the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and conduct their business and professional practices accordingly. Further, Members other than REALTORS® may, upon recommendation of the Membership Committee, or upon recommendation by a hearing panel of the Professional Standards Committee, be subject to discipline as described above, for any conduct, which in the opinion of the Board of Directors, applied on a nondiscriminatory basis, reflects adversely on the terms REALTOR® or REALTORS® and the real estate industry, or for conduct that is inconsistent with or adverse to the objectives and purposes of the local Board, the State Association, and the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

**Section 3.** Any REALTOR® Member of the Board may be disciplined by the Board of Directors for violations of the Code of Ethics or other duties of membership, after a hearing as described in the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual of the National Association of REALTORS®, provided that the discipline imposed is consistent with the discipline authorized by the Professional Standards Committee of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® as set forth in the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual of the National Association.

**Section 4.** Resignations of Members shall become effective when received in writing by the Board of Directors, provided, however, that if any Member submitting the resignation is indebted to the Board for dues, fees, fines or other assessments of the Board or any other services, departments, divisions or subsidiaries, the Board may condition the right of the resigning Member to reapply for membership upon payment in full of all such monies owed.

**Section 5.** If a Member resigns from the Board or otherwise causes membership to terminate with an ethics complaint pending, the complaint shall be processed until the decision of the association with respect to disposition of the complaint is final by this association (if respondent does not hold membership in any other association) or by any other association in which the respondent continues to hold membership. If an ethics respondent resigns or otherwise causes membership in all Boards to terminate before an ethics complaint is filed alleging unethical conduct occurred while the respondent was a REALTOR®, the complaint, once filed, shall be

processed until the decision of the association with respect to disposition of the complaint is final. In any instance where an ethics hearing is held subsequent to an ethic respondent's resignation or membership termination, any discipline ratified by the Board of Directors shall be held in abeyance until such time as the respondent rejoins an association of REALTORS®.

- (a) If a member resigns or otherwise causes membership to terminate, the duty to submit to mediation and arbitration continues in effect even after membership lapses or is terminated, provided that the dispute arose while the former member was a REALTOR®.

**Section 6. REALTOR® Members.** REALTOR® Members, whether primary or secondary, in good standing whose financial obligations to the Board are paid in full shall be entitled to vote and to hold elective office in the Board; may use the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS®, which use shall be subject to the provisions of Article VIII; and have the primary responsibility to safeguard and promote the standards, interests, and welfare of the Board and the real estate profession.

- (a) If a REALTOR® Member is a sole proprietor in a firm, a partner in a partnership or an officer in a corporation and is suspended or expelled, the firm, partnership, or corporation shall not use the terms REALTOR® or REALTORS® in connection with its business during the period of suspension, or until readmission to REALTOR® Membership, or unless connection with the firm, partnership, or corporation is severed, whichever may apply. The membership of all other principals, partners, or corporate officers shall suspend or terminate during the period of suspension of the disciplined Member, or until readmission of the disciplined Member, or unless connection of the disciplined Member with the firm, partnership, or corporation is severed, whichever may apply. Further, the membership of REALTORS® other than principals who are employed by or affiliated as independent contractors with the disciplined Member shall suspend or terminate during the period of suspension of the disciplined Member or until readmission of the disciplined Member or until connection of the disciplined Member with the firm, partnership, or corporation is severed, or unless the REALTOR® Member (non-principal) elects to sever his connection with the REALTOR® and affiliate with another REALTOR® Member in good standing in the Board, whichever may apply. If a REALTOR® Member who is other than a principal in a firm, partnership, or corporation is suspended or expelled, the use of the terms REALTOR® or REALTORS® by the firm, partnership, or corporation shall not be affected.

**Section 7. Affiliate Members.** Affiliate Members shall have rights and privileges and be subject to obligations prescribed by the Board of Directors.

**Section 8. Institute Affiliate Members.** Institute Affiliate Members shall have rights and privileges and be subject to obligations prescribed by the Board of Directors consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

NOTE: Local associations establish the rights and privileges to be conferred on Institute Affiliate Members except that no Institute Affiliate Member may be granted the right to use the term REALTOR® or the REALTOR® logo; to serve as President of the local association; or to be a participant in the local association's Multiple Listing Service.

**Section 9. Public Service Members.** Public Service Members shall have rights and privileges and be subject to obligations prescribed by the Board of Directors.

**Section 10. Honorary Members.** Honorary Membership shall confer only the right to attend meetings and participate in discussions.

**Section 11. Student Members.** Student Members shall have rights and privileges and be subject to obligations prescribed by the Board of Directors.

**Section 12. Sale of (Business) Brokerage.** In the event a REALTOR® Member, or the legal representatives, or the heirs, administrators, executors, assigns or trustee of a deceased REALTOR® Member shall sell his/her (business) brokerage to a purchaser or purchasers meeting the qualifications set forth in Article IV, Section 1(a) 1, the purchaser or purchasers may apply for REALTOR® Membership as provided therein, including the payment to the Board of dues and application fee as specified in Article X.

**Section 13. Certification by REALTOR®.** “Designated” REALTOR® Members of the Board shall certify to the Board during the month of January on a form provided by the Board, a complete listing of all individuals licensed or certified in the REALTOR®’s office(s) and shall designate a primary Board for each individual who holds membership. Designated REALTORS® shall also identify any non-member licensees in the REALTOR® S office(s) and if Designated REALTOR® dues have been paid to another Board based on said non-member licensees, the Designated REALTOR® shall identify the Board to which dues have been remitted. These declarations shall be used for purposes of calculating dues under Article X, Section 2(a) of the Bylaws. “Designated” REALTOR® Members shall also notify the Board of any additional individual(s) licensed or certified with the firm(s) within thirty (30) days of the date of affiliation or severance of the individual.

**Section 14. Death or Disability.** In the event of the death or disability of a REALTOR® who is a sole proprietor, partner or corporate officer which prevents his/her continuation on the Board, then the disabled Member, or his/her representative or the heirs, administrators, executors, assigns or trustees of the deceased estate as the case may be, may appoint and designate a REALTOR® who shall be a REALTOR® Member of the Board holding a Connecticut Broker's license or Appraiser's license, in good standing, to serve in his/her stead. Said appointment shall be made within 30 days from the death of said REALTOR®. If no new REALTOR® is appointed within said period of time, the rights of the deceased Member in the Board shall be suspended until such appointment is made.

## **ARTICLE VII - PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND ARBITRATION**

**Section 1.** The responsibility of the Board and of Board Members relating to the enforcement of the Code of Ethics, the disciplining of Members, and the arbitration of disputes, and the organization and procedures incident thereto shall be governed by the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, as amended from time to time, which is by this reference incorporated into these Bylaws, provided, however, that

any provision deemed inconsistent with State law shall be deleted or amended to comply with State law.

**Section 2.** It shall be the duty and responsibility of every REALTOR® Member of this Board to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws and the Rules and Regulations of the Board, the Constitution and Bylaws of the State Association, the Constitution and Bylaws of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, and to abide by the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, including the duty to mediate and arbitrate controversies arising out of real estate transactions as specified by Article 17 of the Code of Ethics, and as further defined and in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, as from time to time amended.

**Section 3.** The responsibility of the Board and Board members relating to the enforcement of the Code of Ethics, the disciplining of members, the arbitration of disputes, and the organization and procedures incident thereto, shall be consistent with the cooperative professional standards enforcement agreement entered into by the Board, which by this reference is made a part of these Bylaws.

#### **ARTICLE VIII - USE OF THE TERMS REALTOR® AND REALTORS®**

**Section 1.** Use of the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® by Members shall, at all times, be subject to the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and to the Rules and Regulations prescribed by its Board of Directors. The Board shall have the authority to control, jointly and in full cooperation with the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, use of the terms within its jurisdiction. Any misuse of the terms by members is a violation of a membership duty and may subject members to disciplinary action by the Board of Directors after a hearing as provided for in the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual of the National Association of REALTORS®.

**Section 2.** REALTOR® Members of the Board shall have the privilege of using the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® in connection with their places of business within the State of Connecticut or a state contiguous thereto so long as they remain REALTOR® Members in good standing. No other class of Members shall have this privilege.

**Section 3.** A REALTOR® Member who is a principal of a real estate firm, partnership, or corporation may use the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® only if all the principals of such firm, partnership, or corporation who are actively engaged in the real estate profession within the State of Connecticut or a state contiguous thereto are REALTOR® Members of the Board.

(a) In the case of a REALTOR® member who is a principal of a real estate firm, partnership, or corporation whose business activity is substantially all commercial, the right to use the term REALTOR® or REALTORS® shall be limited to office locations in which a principal, partner, corporate officer, or branch office manager of the firm, partnership, or corporation holds REALTOR® membership. If a firm, partnership, or corporation operates additional

places of business in which no principal, partner, corporate office, or branch office manager holds REALTOR® membership, the term REALTOR® or REALTORS® may not be used in any reference to those additional places of business.

**Section 4.** Affiliate Members and Institute Affiliate Members shall not use the terms REALTOR® or REALTORS® or the imprint of the emblem seal of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

## **ARTICLE IX - STATE AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

**Section 1.** The Board shall be a Member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and the Connecticut Association of REALTORS®. By reason of the Board's membership, each REALTOR® Member of the Member Board shall be entitled to membership in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and the Connecticut Association of REALTORS® without further payment of dues. The Board shall continue as a Member of the State and National Associations, unless by a majority vote of all its REALTOR® Members, decision is made to withdraw, in which case the State and National Associations shall be notified at least one month in advance of the date designated for the termination of such membership.

**Section 2.** The Board recognizes the exclusive property rights of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® in the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS®. The Board shall discontinue use of the terms in any form in its name, upon ceasing to be a Member of the National Association, or upon a determination by the Board of Directors of the National Association that it has violated the conditions imposed upon the terms.

**Section 3.** The Board adopts the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and agrees to enforce the Code among its REALTOR® Members. The Board and all its Members agree to abide by the Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations and policies of the National Association and the Connecticut Association of REALTORS®.

## **ARTICLE X - DUES, FEES AND ASSESSMENTS**

**Section 1. Application Fee.** The Board of Directors may adopt an application fee for REALTOR® membership in reasonable amount, not exceeding three times the amount of the annual dues for REALTOR® Membership, which shall be required to accompany each application for REALTOR® Membership and which shall become the property of the Board upon final approval of the application. The Board of Directors may adopt an application fee for Affiliate Membership not in excess of the annual dues for Affiliate Members.

**Section 2. Dues.** The annual dues of Members shall be as follows:

**(a) Designated REALTOR® Members.** The annual dues of each Designated REALTOR® Member shall be in such amount as established annually by the Board of Directors plus an additional amount to be established annually by the Board of Directors times the number of real estate salespersons and licensed or certified appraisers who (1) are employed by or affiliated as independent contractors, or who are otherwise directly or indirectly licensed with such REALTOR® Member, and (2) are not REALTOR® Members of any Board in the State of Connecticut or a state contiguous thereto or Affiliate Members or Institute Affiliate Members of the Board. In calculating the dues payable to the Board by a Designated REALTOR® Member, non-member licensees, as defined in (1) and (2) of this paragraph shall not be included in the computation of dues if the Designated REALTOR® has paid dues based on said non-member licensees in another Board in the State of Connecticut or a state contiguous thereto, provided the Designated REALTOR® notifies the Board in writing of the identity of the Board to which dues have been remitted. In the case of a Designated REALTOR® Member in a firm, partnership, or corporation whose business activity is substantially all commercial, any assessments for non-member licensees shall be limited to licensees affiliated with the Designated REALTOR® (as defined in (1) and (2) of this paragraph) in the office where the Designated REALTOR® holds membership, and any other offices of the firm located within the jurisdiction of the Board.

(1) For the purpose of this Section, a REALTOR® Member of a Member Board shall be held to be any Member who has a place or places of business within the State of Connecticut or a state contiguous thereto and who, as a principal, partner, corporate officer, or branch manager of a real estate firm, partnership, or corporation, is actively engaged in the real estate profession as defined in Article III, Section 1, of the Constitution of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®. An individual shall be deemed to be licensed with a REALTOR® if the license of the individual is held by the REALTOR®, or by any broker who is licensed with the REALTOR® or by any entity in which the REALTOR® has a direct or indirect ownership interest and which is engaged in soliciting and/or referring clients or customers to the REALTOR® or his firm on a substantially exclusive basis or which is engaged in other aspects of the real estate business (except as provided for in Section 2 (a) (1) hereof provided that such licensee is not otherwise included in the computation of dues payable by the principal, partner, or corporate officer or branch office manager of the entity.

A REALTOR® with a direct or indirect ownership interest in an entity engaged exclusively in soliciting and/or referring clients and customers to the REALTOR® for consideration on a substantially exclusive basis shall annually file with the Board on a form approved by the Board a list of the licensees affiliated with that entity and shall certify that all of the licensees affiliated with the entity are solely engaged in referring clients and customers and are not engaged in listing, selling, leasing, managing, counseling or appraising real property. The individuals disclosed on such form shall not be deemed to be licensed with the REALTOR® filing the form for purposes of this Section and shall not be included in calculating the annual dues of the Designated REALTOR®. Designated REALTORS® shall notify the association within three (3) days of any change in status of licensees in a referral firm.



Membership dues shall be prorated for any licensee included on a certification form submitted to the Board who during the same calendar year applies for REALTOR® membership in the Board. However, membership dues shall not be prorated if the licensee held REALTOR® membership during the preceding calendar year.

- (b) **REALTOR® Members.** The annual dues of REALTOR® Members other than the Designated REALTOR® shall be as established annually by the Board of Directors.
- (c) **Institute Affiliate Members.** The annual dues of each Institute Affiliate Member shall be as established in Article II of the Bylaws of the National Association of REALTORS®.

NOTE: The Institutes, Societies and Councils of the National Association shall be responsible for collecting and remitting dues to the National Association for Institute Affiliate Members (\$105). The National Association shall credit \$35 to the account of a local association for each Institute Affiliate Member whose office address is within the assigned territorial jurisdiction of that association, provided, however, if the office location is also within the territorial jurisdiction of a Commercial Overlay Board (COB), the \$35 amount will be credited to the COB, unless the Institute Affiliate Member directs that the dues be distributed to the other board. The National Association shall also credit \$35 to the account of state associations for each Institute Affiliate Member whose office address is located within the territorial jurisdiction of the state association. Local and state associations may not establish any additional entrance, initiation fees or dues for Institute Affiliate Members, but may provide service packages to which Institute Affiliate Members may voluntarily subscribe.

- (d) **Affiliate Members.** The annual dues of each Affiliate Member shall be as established annually by the Board of Directors.
- (e) **Honorary Members.** Dues payable, if any, shall be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.
- (f) **Public Service Members.** The annual dues of each Public Service Member shall be as established annually by the Board of Directors.
- (g) **Student Members.** Dues payable, if any, shall be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

**Section 3. Dues Payable.** Dues for all Members shall be payable annually in advance of the first day of January as established by the Board of Directors. Dues for new members shall be computed from the date of application and shall be prorated for the remainder of the dues billing period at the time of application OR

- (a) In the event a sales licensee or certified appraiser who holds REALTOR® Membership is dropped for nonpayment of Board dues, and the individual remains with the designated REALTOR®'s firm, the dues obligation of the "designated" REALTOR® as set forth in Article X, Section 2(a) will be increased to reflect the addition of a non-member licensee.

Dues shall be calculated from the first day of the current (calendar) year and are payable within thirty (30) days of the notice of termination.

**Section 4. Nonpayment of Financial Obligations.** If dues, fees, fines or other assessments including amounts owed to the Board are not paid within one (1) month after the due date, the nonpaying Member is subject to suspension at the discretion of the Board of Directors and to a late charge of \$25.00. Two (2) months after the due date, membership of the nonpaying Member may be terminated at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Three (3) months after the due date, membership of the nonpaying Member shall automatically terminate unless within that time the amount due is paid. However, no action shall be taken to suspend or expel a Member for nonpayment of disputed amounts until the accuracy of the amount owed has been confirmed by the Board of Directors. A former Member who has had his membership terminated for nonpayment of dues, fees, fines, or other assessments duly levied in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws or the provisions of other Rules and Regulations of the Board ((or any of its services departments, divisions or subsidiaries)) may apply for reinstatement in a manner prescribed for new applicants for membership, after making payment in full of all accounts due as of the date of termination.

**Section 5. Deposits and Expenditures.** Deposits and expenditures of funds shall be in accordance with policies established by the Board of Directors.

**Section 6. Notice of Dues, Fees, Fines, Assessments and Other Financial Obligations of the Members.** All dues, fees, fines, assessments, or other financial obligations to the Board shall be noticed to the delinquent Board Member in writing setting forth the amount owed and due date.

**Section 7.** The dues of REALTOR® Members who are REALTOR® emeriti (as recognized by the National Association), Past Presidents and Past Treasurers of the National Association or recipients of the Distinguished Service Award shall be as determined by the Board of Directors.

NOTE: A Member Board's dues obligation to the National Association is reduced by the amount equal to the amount which the Board is assessed for a REALTOR® Member, times the number of REALTOR® Emeriti (as recognized by the National Association), Past Presidents of the National Association, and recipients of the Distinguished Service Award of the National Association who are REALTOR® Members of the Board. The dues obligation of such individuals to the local Board should be reduced to reflect the reduction in the Board's dues obligation to the National Association. The Board may, at its option, choose to have no dues requirement for such individuals except as may be required to meet the Board's obligation to the State Association with respect to such individuals. Member Boards should determine whether the dues payable by the Board to the State Association are reduced with respect to such individuals. It should be noted that this does not affect a "designated" REALTOR®'s dues obligation to the Board with respect to those licensees employed by or affiliated with the "designated" REALTOR® who are not Members of the local Board.

## **ARTICLE XI - OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

**Section 1. Officers.** The elected officers of the Board shall be: a President, a President-Elect, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. They shall be elected for terms of one (1) year. Officers shall be elected by the Board of Directors per section 5a. of this article.

**Section 2. Duties of the Officers.** The duties of the officers shall be such as their titles, by general usage, would indicate and such as may be assigned to them by the Board of Directors. It shall be the particular duty of the Chief Staff Executive to keep the records of the Board and to carry on all necessary correspondence with the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and the CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

**Section 3. Board of Directors.** The governing body of the Board shall be a Board of Directors consisting of REALTOR Members of the Ridgefield Board of REALTORS®. Directors shall be the immediate Past President of the Board, the Elected Officers, and six (6) elected REALTOR® Members of the Board. Directors shall be elected to serve for a term of three (3) years. As many Directors shall be elected each year as are required to fill vacancies

- (a) Term Limits. No Director shall serve for more than six consecutive years.
- (b) No more than 3 REALTORS® from the same real estate firm may simultaneously serve on the Board of Directors.

### **Section 4. Election of Directors.**

- (a) Candidates for election to the Board of Directors shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee or by petition as here in after provided.

The Nominating Committee shall consist of three (3) current directors, one of whom shall be a Past President of the Board. The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the President by July 1<sup>st</sup> and shall present nominations for the Directors to be elected at the Annual Membership meeting of the Board.

The Nominating Committee shall select one candidate for each place to be filled on the Board of Directors and shall file its report with the Secretary of the Board not later than 10 days in advance of the September Board of Directors meeting. Its report shall be electronically transmitted to each member eligible to vote at least three (3) weeks preceding the [Annual] Membership meeting. Other nominations of Directors may be made by individual petitions signed by at least 25 REALTOR® members. Said petition(s) must be submitted to the board secretary by October 1<sup>st</sup>. All qualified nominees will be published in the Call for Annual Membership meeting.

- (b) [The Directors shall be elected Annual Membership meeting In the event that a REALTOR® member is unable to be present, he may vote by a duly constituted proxy. Where permitted by state law, and in accordance with applicable state requirements, election of officers may be conducted by electronic means, in accordance with procedures established by the Board of Directors.

- (c) The President, with the approval of the Board of Directors, shall appoint an Election Committee of two (2) REALTOR® Members to conduct the election. In case of a tie vote, the issue shall be determined by lot.

**Section 5. Election of Officers.** Within thirty (30) days after the annual election, the newly elected Directors together with the Directors whose terms will not expire shall meet and elect Officers for the ensuing year. The Officers to be elected will be a President, a President-Elect, a Secretary and a Treasurer who shall be elected at the meeting prior to December 31<sup>st</sup>. All terms begin on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

- (a) The term of office for each officer of the Board shall be one year or until his successor has been elected and installed. With the exception of the Secretary and Treasurer who may serve until replaced, no Officer may serve for more than two consecutive terms in their respective office. As to the Office of President, if such individual's term as Director has expired prior to commencing the second year in office, such individual, once elected President to serve a second term, shall be deemed an additional Director for the term of office and shall serve until his successor has been elected and installed. As to the Office of the President-Elect, if such individual's term as Director has expired prior to commencing the year to be served as President, such individual once elected President shall be deemed an additional Director for the term of office and shall serve until his successor has been elected and installed.

**Section 6. Vacancies.** Vacancies among the Officers and the Board of Directors shall be filled by a simple majority vote of the Board of Directors until the next annual election.

**Section 7. Removal of Officers and Directors.** In the event that an Officer or Director is deemed to be incapable of fulfilling the duties for which elected, but will not resign from office voluntarily, the Officer or Director may be removed from office under the following procedure:

- (a) A petition requiring the removal of an Officer or Director and signed by not less than one third (1/3) of the voting membership or a majority of all Directors shall be filed with the President, or if the President is the subject of the petition, with the next ranking officer, and shall specifically set forth the reasons the individual is deemed disqualified from further service.
- (b) Upon receipt of the petition, and not less than twenty (20) days or more than forty-five (45) days thereafter, a special meeting of the voting membership of the Board shall be held, and the sole business of the meeting shall be to consider the charge against the Officer or Director, and to render a decision on such petition.
- (c) The special meeting shall be noticed to all voting Members at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting, and shall be conducted by the President of the Board unless the President's continued service in office is being considered at the meeting of the hearing by the Members. In such case, the next-ranking officer will conduct the meeting of the hearing by the Members. Provided a quorum is present, a three fourths (3/4) vote of the Members present and voting shall be required for removal from office.

**Section 8. Executive Officer.** There shall be a Executive Officer, appointed by the Board of Directors, who shall be the chief administrative officer of the Board. The Executive Officer shall have the authority to hire, supervise, evaluate and terminate other staff, if any, with the approval of the Board of Directors and shall perform such other duties as prescribed by the Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE XII - MEETINGS**

**Section 1. Annual Meetings.** The annual meeting of the Board shall be held during October of each year, the date, place and hour to be designated by the Board of Directors.

**Section 2. Meeting of Directors.** The Board of Directors shall designate a regular time and place of meeting. Absence from three consecutive regular meetings without an excuse deemed valid by the Board of Directors shall be construed as resignation.

**Section 3. Other Meetings.** Other meetings of the Members may be held at such other times as the President or the Board of Directors may determine, or upon the written request of at least ten percent (10%) of the REALTOR® Members.

**Section 4. Notice of Meetings.** Written notice shall be given to every Member entitled to participate in the meeting at least one (1) week preceding all meetings. If a special meeting is called, it shall be accompanied by a statement of the purpose of the meeting.

**Section 5. Quorum.** A quorum for the transaction of business at a General Membership meeting shall be twenty five percent (25%) of the Members eligible to vote. A quorum for the transaction of business at a Board of Directors meeting shall consist of fifty-one (51%) of the entire Board of Directors.

**Section 6. Electronic Transaction of Business.** To the fullest extent permitted by law, the Board of Directors or membership may conduct business by electronic means.

**Section 7. Action without Meeting.** Unless specifically prohibited by the articles of incorporation, any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Board of Directors may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, shall be signed by all of the Directors. The consent shall be evidenced by one or more written approvals, each of which sets forth the action taken and bears the signature of one or more Directors. All the approvals evidencing the consent shall be delivered to the Chief Staff Executive to be filed in the corporate records. The action taken shall be effective when all the Directors have approved the consent unless the consent specifies a different effective date.

## **ARTICLE XIII - COMMITTEES**

**Section 1. Standing Committees.** The President shall appoint from among the REALTOR® Members, subject to confirmation by the Board of Directors, the following standing committees:  
Professional Standards

**Section 2. Special Committees.** The President shall appoint, subject to confirmation by the Board of Directors, special committees as deemed necessary.

**Section 3. Organization.** All committees shall be of such size and shall have duties, functions and powers as assigned by the President or the Board of Directors except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws.

**Section 4. President.** The President shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees and shall be notified of their meetings.

**Section 5. Action without Meeting.** Any committee may act by unanimous consent in writing without a meeting. The consent shall be evidenced by one or more written approvals, each of which sets forth the action taken and bears the signature of one or more of the members of the committee.

**Section 6. Attendance by Electronic Means.** Members of a committee may participate in any meeting through the use of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Such participation shall be at the discretion of the President and shall constitute presence at the meeting.

## **ARTICLE XIV - FISCAL AND ELECTIVE YEAR**

**Section 1.** The fiscal and elective year of the Board shall be January 1 through December 31.

**Section 2.** The elective year of the Board shall be January 1 through December 31.

## **ARTICLE XV - RULES OF ORDER**

**Section 1.** Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall be recognized as the authority governing the meetings of the Board, its Board of Directors, and committees, in all instances wherein its provisions do not conflict with these Bylaws.

## ARTICLE XVI - AMENDMENTS

**Section 1.** These Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the Members present and qualified to vote at any meeting at which a quorum is present, provided the substance of such proposed amendment or amendments shall be plainly stated in the call for the meeting.

**Section 2.** When Bylaws amendments are mandated by NAR policy, these Bylaws may be automatically amended to reflect the mandate as of the effective date of the mandatory policy authorized by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®. The Board shall provide notice of that change in a regular or special membership communication.

**Section 3.** Notice of all meetings at which amendments are to be considered shall be mailed to every member eligible to vote at least one week prior to the meeting.

**Section 4.** Amendments to these Bylaws affecting the admission or qualification of REALTOR® Members ((and Institute Affiliate Members)), the use of the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS®, or any alteration in the territorial jurisdiction of the Board shall become effective upon their approval as authorized by the Board of Directors of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

## ARTICLE XVII - DISSOLUTION

**Section 1.** Upon the dissolution of this Board, the Board of Directors, after providing for the payment of all obligations, shall distribute any remaining assets to the Connecticut Association of REALTORS® or, within its discretion, to any other non-profit tax exempt organizations or to its then current REALTOR® members.

**Section 2.** The Board recognizes the exclusive property rights of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® in the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS®. The Board shall discontinue use of the terms in any form in its name, upon ceasing to be a Member of the National Association, or upon a determination by the Board of Directors of the National Association that it has violated the conditions imposed upon the terms.

**Section 3.** The Board adopts the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and agrees to enforce the Code among its REALTOR® Members. The Board and all its Members agree to abide by the Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations and policies of the National Association and the Connecticut Association of REALTORS®.

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE THAT THE TITLE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER IS REFERRED TO AS ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE**

