

Bylaws of the Brownsville/South Padre Island Board of REALTORS®

ARTICLE I-NAME

Section 1. Name. The name of this organization shall be the Brownsville/South Padre Island Board of REALTORS®, Inc., 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 profession for the purpose of exerting a beneficial influence upon the profession 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 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 Texas Association of REALTORS® and the National Association of REALTORS® thereby furthering their own objectives throughout the state and nation, and obtaining the benefits and privileges of membership therein.

Section 6. To designate, for the benefit of the public, individuals authorized to use the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® as licensed, prescribed, and controlled by the National Association of REALTORS®.

ARTICLE III-JURISDICTION

Section 1. The Territorial Jurisdiction of the Board as a member of the National Association of REALTORS® shall include the City of Brownsville. Brownsville jurisdiction starts at the Rio Grande River and then west along the Rio Grande River to a point due South of the intersection of Highway 281 and FM 1577. Then North of Highway 1577 to the intersection of Logo Road. Then east to the intersection of Highway 100 and FM 803. Then North along Highway 803 to

the intersection of Highway 106. Then West along a line of Highway 106 to the Gulf of Mexico. Also included is the portion of South Padre Island that lies in Cameron County, Texas, as allocated by the Board of Directors of the National Association of REALTORS®.

Section 2. Territorial Jurisdiction is defined to mean:

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 Texas 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 or a state contiguous thereto shall qualify for REALTOR® Membership only, and each is required to hold REALTOR® Membership 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 REALTORS® membership, shall be required to hold REALTOR® membership unless otherwise qualified for Institute Affiliate Membership as described in Section 1 (b) of Article IV. (Amended 1/05)

(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; the right to hold elective office in the local board, State Association and National Association. (Adopted 1/96)

- (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® Member. 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 arbitrate (or to mediate if required by the association) 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. (Amended 1/11)
- (b) **Institution Affiliate Members.** Institute Affiliate Members shall be individuals who hold a professional designation awarded by a 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® or REALTOR®-ASSOCIATE membership, subject to payment of applicable dues for such membership. (Amended 1/02)
- (c) **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 paragraphs (a) or (b) of this Section, have interests requiring information concerning real estate, and are in sympathy with the objectives of the Board.
- (d) **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.
- (e) **Honorary Members.** Honorary members shall be individuals not engaged in the real estate profession who have performed notable service for the real estate profession, for the association, or for the public.
- (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 level course in real estate, but are not engaged in the real estate profession on their own account or 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 himself/herself with the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Rules and Regulations of the association, the State and National Associations, and if elected a member, will abide by the Constitutions and Bylaws and Rules and Regulations of the association, 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 arbitrate (or to mediate if required by the association) 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 association, through its membership committee or otherwise, may invite and receive information and comment about applicant from any member or other persons, and that applicant agrees that any information and comment furnished to the association 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. (Amended 11/11)

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 association, through its membership committee or otherwise, that he/she 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 within the state 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 association, 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/she will abide by such Constitution, Bylaws, rules and regulations, and Code of Ethics. (Amended 1/05)

(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 association or a designated REALTOR® member of another association (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 association, 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 examinations thereon as may be required by the membership committee, and shall agree in writing that if elected to membership he/she will abide by such Constitution, Bylaws, rules and regulations, and the Code of Ethics. (Amended 5/07)

(c) The association 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 this or any other REALTOR® association 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 this or any other REALTOR® association or REALTOR® association MLS
6. Any misuse of the term REALTOR® or REALTORS® in the name of the applicant's firm

"Provisional" membership may be granted in instances where ethics complaints or arbitration requests (or hearings) are pending in other associations or where the applicant for membership has unsatisfied discipline pending in another association (except for violations of the Code of Ethics; see Article V, Section 2(a), NOTE 2), provided all other qualifications for membership have been satisfied. Associations may reconsider the membership status of such individuals when all pending ethics and arbitration matters (and related discipline) have been resolved or if such matters are not resolved within six (6) months from the date that provisional membership is approved. Provisional members shall be considered REALTORS® and shall be subject to all of the same privileges and obligations of REALTOR® membership. If a member resigns from another association with an ethics complaint or arbitration request pending, the association 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 association to which the applicant has made application) and will abide by the decision of the hearing panel. (Amended 11/09)

Section 3. Election.

Election The procedure for election to membership shall be as follows:

(a) Applicants for REALTOR® (and REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®, where applicable) membership shall be granted provisional membership immediately upon submission of a completed application form and remittance of applicable association dues and any application fee. Provisional members shall be considered REALTORS® (or REALTOR-ASSOCIATES®) and shall be subject to all of the same privileges and obligations of membership. Provisional membership is granted subject to subsequent review of the application by the board of directors. 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)

within 60 days from the association's receipt of their application, membership may, at the discretion of the board of directors, be terminated.

(b) Dues shall be computed from the date of application and shall be non-refundable unless the association's board of directors terminates the individual's membership in accordance with Subsection (a) above. 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 terminate any provisional membership without providing the provisional member with advance notice, an opportunity to appear before the board of directors, to call witnesses on his/her behalf, to be represented by counsel, and to make such statements as he/she 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 provisional membership should be terminated, it shall record its reasons with the chief staff executive. If the board of directors believes that termination of provisional membership may become the basis of litigation and a claim of damage by a provisional member, it may specify that termination shall become effective upon entry in a suit by the association for a declaratory judgment by a court of competent jurisdiction of a final judgment declaring that the termination violates no rights of the individual. (Adopted 1/98, Amended 1/05)

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 (2) hours and thirty (30) minutes of instructional time. This requirement does not apply to applicants for REALTOR® membership or provisional members who have completed comparable orientation in another association, provided that REALTOR® membership has been continuous, or that any break in membership is for one (1) year or less. Failure to satisfy this requirement within sixty (60) days of the date of application (or, alternatively, the date that provisional membership was granted), will result in denial of the membership application or termination of provisional membership.

Section 5. REALTOR® 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 cycle 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. (Adopted 1/01, Amended 11/08, Amended 11/2016)

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 association 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 they have transferred within thirty (30) days of the date they advised the association of their change in status, their new membership application will terminate automatically unless otherwise so directed by the board of directors.

(a) A REALTOR® (or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®, where applicable) who is transferring his/her 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 thirty (30) days of the date the association is advised of the disaffiliation with the current firm, membership will terminate automatically unless otherwise so directed by the board of directors. (Amended 1/98)

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

(b) 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.

(c) 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. (Amended 1/05)

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 Board. Although Members other than REALTORS® are not subject to the Code of Ethics, nor 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 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 Board, 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 of REALTORS®.

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 of its services, departments, division, 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 arbitration (or to mediation if required by the association) continues in effect even after membership lapses or is terminated, provided that the dispute arose while the former member was a REALTOR®. (Amended 1/00, 11/11, 1/17)

Section 6. REALTOR® members, whether primary or secondary, in good standing whose financial obligations to the association are paid in full shall be entitled to vote and to hold elective office in the association; 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 association 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, or management control is relinquished, 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, or unless the REALTOR® who is suspended or expelled removes himself/herself from any form or degree of management control of the firm for the term of the suspension or until readmission to membership, whichever may apply. Removal of an individual from any form or degree of management control must be certified to the association by the member who is being suspended or expelled and by the individual who is assuming management control and the signatures of such certification must be notarized. In the event the suspended or expelled member is so certified to have relinquished all form or degree of management control of the firm, the membership of other partners, corporate officers, or other individuals affiliated with the firm shall not be affected, and the firm, partnership or corporation may continue to use the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® in connection with its business during the period of suspension or until the former member is admitted to membership in the Board. The foregoing is not intended to preclude a suspended or expelled member from functioning as an employee or independent contractor, providing no management control is exercised. Further, the membership of REALTORS® other than principals who are employed 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 unless connection of the disciplined member with the firm, partnership, or corporation is severed, or management control is relinquished, or unless the REALTOR® member (non-principal) elects to sever his/her connection with the REALTOR® and affiliate with another REALTOR® member in good standing in the Board, whichever may apply.

If a REALTOR® member other than a sole proprietor in a firm, partner in a partnership, or an officer of a corporation is suspended or expelled, the use of the terms REALTOR® or REALTORS® by the firm, partnership or corporation shall not be affected.

(b) In any action taken against a REALTOR® member for suspension or expulsion under Section 6(a) hereof, notice of such action shall be given to all REALTORS® employed by or affiliated as independent contractors with such REALTOR® member and they shall be advised that the provisions in Article VI, Section 6(a) shall apply.

Section 7. Institute Affiliate Members. Institute Affiliate Members shall have rights and privileges and be subjected to obligations prescribed by the Board of Directors consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of the National Association of REALTORS®.

Section 8. Affiliate Members. Affiliate Members shall have rights and privileges and be subject to obligations prescribed by the Board of Directors.

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. 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 13. Legal Liability Training.

Within two (2) years of the date of election to membership, and every two (2) years thereafter, each REALTOR® member of the association shall be required to demonstrate that they have completed a course of instruction on antitrust laws, agency laws, civil rights laws or the REALTORS® Code of Ethics, its interpretation and meaning and/or the procedures related to its enforcement.

This requirement will be considered satisfied upon presentation of evidence that the member has completed an educational program conducted by another Member Board, the State Association of REALTORS®, the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® or any of its affiliated Institutes, Societies or Councils, or any other recognized educational institution which, in the opinion of the board of directors, is an adequate substitute for the training programs conducted by the association. Failure to satisfy this requirement biennially will result in membership being suspended from the date it otherwise would be renewed until such time that the member provides evidence of completion of the aforementioned educational requirements.

Section 14. Harassment.

Any member of the association may be reprimanded, placed on probation, suspended or expelled for harassment of an association or Association Officer or Director after an investigation in accordance with the procedures of the association. As used in this Section, harassment means any verbal or physical conduct including threatening or obscene language, unwelcome sexual advances, stalking, actions including strikes, shoves, kicks, or other similar physical contact, or threats to do the same, or any other conduct with the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating a hostile, intimidating or offensive work environment. The decision of the appropriate disciplinary action to be taken shall be made

by the investigatory team comprised of the President, and President-elect and/or Vice President and one member of the Board of Directors selected by the highest ranking officer not named in the complaint, upon consultation with legal counsel for the association. Disciplinary action may include any sanction authorized in the association's Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual. If the complaint names the President, President-Elect or Vice President, they may not participate in the proceedings and shall be replaced by the Immediate Past President or, alternatively, by another member of the Board of Directors selected by the highest ranking officer not named in the complaint.

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 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 this Board, 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 terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® by Members shall, at all times, be subject to the provisions of the Constitution and the 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 association's Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual. (Amended 5/06)

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 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 or a state contiguous thereto are REALTOR® Members of Board or Institute Affiliate Members as described in Section 1(b) of Article IV.

- (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 officer, or branch office manager holds REALTOR® membership, the term REALTOR® or REALTORS® may not be used in any reference to the additional places of business. (Amended 1/01)

Section 4. Institute Affiliate Members shall not use the terms REALTOR® or REALTORS®, nor 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 Texas 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 Texas 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 of 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 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 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 of its Members agree to abide by the Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, and policies of the National Association and the Texas Association of REALTORS®.

ARTICLE X – DUES 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. (Amended 1/02)

Section 2. Dues. The annual dues of members shall be as follows.

(a) **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 association in the state or a state contiguous thereto or Institute Affiliate members of the association. In calculating the dues payable to the association 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 association in the state or a state contiguous thereto, provided the designated REALTOR® notifies the association in writing of the identity of the association 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 this association. (Amended 1/05)

(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 or a state contiguous thereto and who, as a principal, partner, corporate officer, or branch office 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 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, 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 association on a form approved by the association 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, renting, 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.

The exemption for any licensee included on the certification form shall automatically be revoked upon the individual being engaged in real estate licensed activities (listing, selling, leasing, renting, managing, counseling, or appraising real property) other than referrals, and dues for the current fiscal year shall be payable.

Membership dues shall be prorated for any licensee included on a certification form submitted to the association who during the same calendar year applies for REALTOR® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® membership in the association. However, membership dues shall not be prorated if the licensee held REALTOR® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® membership during the preceding calendar year. (Amended 11/09 and 11/14)

(b) **REALTOR® Members.** The annual dues of REALTOR® members other than the designated REALTOR® shall be as established annually by the board of directors. (Amended 1/05)

(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®.

(d) **Affiliate Members.** The annual dues of each Affiliate member shall be as established annually by the board of directors. (Amended 1/05)

(e) **Public Service Members.** The annual dues of each Public Service member shall be as established annually by the board of directors. (Amended 1/05)

(f) **Honorary Members.** Dues payable, if any, shall be at the discretion of the board of directors. (Amended 1/05)

(g) **Student Members.** Dues payable, if any, shall be at the discretion of the board of directors. (Amended 1/05)

Section 3. Dues Payable. Dues for all members shall be payable annually in advance on the first day of January. Dues for new members shall be computed from the date of application and granting of provisional membership. (Amended 1/05)

(a) In the event a sales licensee or licensed 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 nonmember licensee. Dues shall be calculated from the first day of the current fiscal year and are payable within fifteen (15) days of the notice of termination.

Section 4. Nonpayment of Financial Obligations. If dues, fees, fines or other assessments including amount 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. Two (2) month 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 terminated 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/her 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 dues 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. (Amended 1/05)

Section 6. Notice of Dues, Fees, Fines, Assessments, and Other Financial Obligations of Members. All dues, fees, fines, assessments, or other financial obligations to the Board shall be notified 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® Emeritus (as recognized by the National Association), Past Presidents of the National Association or recipients of the Distinguished Service Award shall be as determined by the Board of Directors.

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 year.

Section 2. Duties of 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 including serving on the Executive Committee. 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 Texas Association of REALTORS®. (Amended 1/05)

Section 3. Board of Directors. The governing body of the Board shall be a Board of Directors, consisting of the elected Officers, the immediate past president of the Board, and a sufficient number of additional Directors elected from the REALTOR® Members of the Board to bring the total to thirteen (13). Directors shall be elected to serve for terms of three (3) years, staggered so that approximately one third thereof shall be elected annually, along with the Officers.

Section 3.1 – Term Limits:

(a) Directors shall be elected to serve for terms of three (3) years, not to exceed two (2) consecutive terms of three (3) years. Thereafter a two year hiatus/break is required before being eligible for election as a Director of the Board.

(b) Officers shall be elected to serve one (1) year terms, not to exceed two (2) consecutive years in the same Officer Position. After the 4th consecutive year in an Officer position, a two year hiatus/break is required before being eligible for election as an Officer. In all cases the two year hiatus/break will begin the first day after the last day served.

No more than two (2) REALTORS® from the same real estate firm may be elected to serve on the Board of Directors simultaneously, and only one of the two (2) may serve as an officer.

Section 4. Election of Officers and Directors.

At least two (2) months before the annual election, a nominating committee of two (2) past presidents, two (2) sitting Directors of the Board, and two (2) members at large of the board shall be appointed by the president with the approval of the board of directors. The nominating committee may select one or more qualified candidate(s) for each office and place to be filled on the board of directors. The report of the nominating committee shall be mailed or, where permitted by state law, electronically transmitted to each member eligible to vote at least three (3) weeks preceding the election. Additional candidates for the offices to be filled may be placed in nomination by petition signed by at least 20% of the REALTOR® members eligible to vote. The petition shall be filed with the chief staff executive at least two (2) weeks before the election. The chief staff executive shall send notice of such additional nominations to all members eligible to vote before the election. (Amended 1/05)

- (a) The election of officers and directors shall take place at the annual meeting or where permitted by state law, electronically. (Amended 1/05)
- (b) The President, with the approval of the Board of Directors, shall appoint an Election Committee of three (3) REALTOR® Members to conduct the election. In case of a tie vote, the issue shall be determined by lot.

Section 5. Vacancies. Vacancies among the officers and the board of directors shall be appointed by the President and approved by a simple majority vote of the board of directors until the next annual election.

Section 6. 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 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 to be 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. 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 vote of Members present and voting shall be required for removal from office.

Section 7. Chief Staff Executive. There shall be a Chief Staff Executive, appointed by the Board of Directors, who shall be the chief administrative officer of the Board. The Chief Staff Executive shall have the authority to hire, supervise, evaluate and terminate other staff, if any, and shall perform such other duties as prescribed by the Board of Directors. (Adopted 1/05)

ARTICLE XII – MEETINGS

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

Section 2. Regular Meetings of Directors. At the first meeting of each year the Board of Directors shall designate a regular time and place of Directors meetings. Absence from three (3) regular meetings within the calendar year without an excuse deemed valid by the board of directors shall be construed as resignation. (Excused absences shall be limited to Association business, funeral, or illness. All excused absences shall be approved by the Board of Directors.)

Section 3. Other Meetings. Meetings of the Members may be held at other times as the President of the Board of Directors may determine, or upon the written request of at least 20% of the Members eligible to vote.

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 general and/or special meetings of the membership shall consist of twenty (20) % of the Members eligible to vote, except as may otherwise be required by state law. A quorum for the transaction of business at a Board of Directors meeting shall consist of fifty-one percent (51%) of the Directors eligible to vote at a Board of Directors meeting.

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. (Adopted 1/05)

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. (Adopted 1/05)

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 committee chairmen. The appointed chairmen of these committees will then present nominees for vice-chairmen of their respective committees to the President Elect. The President Elect will then appoint from the nominees or from among the REALTOR Members, the vice-chairman of the committees, subject to confirmation by the Board of Directors.

- Executive Committee
- Budget & Finance Committee
- Bylaws Committee
- Education Committee
- Event/Fundraising Committee
- Legislative/Governmental & Political Affairs Committee
- Membership/Affiliate Committee
- Nominations Committee
- REALTOR®/Affiliate of the Year Committee
- Technology Committee
- T.R.E.P.A.C. Committee

Section 2. Special Committees. The President shall appoint, subject to confirmation by the Board of Directors, special committees as deem 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. (Adopted 1/05)

Section 6. Attendance by Telephone. 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. (Adopted 1/05)

ARTICLE XIV – FISCAL AND ELECTIVE YEAR

Section 1. The fiscal year of the Board shall be January 1 to December 31. (Amended 1/05)

Section 2. The elective year of the Board shall be January 1 to December 31. (Adopted 1/05)

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.

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. (Adopted 1/05)

Section 2. Notice of all meetings at which amendments are to be considered shall be mailed or submitted electronically to every member eligible to vote at least one (1) week prior to the meeting.

Section 3. Amendments to these Bylaws affecting the admission or qualification of REALTOR® 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 Texas Association of REALTORS® or, within its discretion, to any other non-profit tax exempt organization. (Amended 1/05)