

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

A Guide to Writing & Revising
Congregational
Constitutions & Bylaws

Revised August, 2010

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Introduction

This is a guide to aid *kehillot* [congregations or communities] in writing a constitution or bylaws. It is a **guide** designed to help in revising or writing your constitution; it is not a final draft. The United Synagogue seeks to set a tone and suggest areas where discussion needs to take place to give direction to your work. Use this guide as a draft. Have discussions to consider the best wording for your needs. You will find blanks which need to be customized for your community. Because some aspects of the governance of religious institutions may be regulated by provincial/state or local law, be sure to consult a qualified attorney to review your constitution to ensure that it conforms to applicable law.

You will find commentary or notes which should direct your constitution committee to discuss issues in order to create a document which best fits your *kehillah*.

This guide was written by the Synagogue Programming Department working with the Committee on Congregational Standards and Committee on Congregational Standards and Legal Affairs Committee. It was prepared by Rabbi Moshe Edelman with the assistance of several Regional Executive Directors of the United Synagogue in August 1997, *Av 5757*.

This August, 2010 revision was prepared by Rabbi Paul Drazen with the assistance of members of the District Staff of the United Synagogue and Edward Rudofsky, chair of the Committee on Congregational Standards.



Constitution and bylaws of _____

ARTICLE I

NAME

This *kehillah* / congregation / community of Jewish people shall be called _____.

ARTICLE II

THE CONGREGATION'S MISSION

COMMENT: Key to creating a mission-driven *kehillah* is defined in a mission statement. Once a mission is articulated, program and planning emanate from it. A congregation's unique character should be a point of pride for all its members. The process of formulating a mission is an exciting opportunity to focus and motivate the congregation. We urge you to spend time and energy engaging in the process as this portion of the document will guide congregational decisions in the years ahead.

Congregation ____ is established to build and maintain a *kehillah*, a religious community encompassing roles as *beit kneset* - a place to assemble, *beit midrash* - a place to study, and *beit tefillah* - a place to pray. We shall provide varied opportunities for religious, educational, cultural, social and recreational experiences for the Jews of the community.

Congregation ____ is committed to the principles and values of Conservative Judaism. The synagogue is dedicated to the study of Torah, observance of *mitzvot*, to the State of Israel, the historic homeland of the Jewish people, a spiritual resource for Torah learning, the center of a Jew's liturgical attention and for the ingathering of Jews - physically and spiritually all within the scope of *klal Yisrael*, the kinship of all Jews, which focuses the congregation to reach out to all Jews.

Congregation ____ seeks to:
transform the lives of Jews through the observance and the teaching of *mitzvot*; refine the moral and ethical behavior of our members; create a *kehillah* in which to mold our members, children and adults, into responsible citizens of the world.

ARTICLE III

AFFILIATION

COMMENT: Conservative Judaism espouses a particular set of tenets and a philosophy of Judaism.

Congregation ____ shall be affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. The auxiliaries and organizations of the congregation shall also affiliate with the appropriate groups of the Conservative Movement. The congregation shall follow the Standards for Congregational Practice published by the United Synagogue on its web site.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

COMMENT: United Synagogue's standards allow only Jews to be members of the congregation. However, the congregation should encourage non-voting members, whether family members or others in the community, to participate in *kehillah* activities, to learn about Jewish life, observance and history. Membership should be more than just financial commitment; your committee should prepare a statement of encouragement and expectation of participation in Jewish life at home and in the synagogue for the membership at large.

Section 1. Jewish persons from the age of ____ years or older are eligible for membership. A person born of a Jewish mother or who has been converted to Judaism according to halakhic requirements is a Jew.



Section 2. There shall be three types of membership;

- a. Household Membership. This includes up to two (2) Jewish men or Jewish women and their dependent children who are not old enough to be eligible for their own membership, residing together as a single family unit. There is one vote per household membership. Each household member shall be entitled to a vote provided he/she is present at the place and time of voting.
- b. Individual Membership. This includes a Jewish man or Jewish woman who either (a) resides alone, or (b) who lives in a home with a household membership but is old enough to be eligible for her/his own membership. He/she shall be entitled to a vote provided he/she is present at the place and time of voting.
- c. Honorary Membership. This includes memberships which may be given the professional staff of the congregation [rabbi, cantor, executive director, director of education, youth director], spouse and children [through college graduation]; and other deserving persons in the community. Honorary members do not have a vote.

COMMENTARY: Synagogues should encourage affiliation sooner rather than later. Consider granting free membership for two or three years for newly married and new residents in the community. Children not yet married and less than age 21 should be considered members for purposes of honors and obligations. Undergraduate students at local universities should be afforded free membership to the synagogue. Your committee should discuss these categories and how their decision will be communicated to the general community.

Section 3. Application for membership shall be made in writing to the ____ [membership / outreach] Committee, which shall report on each application to the Board [of Trustees] for appropriate action.

Section 4. A majority vote of the members present at a meeting of the Board [of Trustees] shall be required to elect to membership.

Section 5. Membership may be suspended or ended by a vote of the Board [of Trustees] at any regular or special meeting for conduct which it deems to bring discredit upon Jews, the *kehillah*, synagogue or the Jewish community; or for failure to fulfill congregational obligations, including dues assessment, school tuition, building fund, or any other pledge.

(NOTE: Section 5 *must* be carefully discussed for legal and moral implications.)

Section 6. Resignation from membership shall be submitted in writing to the membership committee, which shall review the same with the Rabbi prior to forwarding same to the Board [of Trustees]. Resignations shall be noted in the Board minutes.

ARTICLE V

FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

All members shall pay such dues, assessments and obligations as shall be determined by the Board [of Trustees] and/or the *kehillah*. Special financial arrangements will be made upon request and need for such consideration; all such arrangements will be held in strict confidence.

(NOTE: Consider how to affirm that those legitimately unable to pay are nonetheless welcome to full membership.)

ARTICLE VI

PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP



COMMENTARY: A statement of privileges of membership is included in this document; what of obligations of membership? Besides financial obligations, should the kehillah ask / demand / require / expect behaviors of members? The community *mitzvot* of worship, *tzedakah* (charity), *gemilut chesed* (acts of lovingkindness), *bikur holim* (visiting the sick), *livayat ha-met* (death and mourning obligations), *m'sameah hatan v'kallah* (celebrating marriages), support of Jewish education, and the State of Israel must be studied with your clergy. A document for membership, outlining spiritual obligations might be a requirement of membership.

Members in good standing shall enjoy these privileges, among others, subject to *halakha* as interpreted by the *mara d'atra*:

To participate in *tefillah and Talmud Torah* (religious services and study) conducted or sponsored by the synagogue, subject to rules and regulations which may be established by the Board [of Trustees], or its designated committee.

To enroll children in the early childhood programs, religious school and youth activities of the congregation, subject to rules and regulations which may be established by the Board [of Trustees].

To celebrate the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* of a child.

To secure seating for *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*.

To participate in the educational, cultural and social programs of the congregation.

To attend meetings of the congregation and to have a voice and a vote at such meetings.

To call on the *klei kodesh* (rabbi and cantor) and professional staff for Jewish needs and Jewish life cycle events.

To secure a location in the synagogue's *Beit Olam* (cemetery).

To hold an office in the congregation, when eligible.

ARTICLE VII

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Section 1. An annual meeting of the congregation shall be held during the month of ____, on such day as the president and Board [of Trustees] may designate. Subject to the requirements of local law, notice of the annual meeting shall be given by the secretary of the congregation in writing by mail or electronic mailing, to all members of the congregation and sent not less than ____ days prior to such meeting.

Section 2. Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the president whenever it is deemed necessary. A special meeting must be called at the written non-electronic request of ____ members in good standing of the congregation, or of ____ members in good standing of the Board [of Trustees]. Said request shall state the reason for and the purpose of the meeting. In the event that the president fails to issue a call for the special meeting within ____ days after being requested to do so, any other officer may issue such call.

Section 3. No business shall be transacted at a special meeting, except for the purposes stated in the call for such meeting. Subject to the requirements of local law, notice of such special meeting shall be given by the secretary of the congregation by mail or electronic mailing, to all members of the organization, not less than ____ nor more than ____ days prior to such meeting.

Section 4. At all meetings of the congregation, regular and special, a quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of [__ members of the congregation] [__ % of the membership of the congregation]. A lesser number may adjourn the meeting to some future time, not less than ____ nor more than ____ days from the date thereof. The secretary shall thereupon give at least ____ days notice, by mail or e-mail, of such adjourned meeting, to all members.



(NOTE: Some congregations use an absolute number, others a percentage of membership)

Section 5. Only members in good financial standing may vote at congregation meetings. Members in good financial standing are those who financial obligations to the congregation are current as of the date of the meeting, as determined by the responsible officer [or ___ committee]. Members who are not in good financial standing shall be so notified by mail or electronic mail not later than ___ day(s) prior to the meeting.

Section 6. At all congregational meetings, members shall be required to speak and act with *derekh eretz* (civility; decent respect for others) in order to promote *shalom bayit* (peace in the house). *Lashon hora* (evil words) shall not be permitted. Meetings shall otherwise be conducted in accordance with the then-current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 7. Meetings shall be held in person or, to the extent permitted by local law, through electronic means such as teleconference or webinars. A system to allow those participating through electronic means to participate in the discussion and vote shall be established.

ARTICLE VIII

BOARD [OF TRUSTEES]

COMMENTARY: An officer or board trustee is a position of honor and responsibility. Leaders are Jewish role models. Leaders strive to learn and live as Jews. Leaders participate in congregational activities and support the synagogue's program. Living in accordance with the tenets and beliefs of Conservative Judaism make this volunteer effort different from all other opportunities.

Section 1. Other than in matters of *halakha* (Jewish law), the management and administration of the congregation shall be vested in a Board [of Trustees] of ___ members. Each board member shall be elected by the congregation for a term of ___ years. Terms shall overlap in such a manner that each year the terms of office of ___% of members shall expire. The election shall be annually after the nominating committee presents its recommendations.

(NOTES #1: Check state or provincial religious corporations acts for requirements or limitations.

#2: Some congregations have a Board consisting of trustees, officers, committee chairs, presidents of auxiliaries and past presidents. We suggest no more than one past president have a seat on the board.

#3: If terms are two years, we suggest that 25% of the board change each year. If terms are three years, we suggest that 33% of the board change each year.)

Section 2. The rabbi and cantor of the congregation shall receive notice of all meetings and have the right to speak thereat, but shall be ex-officio members of the board without voting rights.

Section 3. The Board [of Trustees] shall be charged with and assume control of all of the property of the congregation; shall designate the bank or banks wherein the funds of the congregation shall be deposited; shall be responsible for all expenditures and disposal of congregational funds and property. Congregational funds shall be invested only in instruments which are legal. All funds shall require the signature of ___ officers for withdrawals or checks. A clergy discretionary fund shall be in the name of the rabbi and/or cantor, and shall be subject to the guidelines outlined by United Synagogue and Rabbinical Assembly.

(NOTE: In the post-Madoff age, it is vital to have a committee determine and outline precisely what kind of investments may be made, how they will be reviewed and indicate the balance between return and security of investment.)



Section 4. The Board [of Trustees] shall make such rules and regulations, consistent with these bylaws, for the proper conduct of their meetings and the furtherance of the purposes of the congregation. Items deemed non-controversial [i.e., ones where debate and discussion is essentially not needed, such as approval of parsonage amounts] may be voted on by secure electronic means, such as on-line surveys. For all other matters, electronic voting is allowed only when part of electronic participation in the meeting.

Section 5. The Board [of Trustees] shall meet on the ____ (e.g. first Tuesday) of each month, unless that day is a Jewish or legal holiday, in which event the meeting shall be held on the earliest available date fixed by the Board at its prior meeting. A quorum shall be [# members of the board] [____% of the membership of the board]. Each matter voted upon by the board shall be by a majority vote of the members present.

Section 6. Special meetings of the Board [of Trustees] may be called by the president [chair, chair of the board, presiding officer], and must be called at the non-electronic written request of [# members of the board] [____% of the membership of the board]. Said request shall state the reason for and the purpose of the meeting. In the event that the president fails to issue a call for a special meeting within ____ days after being requested to do so, any other officer may issue such call. The secretary shall give such notice of a Special Meeting as may be practicable under the circumstances. No other business may be transacted at such a meeting.

Section 7. In the event of the death, resignation or removal of a member of the board, a successor shall be nominated by the president and elected by the Board [of Trustees] to fill the office for the unexpired term.

ARTICLE IX

CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS

COMMENTARY: The Board [of Trustees], officers and committee chairs will be successful when they build a meaningful working relationship with the clergy and professional staff. A statement of commitment, participation and affection together with an annual discussion will lead to a team approach to Jewish life.

Section 1. The officers of the congregation shall be: President, [Executive Vice President or President-Elect], Vice President for Religious Observance/Services, Vice President for Finance, Vice President for Education and Youth, Vice President for Volunteer Coordination, Vice President for Programming, Vice President for Membership, Recording/Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer/Financial Secretary. All officers of the congregation shall be elected by the members of the congregation at the duly called congregational annual meeting.

(NOTE: The Constitution Committee and/or Board must discuss the specific needs of the Congregation in establishing these leadership categories. The recommendation offers several divisions of responsibility)

Section 2. It shall be the function of the president (or board chair) to preside at all meetings of the congregation and to call all meetings of the congregation and of the Board [of Trustees]; to sign all agreements, contracts, deeds and other documents for the congregation, pursuant to appropriate resolutions by the congregation or the Board [of Trustees]; to be amongst the signatories of all checks, vouchers and notes, together with the treasurer and such officers as may be directed by the Board [of Trustees]; and to appoint all committees. The president shall be an ex-officio member of all committees, except the nominating committee, without the right to vote.

Section 3. The Executive Vice-President shall assist the President in the discharge of all duties and, in case of absence, resignation, death or disability, shall discharge all of the duties of that office.



Section 4. The Vice President for Religious Observance shall work with the clergy and religious committee on the schedule and content of religious services, holiday observances, all life cycle events including weddings, *B'nai Mitzvah*, deaths, *Brit Milah* and baby namings.

Section 5. Vice-President for Finance shall be responsible for those committees which are charged with developing the overall budget, finalizing contracts, and raising of funds over and above dues, subscriptions, pledges and voluntary contributions.

Section 6. Vice-President for Education/Youth shall oversee the individual chairs who relate to Adult Education, Religious School, Youth, Nursery School, Hebrew High School and Koach College committees.

Section 7. Vice-President for Volunteer Coordination shall oversee the ongoing development of congregational volunteers, directing appropriate individuals to the committees and working with committee chairs to involve the membership in the sacred work of the synagogue.

Section 8. Vice President for Programming shall coordinate programs with the appropriate committees or auxiliaries and shall initiate and create projects and programs as needed to enhance the mission of the congregation. He/she shall oversee calendar coordination of all groups and committees within the congregation.

Section 9. Vice President for Membership shall coordinate efforts to retain current members and to reach out to attract new members.

Section 10. The Recording/Corresponding Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all the proceedings of the congregation and of the Board [of Trustees]; issue all notices for meetings; carry on all correspondence of the organization and the Board [of Trustees], and sign such instruments or documents as may be necessary to effectuate the proper directions of the organization or the Board [of Trustees]. The secretary shall furnish the treasurer with the names of all persons who have become members of the organization. The secretary shall direct the maintenance of an archives of the history of the congregation, its clergy and the Jewish community.

(NOTE: In some congregations these are two offices, held by two individuals.)

Section 11. The Treasurer/Financial Secretary shall keep an accurate and correct record of the receipts and expenditures of the congregation and of the accounts between the congregation, its members and others. These records shall be open for inspection by the Board [of Trustees] and the finance committee. The treasurer shall notify all members of the congregation of their obligations and pledges; receive all monies which shall be payable to the congregation, and cause the same to be deposited or invested in the congregation's name, as directed by the Board [of Trustees]. The treasurer shall make withdrawals upon an order from the president, attested to by the secretary, and then only by check or voucher, signed by ___ designated officers (e.g, the treasurer and countersigned by the president.) A written report shall be rendered of the finances of the congregation at meetings of the Board [of Trustees] when requested, at the annual meeting of the congregation, and at such other meetings or occasions as the treasurer may be directed to do so by the congregation or by the Board [of Trustees]. This report shall be affixed to the minutes of that meeting.

(NOTE: In some congregations these are two offices, held by two individuals.)

Section 12. An officer shall be elected for a term of ___ year(s) and may be re-elected for a second term of ___ year(s). An officer shall not be eligible for more than two consecutive terms in the same office.



Section 13. In the event of the death, resignation or incapacity of any officer, a successor shall be elected by the Board [of Trustees] to fill the vacancy until the next election of the congregation.

ARTICLE X

THE RABBI

Section 1. The pulpit shall be occupied by an ordained rabbi. Candidates for election as rabbi shall be solicited in accordance with the rules of the Joint Commission on Rabbinic Placement (of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Rabbinical Assembly and The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism).

Section 2. The rabbi shall be elected by the [Board] [congregation] at a meeting called for that purpose, upon the recommendation of the Board [of Trustees] and the congregation shall use the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism Guide to Contractual Relations and Standards for Congregational Practice Standard I - The Rabbi, adopted by The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and available on its web site.

(NOTE: State /provincial law vary. Be sure you comply.)

Section 3. The rabbi shall have the responsibility of teacher and preacher of the congregation. The rabbi shall enjoy the freedom of the pulpit. The rabbi shall seek the advice and guidance of the board [of Trustees]. The rabbi, as *mara d'atra*, shall be the *halakhic* authority of the congregation. In exercising this authority the rabbi shall give due consideration to the *minhag* (traditions) of the congregation, and the views of the lay leadership and membership, as expressed through direct communications, meetings, or polls of the membership. If the rabbi is not a member of the Rabbinical Assembly, s/he shall be expected, nonetheless, to adhere to the standards expected of members of the Rabbinical Assembly. The rabbi shall be an ex-officio member, without vote, of all committees.

Section 4. The renewal or termination of the contract with the rabbi shall be upon the recommendation of the Board or a committee and voted upon by the congregation at a meeting called for this purpose. In the event of termination, the current policy of severance agreed upon by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the Rabbinical Assembly shall be followed.

(NOTE: State /provincial law vary. Be sure you comply.)

ARTICLE XI

THE CANTOR

Section 1. The pulpit shall be occupied by a qualified *hazzan*. Candidates for election as cantor shall be solicited in accordance with the rules of the Commission on Cantorial Placement (of the Cantors Assembly and The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism).

Section 2. The *hazzan* shall be elected by the congregation at a meeting called for that purpose upon the recommendation of the Board [of Trustees]. The congregation shall use the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism Guide to Contractual Relations and Standards for Congregational Practice adopted by The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and available on its web site.

Section 3. The *hazzan* shall act as the *ba'al nusach* [religious musical expert] and principal *sheliach tzibbur* of the congregation, in consultation with the rabbi and religious committee, and with due deference to the rabbi's authority as *mara d'atra* of the congregation. The *hazzan* shall also consult with the responsible program directors and committees regarding all programs and activities of the congregation involving liturgical or Jewish music.



Section 4. The renewal or termination of the contract with the *hazzan* shall be upon the recommendation of a committee and voted upon by the congregation at a meeting called for this purpose. In the event of termination, the current policy of severance agreed upon by The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and The Cantors Assembly shall be followed.

ARTICLE XII

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Section 1. The director of education (principal)(director of congregational learning) of the synagogue school shall be selected by a committee specifically designated and include members of the Board of Education, the Board [of Trustees], the rabbi and the members at large. The director of education may be selected with the assistance of the Education Placement Service of The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the Jewish Educators' Assembly. Upon recommendation of the committee, the candidate for director of education shall be presented for approval by the Board [of Trustees]. The congregation shall use the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism Guide to Contractual Relations and Standards for Congregational Practice adopted by The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and available on its web site.

Section 2. The director of education shall be responsible for the Jewish education of the children of the congregation, development of the school(s) curriculum, the supervision and selection of the faculty and the administration of the school(s).

Section 3. The director of education shall be responsible to the education committee and the rabbi of the congregation. The director of education shall report on the progress of the school at each meeting of the education committee and at least annually to the Board of Directors.

Section 4. The director of education shall be qualified and available to teach in the congregation's adult education program and shall do so consistent with his/her primary obligations and his/her employment agreement with the congregation.

Section 5. The director of education shall be a member of the Jewish Educators' Assembly or shall apply for membership no later than the time of the first renewal of the contractual relationship with the congregation.

Section 6. The director of education shall represent the congregation at meetings of the local Bureau of Jewish Education, at JEA meetings and other organizations advancing Jewish education as time permits, or shall arrange for substitute representation of the congregation in consultation with the responsible lay leader(s), such as the Vice President of Education.

Section 7. The director of education shall work in cooperation with any other professionals and/or committees relating to the Jewish education of children. Others charged with education in the congregation, such as the early childhood education director, Jewish family educator, Hebrew high school director, youth director or Solomon Schechter Day School director shall have direct contact and report to the director of education.

Section 8. The contract with the director of education the congregation shall be prepared using the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism Guide to Contractual Relations and Standards for Congregational Practice adopted by The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and available on its web site.



ARTICLE XIII

OTHER STAFF MEMBERS

When preparing the provisions of the contracts with all other professional employees of the synagogue, the congregation shall use the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism Guide to Contractual Relations and Standards for Congregational Practice adopted by The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and available on its web site.

ARTICLE XIV

COMPLEMENTARY ORGANIZATIONS OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

Section 1. The congregation shall sponsor such additional organizations, affiliated with Conservative Judaism, as shall be recommended by the Board [of Trustees].

Section 2. The activities of auxiliary groups shall always be conducted in accordance with the Standards for Congregational Practice of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and in the best interests of the synagogue and Conservative Judaism.

ARTICLE XV

STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. Upon taking office, and from time-to-time thereafter as he/she or the Board shall deem necessary, the President shall appoint the chairs and members of all standing, special and ad hoc committees, other than the nominating committee of the congregation.

Section 2. Standing committee chairs shall be appointed for a term of ___ year(s) and may be reappointed for one additional consecutive term. A chair shall not serve more than a total of 4 terms as chair of the same committee.

Section 3. The standing committees of this congregation and their duties shall be as follows:

Religious Committee. This committee shall be chaired by the Vice President for Religious Observance and the rabbi, cantor and committee shall be in charge of all religious services of the congregation, including weddings, *B'nai Mitzvah* and funerals subject to the authority of the cantor as the *ba'al nusach* and the rabbi as the *mara d'atra* of the congregation. It formulates rules and regulations for all such services subject to the approval of the cantor as to *nusach* and musical issues, the rabbi as to *halakhic* issues, and the Board [of Trustees] as to all other issues. It shall offer to the rabbi and cantor advice and guidance regarding the character and mode of the various services. The committee shall also be in charge of all aspects of services during the High Holy Days, the Festivals, *Shabbat* services and all holiday observances. The committee shall have the responsibility of appointing *gabbaim* and ushers for religious services. The vice president for religious observance shall be a voting member. The rabbi and cantor shall attend and have voting rights.

Education Committee. This committee shall be chaired by the Vice President for Education and the Director of Education shall be in charge of all educational services of the congregation, subject to the authority of the cantor as the *ba'al nusach* and the rabbi as the *mara d'atra* of the congregation. This committee is charged with the responsibility to recommend the hiring and continuation of the [director of education / principal / director of congregational learning] to the [Board (of Trustees)] [executive committee]. It shall review the director of education's recommendations to hire members of a faculty.



The director of education / principal, the rabbi and the committee shall develop the curriculum and supervise the school(s) of the congregation on the elementary and secondary levels, subject to the approval of the cantor as to *nusach* and musical issues, the rabbi as to *halakhic* issues, and the Board [of Trustees] as to all other issues. The committee, director of education and rabbi shall determine policy and formulate rules and regulations for the administration of such school(s), subject to the approval of the Board [of Trustees].

Membership Committee. This committee shall be chaired by the Vice President for Membership and shall be responsible for the retention of existing members and solicitation of new members. It shall communicate with Jewish families in the community which are not yet formally affiliated with any congregation, particularly families which recently moved to the area, with the view of inviting them to become members of the congregation. The committee shall receive applications for membership, meet with applicants, review membership applications with the rabbi [and executive director], and present them for appropriate action to the Board [of Trustees]. The committee shall also initiate action for the suspension or expulsion of members. The committee shall develop programs to encourage maintaining membership with the congregation, and shall call all appropriate committees to assist in membership retention.

Finance and Budget Committee. The committee shall be co-chaired by the Vice President of Finance and Budget and the Treasurer and shall review the financial operations of the congregation and shall report to the annual meeting of the congregation and on a regular basis to meetings of the Board [of Trustees]. It shall present at the annual meeting of the congregation a proposed budget approved by the Board [of Trustees] for the upcoming fiscal year for the approval of the congregation. It shall supervise all fund raising events which must be appropriate and in keeping with Jewish values. It shall be charged with the responsibility to appoint a Ways and Means Subcommittee to raise funds and develop endowment funds.

Adult Education Committee. The committee shall be chaired by the Vice President for Education and Youth in consultation with the rabbi and director of education shall be responsible for developing a program of education for the adults of the congregation and the Jewish community. It shall also determine policy and formulate rules and regulations for the administration of the program, subject to the approval of the Board [of Trustees].

Social Action and Community Relations Committee. The committee shall be chaired by the Vice President for Programming in consultation with the rabbi and shall be responsible for developing and maintaining liaison with Jewish and general organizations in the community. It shall study community problems which may arise and make recommendations for appropriate action to the Board. It shall develop projects in consonance with the principles of *tikun olam* [improving the world], *darchei shalom* [creating paths for peace] and *tzedek u'mishpat* [justice and righteousness], and interpret resolutions passed at the Biennial Convention of The United Synagogue.

Youth Activities Committee. The committee shall be chaired by the Vice President for Education and Youth in consultation with the youth director and rabbi shall be responsible for developing a program of youth activities for the congregation. It shall also determine policy and formulate rules and regulations for the administration of such activities including Kadima (pre-teen), USY (teens) and Koach (college age). It shall hire/replace the youth director and shall consult with the youth director in the hiring and replacement of advisors, in consonance with the rules of the United Synagogue. It shall also select a person to represent the *kehillah* on the Regional Youth Commission.



Program Committee. This committee shall be chaired by the Vice President for Programming and, in consultation with the rabbi, shall be responsible for developing a year-round program of social, cultural and Zionist activities among members of the Congregation. It shall have the responsibility of arranging for appropriate programs.

Nominating Committee. The committee shall be responsible for developing a slate of officers and trustees annually. The nominated slate shall be presented ___ days prior to the election meeting. The individuals nominated shall be circulated in a congregational mailing at least ___ days prior to the meeting.

(Note #1: The number of days may depend on State/Provincial regulations and therefore we do not include a specific recommendation.)

Note #2: Other committees to consider are: leadership development, communications, publicity, building / house [includes risk and security issues], Israel relations,

Note #3: In many congregations there is an Executive Committee which meets prior to a full board meeting to prepare for action by the Board.)

ARTICLE XVI

SELECTION OF A NOMINATING COMMITTEE

COMMENTARY: In effect, the Nominating Committee is a Board Leadership Development Committee. This Committee should function throughout the year. Looking for new leaders, training current and potential leaders and guiding the effective work of the board is vital for the smooth success of the congregation. A budget for the Nominating Committee should be invested in bringing trainers to the Board and sending members to USCJ leadership sessions.

There shall be a nominating committee consisting of ___ members, a maximum of ___ shall be from the Board [of Trustees], and at least ___ shall be non-board members. The committee shall be appointed by the Board [of Trustees] and elected by the Congregation at its [annual meeting] [annual general meeting] The committee shall be appointed at least ___ days prior to the congregation's annual meeting.

Notice of appointment shall be sent to the individuals, by electronic or written mail, within ___ days of their selection. [The committee shall elect a chair who shall have a vote.] [The immediate past president of the congregation shall serve as the chair, with vote.] The nominating committee is responsible for designating a slate of officers and board members. The committee shall solicit interest from the entire membership, from current board members, from clergy and other professionals.

The committee shall interview interested members and make recommendations to fill open positions to the congregational board. The committee shall develop a procedure allowing for nominations from the congregation and from the floor. The committee shall nominate one member for each office.

ARTICLE XVII

PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE: CODE OF BEHAVIOR

As Conservative Jews, ethical and moral behavior is imperative and values of *derech erez* and *kavod*, mutual respect and honor, take precedence in guiding our discussions and deliberations. Members shall be required to speak and act accordingly at all times in order to promote *shalom bayit* (peace in the house). *Lashon hora* (evil words) shall not be permitted. Meetings shall otherwise be conducted in accordance with the then-current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.



ARTICLE XVIII
AMENDMENTS

Section 1. This constitution, or any portion thereof, may be amended in the following manner:

- a. A proposal to amend or suspend one or more articles of this constitution, or to introduce new articles to it, shall be submitted in non-electronic writing to the Board [of Trustees], signed by at least ___ members in good standing of the congregation. Proposals may also originate with the Board [of Trustees]. The Board [of Trustees] shall consider such a proposal at the meeting of the Board immediately following the meeting at which the proposal is submitted or made, upon notice to all members of the Board.
- b. Within ___ days after consideration of the proposal by the Board [of Trustees], a special meeting of the Congregation shall be called to consider and vote on the proposal. The notice of such meeting shall include a copy of the proposed amendment, a copy of the current section being amended and a statement by the proponent in support of the amendment, explaining the rationale/import of it, as well as a statement explaining the rationale of any opposition to the amendment, if known. Electronic notification and distribution are permitted.
- c. At such meeting, a report shall be submitted to the congregation on the recommendation of the Board [of Trustees] as to action to be taken.
- d. If at least two-thirds of the members of the congregation present and voting at such meeting favors the proposal, it shall be declared adopted.

Section 2. A proposal for amendment or suspension which has been rejected by the congregation may not be resubmitted for the consideration of the congregation unless ___ months have elapsed since the time of such rejection.

(NOTE: Consult State/Provincial regulations for specific requirements, if any.)

ARTICLE XIX
ADOPTION

This constitution and bylaws was adopted by a vote of at least ___ of the members of the congregation present at a meeting held on _____

(NOTE: Consult State/Provincial regulations for specific requirements, if any.)