

CONSTITUTION of THE NATIONAL RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION

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The National Rural Letter Carrier

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLE I Name	6
ARTICLE II Purpose	6
ARTICLE III Members	7
Section 1. Member in Good Standing	7
Section 2. Classifications	7
Section 3. Restrictions.....	9
Section 4. Affiliation	9
Section 5. Application.....	10
Section 6. Dues	10
Section 7. Membership Year	10
Section 8. Magazine	11
Section 9. Standards of Conduct for the Association and its Members	11
Section 10. Discipline	11
ARTICLE IV State Associations	12
Section 1. State Associations	12
Section 2. Officers	12
Section 3. Dues	12
Section 4. Annual Report.....	12
Section 5. Dissolution	13
Section 6. Units	13
Section 7. Trusteeship.....	13
ARTICLE V National Officers	14
Section 1. Officers	14
Section 2. Duties	14
Section 3. Election	18
Section 4. Salaries.....	19
Section 5. Expenses.....	20
Section 6. Benefits	20
Section 7. Removal.....	21
Section 8. Vacancy in Office	21
Section 9. Association Property	22
ARTICLE VI Meetings.....	22
Section 1. National Convention	22
Section 2. Delegates	22
Section 3. Compensation for National Paid Delegates	25
Section 4. National Officers	26

Section 5. Quorum.....	26
Section 6. Order of Business	26
Section 7. Special Meetings.....	26
ARTICLE VII National Board.....	27
Section 1. Members.....	27
Section 2. Duties.....	27
Section 3. Meetings	27
ARTICLE VIII Committees.....	27
Section 1. Convention Committees.....	27
Section 2. Appeals Committee.....	29
Section 3. Chaplain	29
Section 4. Committee Meetings.....	29
Section 5. National Appeals Commission.....	29
Section 6. Special Committees.....	30
Section 7. Committee Compensation.....	30
ARTICLE IX Steward System	31
Section 1. Responsibility	31
Section 2. Role of State Associations	31
Section 3. Regional Representative	31
Section 4. District Representative	32
Section 5. Assistant District Representative	33
Section 6. Area Steward	33
Section 7. Local Stewards.....	34
Section 8. Discipline.....	36
Section 9. Decertification	37
Section 10. Representatives/Stewards Acting as Managers.....	37
Section 11. Salaries.....	37
Section 12. Expenses.....	37
Section 13. Benefits.....	38
Section 14. Association Property.....	39
ARTICLE X Appeals.....	39
Section 1. State.....	39
Section 2. National.....	41
Section 3. Administration.....	43
ARTICLE XI National Agreements.....	44
Section 1. Presentation	44
Section 2. Ratification Vote	44

Section 3. Ratification Committee	44
Section 4. Ballot Tabulation	44
ARTICLE XII Parliamentary Authority	45
ARTICLE XIII Amendment of Constitution	45
APPENDIX A	45

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this Association shall be the NATIONAL RURAL LETTER CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION (NRLCA).

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The Association is established upon the long-recognized need of Rural Letter Carriers to organize and create a united force, advance the interests of all members, ensure job security, enhance opportunities and assure our full share in the success of the United States Postal Service to which we contribute so substantially.

The Association shall seek, with all of the resources at its command, to assist its members in the realization of their highest aspirations as workers and as citizens. Such aspirations are our right and shall be protected against all threats, In God We Trust.

The Association is dedicated to the discharge of its responsibilities and the achievement of its objectives in accordance with the democratic principles embodied in this Constitution.

The object of the Association shall be to improve conditions of labor with the United States Postal Service, advance the methods used by Rural Letter Carriers and promote fraternal spirit among its members.

This Association shall not affiliate or merge with any other organization or group without a majority vote of the delegates at a National Convention.

ARTICLE III

Members

Section 1. Member in Good Standing. A "member in good standing" is a member who has made timely payment of dues and has not voluntarily withdrawn or been expelled or suspended by the Association.

Section 2. Classifications

- A. Bargaining Unit Member.** Membership is open to the following rural carriers:
1. Regular Carriers (Designation Code 71), including regular carriers on limited duty assignments and assigned to (960-979) rural routes or who are in Injured-on-Duty/Leave Without Pay (IOD/LWOP) status and assigned to (980-989) rural routes;
 2. Part-Time Flexible Rural Carriers (PTFs, Designation Code 76);
 3. Substitute Rural Carriers (Designation Codes 72 and 73)
 4. Rural Carrier Associates (RCAs, Designation Codes 78, 74, 79);
 5. Rural Carrier Reliefs (RCRs, Designation Code 75);
 6. Auxiliary Rural Carriers (Designation Code 77); and
 7. Assistant Rural Carriers (ARCs, Designation Code 70-5); and
 8. Rural Carriers in the Armed Forces of our country, provided they were members when their duty began.

Bargaining Unit Members in good standing are entitled to all voting rights and to hold both elective and appointive office at all levels of the Association.

- B. **Retired Member.** Retired membership is open to Rural Carriers who were members in good standing at retirement on an annuity. Eligibility for Retired membership expires on June 30 of the year following retirement. Failure to pay dues for one full membership year terminates Retired membership. However, a Retired carrier whose membership has lapsed, due to extenuating circumstances, may apply for reinstatement to the National Secretary-Treasurer by providing proof of prior membership and the current year's dues. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall present the request for membership to the National Board for a decision. Retired Members in good standing are entitled to all voting rights with the exception of ratification of National Agreements. Retired Members may not be elected to National office.
- C. **Associate Member.** Associate membership is open to Rural Carriers who were members in good standing and are now either working in other non-managerial Postal Service jobs or have left the service and are not receiving an annuity. Failure to pay dues for one full membership year terminates Associate membership. Associate Members shall not be entitled to vote or to hold elective or appointive office in the Association.
- D. **Retired Associate Member.** Retired Associate membership is open to Associate Members who have retired on an annuity. Eligibility for Retired Associate membership expires on June 30 of the year following retirement. Failure to pay dues for one full membership year terminates Retired Associate membership. Retired Associates may not apply for reinstatement. Retired Associate Members shall not be entitled to vote or to hold elective or appointive office in the

Association.

- E. **Honorary Member.** Honorary membership may be bestowed by the Association at the National Convention upon recommendation of the National Board. Honorary Members shall not be entitled to vote or to hold elective or appointive office in the Association.

Section 3. Restrictions. Inasmuch as it is an unfair labor practice under the Labor Management Relations Act (LMRA) for any employer (including persons acting in that capacity) to dominate or interfere with the administration of any labor organization, it follows that employers, while they may be members, may not be candidates for office or serve as officers.

Members are prohibited from participation in the Association while serving in managerial or supervisory positions, such as Officer-in-Charge (OIC), Acting Supervisor (204-B) or Postmaster Relief (PMR) or acting in any capacity normally performed by a manager. Members who accept managerial positions shall be deemed to have resigned from all elected and appointed positions within the Association and shall be prohibited from holding any elected or appointed union positions for a period of one year from the last day served in that capacity.

Section 4. Affiliation

- A. **Organized States including organized Territories.** Members working in organized states shall affiliate with the state association representing the office from which the route originates. The state association shall determine affiliation with local, district and/or county units.

- B. **Unorganized States.** Bargaining Unit Rural Carriers working in unorganized states or territories shall become members of this Association upon payment of annual National per capita dues. Such members may also affiliate with the following organized states by paying that state association's per capita dues:
Alaska - membership in Washington;
Hawaii - membership in California;
Virgin Islands - membership in Puerto Rico.
- C. **Involuntary Reassignment.** A member involuntarily reassigned to another state may retain membership in the former state by payment of that state's per capita dues. An individual with membership in two states may be a candidate for National Delegate and shall have voting rights for selection of such in one state.
- D. **Retirees.** A Retired Member shall affiliate either in the state of residence or in the state where previously employed as a regular rural carrier.

Section 5. Application. The Association recognizes and accepts Standard Forms 1187 and 1187-R, *Authorization for Deduction of Dues*, for employees or retirees wishing to join the Association. Additionally, prospective members may make application by remitting in advance the appropriate annual cash payment.

Section 6. Dues. Annual National Per Capita dues shall be:

- A. Regular, PTF and Associate - 1.3% of the annual salary of a 40 hour step 1 from table two of the current rural carrier evaluated schedule in effect;
- B. Leave Replacements (Substitutes, RCR, RCA, Auxiliary, and ARC) - .450 (thousandths) % of the annual sala-

ry of a 40 hour step 1 from table two of the current rural carrier evaluated schedule in effect;

- C. Retired and Retired Associate - \$56.00.

Section 7. Membership Year. The Association year shall be July 1 through June 30.

Section 8. Magazine. Members in good standing shall receive each issue of *The National Rural Letter Carrier*.

Section 9. Standards of Conduct for the Association and its Members

- A. Maintain democratic procedures and practices;
- B. Ensure members' rights to participation in the affairs of the Association through periodic elections, fair and equal treatment under the governing rules and due process in any disciplinary proceedings;
- C. Prevent discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, gender, religion, creed, national origin or disability, or on the basis of marital, economic, social or political status;
- D. Maintain the fiscal integrity of the Association;
- E. Prohibit business or financial interests on the part of its officers and agents which conflict with their duty to the Association.

Section 10. Discipline. The National Board may discipline any member of the Association or subordinate unit for misconduct or neglect of duty in office after a fair and impartial hearing. Any member so disciplined shall have a right of appeal as provided in this Constitution.

ARTICLE IV

State Associations

Section 1. State Associations. State Associations will include any State or Territorial Association chartered by the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association. A state or territory with at least fifteen members may apply for charter to the National Board by remitting a charter fee of \$5.00, national per capita dues for its members and a copy of its proposed Constitution for review by the National Board. No state constitution shall conflict with the NRLCA Constitution. The State Board shall have the authority to make interim amendments to the state constitution when necessary to conform to state and federal law.

No state association shall offer representation to rural craft employees in matters relating to EEO, MSPB, OWCP or other non-contractual issues without prior written consent of the National Board.

Section 2. Officers. Each state association shall have a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer (or a combined Secretary-Treasurer) and such other officers as the state association deems necessary.

Section 3. Dues. A state which fails to remit National per capita dues for all members before the close of business on the first day of the National Convention shall be suspended from membership in the Association. Should per capita dues remain unpaid after ninety days, the state's charter shall be revoked.

Section 4. Annual Report. Each state secretary shall prepare an Annual Report immediately after the close of the state convention. The report shall be mailed to the National Secretary-Treasurer and shall include a roster of State Officers and Appointees, the roster of National Delegates

and adopted resolutions which fall within the jurisdiction of the National Convention.

Section 5. Dissolution. In the event of dissolution or revocation of a state association's charter, all assets shall become the property of the NRLCA. The balance of the aforementioned funds shall be returned when the state association resumes operation and/or is re-chartered.

Section 6. Units. States shall have authority to establish subordinate units. No unit's Constitution shall conflict with the NRLCA Constitution.

Section 7. Trusteeship

- A. **Purpose.** The National Board may place any subordinate unit in trusteeship for any of the following reasons:
1. To uphold the principles of this Constitution;
 2. To prevent or correct corruption or financial mismanagement;
 3. To ensure performance of collective bargaining agreements or duties of a bargaining representative;
 4. To restore democratic procedures;
 5. To otherwise carry out the objectives of the Association.
- B. **Authority.** The trustee shall assume immediate control of the subordinate unit with full authority over all officers and property. The trustee shall act in such capacity for the duration of the trusteeship.
- C. **Hearing.** A trusteeship hearing shall be held before a committee of three members within 30 days of imposing trusteeship. The members shall be selected as follows: one member selected by the National

Board, one selected by the Board in trusteeship and a chairman selected by the other two members. The committee shall have sole discretion regarding the conduct and procedures of the trustee-ship hearing. Only Bargaining Unit Members may serve on this committee. No member of this committee shall be chosen from the State Association or Unit in trusteeship, or from the National Board. The committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the President as soon as practical following the hearing. The National Board shall determine whether to continue or to terminate the trusteeship.

- D. **Termination.** The affected subordinate unit may petition the National Board to terminate the trusteeship at six month intervals following the decision of the National Board. The board of the subordinate unit in trusteeship may appeal the decision of the National Board as provided in this Constitution. The National Board may terminate a trusteeship at any time.

ARTICLE V

National Officers

Section 1. Officers. The National Officers shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Director of Labor Relations, Director of Steward Operations and an Executive Committee of four members. The President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Director of Labor Relations and Director of Steward Operations shall be resident officers at National Headquarters.

Section 2. Duties. The National Officers shall perform such duties as are prescribed in this Constitution, by the National Board or in the adopted parliamentary authority.

A. President

1. Direct the Association's affairs, including the Headquarters Office;
2. Preside at meetings of the Association and the National Board, and enforce the laws thereof;
3. Temporarily fill vacancies on the National Board, subject to the approval of the National Board;
4. At the close of each National Convention, appoint special committees and fill vacancies occurring there-in during recess;
5. Make decisions on questions of governing law, subject to approval of the National Board, and report such for approval to the next National Convention;
6. Submit a written report of official acts to each National Convention;
7. Prepare a summary report on the disposition of those resolutions adopted at the previous convention;
8. Grant and issue charters in conjunction with the Secretary-Treasurer;
9. Appoint Association members, retain legal counsel and secure other services to fulfill the obligations of the Association related to Labor-Management Relations, with the approval of the National Board. Members appointed to such duties shall receive sub-hire as defined in this Constitution, reimbursement for necessary expenses and a daily meal allowance;
10. Sign papers and documents requiring the President's signature;
11. Countersign checks issued in payment of obligations of the Association as required.

B. Vice President

1. Preside in the absence of the President;

2. Assume the office of President in case of the President's resignation, removal or death and serve until such time as a successor shall be duly elected and installed;
3. Act on behalf of the majority of the National Board should the President become disqualified or refuse or neglect to discharge the duties of President;
4. Countersign checks issued in payment of obligations of the Association as required;
5. Perform other duties as prescribed by the President.

C. **Secretary-Treasurer**

1. Keep a correct record of the proceedings of the Association;
2. Conduct and keep a correct record of the correspondence of the Association;
3. Have charge of the official seal, books, papers and documents of the Association and affix the seal of the Association to official documents;
4. Prepare for posting on the NRLCA website a correct copy of the entire proceedings of the National Convention or special meeting of the Association within two months of the close of said meeting. In addition, the secretary-treasurer will advertise the availability of a hard copy of the entire proceedings in a fall edition of *The National Rural Letter Carrier*. This hard copy will be mailed to any requesting member. The report shall include a statement of the financial condition and membership of the Association;
5. Receive monies due and make timely deposits into the Association's Treasury;
6. Cause to be written verified orders for payments drawn on the Treasury and issue checks in payment of properly itemized invoices, state-

- ments, authorized payroll payments and other obligations of the Association as directed by the National Board;
7. Invest Association funds, in excess of those needed for current operation, in U.S. Government Securities or federally insured financial institutions as directed by the National Board;
 8. Keep in force a blanket bond covering the National Officers, National Office employees and state association officers in an amount determined by the National Board;
 9. Keep a true and correct account of financial transactions. The Association's books and records shall be audited at the end of each fiscal year by a certified public accountant selected by the President. The report of the certified public accountant shall be submitted to the National Convention;
 10. Prepare a quarterly financial report providing both the statement of activities and statement of financial position for the Association. This report shall be published in *The National Rural Letter Carrier*;
 11. Meet with the Finance Committee and provide a detailed overview of the total revenues, expenditures and financial position of the Association;
 12. Submit a financial report to the Finance Committee at the National Convention that details the period July 1 to the opening of Convention;
 13. Employ such office help as may be necessary to properly discharge the duties of the office, subject to the approval of the National Board;
 14. Perform other duties as prescribed by the President.

D. Director of Labor Relations

1. Oversee labor relations issues in the field;
2. Develop and disseminate educational programs for stewards in conjunction with the Director of Steward Operations;
3. Supervise Step 4 Grievance and Arbitration procedures;
4. Devote time to labor relations issues;
5. Perform other duties as prescribed by the President.

E. Director of Steward Operations

1. Oversee and administer the Steward System;
2. Develop and disseminate educational programs for stewards;
3. Coordinate training of stewards with the Director of Labor Relations;
4. Perform other duties as prescribed by the President.

F. Executive Committee Members

1. Act as Trustees of the Association;
2. Administer the steward system and other labor relations activities in the Postal Areas to which they are assigned by the President;
3. Coordinate activities with the Director of Labor Relations and the Director of Steward Operations;
4. Perform other duties as prescribed by the President.

Section 3. Election

- A. The nomination and election of officers shall take place at each National Convention. Nominations shall be in order at any time after 10:00 a.m. on the

second day of business and until the time of elections.

- B. No member shall be eligible for office in the Association who currently holds a position in Management in the Postal Service, or in another craft, or has not been a continuous member in good standing for three consecutive years prior to nomination.
- C. The President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Director of Labor Relations and Director of Steward Operations shall be elected for one year or until their successors are elected and installed. Executive Committeemen shall be elected one each year for a four-year term or until their successors are elected and installed.
- D. The election of officers shall be by majority vote, and write-in votes shall not be considered valid. Election shall be by ballot when there is more than one nominee for the same office. When there are more than two nominees for the same office, the one receiving the least number of votes on the third ballot and on each succeeding ballot shall be dropped, until election is accomplished. When there is only one nominee for an office and nominations have been closed, the President or Secretary-Treasurer shall declare that the nominee is elected.

Section 4. Salaries. Officers shall be paid annual salaries as follows:

President \$140,769;

Vice President \$134,509;

Secretary-Treasurer \$134,509;

Director of Labor Relations \$134,509;

Director of Steward Operations \$134,509;

Executive Committee Members \$115,744.

Salaries shall be paid biweekly and are full payment for services rendered. Salaries shall be adjusted to reflect cost-of-living adjustments received by regular rural craft employees plus an automatic pay increase equal to the dollar amount pay increase received by a 43K, Step 12 carrier. Officers shall not hold any other paid position in the Association or in connection with the Association. No officer shall be allowed compensation for services or expenses if the officer is receiving compensation from any other source for that service.

Section 5. Expenses

- A. **Travel.** Officers shall be paid actual travel and lodging expenses plus a \$50.00 meal allowance per day while in travel status. Executive Committee Members are considered to be in a travel status when working at the Headquarters Office.
- B. **Lodging.** Resident officers shall be furnished living quarters in the Washington, D.C. area.
- C. **Review.** Itemized expenses shall be reviewed and approved for payment by the National Board.

Section 6. Benefits

- A. **Retirement and Insurance.** The Association shall pay only the USPS portion of contributions for National Officers to continue in the Federal Retirement, Health and Life Insurance Programs in which they were enrolled prior to election to national office.
- B. **Annual Leave.** National Officers shall be granted 26 days annual leave per year, which may be accumulated up to 55 days. At the end of each fiscal year, all or a portion may be "cashed out" at their current rate. Within six months of termination of service, an officer

or officer's estate shall be paid for accumulated annual leave at their current rate.

- C. **Sick Leave.** National Officers shall earn 13 days sick leave per year. Unused sick leave shall be carried forward for future use. Within six months of termination of service, an officer shall be paid for accumulated sick leave at the sub-hire rate.

Section 7. Removal. The National Board may suspend with pay a national officer for misconduct or neglect of duty in office, pending a hearing before a committee of three members within 30 days of suspension. The members shall be selected as follows: one member selected by the National Board, one selected by the suspended officer and a chairman selected by the other two members. No national officer shall serve on the Committee. The committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the next National Convention. The National Convention, by a two-thirds vote, may remove the officer from office. An officer does not have the right of appeal.

Section 8. Vacancy in Office

- A. **President.** In the case of vacancy in the office of President, the Vice President shall serve as President for the remainder of the term.
- B. **Other Offices.** In the case of vacancy in any other office, the President shall appoint a successor, subject to the approval of the National Board. In the event the vacancy occurs within sixty days preceding the National Convention, the vacancy shall be filled by election at the Convention.
- C. **Separation.** An officer who voluntarily separates from the rural craft shall be deemed to have resigned from

office. An officer whose separation from the rural craft is determined by the National Board to be through no fault of the officer shall remain in office until the next National Convention. Should an officer retire to avoid detrimental effects to retirement benefits because of changes in the retirement system or tax laws, such officer shall remain in office until the next National Convention.

Section 9. Association Property. Officers shall account for and deliver to their successors or to the National Board all monies, books, papers, securities or other property of the Association at the end of their term of office or when requested by the National Board.

ARTICLE VI

Meetings

Section 1. National Convention. A convention shall be held each year between August 1 and September 30 on dates determined by the National Board. The National Board shall select a host city at least four years in advance from the following regions, in this order: Mid-States, Southwest, Western, South Atlantic, and Eastern. Once a convention city has been selected, all arrangements and costs of the convention shall be borne by the National Association, under the supervision and authority of the National Board.

Section 2. Delegates

A. Eligibility

1. Each state association shall be entitled to representation by one delegate for every 100 members or major fraction thereof and one Delegate-at-Large. Membership shall be based on the number of dues withholding and cash pay Bargaining Unit and Retired Members on June 30 of the

Association year just ended.

2. Only Bargaining Unit Members and Retired Members in good standing may be nominated, elected or seated as delegates. Such "good standing" status shall be the sole prerequisite for determining eligibility or entitlement to service as a delegate or to any payment or benefit, except that a state may establish reasonable rules to ensure attendance at the Convention.
3. A member who accepts or acts at any time in any capacity normally performed by a manager from the end of one Convention to the end of the next Convention shall be ineligible to be nominated or serve as delegate.

B. Nomination

1. Within each state association, nominations for National Delegate shall be submitted by U.S. Mail to a pre-arranged post office box on a nominating ballot or copy. The nominating ballot shall be signed and show the name and address of the member making the nomination, and may include self-nomination. The nominating ballot and instructions shall be posted on the NRLCA website and in all published issues of The National Rural Letter Carrier from February-May.
2. Nominations must be received in the pre-arranged post office box at least 40 days prior to the opening of the state convention. Upon receipt, the State Secretary shall send a notice of nomination to the candidate by U.S. Mail.

C. Elections

1. A member must be on the rolls at least 40 days prior to the opening of the state convention in order to be eligible to vote for National

Delegates.

2. The State Secretary shall prepare a ballot listing the candidates for National Delegate. Instructions on each ballot shall include the number of delegates to be elected, the deadline for return of the ballot and the mailing address of the designated post office box. The number of votes cast on each ballot shall not exceed the number of delegates to which the state association was entitled at the previous convention.
3. The State Secretary shall cause the ballot to be mailed to eligible members at least 20 days prior to the opening of the state convention. In addition, the State Secretary/ Designee shall arrange for the rental of a post office box for the receipt of the ballots and another for the return of undeliverable ballots.
4. An envelope marked "Ballot" shall be provided in which to seal the ballot. To permit verification of membership and to maintain the integrity of the voting procedure, an outer envelope, also marked "Ballot" which clearly identifies the name and address of the member, shall also be provided. The sealed envelope containing the ballot shall be placed in the outer envelope by the member and mailed to the designated post office box.
5. An Election Committee shall be appointed by the State President. No candidate for National Delegate may serve on the Election Committee. After the deadline for receipt of ballots, the Election Committee shall collect and tabulate the ballots at the state convention. The post office box designated for the return of ballots shall be accessible only to the Election Committee.
6. Any candidate or designee may observe the ballot tabulation. In reporting the results of the

election, the candidates shall be placed on a roster in the order of votes received. The number of delegates to which the state is entitled shall be declared regular delegates; the remaining candidates shall be declared alternates.

7. Each state association shall be entitled to one Delegate-at-Large from the roster of elected regular delegates. That position shall be filled by a state officer in ranking order, beginning with the State President. A state officer may not be automatically declared a delegate by virtue of office unless elected by direct vote of the membership. National-Paid Delegates shall be named in accordance with the plurality of votes received.
8. The State Secretary shall prepare and send credentials to the National Secretary-Treasurer for the Delegate-at-Large, regular delegates and an appropriate number of alternates immediately following the state convention. The credentials shall be embossed with the state's seal to verify authenticity.
9. Delegates-at-Large and regular elected delegates presenting identification to the Credentials Committee at the National Convention shall be certified and seated.

Section 3. Compensation for National Paid Delegates.

The National Association shall pay the Delegate-at-Large from each state for mileage at twice the IRS reimbursement rate for one-way travel as determined by the Credentials/Mileage and Per Diem Committee and \$75.00 per diem during sessions of the Convention. Additionally, the National Association shall pay mileage and per diem on the same basis to one regular delegate for each 800 members, provided this shall not increase the total number of delegates to which each state is entitled. No Delegate-at-Large shall

receive a per diem until the Committee on Credentials receives the state delegation roster under the seal of the State Secretary. This roster shall be furnished no later than the first session of the Convention.

Section 4. National Officers. Each National Officer shall be entitled to vote on every question before the National Convention, except the election of National Officers. The immediate past National President shall have the status of Delegate-at-Large at the National Convention immediately following his/her term of office and shall be entitled to vote on every question before the National Convention, except the election of National Officers.

Section 5. Quorum. The quorum at any meeting of the National Convention shall be a majority of the voting delegates who have been registered as in attendance, representing not less than 25 states.

Section 6. Order of Business. The National Convention Program shall be the order of business. The President may make changes for a session to expedite the proceedings or accommodate guest speakers. The order of business may be transposed by a majority vote of the Convention, with the following exceptions:

- A. The first item of business shall be the report of the Credentials Committee;
- B. Beginning Wednesday afternoon, the report of the Constitution Committee, followed by the report of the Resolutions Committee, shall be the order of business without interruption, unless suspended by a two-thirds vote of the Convention.

Section 7. Special Meetings. A special meeting of the Association may be called by the President upon written request of the majority of the States holding charters, provided

no meeting shall be called within less than thirty days' notice.

ARTICLE VII

National Board

Section 1. Members. The members of the National Board shall be the officers.

Section 2. Duties. The National Board shall perform such duties as are prescribed in this Constitution as well as the following:

- A. Maintain and distribute *The National Rural Letter Carrier*, the official publication of the Association. Employ an editor, publisher and other employees as necessary;
- B. Maintain a Headquarters Office in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area;
- C. Set the annual salaries of personnel employed in the Headquarters Office;
- D. Submit, individually, a written report at each National Convention or special meeting of the Association.

Section 3. Meetings. Meetings of the National Board may be called by the President or by a majority of members of the National Board.

ARTICLE VIII

Committees

Section 1. Convention Committees. The following Convention Committees shall be appointed by the President from the elected National Delegates:

- A. Constitution Committee of at least five members appointed at least two full weeks before the National Convention, which shall compare, combine, correct (retaining their intent), compose and report proposed changes to the Convention with a recommendation;
- B. Credentials/Mileage and Per Diem Committee of at least five members appointed at least two full weeks before the National Convention, which shall verify the credentials of National Delegates and shall prepare a report listing, by state, membership and the number of votes to which each state is entitled. The committee shall also determine the allowance for National Delegates assigned to committees, delegates-at-large and other national paid delegates;
- C. Finance Committee of at least three members appointed at least two full weeks before the National Convention, which shall review the Association's financial records from July 1 of the previous year through opening day of the convention and consider suggestions from members of the National Board and delegates. The Finance Committee shall submit recommendations for dues, general expenditures and officers' salaries, benefits and expenses. These recommendations shall be reported to the Convention and submitted to the Constitution Committee. The Finance Committee shall have access to the Association's CPA firm and to necessary records;
- D. Media Committee which shall be responsible for displaying proposed constitutional amendments and resolutions for discussion by the delegates;
- E. Press Room Committee of at least five members appointed at least two full weeks before the National

Convention, which shall publish a daily convention newsletter and provide copy service for official convention business;

- F. Resolutions Committee of at least five members appointed at least two full weeks before the National Convention, which shall compare, combine, correct (retaining their intent) and report proposed resolutions to the Convention;
- G. Sergeants-at-Arms Committees which shall maintain order and carry out instructions as directed by the presiding officer;
- H. Tellers Committees which shall assist in counting votes and shall distribute, collect and tabulate ballots as necessary.

Section 2. Appeals Committee. Such Appeals Committees as may be necessary shall be appointed by the President comprised of five Bargaining Unit Members. No national officer, members who have participated at any level of the appeal, or members from the state with a pending appeal shall serve on the committee. Such committees shall be provided complete files prior to the Convention.

Section 3. Chaplain. A Convention Chaplain shall be appointed by the President.

Section 4. Committee Meetings. Committees shall meet at the Convention site on a date to be determined by the President.

Section 5. National Appeals Commission. The National President, with the approval of the National Board, shall appoint a National Appeals Commission of five Bargaining Unit Members as follows: one member from each geo-

graphic area served by the four Executive Committeemen and a fifth selected at large. The President shall appoint one member as Chair. No national officer shall serve on the Commission.

No member shall serve more than three consecutive years. Members of the National Appeals Commission shall be excluded from participation in appeals from their state.

Section 6. Special Committees. Special committees may be created as necessary by the President or the National Board.

Section 7. Committee Compensation. Compensation equal to the maximum daily rate of salary payable at the top step of the Rural Carrier Evaluated Schedule Table 1, exclusive of Equipment Maintenance Allowance, shall be defined as sub-hire.

- A. National Convention Committees.** Committeemembers shall receive sub-hire, a daily meal allowance, actual lodging expenses and any additional travel expenses deemed appropriate for one day of travel to the convention site and for meeting days prior to the official opening day of the Convention. Committee members may not receive a daily meal allowance and per diem for the same day. Committee members shall receive per diem during the sessions of the convention and mileage to be determined by the Mileage and Per Diem Committee.
- B. Other Special Committees.** Members assigned to special committees shall receive sub-hire, a daily meal allowance and necessary expenses.

ARTICLE IX

Steward System

Section 1. Responsibility. Representation, provided for in the National Agreement, shall be accomplished through the Steward System. The NRLCA shall be responsible for the Steward System throughout the Nation. The NRLCA Representatives/Stewards shall be responsible for processing grievances and appeals through the Grievance-Arbitration procedure. The Association, as the exclusive bargaining agent, is the only organization authorized to represent Rural Carriers in matters of labor-management relations.

Section 2. Role of State Associations. Each state shall make recommendations for the positions of District Representative and Assistant District Representatives. The National Association shall consult with the State Association(s) for the name(s) of a member to serve as a District Representative(s) and Assistant District Representative(s). The final decision shall be made by the National Association.

Section 3. Regional Representative

- A. The National Association shall be responsible to appoint Regional Representative(s) as they deem necessary to fully support the Steward System.

- B. Duties
 1. Process and adjudicate Step 3 grievances;
 2. Oversee certification training;
 3. Liaison between the National Association and District and Assistant District Representatives;
 4. A person serving full time in this position cannot serve on their respective state board;
 5. Other duties as assigned by the National Association.

Section 4. District Representative

- A. The National Association shall be responsible to appoint and certify District Representative(s) as they deem necessary to fully support the Steward System. The District Representative shall be responsible to the National Association for the performance of all duties. District Representatives shall be full-time employees of the National Association. A District Representative may be assigned to more than one (1) postal district.
- B. Duties
1. Supervise and administer the Steward System within the assigned postal district(s);
 2. Certify Area and Local Stewards, with notification to appropriate postmasters and the National Association;
 3. Train Area and Local Stewards prior to certification, utilizing training materials provided by the National Association;
 4. Provide certification training, and additionally provide enhancement training as required by the National Association to Area and Local Stewards;
 5. Appeal grievances to Step 2 and Step 3, in conjunction with the Executive Committeeman and/or Regional Representative;
 6. Act, or designate another to act, as a representative in the event an Area or Local Steward is unavailable;
 7. A person serving full time in this position cannot serve on their respective state board;
 8. Other duties as assigned by the National Association.

Section 5. Assistant District Representative

- A. The National Association shall be responsible to appoint and certify an Assistant District Representative(s) as they deem necessary to fully support the Steward System. The Assistant District Representative shall be responsible to the District Representative and to the National Association for the performance of all duties. Assistant District Representatives may be full-time or part-time.

- B. Duties
 - 1. Represent carriers in offices assigned by the District Representative;
 - 2. Serve with the same authority as the District Representative, under his/her direction;
 - 3. Appeal grievances to Step 2 and Step 3 in the absence of the District Representative and in conjunction with the Executive Committeeman and/or Regional Representative;
 - 4. Assist in training of Area and Local Stewards;
 - 5. A person serving full time in this position cannot serve on their respective state board;
 - 6. Other duties as assigned by the National Association.

Section 6. Area Steward

- A. Area Stewards shall be responsible to the District Representative. Area Stewards shall be certified in no more than twenty (20) offices in a specific geographic area, as determined by the District Representative. Area Stewards are equal in authority to a Local Steward and have no authority in an office that currently has a Local Steward. The National Association shall appoint all Area Stewards and fund salaries, benefits, and expenses.

B. Duties

1. Represent carriers in offices assigned by the District Representative;
2. Handle all grievances as directed by the District Representative;
3. Process grievances through Step 1;
4. Appeal grievances to Step 2 and forward the original file to the District Representative;
5. Attend training sessions as required by the National Association.

Section 7. Local Stewards

A. Local Stewards shall be responsible to the District Representative and have no authority until certified.

B. Selection

1. Any Bargaining Unit Member, with the exception of Assistant Rural Carriers (ARCs, Designation Code 70-5), in a local office or a delivery unit may be elected Local Steward and shall serve until a successor is elected and certified or until he/she resigns. Where a local steward is in place, any member may call for an election in the month of July of every fourth year. An election may also be called for any time the position is vacant, or when two-thirds of the members submit a petition to the District Representative for approval.
2. Local steward elections require written notification to all members at least 15 days before the date of the election. Election shall require a majority of votes cast by members in a local office or a delivery unit. In the event of a tie vote, the District Representative, **after consulting with the assigned Executive Committeeman**, shall select a steward to serve in that office or delivery unit.

3. When more than one Local Steward has been elected in a delivery unit **having 50 or more rural craft employees**, a Chief Steward shall be elected **from those Local Stewards** by the members of that delivery unit. When an office is comprised of multiple delivery units, a Chief Steward shall be elected from among the current local stewards by all members of that office. A Chief Steward shall be selected by the District Representative in the event of a tie. **If there is only one elected Local Steward in the office, the District Representative may appoint that Local Steward as Chief Steward for the office. The Chief Steward shall represent the craft in matters that concern the entire office.** The Chief Steward for the office shall also serve as the Local Steward for delivery units where no Local Steward has been elected.

C. Duties

1. Assist any rural craft employee who feels aggrieved and accompany the grievant during any discussion with management, if the employee desires;
2. Meet with the Postmaster or designee as expeditiously as possible to jointly develop the facts in the grievance file and attempt to resolve the grievance when the Step 1 discussion has failed;
3. Appeal grievances to Step 2 and submit the original file to the District Representative;
4. Represent the rural carrier craft in the office or delivery unit;
5. Maintain certification by attending annual enhancement training and other training as required. Failure to do so shall result in decertification by the District Representative.

Section 8. Discipline. Any representative/steward may be disciplined for violation of the Constitution or policies set forth by the Association. The National Board, by a three-fourths vote, may suspend or expel a representative/steward from office. Charges may be filed on the following grounds:

- A. Neglect of duty or breach of the Constitution;
- B. Conduct detrimental to the welfare and interests of the membership of the Association;
- C. Conduct which hinders the due process of the grievance procedure;
- D. Instigating or engaging in acts on the side of management that violate the principles of the National Agreement or Constitution.

Section 9. Decertification

- A. A Regional/District/Assistant District Representative may be decertified by the National Association for the following reasons:
 - 1. Failure of Duty of Fair Representation;
 - 2. Failure to process grievances;
 - 3. Failure to attend training sessions;
 - 4. Failure to adhere to NRLCA rules and regulations.

- B. A Local/Area Steward may be decertified by the District Representative after consultation with the Executive Committeeman and/or Directors of Labor Relations/ Steward Operations for the following reasons:
 - 1. Failure of Duty of Fair Representation;
 - 2. Failure to process grievances;
 - 3. Failure to attend training sessions;
 - 4. Failure to adhere to NRLCA rules and regula-

tions.

Section 10. Representatives/Stewards Acting As Managers

- A. **Regional, District, and Assistant District Representatives.** Upon acceptance of any supervisory or managerial position with the Postal Service the Regional, District or Assistant District Representative shall immediately notify the National Executive Committeeman assigned to their area and shall be immediately decertified. On return to a craft position the former representative may not resume representative duties for a minimum period of one year.

- B. **Area and Local Stewards.** Upon acceptance of any supervisory or managerial position with the Postal Service all other stewards shall notify the District Representative and shall be immediately decertified. On return to the craft position the former steward may not resume steward duties for a minimum period of one year.

Section 11. Salaries. Salaries shall be paid biweekly and are full payment for services rendered. Salaries shall be adjusted to reflect the cost-of-living adjustments and general wage increases received by regular rural carrier craft employees per the National Agreement. Area Stewards shall be reimbursed for all lost annual and sick leave. No representative/steward shall be allowed compensation for services and/or expenses if the representative/steward is receiving compensation from any other source for such services and/or expenses.

Section 12. Expenses

- A. **Travel.** Regional, District, and Assistant District Representatives shall be paid actual travel and lodging expenses plus a \$50.00 meal allowance per day

while in travel status.

B. Review

1. Itemized expenses of Area/Local Stewards and Assistant District Representatives shall be reviewed and approved by the District Representative and finalized by the National Association.
2. Itemized expenses of Regional/District Representatives shall be reviewed and approved by the Executive Committeeman and finalized by the National Association.

Section 13. Benefits

- A. **Retirement and Insurance.** The Association shall pay only the USPS portion of contributions for representatives to continue in the Federal Retirement, Health, and Life Insurance Programs in which they were enrolled prior to their appointment.
- B. The National Association shall pay for any annual and sick leave days lost because of accumulation of leave without pay (LWOP) for all part-time Assistant District Representatives/Area Stewards while working for the National Association.
- C. **Annual Leave.** Full-time Representatives shall be granted twenty-six (26) days annual leave per year, which may be accumulated up to fifty-five (55) days. At the end of each fiscal year, all or a portion may be "cashed out" at their current rate. Within six (6) months of termination of service, a representative or representative's estate shall be paid for accumulated annual leave at the current rate. **NSS full-time employees are not required to use annual leave during the annual NRLCA Convention and will remain**

in a paid status.

- D. **Sick Leave.** Full-time Representatives shall earn thirteen (13) days sick leave per year. Unused sick leave shall be carried forward for future use. Within six (6) months of termination of service, a representative or representative's estate shall be paid for accumulated sick leave at the current rate.

Section 14. Association Property. Representatives/Stewards shall account for and deliver to their successors, or the National Board, all monies, books, papers, securities or other property of the Association at the end of their term of office or when requested by the National Association.

ARTICLE X

Appeals

Section 1. State

- A. A member aggrieved by any action of a state association or officer shall have the right to appeal to the State Board.
1. Appeals must be filed and mailed individually, in writing, and be filed with the State President via first class mail within 30 days of having knowledge of said action.
 2. Within 10 days of receipt of the appeal, the State President shall notify all members of the State Board and the assigned Executive Committeeman and shall request that the Charging Party provide a letter outlining the specific charges and any relief sought. This letter of specificity, along with complete documentation, must be returned via first class mail within 20 days of receipt of the President's request.
 3. Upon receipt of the letter of specificity, the State

President shall forward a copy to the Charged Party for response. The Charged Party shall have 20 days from receipt of said letter to respond in writing and provide documentation to the State President via first class mail.

4. The State Board shall review the Charging Party's letter of specificity, documentation, relief sought and the response of the Charged Party. The State Board is authorized, in consultation with the Executive Committeeman, to take the necessary action to resolve the issue within 30 days. Extension of this 30-day time limit, when necessary, shall not exceed 15 days. The Charging Party(s) and Charged Party(s) (hereafter referred to as the Party or Parties) shall be notified in writing of the decision of the State Board.

B. A Party not satisfied with this decision, or any other action of the State Board on said appeal, shall have the right to appeal to the National Board.

1. This appeal must be in writing and be filed with the President of the National Association via first class mail within 30 days of receipt of the State Board's decision.
2. Within 15 days of receipt of an appeal, the National Board shall notify the National Appeals Commission. The President shall notify the State President and the Parties that the appeal has been received and forwarded to the National Appeals Commission.
3. Within 30 days, the National Appeals Commission shall investigate each appeal and report its findings and recommendations in writing to the National Board. Upon receipt of the findings and recommendations of the Appeals Commission, the National President shall notify the Parties that the findings and rec-

ommendations are before the National Board. The National Board shall render a decision and notify the Parties in writing within a reasonable period of time.

- C. A Party not satisfied with the decision of the National Board shall have the right to appeal to the next Convention of the National Association.
 - 1. This appeal must be in writing and be filed with the National President via first class mail within 30 days of receipt of the National Board's decision. The appeal, if received more than 45 days prior to the National Convention, shall be scheduled for that Convention. If received within 45 days of the Convention the appeal may be held until the following National Convention.
 - 2. Within 15 days of receipt of said appeal, the President shall notify the Parties that the appeal has been received and shall be forwarded to a National Appeals Committee.
 - 3. The Appeals Committee shall complete an investigation and report its findings and recommendations in writing to the Parties and to the President of the state association at least 24 hours before the report is presented to the National Delegates.

Section 2. National

- A. A member aggrieved by any action of the National Association or Officer, representative or steward thereof shall have the right to appeal directly to the National Board.
 - 1. Appeals must be filed and mailed individually, in writing, and be filed with the National President via first class mail within 30 days of having knowledge of said action.
 - 2. Within 15 days of receipt of the appeal, the National Board shall retain the appeal

for investigation, forward the appeal to the National Appeals Commission or, if received within 90 days of the first business session of the National Convention, refer the appeal to the Appeals Committee. The President shall notify the Charging Party(s) of the appeal's receipt and disposition, and if necessary, request that the Charging Party provide a letter outlining the specific charge and any relief sought. The letter of specificity, along with complete documentation, must be returned via first class mail within 20 days of receipt of the National Board's request.

3. Upon receipt of the letter of specificity, the National President shall cause a copy to be forwarded to the Charged Party for response. The Charged Party shall have 20 days from receipt of said letter to respond in writing and provide documentation to the National President via first class mail.
4. Should the National Board retain the appeal, it shall investigate, render a decision and notify the Charging Party(s) and Charged Party(s) (hereafter referred to as the Party or Parties) in writing within a reasonable period of time.
5. Should the National Board forward the appeal to the National Appeals Commission, the commission shall complete an investigation and report its findings and recommendations in writing to the National Board within 30 days. Upon receipt, the National President shall **cause** the Party or Parties to be notified that the Commission's report is before the National Board. The National Board shall render a decision and notify the Party or Parties in writing within a reasonable period of time.
6. Should the National Board refer the appeal to

the Appeals Committee, the appeal shall be handled in accordance with the provisions that follow.

- B. A Party not satisfied with a decision rendered by the National Board shall have the right to appeal to the next National Convention.
 1. The appeal must be in writing and be filed with the National President via first class mail within 30 days of receipt of the National Board's decision. The appeal, if received more than 45 days prior to the National Convention, shall be scheduled for that Convention. If received within 45 days of the Convention the appeal may be held until the following National Convention.
 2. Within 15 days of receipt of the appeal, the President shall notify the Party(s) that the appeal has been received and shall be forwarded to a National Appeals Committee.
 3. The Appeals Committee shall complete an investigation and report its findings and recommendations in writing to the Parties at least 24 hours before thereport is presented to the National Delegates.

Section 3. Administration

At every level of appeal, members shall be afforded the rights of due process and the right to appeal an adverse decision to the next level. The National Board shall have full authority to intervene to protect the members of this Association. Correspondence shall be by certified mail, return receipt requested. Timeliness shall be determined by postmark. Costs of the state investigation and action shall be borne by the state association; costs of the National Appeals Commission and Appeals Committee shall be borne by the National Association. No legal proceeding may be initiated until the appeal procedures provided herein have been exhausted.

ARTICLE XI

National Agreements

Section 1. Presentation. National Agreements reached between the Association and the USPS shall be presented to Bargaining Unit Members in good standing via The National Rural Letter Carrier and in Ratification Meetings held nationwide. At least one Ratification Meeting shall be held within each state association.

Section 2. Ratification Vote. A ballot vote of the Bargaining Unit Members of the Association shall determine the ratification of the proposed National Agreement. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall mail a ballot by First Class mail to Bargaining Unit Members. The ballot shall clearly define a YES vote as "in favor of" ratification and a NO vote as "opposed to" ratification. The ballot shall also clearly indicate a deadline for receipt in the National Office, as determined by the National Board.

Section 3. Ratification Committee. A National Ratification Committee of nine Bargaining Unit Members shall count the ballots. The members shall be selected as follows: two members selected from each geographic area served by the four Executive Committeemen (one member who holds an elected State Board or a District Representative position and the other from the general membership) and a ninth member selected at large. No National Officer shall serve on the committee. The National President, with the approval of the National Board, shall make appointments to the National Ratification Committee, including the designation of a Chair.

Section 4. Ballot Tabulation. Ratification ballots shall be totaled by state, and the results posted on the NRLCA Website and reported in the next available issue of The National Rural Letter Carrier. The proposed National Agreement shall be considered rejected in the event of a tie.

ARTICLE XII

Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Association in cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution or any special rules of order the Association may adopt.

ARTICLE XIII

Amendment of Constitution

This Constitution may be amended at any National Convention by a two-thirds vote. Amendments shall take effect immediately, unless otherwise ordered by the Convention. The National Board shall have the authority to make interim amendments to the Constitution of the Association when necessary to conform to federal law. Any provision of this Constitution which conflicts with federal or state law, regulation or ordinance shall be inoperative as to those jurisdictions in which said federal or state law, regulation or ordinance is in force.

APPENDIX A

In compliance with Federal Labor Laws, all Local and/or District Units must have a Constitution. All sections in this Uniform Local Unit Constitution must be included. However, adoption of this Uniform Constitution by the Local or District Unit eliminates the need for any other Unit Constitution.

The Local and/or District Unit may make amendments to this Uniform Constitution, but no amendment shall be in conflict with the State Constitution or the NRLCA Constitution.

UNIFORM LOCAL AND/OR DISTRICT UNIT CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this Association shall be the _____, hereafter referred to as the Unit. This Association shall be a subordinate unit of the _____ (State) Rural Letter Carriers' Association (____RLCA) and the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA).

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of this Unit shall be as provided in Article II of the NRLCA Constitution.

ARTICLE III

Members

Eligibility for membership in this Unit shall be in compliance with Article III of the NRLCA Constitution and with the assignment of subordinate units by the (State)_____RLCA.

ARTICLE IV

Officers

Section 1. Officers. The elective officers of this Unit shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer (or a combined Secretary-Treasurer) and such other officers as the Unit deems necessary.

Section 2. Duties. The Unit Officers shall perform such duties as are prescribed in this Constitution, by the State Board or in the adopted parliamentary authority. No Officer of this Unit shall incur any indebtedness on its behalf or appropriate any money without authority from the Unit. Officers shall

account for and deliver to their successors or to the Unit all monies, books, papers, securities or other property of the Unit at the end of their term of office or when requested by the State Board.

- A. **President.** The President shall be responsible for the supervision of all activities of the Unit and shall enforce compliance with the NRLCA Constitution and the (state) _____ Constitution. The President shall preside at all meetings and shall be entitled to one vote on all matters to come before the Unit. The President shall sign papers or documents requiring the President's signature.
- B. **Vice President.** The Vice President shall serve in the absence of the President and perform other duties as prescribed by the President.
- C. **Secretary.** The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping the minutes, handling of finances, reports and correspondence relating thereto and shall establish an approved accounting and record keeping system. The Secretary shall make a report at each regular meeting of all monies received and expended, report on all official correspondence and shall file any necessary governmental reports. The Secretary shall perform other duties as prescribed by the President.
- D. **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall make a report at each meeting of all monies received and expended, shall make timely deposits of all monies into the Unit's accounts and pay all authorized bills.
- E. **Executive Board.** An Executive Board is optional with each Unit, but shall consist of all of the Unit Officers and not more than 6 additional members, if authorized. The Executive Board shall have authority to act for the Unit Membership between meetings.

Section 3. Election. Only members in good standing shall be eligible to nominate, vote or hold office in this Unit. Election of officers shall be by secret ballot and shall take place at the annual meeting. The Unit President shall make appointments when necessary to fill vacancies in elective positions until the next annual meeting.

Section 4. Convention Delegates. All delegates to the State Convention shall be elected by secret ballot.

ARTICLE V

Meetings

Section 1. Meetings. Meetings shall be held as determined by the Unit. Failure to hold a meeting at least once a year shall cause revocation of the Unit Charter. A permanent record of the minutes which accurately reflects the business transacted at each meeting shall be kept by the Secretary.

Section 2. Special Meeting. A special meeting may be called by the Unit President or at the request of 25% of the members. No business other than that for which the special meeting is called shall be transacted.

Section 3. Quorum. Those members in attendance shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the Unit's business at any meeting.

Section 4. Annual Meeting. Notice of the annual meeting for the purpose of election of Unit officers shall be given in writing to each member not less than 15 calendar days prior to the meeting date. The annual meeting must be held at least 40 days prior to the State Convention. The meeting notice shall be mailed to each member at the last known address.

Section 5. Agenda. A suggested order of business may include:

Call to Order

Reading and Approval of Minutes

Reading of Financial Report
Unfinished Business
New Business
Adjournment

ARTICLE VI

Dissolution

In the event of dissolution or revocation of the Unit's charter, all assets shall become the property of the State Association.

ARTICLE VII

Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Unit in cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution or any special rules of order the Unit may adopt.

ARTICLE VIII

Amendment

This Constitution may be amended at a Unit meeting by a two-thirds vote, provided that each member has been notified in writing at least 15 days prior that Constitutional changes will be considered. All amendments to this Constitution shall become effective upon approval of the (state) _____ Rural Letter Carriers' Association.