



CONSTITUTION OF RHODE ISLAND LEATHER ENTHUSIASTS

FIRST CLUB MEETING - July 30, 2022

ORIGINAL CONSTITUTION RATIFIED

FORMAL CLUB PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT - September 14, 2022

AMENDMENTS ADOPTED - September 27, 2023

ARTICLE I - ORGANIZATION

Section 1 - Name

The name of this organization shall be: R.I.L.E. Rhode Island Leather Enthusiasts

ARTICLE II – AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

Section 1 - Authority

R.I.L.E. decisions and authority must adhere to Federal, State, and local laws and to legal statutes, policies, and other regulations of recognized legal authorities.

Section 2 – Not for Profit

R.I.L.E. shall be a nonprofit organization.

Section 3 - Purpose

R.I.L.E. is a leather and kink community group, whose purpose is to develop character and leadership in the spirit of friendship, brotherhood and goodwill.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - Type of Memberships

Type of Memberships R.I.L.E. shall consist of the following categories of members: Founder, Charter, Full, Inactive, Associate, Alumni, Honorary and Emerit. R.I.L.E. membership is restricted to adults 21 years old and over who meet all other qualifications for membership and who are elected to the club pursuant to the Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 2 – Voting and Commencement of Membership

1. Applicants and changes of membership status must be accepted by a two-thirds equivalent vote of the membership present and voting, except where otherwise indicated. Only members in good standing with voting privileges may be present during the discussion and the vote.
2. Membership shall begin after an affirmative vote and full payment of initial dues.
3. All member votes must achieve at least (2/3) two thirds vote of voting members in attendance.
4. Prospective Members must be sponsored by a Full Member in good standing.
5. New Member Pledge Period
 - a. Pledge Period shall be 3 months from date of application.

- i. During their pledge period, applicants must attend at least one Club meeting and two social events. Upon fulfillment of these requirements, the applicant is eligible for a vote of membership.
 - ii. Pledge cannot sponsor new members until the pledge period has expired.
 - iii. Pledge cannot serve in an executive role until the pledge period has expired.
 - iv. Pledge can serve on a committee
- b. In some circumstances, the pledge period may be waived at the discretion of the President and Vice Presidents, and must be approved via a majority vote by the board.

Section 3 - Full Members

1. Applicants must submit a written or electronic application and have the sponsorship of a full member in good standing.
2. An applicant's 90-day pledge period begins on the date when the application is submitted, complete and approved. The pledge period ends when they are voted upon for membership at the meeting following their three month pledge period.
3. Full Members in good standing get one (1) vote on club matters.
4. Full members must attend at least two (2) club meetings each year and four (4) social events.
 - a. Failure to maintain the meeting attendance requirement will revoke the members in good standing status. The good standing status will be restored when the member completes two meeting requirements of the current program year.

Section 4 - Associate Members

1. Persons who wish to participate in the activities of the Club but are unable to function as full members (because of distance, full membership in another similar club, or other constraints) may apply for associate membership.
2. Applicants submit a written or electronic application and must have a sponsor who is a full member in good standing.
3. Applicants must attend at least one (1) club meeting and one (1) social event within a twelve-month period.
4. Associate members may cast one-half vote (1/2) on club matters.
5. Pays a reduced rate for dues.
6. Associate members CAN serve on committees
7. Associate members CANNOT serve in an executive role.
8. Associate members CANNOT sponsor new members.
 - a. Associate members are free to recommend new members for sponsorship.
9. Associate members CANNOT vote on membership related issues

Section 5 – Alumni Members

1. Full Members in good standing may request to become Alumni Members.
2. Candidates for Alumni Membership must have been members of R.I.L.E. for at least one year.
3. Alumni Members may enjoy the social privileges of R.I.L.E.
4. Alumni Members do not have voting privileges

Section 6 – Inactive Members

1. A Member may take a leave of absence by request to the Board. If the leave of absence is approved by a majority vote of the Board, their financial obligation shall be waived during their leave only.
2. A Member on leave of absence shall be considered an Inactive Member and shall have no voting privileges but shall have all social privileges.
3. Leave of absence shall be for a maximum of one year, subject to review. At that time the Board may elect to extend or terminate the leave by majority vote. Failure of an Inactive Member to request extension of leave or change in membership status to a member of the Board within the specified period shall be considered as resignation from membership in the Club.

Section 7 - Charter Members

1. Charter Members are those members who initially voted to establish R.I.L.E.
2. Charter Members shall be identified in club publications, shall be permitted to wear Charter member pins, and shall be identified in the membership list.

Section 8 - Emerit, Emeritus, Emerita Membership

1. The intent of Emerit membership status is to bestow an honorary membership status to certain R.I.L.E. members who have chosen to leave active membership. The honorarium may be granted to those that helped to move and grow the organization during their tenure as a member.
2. A member Emeriti has earned their discharge from all club responsibilities, such as paying dues or attending meetings or events, because of exceptional service to the club. The Emeriti Member is welcome at all events and open meetings but may not participate in any voting.
3. In recognition of substantial service to the club over a period of a minimum of 10 years, the Executive Board may recommend to the general membership that a member be designated a member Emeriti, in lieu of Alumni membership status.
4. The inaugural executive board, upon completion of their full terms of office, and who maintain a membership in good standing for 5 years will earn Emerit status with no need for board approval, once they choose to no longer be an active member of the club.

5. Members other than the Inaugural Executive Board and Founders proposed for Emerit status must be sponsored by the Executive Board, who themselves must be members in good standing. The motion to confer Emerit status must pass by $\frac{3}{4}$ of the membership present or their proxies, in a secret ballot. Abstentions are not counted as voting.

Section 9 – Associate Membership in Other Clubs

1. Members of R.I.L.E. may also be members of similar clubs within the leather or kink community.
 - a. Full members of R.I.L.E. may not serve as officers of similar clubs
 - b. Full members of other organizations may only be an associate member of R.I.L.E.
2. Full Members of R.I.L.E are allowed to be Associate Members of other clubs.
3. If a full member wants to be nominated for an Officer position with another club, they must move into an associate Member.

Section 10 – Availability of Club Documents

1. A copy of the Constitution and Bylaws of R.I.L.E. shall be available to prospective, full and associate members.
2. Club records shall be open to full and associate members in good standing.

Section 11 - Founder

1. Founders are those members who created and established R.I.L.E. These 3 Founders hold this title for the lifetime of the club. Founders are also Charter Members and Full Members.
 - a. The 3 Founders are Harry Ostrowsky, Jeff Janelle, and Matt Karnick.
2. Founders shall be identified in club publications, shall be permitted to wear Founder pins and accessories set forth by the Founders, Charter member pins, and shall be identified in the membership list.
3. Founding President and Vice Presidents shall automatically enter Emerit Membership status after ending their full term in office if they so choose.
4. Founders may attend any future open or closed board meeting while an active member. Unless actively serving on the board, Founders do not have voting rights in a board meeting.
5. Founders can attend all R.I.L.E meetings as long as they are an active member and in good standing.

Section 12 - Honorary Member

1. When a compelling reason exists, the membership, in recognition of an individual or organization's contribution of support with the members of the Organization, may offer an Honorary Membership.
2. Honorary status does not impose any obligations of attendance, activity, or dues payment.

3. The Honorary Member does not have voting rights, or other membership privileges, but a voice during discussions on issues before the membership and will always be respected by the membership.

ARTICLE IV - CLUB FINANCES

Section 1 – Authority

1. The club may collect dues to fund club activities.
2. The club may open a bank account to manage club funds, and designate individuals to act officially as signatories of the account.

Section 2 – Adjustment of Dues

In individual cases of hardship, dues may be reduced, suspended, or waived by majority vote of the Board. The board has the right to annually reassess the cost of membership

Section 3 - Arrears

1. The Treasurer shall notify Members whose dues are in arrears. Members with dues 90 days in arrears shall have their voting privileges suspended pending payment.
2. Members with dues 90 days in arrears shall be reviewed by the Board and subject to dismissal.

Section 4 – Refund

Upon voluntary termination of membership, prepaid dues may be refunded on a quarterly prorated basis at the discretion of the Board. Upon involuntary termination of membership, prepaid dues shall not be refunded.

ARTICLE V - ATTENDANCE

Section 1 - Expectation

1. Full members must attend at least two club meetings each year and four social events.
2. Associate members must attend at least one club meeting and one social event per year.
3. Failure to maintain the meeting attendance requirement will revoke the members in good standing status.
 - a. The good standing status will be restored when the member completes two meeting requirements of the current program year.

Section 2 - Records

Attendance at meetings shall be taken by the Secretary or their designate. Attendance at other club events shall be assessed by the report of those present at the event.

ARTICLE VI – CLUB COLORS

Section 1 – Insignia

1. The club insignia is property of R.I.L.E. No duplication may occur without prior authorization of the Board.
2. The club insignia may be displayed by members and others as authorized.

Section 2 - Banner

The club shall have an official banner bearing the insignia of the club. The banner may be displayed at official club activities. When a member attends an official function of a similar organization, they may display the club banner at that function with permission of the host.

Section 3 - Token

Leadership may approve the presentation of a token bearing the club insignia to another organization, institution or individual of recognized commonality, as a gesture of friendship and fraternal goodwill.

Section 4 - Patches

1. The club shall have large and small patches bearing the club insignia. Members are encouraged to wear Club patches.
2. Large patches may be displayed in the middle of the back between the shoulder blades.
3. Small patches may be worn at the member's discretion.
4. Full members can wear large and small patches.
5. Associate members shall be permitted to wear small patches only.
6. Former members are not permitted to wear the club colors.
7. Alumni and Emeriti members are permitted to wear any patch given during their full membership.

ARTICLE VII - NOMINATION OF OFFICERS

Section 1 - Qualifications

1. Full Members in good standing may be nominated or may nominate themselves or another Full Member for one or two Officer positions. However, they may only accept one office.

2. Associate Members may not nominate a member for an Officer position.

Section 2 - Acceptance

Nominations shall be accepted at the meeting prior to the election meeting.

ARTICLE VIII - ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1 - Schedule

Election of Officers shall be held one month prior to the Annual Meeting. Newly elected Officers shall take office at the Annual Meeting.

Section 2 - Voting Qualifications

Each voter must be a member in good standing.

Section 3 - Vote Weighting

1. Each Full and Emeriti Members shall be entitled to cast one vote for each vacancy on the Board.
2. Each Associate Member shall be entitled to cast one half vote for each vacancy on the Board.

Section 4 - Form of Election

- Officers shall be elected by open vote, or by secret ballot upon a sustained motion to do so.
- In the event of a sustained motion for a secret ballot, the Secretary shall make available to each voting member present at the election a ballot on which to vote, to distinguish half votes from full votes.

Section 5 - Absentee and Proxy Voting

Absentee and proxy voting shall be permitted for officer elections upon an equivalent majority vote of those present and eligible to vote.

Section 6 - Runoff Election

A candidate must receive an equivalent majority of the total votes cast. If no candidate receives said majority, then a runoff election shall be held between the top two candidates, and the candidate who receives an equivalent majority shall be elected. The runoff election shall occur immediately after the initial election is held.

Section 7 - Vacancies

1. Should the office of President become vacant, the Vice President shall assume the President's duties.

- a. If there are two (2) Vice Presidents, the board should hold a vote to decide which Vice President shall assume the President's duties.
 - b. If this ends in a tie, then all members should vote.
2. Should any other office become vacant, an election shall be held within one month to determine a successor.
 - a. The newly elected officer's term shall run concurrently with the terms of the existing officers.

ARTICLE IX - BOARD OF R.I.L.E.

Section 1 – Officers

1. The club shall elect officers as follows to represent R.I.L.E. They shall be known as the Board.
2. The Board shall consist of the following members
 - a. President
 - b. Vice President of Operations
 - c. Vice President of Marketing
 - d. Treasurer
 - e. Secretary
 - f. Event Director
 - g. Historian
 - h. Membership Director

Section 2 – Term of Office

For All officers the term of office for each elected Officer shall begin and end on the date of the Annual Meeting. The term of office shall be two years.

Section 3 – Term Limits

No member shall hold the same elected office for more than two consecutive full terms. To be considered a full term served, an officer must serve at least half of the term of office.

ARTICLE X - DUTIES OF RHODE ISLAND LEATHER ENTHUSIASTS' OFFICERS

Section 1 - President

The President's duties shall include:

1. General oversight of Board, appointed positions and chairs of the club
2. Upholding the spirit of the Club's Constitution
3. Development of the membership and activities of the club

4. Presiding over meetings
5. Preparing the agenda for meetings
6. Establishing committees
7. Ensuring appropriate use of club colors
8. Recognizing membership contributions and assigning rank accordingly.

Section 2 - Vice President

The Vice Presidents' duties shall include:

1. Assisting the President in conducting meetings
2. Presiding over meetings in the absence of the President
3. Serving the remainder of the President's term should the President not be able to complete the term
4. Assisting the President in preparing the agenda for each meeting, if necessary
5. Ensuring appropriate use of club colors
6. In the event of two Vice Presidents both will assume different responsibilities set forth by the president.

Section 3 - Treasurer

The Treasurer's duties shall include:

1. Being responsible for management of the Club's funds.
2. Making payments and expenditures as approved by the Membership
3. Maintaining accurate records of income and expenditures and filing such records in a safe place
4. Making financial reports to the membership at each regular meeting
5. Responsible for collections of dues and notification of delinquency in their dues

Section 4 - Secretary

The Secretary's duties shall include:

1. Recording accurate minutes of Club Meetings, transcribing them, and distributing them to the membership
2. Keeping and filing complete sets of the minutes
3. Assisting the President and the Vice President in preparing the agenda for each meeting, if necessary
4. Recording attendance at meetings
5. Preparing an accurate voting list
6. Preparing and establishing procedures to process ballots
7. Reading correspondence received at the Meetings

Section 5 - Event Director

The Event Director's duties shall include:

1. Electronically distributing invitations and notifications for the activities of R.I.L.E and other clubs.
 - a. The Event Director is not responsible for processing invitations of individual members for non-official club activities.
2. Coordinating social and educational events.

Section 6 - Historian

The Historians duties shall include:

1. Maintain an electronic archive of all club related documents and photographs
2. Ensures that all R.I.L.E. sponsored events have adequate photography coverage
3. Responsible for archiving appropriate records with the Leather Archives

Section 7 - Membership Director

The Membership Director's duties shall include:

1. Provide screening of all applications for membership in R.I.L.E. to ensure accurate and complete information
2. Maintaining an official list of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the members.
3. Leads membership recruitment efforts

ARTICLE XI: APPOINTED POSITIONS

Section 1 - Appointment

The Board may appoint members to positions such as webmaster, etc. The appointees shall serve until they resign, or until their appointments are rescinded by the board.

Section 2 - Responsibility

Responsibilities for appointed positions shall be defined in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE XII - CONDUCT

Fighting shall not be tolerated at club meetings or functions. Discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated. While wearing club colors members shall act with proper decorum and in keeping with the dignity of R.I.L.E.

ARTICLE XIII - CENSURE

Section 1 - Charges

Any member may be brought up for censure upon substantiated charges. These charges may include but are not limited to violation of this Constitution and/or Bylaws, harassment or intimidation of a member, or violation of another member's rights or of a civil or criminal statute.

Section 2 – Form of Censure

Censure can take the form of formal reprimand, suspension or expulsion from the Club or removal from the Board.

Section 3 - Procedure

For procedure, see Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised edition, Article XIII, sections 72, 73, and 75.

ARTICLE XIV - RECOGNITION

1. The Club shall have a system of recognizing positive behaviors for all R.I.L.E. members.
2. Membership recognition is designed to promote positive behavior and collaboration both with members, partners of the club and the community.
3. Recognition shall take form as a title system. The recognition system is to show and display the level of accomplishments members have achieved while a R.I.L.E. member.
 - a. These titles are for recognition and respect within R.I.L.E.
4. Members awarded the tile may wear pins or patches of the title with the Club colors.
 - a. Recognition rank titles should be a Nautical theme in nature and include but are not limited to.
 - i. Ensign
 - ii. Lieutenant
 - iii. Lieutenant Jr Grade
 - iv. Lieutenant Commander
 - v. Commander
 - vi. Captain
 - vii. Rear Admiral
 - viii. Vice Admiral
 - ix. Admiral
5. Awarding the recognition title membership should be done at a club meeting or event, bestowed by the President or highest recognition ranking member.
6. Ranks are awarded based on an accrual of points

- a. Recognition points are awarded based on the areas of recruitment, attendance, networking, years of membership, committee service, and being an officer of the club.
 - b. A member can choose to nominate another member for recognition points, with the President approving or vetoing the nomination.
 - c. Points are capped in certain categories and only affect the rank a member is working towards; categories will unlock with each promotion in rank.
7. If a member is censured, the board may vote to change the member's title, unless it is Captain or an above rank.
 - a. If censured, to demote a Captain or above, a vote would be required, needing a majority vote of the Founders and Board collectively.
8. Only the President and Founders are allowed to issue discretionary points.
9. If no officers are present at an event or function the highest recognition ranking member may make necessary decisions regarding the event or function on R.I.L.Es behalf.

ARTICLE XV - MEETINGS

Section 1 - Definitions

Club meetings shall include:

1. Regular Meetings which shall be held bi-monthly, unless canceled at a prior meeting by an equivalent majority of members present and eligible to vote.
2. Board Meetings which shall be held as needed.
3. Committee Meetings which shall be held as needed.
4. Special Meetings which may be called by the President, the Board or an equivalent majority of the voting Members. Each member shall be notified at least one week prior to a Special Meeting, of the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting, which shall be limited to the purpose for which it was called.

Section 2 – Quorum

1. At a Regular or Special Meeting, a quorum shall exist when at least 25% of the Full Members in good standing are present, with 50% off the board present.
2. At a Board Meeting, a quorum shall exist when at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of the officers are present.

Section 3 - Voting

1. Voting shall be by equivalent majority vote of eligible members, present and voting unless stated otherwise herein. In case of a tie, the presiding board member's vote shall be dropped.
2. Equivalent votes shall be defined as the number of total votes cast, excluding abstentions, and counting full and half votes as such.
3. Voting may be conducted by secret ballot upon an equivalent majority vote to do so.

4. Where there is a potential conflict of interest with another fetish community organization including but not limited to scheduling or competing financial interests, members shall abstain from voting.

Section 4 - Procedure

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised edition shall guide Club meetings except where they are inconsistent with the Constitution or Bylaws of the Club.

ARTICLE XVI - BYLAWS

R.I.L.E. may enact any Bylaws which they deem necessary for the proper functioning of the Club or which may be necessary to carry out the Articles of this Constitution, as long as such Bylaws are consistent with this Constitution and are approved by an equivalent majority vote of membership present.

ARTICLE XVII - AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Section 1 - Proposals

Any Full, Emeriti, or Associate Member in good standing may propose amendments to this Constitution.

Section 2 - Review Committee

A Committee shall be appointed by the Board and shall review proposed amendments to this Constitution and then report back to the membership with its recommendations.

Section 3 - Voting

Proposed amendments must be ratified by a number of eligible votes equal to two-thirds of the full members in good standing. Absentee ballots shall be permitted for Constitutional amendments.

ARTICLE XVIII - RATIFICATION

The Constitution of R.I.L.E. must be ratified by a number of eligible votes equal to two-thirds of the full members in good standing. Absentee ballots shall be permitted for Constitutional ratification.

ARTICLE XIX – DISSOLUTION

1. Dissolution requires a vote of 80% of Full Members, excluding Associate, Alumni and Emeriti Members
2. Vote of dissolution must be announced 30 days prior to actual vote
3. In the event of proposed dissolution, Board Members are responsible for the creation of a committee to distribute assets
4. Upon the dissolution of R.I.L.E all of the assets are to be donated to an LGBTQI cause or establishment