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# DPMC Constitution (revised 9/2019)

## CONSTITUTION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY

### PREAMBLE

Freedom, equity, security, peace and prosperity throughout the world; these are our high aims. To achieve these aims, we seek to promote and to preserve liberal democratic government everywhere — abroad, in America, in Wisconsin. To promote and to preserve liberal government, we seek to build and to develop a liberal Democratic Party.

A political party is a means to an end. Means shape ends. To be a force for democracy, a political party must be a democracy. Its members must have equal voice, one with another. Its leaders must be freely chosen by its members and must answer to them. Its program must arise from the free and full competition of ideas among its members.

In recognition of these plain truths, we adopt this Constitution. Through it we shall fashion and maintain a democratic party.

### ARTICLE I -NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Democratic Party of Milwaukee County (hereinafter, DPMC).

## ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

It shall be the primary purpose of the DPMC to develop the fullest possible party membership in the county, to hold regularly scheduled meetings, to encourage Democratic candidates for elective office, to form and maintain an effective campaign organization, to make recommendations for the State Party platform, and to promote the general interests of the Democratic Party.

## ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Any resident of Milwaukee County, at least 14 years of age, who subscribes to the progressive principles of the Democratic Party is eligible for voting membership and shall become a member upon payment of dues and receipt of such dues by the Democratic Party of Wisconsin (hereinafter, DPW).

## ARTICLE IV - ORGANIZATION

Section 1 - The elected officers of this organization shall be: the County Chair; the Vice Chair; the Recording Secretary; the Corresponding Secretary; the Membership Secretary; and the Treasurer. Such officers to be elected for a two-year term at the November meeting held in odd number years. The Corresponding Secretary shall give notice to all members of the DPMC and to the DPW at least ten days prior to the election meeting. The majority of members voting shall be sufficient to elect. The officers elected shall assume office on January 1 of the year following their election. Only those people meeting the definition of member under Article III will be permitted to vote.

Section 2 - In the event the office of County Chair becomes vacant prior to the expiration of the term, the Vice Chair shall assume the duties of the County Chair until such time as a special election, called by the Corresponding Secretary, is held to fill the vacancy. Such special election shall be held within 45 days after the vacancy occurs. Notice shall be given to all DPMC members and to the DPW at least ten days prior to the special election. The officers elected shall assume office at the first meeting subsequent to their election and shall hold office until their successors are elected. In the event of a vacancy in any position on the Executive Board ordinarily filled by election, except that of County Chair, the Executive Board shall elect a successor to serve until the vacancy is permanently filled by special election as provided in Section 1 of this Article. In the case of an inability to perform the duties due to mental or health issues, the Chair shall be able to appoint, with the confirmation of the Administrative Committee, an acting officer until the person in said position returns or the office is vacated.

Section 3 - Where not otherwise provided for, the County Chair, in accordance with the provisions of Article VI, Section 4 shall appoint a chair of all standing committees at or before the first regular meeting of the newly elected Executive Board. The term of office of standing committee chairs shall coincide with the term of the county chair and they shall serve at the Chair's pleasure with Executive Board approval.

Section 4 - The duties of the officers shall be those listed below and other such duties as may be imposed upon them by this constitution or the acts of the Executive Board which are not in conflict with the provisions of this constitution.

Section 5 - The County Chair shall preside at meetings of the Executive Board and of the DPMC. He/she shall appoint all committees with the approval of the Executive Board.

Section 6 - The Vice Chair shall preside at meetings in the absence of the Chair. In the event of a vacancy in the position of Chair, the Vice Chair shall serve as County Chair temporarily until the position is filled in accordance with the provisions of Section 2.

Section 7 - The Recording Secretary shall be responsible for keeping a true and accurate record of all proceedings of the Executive Board and of the DPMC.

Section 8 - The Corresponding Secretary shall be responsible for issuing meeting notices, maintaining the correspondence of the DPMC, and shall chair the Communications committee.

Section 9 - The Membership Secretary shall be responsible for keeping an accurate record of all paid memberships and for providing lists to DPMC subunits at their request and shall chair the Membership Committee.

Section 10 - The Treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds of this organization and shall expend these funds only in accordance with the directives of the Executive Board. He/she shall make financial reports in writing at each Executive Board and DPMC meeting. He/she shall be responsible for preparing such financial statements as are required by law and for forwarding them to the proper authorities. His/her financial records shall be audited as determined by the Executive Board.

Section 11 - The County Chair shall appoint a parliamentarian.

## **ARTICLE V – EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Section 1 - The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers as identified in Article IV, any member of the Democratic National Committee living in Milwaukee County, and two at-large members appointed by the Chair with the approval of the Administrative Council.

Section 2 - The Executive Board shall establish and implement all programs and operating procedures and policies of this organization; approve or reject by a majority vote all appointments made by the county chair; appoint standing committee chairs when the County Chair does not act within a reasonable period of time; and shall make recommendations on contributions to partisan and nonpartisan candidates. Any responsibility given to the Executive Board herein may be exercised by the Party at any general membership meeting.

Section 3 - The Executive Board shall meet at least once every three months. Special meetings of the Party and of the Executive Board may be called by the County Chair or by either body while in session.

Section 4 - Upon written request to the corresponding secretary by 25% of the members of the Executive Board indicating the reason for a meeting, the corresponding secretary shall call a special meeting and shall send out notice of such meeting within three days after receipt of the request.

Section 5 - Notice of all special meetings of the Executive Board must be given at least two days and not more than fourteen days prior to the date of the special meeting.

Section 6 - Quorum for conducting business for the Executive Board shall be 50% of its members.

## **ARTICLE VI – ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL**

Section 1 – The Administrative Council shall be compromised by the elected officers as identified in Article IV, the regional chairs, caucus chairs, the immediate past County Chair, who shall only serve for one term, all standing committee chairs, any member of the State Administrative Committee residing in Milwaukee County, a representative each chapter of College Democrats in Milwaukee County, and up to five (5) members at large appointed by the County Chair and approved by the Executive Board to achieve gender and ethnic balance on the Administrative Council.

Section 2 - The Administrative Council shall assist the Executive Board in the establishment and implementation all programs relating to the County Party; approve the annual operating budget; approve the annual strategic operating plan; and approve or amend the by-laws of the organization.

Section 3 - The Administrative Council shall meet at least four times a year. Special meetings of the Administrative Council may be called by the County Chair or by either body while in session.

Section 4 - Upon written request to the corresponding secretary by 25% of the members of the Administrative Council indicating the reason for a meeting, the corresponding secretary shall call a special meeting and shall send out notice of such meeting within three days after receipt of the

Section 5 - Notice of all special meetings of the Administrative Council must be given at least five days and not more than fourteen days prior to the date of the special meeting.

Section 6 - Quorum for conducting business for the Administrative Council shall be 25% of its members. Notice must be given by electronic mail to all members of the Council.

## ARTICLE VII – DUES AND FINANCE

Section 1 – Membership dues shall be determined by the Democratic Party of Wisconsin

Section 2 – Dues will be sent to the DPW, who will return the DPMC portion.

Section 3 – Funds for the DPMC may be solicited or earned from sources other than membership dues.

Section 4 - The Chair and the Treasurer shall have access to all financial instruments.

Section 5 - The Chair and Treasurer in mutual coordination, maintain an ability to authorize spending not to exceed \$500 without approval of the Executive Board. If the two cannot agree then the decision shall go before the Executive Board in regular order.

## ARTICLE VIII – MEETINGS

Section 1 - The most recently revised “Roberts Rules of Order” shall be the parliamentary authority for all meetings.

Section 2 - The DPMC shall establish a regular meeting date unless otherwise ordered by the Executive Board. Notice for all meetings will be sent at least (7) days in advance of the meeting. Notices shall be sent, at minimum, through email.

Section 3 - If three (3) months pass without a meeting, twenty percent (20%) of the general membership may petition the Democratic Party of Wisconsin State Chairperson who shall call a meeting of the DPMC giving 10 days notice to DPMC members.

Section 4 - Special meetings may be called by the County Chair or the Executive Board.

Section 5 – The DPMC encourages respectful debate and exchange of ideas. To this end, proper decorum shall be maintained by all DPMC sponsored meeting or event attendees. Prohibited behavior includes, but is not limited to: making personal attacks, name calling, advocating unethical or illegal activities, interrupting another speaker, speaking out of

order, or otherwise engaging in behavior disruptive to respectful debate and exchange of ideas. Any attendee violating this rule will receive one warning. Continued violation of this rule will result in the offender being ejected from the meeting or event at the determination of the County Chair or the Vice Chair. In the absence of either the County Chair or Vice Chair, the determination may be made by any three (3) Executive Board members present.

Section 6 – A quorum for conducting business for general Party meetings shall be 5% of all Party members.

Section 7 – The Executive Board and the Administrative Council may convene into closed session in order to discuss issues of personnel, finance, political strategy.

## ARTICLE IX – ENDORSEMENT

Section 1 - The DPMC shall not endorse any candidate for elective office in a partisan primary election.

Section 2 - The Executive Board may apply to the DPW Administrative Committee for an exception to Section 1.

Section 3 – The DPMC may, if it desires, endorse candidates in non-partisan races. Endorsements shall follow this timeline:

In December of the year preceding a non-partisan election, the Elections Committee shall develop a questionnaire for candidates and submit it for review by the Executive Board by December 31.

The questionnaire shall be distributed to all candidates who are interested in seeking the endorsement of the DPMC. The Election Committee, in consultation with the Executive Board, shall determine a deadline for questionnaires to be submitted. The Election Committee shall review the questionnaires and make recommendations to the Administrative Council on which candidates to invite for an interview in January or February.

The Administrative Council of the DPMC shall be responsible for interviewing candidates and preparing recommendations for a vote of the full membership in the February or March meeting. An endorsement requires a majority vote of the DPMC membership in its regularly scheduled meeting.

If a special non-partisan election is scheduled, the Executive Board may determine a different schedule for endorsements in that specific race.

Section 4 - Should a member of the Administrative Council or Election Committee be running for office and seeking an endorsement or contribution, they shall recuse themselves from any decision-making in this process.

Section 5 – Dual endorsements in non-partisan races are allowed.

## ARTICLE X – COMMITTEES

Section 1 - The County Chair may appoint special committees with executive board approval.

Section 2 – Committees shall be responsible for developing programs in their area of operation with the approval of the Executive Board and for submitting reports to the Executive Board and the Party.

Section 3 -The Executive Board shall approve or reject by a majority vote all appointments made by the County Chair. It shall have the authority to appoint when the County Chair does not act within a reasonable period of time. Committees shall consist no less than 3 and no more than 9 voting members, all appointed by the Chair and approved by the Executive Board. Additional individuals may attend and participate in committee discussions as non-voting participants.

Section 4 – The Standing Committees shall be:

1. **Special Events** – responsible for developing fundraising projects and events to advance the Party
2. **Membership** – responsible for developing and implementing a plan for membership recruitment and expansion that reflects the community.
3. **Elections** – responsible for working with partner organizations in recruiting candidates, working with Democratic candidates for partisan or non-partisan electoral offices, and for the development of campaign volunteers.
4. **Issues** – responsible for developing vehicles to give voice to members' views on issues, through events; speakers; on- and off-line activism; and issue discussion. In addition, the committee will work with the state party Platform and Resolutions Committee through development and consideration of platform items and resolutions. The members of the state party Platform and Resolutions Committee from Milwaukee County will serve ex-officio on this committee.
5. **Statutory** – responsible for nominating members to serve as election officials (poll workers) to insure fair and open elections.
6. **Constitution** – responsible for considering any amendments to the constitution and bylaws, as well as ensuring the party follows proper rules. In addition, responsible for the election rules of party officers in the County.
7. **Finance** – responsible for creating and presenting an annual budget for consideration by the Administrative Council and doing yearly audits of the finances.

8. **Volunteers** – responsible for developing protocols and strategies to solicit and engage volunteers in the work of the County Party.

## ARTICLE XI - REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1 – The County shall be subdivided into 5 geographic regions whose primary work is for the purposes of electing regional officers, selecting delegates to the Congressional District/State Party Conventions, providing for dialogue and discussion of issues relevant to the region, and to promulgate resolutions to the Party in preparation for the Congressional District conventions. The regions are based upon the following zip codes and municipalities:

Region 1 (West Central) –Those parts of the City of Milwaukee in 53213, 53222, 53224, 53225, 53226 and the entire City of Wauwatosa;

Region 2 (Milwaukee Central)–53203, 53205, 53206, 53208, 53210, 53216, 53218, 53233;

Region 3 (North East) – 53202, 53209, 53211, 53212, 53217, 53223;

Region 4 (South East) – 53110, 53154, 53172, 53204, 53207, 53215, 53235, and the part of the City of Milwaukee in 53221;

Region 5 (South West) – 53129, 53130, 53132, 53214, 53219, 53220, 53227, 53228, the part of the City of Greenfield in 53221 and the entire Village of West Milwaukee.

Section 2 – Each geographic region shall hold an annual meeting between January 1 and February 15, prior to the annual Congressional District Convention. The region chair shall set the time and place of the Regional Annual Meeting. Members of the region shall be given at least 30 days notice. The regional annual meeting shall be held within the boundaries of the region. Voting privileges are open to any current paid member of the region. Immediately following the Regional Annual Meeting a list of delegates selected shall be sent to the DPMC Membership Secretary .

Section 3 – Unless the region’s constitution shall provide for additional members, the officers of the regional organization shall be the regional chairperson, the regional vice chair, the regional secretary/treasurer, and the chair of any caucuses within the region. The regional executive committee shall meet at least every three months to consider and act upon matters of concern to the region. The time and place for such meetings are to be determined by the chairperson. At least ten days notice of every meeting shall be given by the chairperson to members of the regional executive committee.



Section 4 - In the event of a vacancy in the office of regional chairperson, the vice-chairperson shall serve as his/her successor until the next regional annual meeting. In the event the vice-chairperson declines to accept the office of regional chairperson within ten days after notification by the county chairperson, the regional executive committee shall elect a successor at a meeting called by the county chairperson. In the event of a vacancy in any regional officer other than regional chairperson, the regional executive committee shall elect a successor to serve until the next annual meeting.

Section 5 - A region, in its constitution, may provide for funding for operating expenses and campaign expenses. Where required by election law, the secretary/treasurer shall file the appropriate reports.

## ARTICLE XII - STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1 - Wisconsin Election and Campaign Laws Section 154. 8. 17(5)(b) make the DPMC responsible for selecting committeemen and women (the County Statutory Committee) who in turn are responsible for recruiting potential poll inspectors.

1. Committeemen and women shall be elected at a combined meeting of the County Statutory Committee and members in good standing of the County Party. This meeting is to be held no sooner than 15 days after the September primary and no later than April 1 of the following year. Each member of the Party is entitled to one vote.
2. A meeting of the committee people shall be called within 30 days of the above election at which time the committee members shall elect their own chair.
3. The Statutory Committee shall appoint election inspectors in compliance with state statute.

Section 2 - County Elections Commission - On or before June 1 each year following a presidential election the Milwaukee County Party shall submit three names to the County Executive for consideration for appointment to the County Elections Commission. If the Democratic candidate for governor prevailed in the November election in Milwaukee County, the County Executive shall choose to appoint two of the three individuals. If the Republican candidate for governor prevailed, one individual will be appointed. The three recommendations shall be elected by the membership of the Party at its May meeting.

Section 3 - City Elections Commission - On or before June 1 each year following a presidential election the Milwaukee County Party shall submit three names to the Mayor of Milwaukee for consideration for appointment to the City Elections Commission. If the Democratic candidate for governor prevailed in the November election in the City of

Milwaukee, the Mayor shall choose to appoint two of the three individuals. If the Republican candidate for president prevailed, one individual will be appointed. The three recommendations shall be elected by the membership of the Party at its May meeting.

## ARTICLE XIII - EXPULSION

Any DPMC member may file a written challenge with the Executive Board alleging that a DPMC member has disavowed this Constitution or the principles of the DPMC. Upon submission of the challenge, the challenger has 60 days in which to collect signatures totaling 10% of the DPMC membership. Signatures must be from members in good standing at the time the challenge is submitted to the Executive Board. If the challenge petition receives the required number of signatures, the Executive Board shall determine if the challenge has merit by a majority vote. If the challenge has merit, the Executive Board shall give reasonable notice to the person charged and hold a hearing at which 50% of the Executive Board must be present. After hearing the evidence, the Executive Board members present shall vote to recommend either: expulsion, censure, or rejection of the charges. If the Executive Board recommends expulsion or censure, the findings will be forwarded to the DPW Administrative Committee for final determination.

## ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS

Section 1 - The constitution may be amended in the following manner:

1. An amendment shall be introduced in writing to the Executive Board by any member or any subdivision of this organization.
2. The Executive Board shall discuss the proposed amendment/s and make a recommendation to the Party.
3. The proposed amendment(s) shall be read at the first DPMC meeting following the Executive Board meeting. No debate shall take place at this time. The amendment will be placed on the agenda for the next DPMC meeting for a second reading and action. All amendments shall require a two-thirds vote of all eligible members present and voting for approval. As soon as the amendment(s) have been approved, it shall be adopted, subject to approval by the State Administrative Committee.
4. Re-introduction of an amendment which has failed to receive the necessary 2/3 vote may occur after 6 months have passed since the amendment was initially introduced.

## ARTICLE XV - CONSTITUTION PRIORITY

In the event of a conflict between the DPW Constitution and this constitution, the DPW Constitution shall take precedence.

# ARTICLE XVI - EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon adoption, this constitution shall become effective upon approval by the State Administrative Committee.

**-END-**

Revised March 1974, November 1982, November 1987, October 2002, September 2005, September 2019

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## Democratic Party of Milwaukee County

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