

Bylaws

of the

Washington Ethical Society

As amended by the Board of Trustees through May 15, 2025

I. Discernment and Strategic Planning

A. **Statement of Purpose** (SOP) — see also the *WES Constitution*.¹

1. In the spring of 2011 and every five years thereafter, the Board of Trustees (hereafter, the Board) and Senior Leader provide input to the Membership as it prepares to vote on whether or not to revise the SOP.
2. If the motion passes, within 45 days the Board appoints four members to a *Statement of Purpose* Task Force; nominees are brought forward by the Lay Leadership Development Committee (LLDC).
3. Within 45 days thereafter, the Board approves an SOP revision process; a proposal is brought forward by the *Statement of Purpose* Task Force.

B. **Ends**: the Society meets its constitutional obligations regarding strategic planning through the establishment — and systematic review every five years — of a set of congregational ends.

1. Definition: the Society's Ends statements answer the following questions: What difference do we want to make in the world? For whom? At what cost?
2. Review and renewal of the Ends
 - a. The Board, Senior Leader, and other additional lay leaders review the Society's Ends statements annually at the Mid-year Planning Retreat.
 - b. The review process ensures that the Ends statements are still relevant, that they still inspire us, and they are still reflected in the Society's budget.
 - c. The above group pursues a more comprehensive review with the input of the entire Membership every five years beginning in 2013–2014.
 - d. **Annual Planning Process**

¹ References in the *WES Constitution* are noted as such; all other references (without document designation) are to *WES Bylaws*.

3. Each year begins with an Inaugural Retreat preceding the Board installation. A multi-day or overnight event may be necessary to permit the completion of needed tasks.
 - a. The President coordinates the retreat planning effort and presides. (The Board toolbox contains a sample agenda.)
 - b. The tasks of the Inaugural Retreat include the following:
 - (1) Integration of newly elected Trustees and initial development of group rapport
 - (2) Assurance of the continuity of active Board business
 - (3) Establishment of a calendar of tasks to be completed throughout the year
 - (4) Election of officers
 - (a) The President facilitates, employing a method that permits discussion and consent on the totality of the role assignments; see the section on Board elections [see section III.D.2.b.] for a process crafted for this purpose.
 - (b) The Senior Leader does not participate, but may facilitate or observe if desired.
4. The Board organizes an annual Mid-year Planning Retreat to ensure that WES activities and expenditures align with a near-term strategic vision.
 - a. *Participants*: Trustees, Leaders, other staff, and program leaders
 - b. *Tasks*
 - (1) Ends work
 - (a) Discussion and revision (as needed)²
 - (b) Review of recent expenditure trends in light of the Ends
 - (c) Establishment of 1–3 year priorities to guide budgeting
 - (2) Financial planning
 - (a) Near term: reflects core revenues and expenses unlikely to change, plus aspirational fundraising and programs
 - (b) Long range: includes both an annual review of the existing plan plus a more in-depth effort every three years,³ and addresses trends in operating budgets, capital budgets, and “what if” scenarios

II. Membership

A. Membership

1. The WES Senior Leader approves new members and notifies the Board.

² As the Ends are achieved, or the focus of the Society changes, the Ends themselves must evolve. The group (the Board, Senior Leader, and other lay leaders) explores what new insights have been gained and whether the Ends still inspire the Society to move forward. The group also verifies that the Society’s budgeting reflects the Ends.

³ Starting 2016

2. The Senior Leader offers a path-to-membership process for individuals who wish to join WES; the process — run by the Senior Leader or designees — includes a meeting with the Senior Leader, an orientation to the Society and its philosophical traditions, and a financial contribution.
3. The Senior Leader encourages members to contribute their time and talents to the Society's mission.
4. Members make an annual financial contribution, though the Senior Leader may approve a one-year waiver in cases of severe financial hardship, with notification to the Board.
5. Non-contributing members
 - a. Members who have not contributed in the previous 18 months are notified in writing of a pending re-designation from Member to Friend of the Society.
 - b. Members who have not contributed in the previous 24 months are similarly notified that they have been re-designated as a Friend of the Society.
 - c. The Leaders provide confidential quarterly reports to the Board listing both pending and actual re-designations.
6. The Senior Leader manages the resignations of current members and notifies the Board. The Senior Leader also provides a brief report to the Board (in Executive Session to respect resigning members' privacy) on reasons for the resignations.

B. Committees of the Membership

1. Lay Leadership Development Committee (LLDC) — see the *WES Constitution* and also Appendix C.
2. Community Relations Committee (CRC) — consistent with the *WES Constitution*.
 - a. Four WES members serve on the CRC and are elected by the Board in pairs to staggered two-year terms.
 - b. Each January Leader proposes a pool of four candidates to the Board to replace the two CRC members ending their two-year terms. The Board then votes on and appoints two of the candidates, who start their terms in February.
3. Endowment Committee — see the *WES Constitution*.
 - a. Endowment Committee roles: the committee annually elects one of its members to serve as chair and elects members to other roles as needed.
 - b. Meetings: at least twice per year. A quorum consists of three members and decisions are made in the same manner as the Board. Meeting minutes are taken and retained in a central repository.
 - c. Endowment Committee member liability
 - (1) Committee members are not liable for any losses that may be incurred upon the investments of the assets of the Vision Fund as long as the member acts in good faith and with ordinary prudence.
 - (2) Members are not liable for the acts or omissions of other members.

- (3) Members do not engage in any self-dealing or transactions with the Fund in which they have direct or indirect financial interest. They refrain from any conduct in which their personal interests conflict with the interest of the Fund.
- d. Vision Fund — see “Care for Resources” [section IV.B.4.c.].

C. Routine Meetings of the Membership

1. Topics

- a. *Required business items* appear on meeting agendas as stipulated in the *WES Constitution* and/or these Bylaws:
 - (1) Spring meeting business items include elections of Trustees and approval of an operating budget for the following fiscal year. The Membership may also consider whether or not to revise the Statement of Purpose or provide input on a revision of the Society’s Ends statements.
 - (2) Fall meeting business items include the election of an at-large member of the LLDC — see the *WES Constitution*.
 - (3) Both meetings feature presentations by the Senior Leader and the Board describing significant developments, efforts, and accomplishments since the prior membership meeting.
- b. *Optional business items* may include amendments to the *WES Constitution*, ethical action resolutions/initiatives, and significant decisions deemed appropriate for a vote of the entire Membership. Time-sensitive matters or topics that cannot be fully explored within the confines of a multi-topic meeting — including the proposed appointment or dismissal of the Senior Leader (see the *WES Constitution*) — are taken up at special meetings of the Membership [see section II.D.].

2. Planning — see also the *WES Constitution* and Appendix C.

- a. Any member may propose an optional business item. Five weeks prior to the meeting, the moderator sends out a reminder. Proposals are due to the moderator 21 days prior to the meeting.
- b. Three weeks prior to each meeting, the moderator meets with the Senior Leader and the Board President to plan the meeting (attending in particular to any required business items) and recruit volunteers for the various roles.⁴
- c. The moderator prepares a draft agenda with the elements below and distributes it to the Membership via email (or via postal mail upon request).
 - (1) Essential elements
 - (a) Collection of proxy authorizations (if any; see Appendix A) and issuance of proxy cards
 - (b) Confirmation of a quorum
 - (c) Approval of the agenda

⁴ See also the table of meeting tasks in the *WES Governance Reference Handbook*.

- (d) Elections of meeting parliamentarian and recorder
- (e) Approval of the minutes of the last membership meeting
- (f) Reports from the Board and Senior Leader (spring and fall meetings); reports from Committees of the Membership (spring meeting only)

(2) As-needed elements

- (a) Reports from any special/ad hoc Committees or Task Forces of the Membership
- (b) Unfinished business
- (c) New business — required
- (d) New business — optional

d. Authorization of proxies

- (1) Any Member (a “principal”) wishing to authorize another Member (their proxy agent) to vote on their behalf at a meeting — and who has not authorized a proxy in the preceding 10 months — may do so by completing the top half of a proxy authorization form (Appendix A) and giving the entire form to their proxy agent.
 - (2) The specified proxy agent completes the bottom half of the form and brings the entire form (top and bottom) with them to the meeting. At the start of the meeting, the moderator (or the designee) collects the form for each principal and issues their proxy agent a proxy card to use when voting.
 - (3) The Senior Leader, Trustees, and moderator are ineligible to serve as proxy agents.
 - (4) A proxy agent may hold a proxy for no more than one principal.
 - (5) A proxy is automatically revoked when the Member is present at the meeting. A principal may revoke their proxy by written dated notification to the moderator and the proxy agent prior to the start of the meeting.
3. Conduct: the moderator is authorized to employ various facilitation techniques in pursuit of meeting goals, so long as these approaches fulfill the constitutional requirement that decisions be made “employing a democratic process that gives due consideration to all views present.”
4. Recording: WES membership meetings will be audio and/or video recorded and the recordings will be made available via the members-only section of the WES website. Reminders about recording will be provided in meeting agendas and at the beginning of meetings.

D. Special Meetings of the Membership

- 1. Topic: limited to the purpose for which it was called
- 2. Planning — see also the WES *Constitution* and Appendix C.
 - a. Prior to each meeting, the moderator meets with the Senior Leader and the Board President to plan the meeting.

The moderator prepares a draft agenda containing the following elements:

- (1) Confirmation of a quorum
 - (2) Approval of an agenda
 - (3) Elections of meeting parliamentarian and recorder
 - (4) Designated topic
- b. Proxy voting is not permitted.
3. **Conduct:** aside from the limitations in subsections 1. and 2.c. here, routine membership meeting guidelines apply.

III. Board of Trustees

A. **Responsibilities** — see also the WES *Constitution*, section III.B.

1. The Board helps maintain Ends statements built upon the foundation of the WES Statement of Purpose, participates in stewardship efforts, executes financial oversight, and monitors/evaluates the Society's leadership, including itself. Trustees maintain a general understanding of the many program areas through which the Society pursues its mission. The Board conducts member outreach and solicits member input through forums, surveys, etc., at least three times per year. Trustees participate in the life of the WES community.
2. The Board endorses the annual operating budget prior to its presentation at the spring membership meeting. In the event that both the Senior Leader and the Board cannot consent to a mutually agreeable budget, the Senior Leader and Board (represented by the Treasurer) each present their version of the budget to the Membership for a decision.
3. The Board primarily governs through the creation, maintenance, and monitoring of compliance with written policies.
 - a. When invited to make a decision about a particular occurrence of an issue, the Board considers the issue from a policy perspective. If an issue is already addressed by policy, the Board does not take up the issue unless there is a request to revise the policy or to clarify its interpretation. If there is no applicable policy, the Board discerns whether it would be helpful or excessive to create a policy to address the general issue.
 - b. The Board is judicious around policy creation. Policies are clear, with a balance of conciseness and completeness. Clear distinctions are maintained between policies owned by the Board and policies owned by others.
4. When a Leader/Senior Leader leaves, it is a major event in the life of the community. The community will need to come to terms with the departure and then make an assessment of the kind of leadership that it wants, going forward. This is an intentional process which takes significant time and resources to hire the next settled Leader. While in rare and exceptional circumstances, a settled Leader may be hired directly, it is not normally in the best interest of the community to proceed immediately with a search for a long-term replacement.

- a. As the governing body in WES, the Board is responsible for hiring an Interim Leader to guide the community through the transition period. The Board will collect community feedback on needs for the interim period and may also use resources offered by the American Ethical Union (AEU) and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) as appropriate, to recruit and hire an Interim Leader.
 - b. The Interim Leader will be appointed on a salary and terms finalized by the Board for a transition period, preferably for one to two years.
5. Every Trustee's voice matters. To this end, the Board refrains from majority voting and instead employs dynamic governance, also known as sociocracy.⁵ Trustees respect the legitimacy of the Board's decisions; the President typically serves as Board spokesperson.
6. The Board takes responsibility for its own learning through shared study and spiritual practice. Trustees arrive for Board meetings on time and prepared. The Board initiates an intervention with any Trustee who misses three consecutive meetings or a total of five meetings in a given year.⁶ Continued absences are grounds for removal.

B. Board of Trustees Personal ARAOMC Commitment Policy

WES acknowledges the existence and impact of systemic racism, white supremacy, and oppression; the lingering effects of bias and systemic injustice; and the need to identify and eradicate these where possible. WES has committed to becoming an increasingly anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural (ARAOMC) and inclusive community. This commitment requires dedicated staff and volunteer time and community resources to address challenges and make progress.

WES is a historically white and white-led congregation, and the dominant culture continues to be white, heterosexual, and cisgender. Entrenched systems of privilege, especially whiteness, affect the way we make decisions, form views, and carry out the processes and mission of WES. As such, it is critical that all members of the Board of Trustees—the seven community leaders charged with policy development, and financial and Senior Leadership oversight—personally commit to working towards the WES ARAOMC goals. This commitment includes:

- a. for white or non-black, indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) Trustees, attending at least one anti-racist training with a focus on individual learning (e.g., Jubilee Training, Beloved Conversations) prior to the start of their Board service, or no later than two months into their term⁷;
- b. actively engaging in the annual Board ARAOMC training;
- c. constantly assessing and working to eliminate individual and group biases; and

⁵ Drawn from the work of John Buck, Sharon Villines, and others; see <http://www.governancealive.com>.

⁶ This standard is predicated on a 20-meeting Board year. If the Board shifts to fewer meetings, this standard should be adapted accordingly.

⁷ This requirement will be extended to four months for the first year of policy enactment (2020-2021).

- d. modeling ARAOMC behavior in our community, including noticing and addressing microaggressions and macroaggressions within board interactions and the community.

C. Trustee Orientation and Training

1. Potential nominees for Trustees are encouraged to attend one or more Board meetings; the LLDC offers them an overview of Board business and a list of Trustee roles and expectations.
2. Newly elected Trustees are encouraged to attend the final Board meeting of the year. They also receive from the Governance Committee a more detailed orientation prior to the Inaugural Retreat in the following areas:
 - a. Copies of the WES *Constitution*, these Bylaws, the most recent Ends Monitoring Report, and other active documents
 - b. Orientation/training in governance, dynamic governance, facilitation, etc.
 - c. Summaries of active business items, with the contribution of the Leaders
 - d. Enrollment in the WES Board listserv

D. Trustee Roles

1. The President leads the Board as a first among equals in fulfilling its purpose. The President...
 - a. reviews draft meeting agendas;
 - b. represents the Board within WES;
 - c. in partnership with the WES Leaders, represents WES to external individuals and organizations; and
 - d. facilitates the transition between one Board year and the next:⁸
 - (1) chairs the Board's Inaugural Retreat
 - (2) ensures that responsibilities of other Board roles are fulfilled during the initial post-election period
 - (3) ensures the election of Trustees to the other Board roles within six weeks of the Board installation
2. The Vice President manages agenda materials and substitutes for the president if needed. The Vice President...
 - a. maintains the Board's calendar of tasks;
 - b. collects materials then prepares and distributes draft meeting agendas; and

⁸ This is possible because — prior to the Board election — the Board elects a Trustee to serve as the following year's President. See the role of President-Elect.

- c. with the consent of the Board, substitutes for the President when the President is unavailable.
- 3. The Information Officer ensures the integrity of Board records. The Information Officer...
 - a. ensures that adequate meeting minutes are taken and subsequently approved; and
 - b. ensures that all official Board records (Bylaws and other Board policies, meeting agendas/minutes, and supporting documentation) are collated and in a timely manner placed in a centralized repository where they will be generally available.
- 4. The Treasurer leads the Board's finance-related fiduciary and oversight duties. The Treasurer chairs the Board's Financial Oversight Committee [see section III.E.1.b.], leads the Board's deliberations on financial matters, and works with the Senior Leader to produce source materials for annual long-term financial planning sessions at the Mid-year Planning Retreat [see section I.C.2.b.(2)].
- 5. The Facilitator manages the flow of business and decision-making at Board meetings, employing dynamic governance. The facilitator also acts as a representative to the Governance Committee [see section III.E.1.a.].
- 6. The Chair of the Governance Committee and Representative to the Financial Oversight Committee attends all meetings of both committees and participates in the activities of both.
- 7. The Representative to the Lay Leadership Committee (LLDC) and Governance Committee acts as a conduit between the LLDC and the Board of Trustees, attending the meetings of both; in addition, this Trustee serves on the Governance Committee, attending the meetings and participating in the activities of that committee as well.
- 8. The President-Elect is elected by the Board two months prior to the Society's annual Board elections. The President-Elect...
 - a. chairs the planning Task Force for the Board's Inaugural Retreat, and
 - b. assumes (or retains) the role of Board President upon commencement of the new Board year, with a term extending to the next such election.
 - c. If the Trustee chosen as President-Elect is facing re-election to the Board and loses, the new Board elects one of its continuing members to preside over the Retreat and to temporarily fulfill other presidential responsibilities until internal Board elections are held.⁹
- 9. The Board may establish and fill other roles as needed, with a term concluding not later than the conclusion of the current Board year.
- 10. The Board (or any Trustee, with the consent of the Board) may temporarily delegate all or a portion of a role from one Trustee to another. The Board may call new elections for one or more Board roles during the course of the year.

E. Board Meetings

⁹ This scenario is unlikely because it is anticipated that a President-Elect will advertise this fact in election materials and will typically win a seat on the new Board.

1. Decision-making employs dynamic governance.¹⁰

- a. *Proposal presentation*: a proposal is presented, followed by clarifying questions.
- b. *Quick-reaction round*: the Facilitator solicits other Trustees' initial reactions; if the initial reaction indicates a need for further efforts, these are pursued.
- c. *Consent round*: Trustees are asked in turn if they have any paramount objections to — or minor “quibbles” with — the proposal. If so, these are addressed. If not the proposal carries.

2. Elections

- a. Simple elections — e.g., the election of the President-Elect — are conducted¹¹ according to the typical dynamic-governance election process:
 - (1) Role description: the Facilitator states its responsibilities, qualifications, etc.
 - (2) Nomination round:¹² Trustees submit slips of paper on which they write, “I, [name], nominate [candidate].”
 - (3) “Say why” round: the Facilitator invites each Trustee in turn to share the reasons for their nomination.
 - (4) Change round: the Facilitator gives each Trustee in turn the option to change their nomination in light of what has been said.
 - (5) Open discussion (optional, and seldom used in most organizations using dynamic governance)
 - (6) Proposal: the Facilitator proposes the candidate for whom the strongest case has been made (not necessarily reflective of a numerical majority).
 - (7) Consent round: as in 1.c. above, the Facilitator asks the candidate for consent last. It is important to honor the candidate's right to decline. If the candidate does decline, the Facilitator conducts a new change round and the process continues until a candidate is elected.¹³
- b. At the Inaugural Retreat held in June, the President-Elect fulfills the responsibility for running Board elections in keeping with the principles of dynamic governance to fill each of the six remaining roles:
 - Vice President
 - Information Officer
 - Treasurer and Chair of the Financial Oversight Committee
 - Facilitator and Representative to the Governance Committee

¹⁰ See the *WES Governance Reference Handbook* for a more detailed description of this process.

¹¹ Elections during the Board year are conducted in either open session or — if requested by one or more of the trustees — in executive session [see section III.D.8.].

¹² Guidelines from dynamic self governance say *do not*: (1) ask for a volunteer; (2) ask who is interested and who is not; interest/availability are no guarantee of a good fit between a candidate and a position, and often the group has wisdom that will not become apparent to individual trustees until after the nomination and “say-why” rounds; (3) have dialogue during a round; and (4) seek the perfect candidate—each candidate has strengths and weaknesses.

¹³ If the role's responsibilities are a hurdle, the Board amends them.

- Chair of the Governance Committee and Representative to the Financial Oversight Committee
- Representative to the Lay Leadership Development Committee and the Governance Committee

The President-Elect or a designee (e.g., the Senior Leader) acts as the moderator of the election process. The details of the process may change from year to year, depending on the preferences of the President-Elect, but the general process proceeds through the following steps:

- (1) Role descriptions: The six Trustee roles (other than president) are reviewed.
- (2) Nomination round: The moderator calls for a short period of quiet reflection as each Trustee fills out a nomination form and signs it. The form requires each of the 7 Trustees to nominate 1 of the 6 non-president Trustees for each of the 6 roles, such that each of the 6 (non-president) Trustees fills 1 role. There is no crosstalk or conferring among Trustees during this period.
- (3) Recording of nominations and supporting reasons: The moderator records the nominations on a grid (shown below) that all Trustees can see, also soliciting and recording the stated reasons for each nomination.

	Vice President	Information Officer	Treasurer and Chair of Financial Oversight Comm	Facilitator and Rep. to Governance Comm	Chair of Governance Comm and Rep. to Financial Oversight Comm	Representative to Lay Leader Development Comm and Governance Comm
Trustee1						
Trustee2						
Trustee3						
Trustee4						
Trustee5						
Trustee6						

- (4) Change round: Having heard the nominations and the reasons supporting those nominations of all the Trustees, the Trustees are given a brief time for reflection, after which each Trustee has the opportunity to change any or all of his/her nominations. The moderator records any changes to the nominations.
- (5) Consent round: Based on the results of the change round, the Board President presents a proposed set of nominations. The Trustees are asked if they have any quibbles or objections to the proposed set of nominations. If there are quibbles, they are addressed. If there are no quibbles or objections, the election is complete. If there are objections, another change round is held to address them. The process is repeated until no objections are remaining.

- c. Use of other methods for decision-making or elections: the Board may decide (via dynamic governance) to temporarily employ a different decision-making process.

3. Management of challenging situations

- a. Decision impasse: if the Board cannot achieve consent on a decision, the proposal is temporarily tabled and a subset of the Board works outside of the boardroom to address the matter. The Board then attempts to achieve consent in a subsequent meeting, perhaps with the assistance of an external facilitator. If consent is still not achievable, the Board may make the decision by majority vote.
- b. Decisions on a possible adverse action [see section III.G.]: the Board makes every effort to ensure the attendance of the Trustee in question, who is entitled to participate in the discussion, but not in the consent round. In the event that the Board resorts to a vote, a simple majority is required for recusal or removal from a Board role, while a two-thirds vote is required for dismissal from the Board. A Trustee may also be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the Membership.

4. Draft agendas and meeting materials

- a. The agenda belongs to the entire Board.
- b. The Vice President draws potential agenda items from the calendar of tasks, and the deferred items list (see below), as well as submissions from Trustees, staff, and others. Submissions must include all associated documentation, labeled as required or optional,¹⁴ and must be received at least six days prior to the Board meeting in question. The Vice President collates, reviews, and prioritizes the items, and then places them in one of the following elements:
 - (1) The consent agenda receives items that are unlikely to require Board discussion or action: reports to the Board; routine decisions, etc.
 - (2) The discussion agenda receives items that are likely to require Board discussion/action.
 - (3) The referred items list receives items that do not constitute Board business. Each item is listed along with the individual/group to whom the Vice President recommends it be referred.
 - (4) The deferred items list receives items that the Vice President considers appropriate for a Board agenda, but with insufficient priority to garner a place on the discussion agenda.
- c. The Vice President forwards to the President a preliminary Board packet containing all of the above. After both agree on the contents of the packet, the Vice President distributes it electronically to the Board and Senior Leader and posts it on the WES website no less than 72 hours prior to the meeting.¹⁵ Whenever possible, the Vice President provides the staff with an agenda summary sentence to be included in announcements of the meeting.
- d. Trustees read and digest all materials prior to the meeting.

5. Regular meetings

- a. The Facilitator presides.
- b. Trustees propose agenda amendments as needed. Any Trustee may prompt the movement of an item from the consent agenda to the discussion agenda, or from the referred items list to the discussion agenda (for reconsideration of its status).
- c. Trustees approve the final agenda.
- d. Items remaining in the consent agenda are approved without discussion.
- e. Items remaining in the referred items list are approved for referral without discussion.
- f. The Information Officer (or a designee) records clear and concise minutes containing
 - (1) date, time, and type of meeting (regular or urgent);
 - (2) names of Trustees present/not present, names of other guests, and whether a quorum was established;

¹⁴ The Vice President will consider the demands upon trustees' time when weighing what is categorized as required reading.

¹⁵ Preferably, very long materials are distributed even earlier. Supporting documents are published to ensure that WES members can grasp the meaning of references to these documents that appear in agendas and minutes.

(3) Board decisions, reflecting

- (a) alternatives considered for important decisions,
- (b) any Trustee recusals,
- (c) any nay votes or abstentions (if applicable), and
- (d) Board action items; and

(4) Executive Session information (see below), including start and end times, topic(s) discussed, and any formal decisions made.

- g. Electronic means of note-taking (e.g., the transcript feature on Zoom) may be employed. If so, attendees may keep such notes for their own use. Given their relatively high error rates, electronic notes are not to be shared with people not present at the meeting.
- h. As is helpful, Trustees propose/weigh agenda items for subsequent Board meetings.
- i. If any Trustees have missed the Board meeting, it is decided whether it would be worthwhile to fill them by phone regarding important elements of the meeting.
- j. The meeting concludes with a Board-only huddle [see section III.D.8.a.(2).(b).].

6. Post-meeting activity

- a. Within seven days after a meeting, the Information Officer emails draft minutes to Trustees and Senior Leader. If after four days no corrections have been received, the minutes are considered approved. If corrections are received an additional two days is provided to permit further discussion.
- b. The Information Officer (or a designee) posts approved minutes and all supporting documents on the WES website and as a hardcopy.
- c. The Vice President updates the calendar of tasks.n

7. Urgent meetings

- a. The President or a subset of two Trustees may call an urgent meeting in unusual situations, in which waiting for a routine meeting is likely to bring detriment to the Society.
- b. Such meetings may be held in person and/or via teleconference; Trustees participating via teleconference are considered “present” for record-keeping purposes.¹⁶
- c. Notification of the upcoming meeting is forwarded to all Trustees via telephone and email at least two hours prior to the meeting.
- d. Quorum requirements are unchanged and routine meeting policies on minutes (recording/approval/dissemination) apply. Decisions are made by consent and a facilitator is employed if feasible.

¹⁶ The District of Columbia Code permits some or all trustees to participate in a meeting via teleconference; as long as all trustees can hear one another, DC considers trustees on the phone to be “present.”

8. Executive Sessions¹⁷

- a. *Participation*: Executive sessions are typically limited to the Board and Senior Leader or Board alone. However, the Board may invite other WES members with special expertise or access to information on an Executive session topic to participate in that session. WES staff members and other WES Leaders may be invited to participate with the concurrence of the Senior Leader.
- b. *Types of sessions* and rationales for their use:
 - (1) Board-Senior Leader sessions:
 - (a) provide private space to cultivate deeper relationships and facilitate frank conversation on such topics as Board self-assessment/self-correction, and
 - (b) provide the Senior Leader with a confidential setting in which to discuss sensitive Society business with the Board and to protect the organization in situations of actual or potential litigation, including personnel matters.
 - (2) Board-only sessions:
 - (a) ensure the Board's independence from the Senior Leader in performing oversight, performance feedback, and salary/benefit reviews; and
 - (b) give Trustees a chance to check in with one another and examine issues they find difficult to explore with the Senior Leader or others present. To this end, the Board concludes each regular meeting with a Board-only huddle. To keep lines of communication open, the President follows up with the Senior Leader after each huddle to provide a summary.
 - (3) Other types of sessions include Board meetings with individuals bringing forward a grievance regarding the Senior Leader (see Appendix B, "Stepwise Management of Conflict at WES").
- c. *Initiation of an Executive Session*: typically reflects a decision of the entire Board, but the facilitator will also attempt to honor requests by individual Trustees.
- d. *Topics in Executive Sessions*: topics that emerge, which are suitable for the open portion of a meeting, are tabled until then.
- e. *Documentation*
 - (1) The minutes of Executive Sessions contain the same elements as those of open sessions; they are distributed only to Trustees and other session participants. Participants present for only a portion of an executive session may have documentation access limited to the portion of the session they attended.
 - (2) Executive Session synopses — including any decisions made — are included in the minutes of an associated open session or are published separately, following the timetable employed for open sessions. Information regarding

¹⁷ These guidelines are drawn from [Executive Sessions: How to Use Them Regularly and Wisely](#) (BoardSource, 2007).

personnel matters, however, is released only with the authorization of the employee involved.

- f. *Filing*: Executive Session minutes for a given Board year are filed and maintained by the Board President.
- g. *Access*: if knowledge of Executive Session business from a given prior year is required by a future Board, they consult with that prior year's President (if available) or other available Trustees, obtain summaries as needed, and (if the requesting Board deems them insufficient) are given the opportunity to review the minutes.

9. Online Collaboration and Decisions

- a. The Board may use online tools (e.g., Google Suite or email) to collaborate and decide on a proposal, if all of the following conditions are met:
 - (1) Discussion of proposal starts during a regular, in-person Board meeting and the president determines that the work can continue online.
 - (2) The Board agrees by consent to move the proposal to online collaboration and decision.
 - (3) A quorum of five or more Trustees participates in the online collaboration.
 - (4) Online decisions are made by consent. A quorum of five or more Trustees must register their consent online to the proposal by the specified date.
- b. Online consent of a proposal by a quorum of five or more Trustees (by the specified date) constitutes Board authorization as of that time, including authorization to take any required Board action.
- c. The person who proposed the original proposal ("manager") will manage and track the online discussion and decision, unless otherwise designated by the Board. Trustees may also employ the facilitator if more support is needed.
- d. The manager will cease online collaboration on a proposal if a participating quorum is not achieved, if any Trustee raises an objection, if any new issues emerge, or if a quorum of five or more Trustees does not consent by the specified end date. If the online collaboration ends with no decision, the topic will be added to the discussion agenda of the next Board meeting.
- e. Notice of online consent to a proposal will be included on the consent agenda of the next BOT meeting.

10. Visitor Policy for Board meetings

- a. Board of Trustee meetings are the primary venue for discussing and developing WES policy, and may potentially include conversations around sensitive governance issues.
- b. As stated in the WES Constitution (section III.D.3), Board meetings are open to all WES members.
- c. Except as noted below, visitors participate in Board meetings as observers.

- d. Seating is open during Board meetings. In the event of limited seating, Trustees have priority to sit at the table.
- e. Board meeting agendas will include time at the beginning of each meeting (except for meetings that are wholly executive sessions) for visitors' comments on agenda items or WES-related issues.
 - (1) After calling the meeting to order, the facilitator will welcome visitors and explain the visitor policy.
 - (2) Visitor comment time is limited to 10 minutes total and each visitor is allowed up to 5 minutes. In the event of more than 2 visitors, the 10 minutes of visitor comment time will be allocated equally among all visitors in attendance.
- f. The Board may refer visitors to WES staff, lay leaders, or teams for issues outside the Board's scope.
- g. The Trustees may choose to add issues raised by visitors during Board meetings (which lie within the Board's scope) to future Board meeting agendas, per the process in the Bylaws (section III.D.4.b-c). Members whose issues have been placed on the agenda in advance of a meeting will be able to comment during the time allotted for that item on the Board meeting agenda.
- h. The facilitator may call on a visitor who has special expertise or access to information related to a topic under discussion to participate in that discussion.

F. Board Committees and Task Forces

1. Committees: established by policy and are typically active continuously
 - a. *Governance Committee*
 - (1) Membership: three Trustees elected by the Board to staggered two-year terms, if possible.
 - (2) Tasks
 - (a) Orients new Board members to WES's governance documents and procedures
 - (b) Ensures the Board's continued fidelity to applicable policies
 - (c) Facilitates the amendment of policies as needed
 - (d) Conducts the Board's yearly self-evaluation
 - (e) One or more committee members represent the Board on the LLDC per their desire and availability, with the consent of the Board
 - b. *Financial Oversight Committee*
 - (1) Membership: two Trustees plus the Treasurer, who chairs; additional members may be added if desired.
 - (2) Tasks:
 - (a) Conducts oversight activities on behalf of the Board as described under "Financial Oversight" [see section VI.A.1.] and

- (b) Reports its findings to the Board, which is responsible for initiating any necessary action in the event that irregularities are identified

c. *Personnel Committee*

- (1) Membership: Given its responsibilities, the Personnel Committee will work closely with the Senior Leader. The Committee will have three members. A Board member nominated by the Board will chair the Committee. Two other lay members will be selected by the Board from members identified by the LLDC, self-nominations and Board nominations. Each will serve three-year terms. To preserve continuity, one lay member will rotate off the Committee after serving a two-year term in the first round in the life of the Committee. All other current and future lay Committee Members will serve for a three-year term, with a possibility of serving an additional three-year term. The duration of membership of the Chair of the Committee will depend on the duration of their membership of the Board and the annual allocation of responsibilities among Board members.
- (2) Tasks:
 - (a) Ensure that the personnel policies, procedures, and practices of WES leadership are in alignment with WES Bylaws, the ethical principles of the Society, its obligations as an ethical employer, and WES anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multicultural goals.
 - (b) Support the Senior Leader and Administrator in exercising their staff supervisory roles in a fair and effective manner.
 - (c) Provide guidance on relevant labor laws and regulations as needed.
 - (d) Update the Employees' Handbook at least once every three years, or more often if warranted.
 - (e) Recommend changes in WES personnel policies and practices to remain contemporary, at the cutting edge of practices in similar religious organizations and aligned with the AEU and UUA.
 - (f) The role of the Committee is focused on policy and advisory support. Operational responsibilities will rest firmly with the Senior Leader while the Board will continue to maintain its oversight role. The Senior Leader will discuss with the Board and agree on the extent of reporting on personnel matters that is appropriate. The Chair of the Personnel Committee will provide useful input in this discussion. The Board will discourage third-party complaints on personnel matters. Members who have concerns will be able to access the Employee Handbook for the current policies on personnel matters.
- (3) Meetings: The Committee will meet as often as needed. The Senior Leader and Administrator will be invitees to Committee meetings. The Administrator will provide secretariat services. The Committee may also meet without the participation of the Administrator and/or Senior Leader when the Chair deems appropriate.

2. Task forces: established for a defined period of time (typically a year or less) and are governed by a charge (preferably written) issued by the Board.
 - a. *Elements of a charge*
 - (1) Task definition
 - (2) Scope of task force authorization
 - (3) Membership of the task force
 - (4) Duration of the task force
 - (5) Expected reports back to the Board
 - b. *Examples of tasks* suitable for assignment to a task force:
 - (1) Retreat planning
 - (2) Stewardship efforts
 - (3) Leader contract renewals/revisions
 - (4) Narrowly defined oversight activities

G. Conflicts of Interest

1. As noted in the *WES Constitution*, Trustees serve the WES mission as established by the Membership in the *WES Statement of Purpose*. Loyalty to the WES mission supersedes interests of the individual Trustee or of other groups with whom the Trustee is affiliated.
2. Trustees disclose the presence of any potential conflict of interest, e.g., the fact that a proposed action could benefit themselves, their family members, or their business associates.
3. In the face of a potential conflict, the Trustee in question may voluntarily recuse themselves or may place the decision in the hands of the Board. In the latter case, the Board renders its decision according to the procedure described in this manual [see section A.6.a.].

H. Adverse Actions [see section D.3.b. for decision procedures]: any Trustee is subject to...

1. imposed recusal from a decision before the Board if the Trustee has a conflict of interest and declines to recuse themselves.
2. removal from an elected Board leadership role if the Trustee is not properly fulfilling the duties of that role.
3. removal from the Board if the Trustee is not appropriately helping the Board meet its responsibilities [see section III.A.].

I. Handling Written Member Communications to the Board

1. In general, communications from members of the Washington Ethical Society (WES) to the Board of Trustees will be shared in the membership section of the WES website.

- a. If a communication is sent to an individual Trustee, that Trustee will inform the member that the communication will be forwarded to all Trustees. The Trustee will then forward the communication to all Trustees.
- b. Communications containing information about employee/personnel matters or similarly sensitive information will not be published.
- c. If the member requests that the Board of Trustees keep their communication with the WES membership confidential, that request must be made in writing to the Board. The Board will then review the request and decide if the communication will be kept confidential.
 - (1) The Board will send its decision about whether or not the communication will be kept confidential to the member in writing.
 - (2) If the Board decides that it will not keep the communication confidential, the Board will first ask the member if they want to revise or retract their communication before it is published.
- d. Any response from the Board of Trustees to a communication from a member will follow the policy of “speaking with one voice.”
- e. The Board as a whole will agree on the language for the response and the method of response.
- f. If a member posts a communication to the membership generally on a topic that involves the Board, such as in the WES Members Facebook group, on the WES Exchange listserv, or in another forum, the Board as a whole will decide whether a response from the Board is appropriate and what the language for the response, if any, will be.
 - (1) The Board will post its response in the membership section of the WES website.
 - (2) The Board will also post a link to its response in the original forum where the communication was made.
- g. All communications from members to the Board of Trustees will be saved in the Board archive.

J. Communicating on Behalf of the Congregation

- 1. The Board of Trustees may make public statements on behalf of the Washington Ethical Society (WES) on positions of the society regarding ethical issues which have been established or amended by a two-thirds vote at a membership meeting. If a position has already been established by a national organization of which WES is a member, and the society itself has not established or amended a position on that topic by a two-thirds vote at a membership meeting, the position of the national organization may be extended to the society via the action of the Senior Leader and the Board of Trustees.
- 2. The Board delegates to specific teams the ability to make public statements on behalf of that team of WES on issues that achieve consensus among that team. A team that issues a public statement will inform the President of the Board of Trustees and the Senior Leader that it has done so. Teams are specifically prohibited from speaking on behalf of WES as a whole.
- 3. The Board may speak for WES in communications with the American Ethical Union (including its staff, Board of Directors, officers, and Assembly), the Unitarian Universalist Association, and other organizations of which WES is a member. Time permitting, the Board may choose to seek input from the WES membership on such communications.

4. The Board may act for WES in appointing WES members to the AEU Board of Directors and other governing or advisory groups of external organizations to which WES belongs. (See Appendix F for a description of the role of WES's representative to the AEU Board.) At least 21 days before making an appointment, the Board will announce a period of at least 14 days for nominations and self-nominations.

IV. Senior Leader, Other Staff, and Programs

A. Senior Leader

1. Salary review

- a. A pair of Trustees meets with the Senior Leader to hear any concerns, ideas, and recommendations.
 - b. In a Board-only executive session, the Trustee pair shares with the rest of the Board the key themes of the above meetings. Taking into account the Senior Leader's input, recent performance reviews, recent changes in the cost of living, guidelines from the Society's denominational affiliations, and the Society's financial situation, the Board decides whether there will be a change in salary and, if so, in what amount.
 - c. The president conveys the Board's decision to the Senior Leader.
 - d. If the Senior Leader requests further negotiations, the Board reconvenes in executive session with the Senior Leader to work out an agreement.
 - e. If the results of the pledge drive differ significantly from the projections that informed the Board's salary decisions, the Board reserves the option to adjust the Senior Leader salary.
 - f. The Senior Leader salary is a component of the annual operating budget, submitted and approved as per section B.4.a.(1).
2. Housing benefit review: once yearly, the Senior Leader may propose to the Board an amendment to the portion of the benefits that is allocated to housing.

B. Other Staff; Programs

1. Senior Leader's use of delegated authority: the Membership of WES looks to its Senior Leader for creation and implementation of mission and programming ministry. The Senior Leader in turn works with paid staff and with volunteers, organized either into formal Teams or ad-hoc groups, on all aspects of programmatic ministry. Programs are likely to include, but are not limited to:
 - a. *Religious education* for children, youth, and adults
 - b. *Music*
 - c. *Platform services*
 - d. *Welcome and membership*
 - e. *Social justice*

- f. *Small groups*, including Deepening Circles
- g. *Administrative teams*, including:
 - (1) Personnel
 - (2) Finance

2. Ethical action

- a. Individuals or groups within WES are encouraged to present proposals at the fall membership meeting.¹⁸ Passage requires a two-thirds majority vote in the affirmative; see also the *WES Constitution*. If a time-sensitive issue arises that is not among the Society's previously approved positions, the Membership may take a position through a vote at the spring membership meeting or at a special membership meeting. If there is a timely need to extend to the Society an ethical position established by a national organization of which WES is a member, the Leader(s) bring this matter forward for a decision by the Leaders and the Board.
- b. The Society pursues ethical actions (public statements, marches/demonstrations, letter-writing campaigns, service projects, etc.) consistent with established Society positions.
 - (1) The Senior Leader coordinates ethical actions, including the application of WES positions to specific initiatives and the use of the WES name and banner in connection with them. The Senior Leader consults with the Board (as desired) to obtain additional input into the vision of WES and its relationship to the resolution. In the case of particularly controversial decisions, the Senior Leader may institute a community-based process to gather input and gauge the will of the Membership.
 - (2) Actions requiring significant investment of time and resources
- c. The Senior Leader has the prerogative to take positions on issues as their conscience dictates. When acting upon a position not also in place for the Society as a whole, the Senior Leader may use their name and title in connection with the Society, but may not represent themselves as professing a congregational view.

3. Senior Leader speaking on behalf of WES

The Board delegates to the Senior Leader the ability to speak publicly and to speak to other organizations on behalf of WES regarding the positions of the Society regarding ethical issues. When the Senior Leader speaks in public, they must clearly indicate such speech is not on behalf of the Society, unless the Society has otherwise authorized it. The Senior Leader retains the latitude to speak for themselves on matters of conscience.

4. Care for people and facilities

- a. The Senior Leader, who serves as Head of Staff, maintains a work environment for both paid staff and volunteers that follows all legal requirements and strives to reflect Ethical Culture values.

¹⁸ Without this endorsement, these individuals/groups are not authorized to take positions on behalf of the society or society entity.

- b. The Senior Leader is responsible to ensuring that facilities are well-maintained and that repairs/replacements are made as needed.
- c. The Senior Leader maintains the Leader's Caring Fund, a separately held and tracked fund that is disbursed at the discretion of the Senior Leader and monitored through regular financial monitoring systems by the Board. Uses might include supporting a member of WES with emergency financial needs, supporting WES members in engaging in lay leadership development otherwise out of their reach, and supporting emergency needs in the community at large.

5. Care for resources

- a. *Overview—types of funds:* WES maintains four types of funds:
 - (1) The operating fund is used to pay for WES's day-to-day operations. Income not specifically designated otherwise goes to the operating fund. In general, spending from the operating fund is controlled by the annual operating budget.
 - (2) Restricted funds are monies designated for a particular WES group, activity, or purpose, including major construction projects.
 - (3) The reserve fund is a source of money for "rainy-day" or special-opportunity expenditures.
 - (4) The Vision Fund is an endowment fund intended to support WES's flourishing and financial stability over the long term.
- b. *Fiduciary policies*
 - (1) The Financial Oversight Committee is charged with monitoring compliance with the following policies and taking all necessary and prudent actions to maintain compliance.
 - (a) The reserve fund should be maintained at a level of at least the average monthly operating budget. The operating fund should be maintained at a level sufficient to accommodate modest deviations from budgeted income and expenses, and normal fluctuations in their timing, without requiring the use of reserve funds or loans from restricted funds.
 - (b) Monies in the operating fund, restricted funds, and reserve fund are all held in one or more cash or cash-equivalent accounts. They may be commingled in the same account(s) but the monies in them are identified and tracked separately. Total monies held in any one financial institution will not exceed 110% of the current FDIC limit on insured funds.
 - (c) The Vision Fund is invested soundly.

- (d) The Society complies with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles to the extent that they are reasonably applicable.
- (e) The Board and its designees receive access to financial records.

(2) The Senior Leader ensures that

- (a) staff compensation is fair, using as a reference the UUA's Fair Compensation Guidelines;
- (b) the Society carries sufficient insurance against theft and casualty losses, Trustees and paid staff are covered by corporate and personal liability, and all non-WES personnel with access to significant funds are bonded; and
- (c) at least two competitive bids are considered when making purchases or entering contracts for over \$10,000.

(3) The Senior Leader obtains Board authorization if it is necessary to

- (a) solicit funds for non-budgeted purposes;
- (b) temporarily loan money from a restricted fund to the operating fund;
- (c) liquidate a restricted fund; or
- (d) take out a loan in the Society's name. A loan of more than 5 percent of budgeted operating income require Membership approval unless it refinances an existing loan at the same or a lower interest rate and does not increase the outstanding principal.

c. *The operating fund*

- (1) Spending from the operating fund is governed by an operating budget prepared in the spring by the Senior Leader. The budget aligns with WES's purposes (as described in mission, vision, ends or similar statements) and reflects any current multi-year goals and one-year priorities. The Senior Leader obtains the Board's endorsement for the budget and presents it at the spring membership meeting. In the event that the Senior Leader and Board cannot agree on a budget, the Senior Leader and Board (represented by the Treasurer) each present their version of the budget at the meeting.
- (2) If a spring membership meeting ends without approval of an operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year, the following things occur:
 - (a) The Board calls a special membership meeting, to be held within 60 days of the spring meeting, for another vote on the operating

budget. The budget offered at that meeting may be revised from the one offered at the spring meeting. If the special meeting also ends without approval of an operating budget, the budget is included on the agenda of the fall membership meeting.

- (b) The Senior Leader develops an interim budget, which is in effect until a budget proposal is approved at the special meeting or the fall meeting. If approval does not occur at either meeting, the interim budget remains in effect for the rest of the fiscal year. The Senior Leader presents the interim budget to the Board but the Board's endorsement is not required for it to take effect. The interim budget meets the following conditions:
 - (i) Total revenues are the lesser of a) total revenues included in the operating budget prepared by the Senior Leader for the spring membership meeting and b) projected revenues (or actual revenues, if known) for the prior year—that is, the fiscal year preceding the one covered by the interim budget.
 - (ii) Total expenses do not exceed total revenues—that is, the budget is balanced.
 - (iii) The budget includes expenses to meet WES's fixed obligations to outside parties, such as mortgage payments. The Senior Leader will consult with the Board on whether to consider dues to the American Ethical Union and "fair share" contributions to the Unitarian Universalist Association as fixed obligations.
 - (iv) For each budget line item that is not a fixed obligation, the budgeted amount does not exceed the lesser of a) the amount specified in the budget approved for the prior year and b) actual spending (projected or final) in the prior year.
 - (v) If meeting condition (iv) does not result in a balanced budget, balance is achieved by reducing amounts for all line items that are not fixed obligations; those reductions are as close to proportional as practicable, in the judgment of the Senior Leader.
- (3) During a budget year, if income is falling short of projections or expenditures are exceeding projections, the Senior Leader may adjust planned spending levels in order to avoid or reduce the need to dip into the reserve fund. The Senior Leader notifies the Board of such

adjustments and notifies the membership of any material changes in WES's operations.

d. *Restricted funds*

- (1) Restricted funds are employed solely for approved purposes. Any authorized loan from a restricted fund to the operating fund must be temporary and accompanied by a timetable for repaying the loan.
- (2) For each restricted fund, one person (typically someone involved in the WES group, activity, or purpose served by the fund) is designated to request expenditures from the fund. Such requests are made in writing to the Senior Leader, who may accept or reject them, or request additional information. A series of expenditures (for example, for a construction project) may be requested and accepted in advance.
- (3) When the Board approves the liquidation of a restricted fund, if the Senior Leader judges that the remaining balance in the fund is significant, the Senior Leader will make a good-faith effort to contact any current WES members who were major donors to the fund and offer to return an appropriate share of the balance to them.

e. *The reserve fund*

- (1) The purpose of the reserve fund is to ensure the stability of WES's mission, programs, employment, and operations. The reserve fund provides an internal source of money for situations such as a sudden increase in expenses, one-time unbudgeted expense, unanticipated loss in funding, or uninsured loss. The fund may also be used for one-time, nonrecurring expenses that will build long-term capacity, such as staff development, research and development, or investment in infrastructure. The fund is not intended to replace a permanent loss of income or address an ongoing budget gap.¹⁹
- (2) The reserve fund may be funded as a line item in the operating budget. In addition, the Board may from time to time direct that a specific source of revenue—such as one-time gifts, bequests, special grants, special appeals, or end-of-year budget surpluses—be designated for the reserve fund.
- (3) Identification of appropriate use of operating reserve funds: the Senior Leader will identify the need to access the reserve fund and will provide the Board with a written statement confirming that the use is consistent

¹⁹ The purpose of operating reserves was adapted from https://nonprofitsassistancefund.org/sites/default/files/publications/nonprofit_operating_reserves_and_policy_examples_2014.pdf.

with the purpose of the reserves as described here. That statement includes the intended use of money from the fund, the availability of any other sources of funds, and as appropriate, a preliminary plan to replenish the fund to the desired minimum level of one month's average operating expenses.

(4) Approval to use operating reserves

- (a) Authority for use of up to \$10,000 from the reserve fund is delegated to the Senior Leader, with the above written statement sent to the Board within one week.
- (b) Use of between \$10,001 and \$20,000 from the reserve fund also requires prior agreement of the Board Treasurer.
- (c) Use of more than \$20,000 requires prior approval from the Board of Trustees.

(5) Reporting and monitoring: the Senior Leader will maintain records of the use of money from the reserve fund and on any replenishment effort, and will provide regular reports on the latter to the Financial Oversight Committee and/or Board of Trustees.

f. *The Vision Fund*

- (1) Vision Fund assets are invested in a well-respected, diversified portfolio, such as the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund, per the Endowment Committee's discretion.
- (2) If the Vision Fund balance exceeds \$100,000, money may be drawn from the Fund for special purposes, or to support WES's day-to-day operations, as follows:
 - (a) Once per year, the Endowment Committee may generate a proposal for a special-purpose disbursement, after soliciting ideas from the WES membership. The proposal must obtain the approval of the Board and the consent of the Leader(s). The proposal must also be approved by a two-thirds vote of the membership if the disbursement would exceed 5 percent of the average fair market value of the fund over the previous thirteen quarters or would reduce the fund balance below \$100,000.
 - (b) A proposed WES budget may draw on no more than 4 percent of the fund balance.

V. The Centrality of Relationship

A. Management of Conflict

1. When one or more members of the WES community come into conflict, they attempt to engage one another in dialogue, drawing as needed upon the many resources and tools available. If this proves unsuccessful, they have the option of seeking assistance from one or more other people mutually agreeable to both parties.
2. If mutual efforts are unsuccessful, one or both parties may seek mediation and/or intervention from people in positions of authority at WES, following a set of defined steps to encourage resolution of the conflict in a setting that is “local” enough to be attuned to the issues at hand, while at the same time offering the opportunity to “appeal” to a level that is sufficiently removed to permit a fresh and unbiased consideration of the issues. Appendix B contains the stepwise resolution process.

B. Policies on Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Disruptive Behavior

1. The goals of these WES Policies are:
 - a. To protect and safeguard the members of the WES community and persons associated with WES, particularly those who have been harmed in incidents of disruption, harassment and sexual misconduct;
 - b. To deal quickly, effectively, respectfully and fairly with allegations/ incidents of harassment, disruption and sexual misconduct;
 - c. To help the community restore and heal itself after an incident of harassment/disruption/sexual misconduct; and
 - d. To provide the person(s) who has/have been found to have done harm with an opportunity to reflect on their behavior and its impact on individuals and the community.
2. Policy details, including definitions, can be found in Appendix D: Policies on Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Disruptive Behavior

C. Procedures on Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Disruptive Behavior

Procedures in support of implementation of Policies on Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Disruptive Behavior are detailed in Appendix E.

VI. Oversight

A. Monitoring

1. Financial oversight

- a. Fidelity to *policies on financial planning* [see section I.C.2.b.(2).]
- b. Fidelity to *processes on income* [see section IV.B.4.b.]
- c. Fidelity to *processes for the safeguarding and tracking of funds*
 - (1) Saving/Investing [see section IV.B.4.c.]
 - (2) Accounting and transparency [see section IV.B.4.d.]: the Board Financial Oversight Committee confirms that outside financial consultation is not less

than quarterly OR that a formal outside financial review²⁰ occurs no less frequently than every three years.

d. Fidelity to *processes for expenses*

(1) Specific guidelines [see section IV.B.4.e.]

(a) Salaries and benefits

(b) Facilities

(2) Correspondence between predicted/actual income and authorized/actual expenses, for both operating and capital accounts [for policies on budgeting, see section IV.B.4.a.]

(a) Monthly: the Financial Oversight Committee reviews income and expenses for both operating and capital accounts, as well as updated balance sheets.

(b) Quarterly: the Senior Leader presents to the Board a revenue/expense report for the previous quarter, covering operating accounts and all capital accounts except the Vision Fund, for which the Board receives a report from the chair of the Endowment Committee.

(c) Semi-annually: giving not less than one week's notice, the Board Oversight Committee reviews bank statements, checks written, invoices paid, and ushers' Sunday collection logs.

(d) Annually: at the spring membership meeting...

(i) the Senior Leader reports on income/expenses for the year ending and their correspondence with the budget, and

(ii) the Chair of the Endowment Committee reports on the previous year's administration of the Vision Fund.

(e) Annually at the fall membership meeting, the Senior Leader will report on any activities and disbursements of operating reserves, with proposed plans for replenishing the reserves fund.

2. Oversight reports: every month the Senior Leader submits to the Board a brief report covering time-sensitive congregational matters requiring Board awareness/action.

3. Ends monitoring

a. Every six months, the Senior Leader obtains input from other staff program leaders, and other Members regarding the Society's progress in pursuit of its Ends.

²⁰ Could be a professional audit or a review conducted by an outside volunteer — e.g., by swapping reviewers (Finance Team members, Treasurers, or administrators) with another congregation.

- b. The Senior Leader compiles this information and presents the Board with an Ends Monitoring Report containing
 - (1) one-page sections on each Ends statement with sections for
 - (a) progress since the last report,
 - (b) short-term focus, and
 - (c) growing edges;
 - (2) a “Summary of Past Progress,” in order to bring new Trustees up to speed without their having to look over past reports;
 - (3) commentary on the costs of achieving the ends; and
 - (4) a page of key metrics, including Sunday attendance, program/event participation, Membership gains and losses, and rates of visitors.

B. Evaluation

- 1. Board evaluation entails Trustee self-evaluation, as well as input from the Senior Leader and possibly others.
 - a. Process checks are managed by the Board Facilitator. They may be requested during Board meetings or during Board-only huddles.
 - b. The Governance Committee facilitates structured, semi-annual evaluations, eliciting input from both Trustees and the Senior Leader.
 - (1) The Mid-year Check-In is a brief review of the Board’s self-governance and its progress to date on its goals for the year.
 - (2) The End-of-Year Evaluation occurs during the last month of each Board year. Results are discussed at the final Board meeting of the year and included on the agenda of the Inaugural Retreat. The Board draws upon lessons learned to update Board policies.
- 2. Leader evaluation:
 - a. Every year, the Board of Trustees, to whom the Senior Leader reports, conducts a review process tailored to provide opportunities for the professional growth and development of the Senior Leader. The Board uses the following process:
 - (1) The Senior Leader uses the Senior Leader job description and the previous year’s evaluation to provide a self-written review, entering a self-evaluation and opportunities for growth, if any, under each item in the job description.
 - (2) The document produced in step (1) is sent to each Trustee, along with the previous year’s final document summarizing the Senior Leader’s evaluation and opportunities for growth.
 - (3) Each Trustee writes an evaluation of how the Senior Leader performed each aspect described in the Senior Leader’s job description, and notes any opportunities for growth. This written evaluation is then sent to the Board President.

- (4) The Board President and one other Trustee (e.g., the Vice President) summarize these performance reviews and produce a written evaluation of the Senior Leader.
 - (5) The Board President and the other Trustee who worked on the summary shares and discusses the written evaluation with the Senior Leader. An outcome of that meeting is a final summary document, which is sent to all the Trustees.
 - (6) The Board and the Senior Leader would discuss this final evaluation in an executive session.
- b. Each year, the Senior Leader and Board set aside time at the time of the Board's end-of-year evaluation, for an open discussion of the Senior Leader-Board relationship.

VII. Relations with External Organizations — see the *WES Constitution*

VIII. General Provisions

- A. Amendments to this document are approved by consent of the Board.

IX. Appendices

- A. Proxy Authorization Form
- B. Stepwise Management of Conflict at WES
- C. Membership Meeting Timeline
- D. Policies on Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Disruptive Behavior
- E. Procedures for Policies on Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Disruptive Behavior

Appendix A: **WES Proxy Authorization Form** (Rev. 12/2/2015)

To be completed by Member authorizing a proxy:

By this form I, _____, authorize
name of principal

_____ to act as my proxy agent at the
name of proxy agent

membership meeting scheduled to occur on _____.
date of meeting

I understand that I have the option to provide my proxy agent with specific instructions regarding how I wish vote(s) to be cast on my behalf, and I understand that I am responsible for making these arrangements with my proxy agent.

I understand my use of a proxy on this date renders me ineligible to employ a proxy for any other membership meeting occurring within the next ten months.

signature of principal

date of signature

To be completed by Member agreeing to serve as a proxy agent:

By this form I, _____, agree to serve
name of proxy agent

as the proxy agent for the principal and meeting referenced above. I understand that I may not serve as the proxy agent for anyone else at this meeting.

signature of proxy agent

date of signature

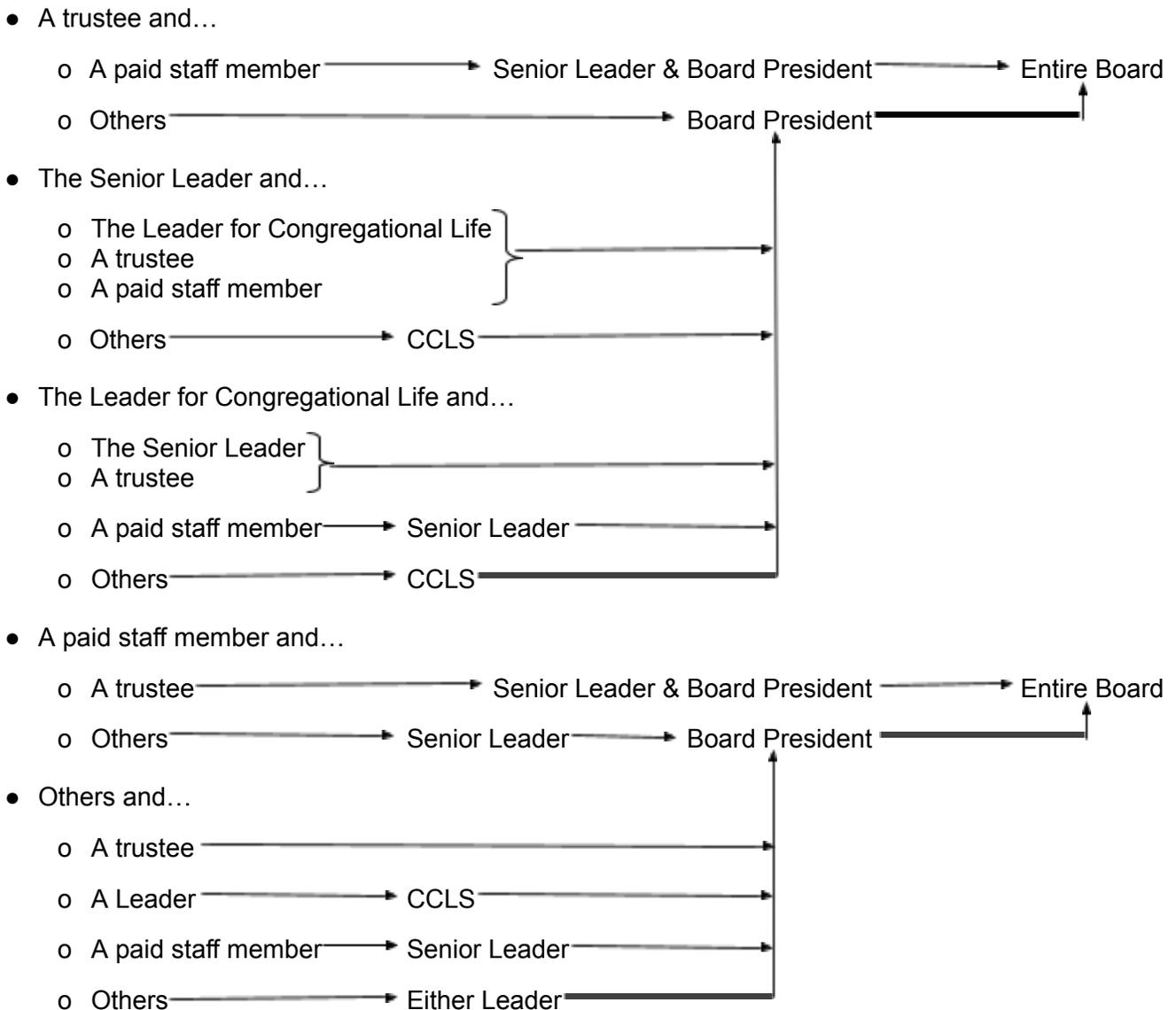
During the meeting, proxy agents will be invited to present completed authorization forms to the membership meeting moderator in order to receive proxy cards for use when voting on behalf of the principal.

Appendix B: **Stepwise Management of Conflict at WES**

1. Attempt to address the conflict directly between the involved parties.
2. Seek assistance from one or more other people mutually agreeable to the parties.
3. Seek mediation and/or intervention from people in positions of authority at WES. If the conflict has arisen within the context of the work of a WES team or committee, the team or committee chairperson(s) — if not party to the dispute — could serve in this role.
4. Once the above “local” options have proven insufficient, one or more parties to the dispute may seek further assistance according to the flow chart below. An individual using the chart should start by locating their WES role, identifying the other party or parties, and then seeking out the individual/group identified.

■

For a conflict involving...



Additional Considerations

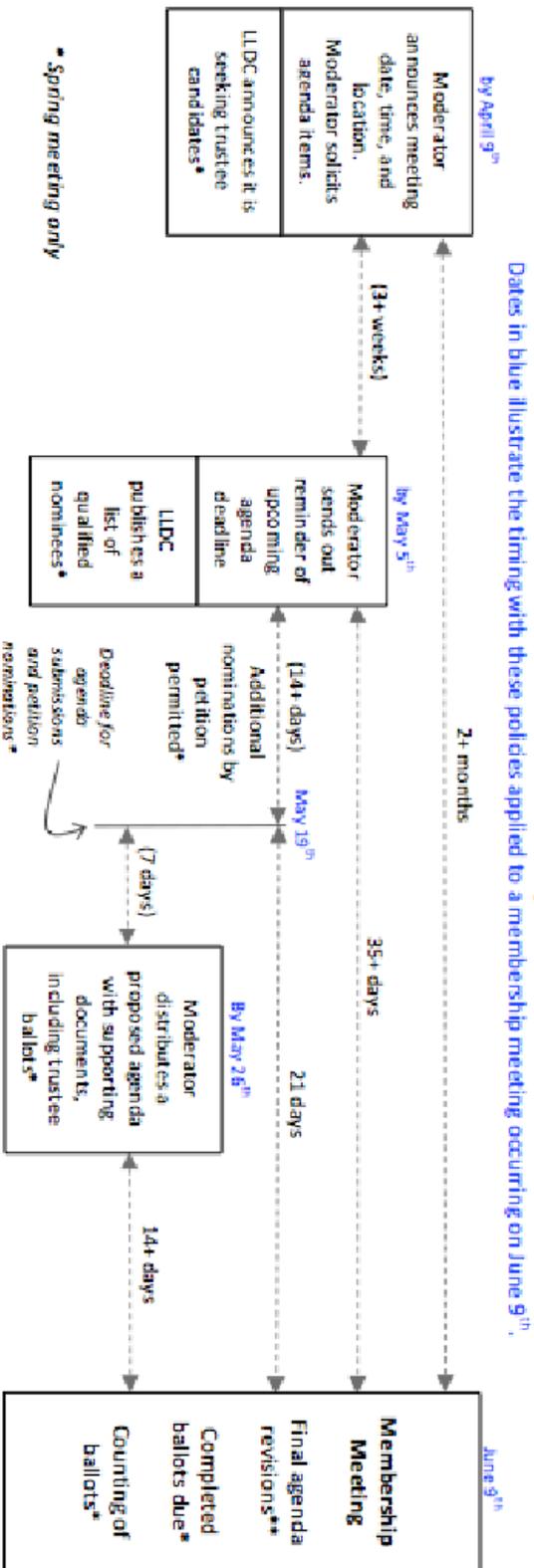
- a. If three or more roles are involved, the matter is brought to the entire Board.
- b. If the flow chart calls for the Board President to be approached, but the President is party to the conflict, the Vice President is approached. If both the President and Vice President are involved, the matter is brought to the entire Board.
- c. The President (or Vice President, per the above) has the option to refer a matter to a different Trustee if doing so would serve better the dispute in question.
- d. WES is not a “closed system.”
 - (1) Conflicts in which at least one party is a paid staff or a Leader may bypass the Board and go directly to outside mediation with the Board’s consent.
 - (2) Conflicts that come to the Board, but which cannot be adequately addressed, may be suitable for outside consultation/mediation.
- e. Optional consultation with the Community Relations Committee [CRC] by agreement of parties: The CRC is established in the WES Constitution to “*foster a congregation-wide culture of open, honest, and healthy communication about all topics—including difficult or conflictual ones—as a core value of the WES community.*” While that charge gives the CRC no direct formal role in particular cases of management of conflict, it is a resource for the Membership and staff. The CRC could provide brief assistance with the conflict by offering resources or training and by attempting to facilitate direct communication between parties involved in the conflict. (See paragraph 1 at the beginning of this appendix.) If this is insufficient, the CRC could help the parties to seek the assistance of one or more people mutually agreeable to the parties. (See paragraph 2 of this appendix.) The CRC’s role should be relatively brief, providing resources and assistance with the steps in paragraphs 1 and 2. If this is insufficient, stepwise management continues on through the flowchart.

Appendix C: Membership Meeting Timeline

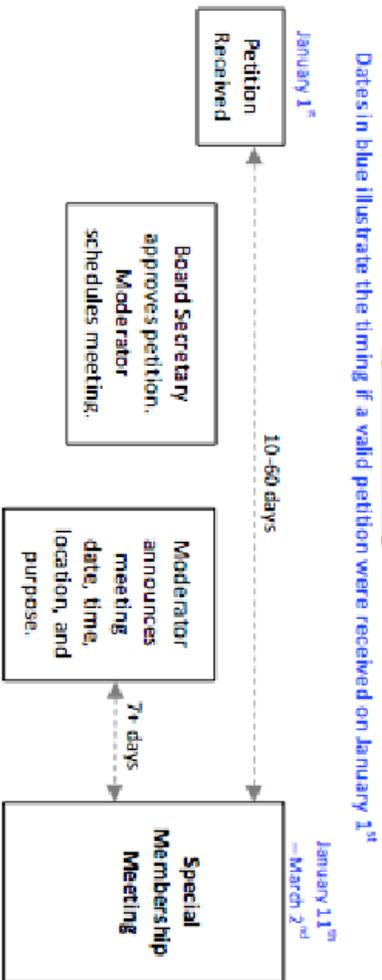
Durations are as stipulated in the constitution with the exception of those within parentheses, which are derivations.

Membership Meeting Timelines

Routine Meeting



Special Meeting



Appendix D: Policies on Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Disruptive Behavior

WES is committed to engaging in an on-going dialogue within the community to develop and maintain a shared understanding of what constitutes acceptable behavior and what may reasonably be understood to be harassment, and hence unwelcome. WES strives for the right balance between members' freedom to express disagreement and the need for such disagreement not to be experienced as disagreeable.

These policies apply to all people at a WES-sponsored event, whether in person or electronic, including staff, members, visitors, renters, and vendors; and to people in the WES building if a WES member, staff, visitor, or friend is involved in the incident. Harassment can be experienced by individuals who are not the intended target of the harassment.

The focus of WES policy is on behavior by WES members, staff, renters or visitors, whether in person or virtual, that impacts other members of the community or the reputation of WES.

Policy: Harassment

a. Statement of policy

The Washington Ethical Society (WES) affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person. WES is committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment free from all forms of discrimination and from any conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive. Harassment of any kind (e.g., actions, words, jokes, or comments) based on an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, ability, sexual orientation, marital status, gender identity or expression, or any other personal characteristic will not be tolerated at WES.

b. Definitions

--- Harassment is any form of unwelcome conduct that demeans, threatens, intimidates, or coerces. Harassing conduct may be in person, electronic, or otherwise; repeated or an egregious single instance; it is either known or may be reasonably understood to be unwanted.

---Harassment is understood in a cultural context which can be challenging in a multicultural community. Harassment is defined from the perspective of the person experiencing it, hence the emphasis is on behavior that is *unwanted or unwelcome*.

--- Verbal harassment includes comments that are offensive or unwelcome, including but not limited to epithets, slurs, innuendo, and stereotyping.

--- Physical harassment includes physical contact, action, or presence that is offensive, unwelcome, or persistent, including but not limited to hazing, stalking, using physical presence to intimidate, and other unwanted physical contact.

– Visual forms of harassment include derogatory or offensive cartoons, drawings, or other types of images.

Policy: Sexual Misconduct

a. Statement of policy

The Washington Ethical Society (WES) affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person. WES is committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment free from all forms of sexual misconduct, abuse, molestation, harassment, or exploitation of any kind.

See the WES Employee Handbook for sexual harassment policy related to staff.

See the SEEK Safety Policy for special guidelines that pertain to children and youth at WES.

b. Definitions

Sexual misconduct is any form of conduct, (in person, electronic or any other form of communication) of a sexual nature that demeans, threatens, intimidates, or coerces. It includes unwelcome sexual advances, attention, or touching; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal engagement or physical contact of a sexual nature. Sexual misconduct also includes harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, self-identified or perceived sex, gender expression, gender identity, and/or status of being transgender.

Policy: Disruptive Behavior

a. Statement of policy

WES affirms its belief in creating and protecting a safe, respectful, and secure environment for everyone, and this includes each person's right to express dissent. WES is committed to an environment where members can participate in WES activities, staff can carry out their professional duties, and others can use WES facilities free from unwelcome disruptive or offensive behavior that interferes with the functioning and flow of the organization. WES is further committed to each member's right to express dissent in a responsible and respectful manner.

Guidelines for Evaluating Disruptive Behavior

It is recognized that disruptive behavior can vary, ranging from disagreeable to disrespectful to disruptive to dangerous behavior. Consequently, response to such behavior will also be on a continuum. WES will contact law enforcement authorities in the event of a disruption that involves the threat of physical violence. In other circumstances, they will keep in mind that contacting the authorities should only be used as a last resort when other attempts at resolving non-physical disruptive behavior have been exhausted.

Appendix E: Procedures for Policies on Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Disruptive Behavior

PROCEDURES for Policies on Disruptive Behavior and Anti-Harassment

PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING INCIDENTS OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR, *pursuant to Policy on Disruptive Behavior*

These procedures for dealing with alleged [extreme, not ordinary] incidents of disrespectful, disruptive, or dangerous behavior (*as defined in the policy on disruptive behavior*) may be invoked if initial, common sense approaches are ineffective to calm, distract, or change behavior in a given situation.

1. Reporting

- a. If anyone believes they have witnessed or experienced disruptive behavior or has an incident reported to them, they should report it to any of the following: Senior Leader, Director of Life-Long Learning or paid staff member, Board member, or member of The Safer Congregation Team. The person receiving the report of the incident will immediately notify the Senior Leader.
- b. If reporting is required by law, the Senior Leader will report it to the authorities.
- c. Reports—and reporters—of incidences of disruptive behavior will be held in strict confidence. WES does not tolerate any retaliation by any means or person.

2. Immediate Response to Disruptive Behavior (*when the disruptive behavior is occurring*)

- a. If an immediate response is needed, the Senior Leader, senior staff member, CRC member or other lay leader, or leader of event or meeting may:
 - ask person to leave event, meeting, or building;
 - suspend the meeting, event, or gathering;
 - take other reasonable actions deemed necessary; or
 - call the police, if behavior poses risk or threat to the safety of anyone or damage to property.
- b. If the Senior Leader is not present or available, or if police are called, the Senior Leader must be notified of occurrence of disruptive behavior immediately, and be provided a description of the occurrence and response in writing within 24 hours.

3. More Deliberate Response (*occurrence is over or recurring, needs further attention*)

- a. First level of response: Senior leader meets with the individual(s) acting disruptively. The Senior Leader may, on a case-by-case basis, if the behavior is deemed severe, refer the incident to the Safer Congregation Team if further exploration of the incident or action is needed. The Senior Leader shall inform the Board of Trustees that they have called on the Safer Congregation Team.

- i. The Safer Congregation Team collects all information necessary, including interviewing individuals involved and those reporting the behavior, to gain a full and fair understanding of occurrence.
 - ii. The Safer Congregation Team reports back to the Senior Leader in writing with recommendations for any action deemed necessary.
 - iii. The Senior Leader reports to the Board the Safer Congregation Team's recommendations, any actions taken, and outcome.
- b. Second level of response: The Senior Leader will refer the situation and response to the Board if further significant action is needed (for example, if disruptive behavior continues or recurs), such as temporary suspension of WES membership and exclusion from WES virtual and physical . The Board and Senior Leader may turn to Safer Congregation Team to develop conditions for resumption of full membership, including a thoughtful process for return to right relations.
- c. Third level of response: The Board and Senior Leader may, in extreme cases, determine that the individual should be removed from membership permanently and excluded from church premises, with written notification to the individual.

GUIDELINES FOR THE Safer Congregation Team *(for procedures pursuant to policies on disruptive behavior, anti-harassment, and sexual harassment)*

1. The Safer Congregation Team will deal with incidences of disruptive behavior, harassment, and sexual harassment, covered by the same-named policies, as deemed necessary by the Senior Leader.
 - a. The Safer Congregation Team will consist of three members, appointed by the Senior Leader with approval of the Board. The Team will report to the Senior Leader primarily or to the Senior Leader and the Board as outlined above.
 - b. Members of the Safer Congregation Team will have two year terms.
 - c. WES will commit to short-term professional training for team members every other year. On the off year, the Safer Congregation Team will meet together at the beginning of each fiscal or liturgical year to review their training.
2. In its deliberations, the Safer Congregation Team will treat all individuals and incidents with dignity and respect. They will strive not to define "acceptable" behavior in advance and avoid stereotypes. When evaluating any incident, they will consider these questions about the behavior:
 - Is it **dangerous**? Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to people or property?
 - Is it **disruptive**? Is behavior interfering with the flow of WES operations and gatherings, or participation in WES activity(s)?
 - Is it **disrespectful or offensive**? Is behavior abusive, distracting, disorderly, interruptive to a person or an event, gathering, activity?
3. The Safer Congregation Team will also consider other factors:

- **Causes:** Why did the disruption occur? Is there a conflict between the individual and others? Should mental health, intoxication, illness, etc., be in play?
- **History:** Have there been previous difficulties with the individual?
- **Probability of change:** How likely is the behavior to recur if no action is taken?

PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING INCIDENTS OF HARASSMENT OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR,
pursuant to policy on anti-harassment

These procedures for dealing with alleged [extreme, not ordinary] incidents of harassment or ongoing harassing conduct or behavior (*as defined in the policy on anti-harassment*) may be invoked if initial, common sense approaches are ineffective to end the harassing behavior in a given situation.

1. Reporting

- a. If anyone believes they have experienced harassment or ongoing harassing behavior, they should report it to the Senior Leader or Director of Life-Long Learning. The DLL will immediately inform the Senior Leader.
- b. If anyone believes they have witnessed an incident of harassment or ongoing harassing behavior, or has such incident(s) reported to them, they should report it to any of the following: Senior Leader, Director of Life-Long Learning, Board member, or member of Safer Congregation team. The person receiving a report of any incident will immediately notify the Senior Leader.
- c. If reporting is required by law, the Senior Leader will take responsibility for reporting to the authorities.
- d. Reports—and reporters—of incidences of harassment will be held in strict confidence. WES does not tolerate any retaliation by any means or person.

2. Immediate Response to Harassment or Harassing Behavior (*when the harassing behavior is occurring*)

- a. If an immediate response is needed, the Senior Leader, senior staff member, paid staff member, Board member, CRC member, or other lay leader [*define*] may:
 - ask the person(s) committing the verbal, non-verbal, public, or electronic harassing behavior or conduct to desist immediately;
 - ask the person(s) committing the verbal or non-verbal harassing behavior or conduct to leave the event, meeting, or building;
 - take other reasonable actions deemed necessary; or
 - call the police, if behavior poses risk or threat to the safety of anyone or damage to property.
- b. The Senior Leader must be notified of any occurrence of harassment or harassing behavior immediately, if they are not present or available, or if police are called. The person(s) reporting the occurrence must provide the Senior Leader with a description of the occurrence and response in writing within 24 hours.

3. More Deliberate Response (*occurrence is over or ongoing, needs further attention*)

- a. First level of response: Senior leader meets with the individual(s) who engaged in harassment or engaged in ongoing harassing behavior of another person(s), whether verbal, non-verbal, public, electronic, etc. The Senior Leader may, on a case-by-case basis, if the conduct is deemed severe, refer the incident to the Safer Congregation Team if further exploration of the incident or action is needed. The Senior Leader also informs the Board of Trustees that they have called on the Safer Congregation Team.
 - i. The Safer Congregation Team collects all information necessary, including interviewing individuals involved and those reporting the behavior or conduct, to gain a full and fair understanding of occurrence.
 - ii. The Safer Congregation Team reports back to the Senior Leader in writing with recommendations for any action deemed necessary.
 - iii. The Senior Leader reports to the Board the Safer Congregation Team's recommendations, any actions taken, and outcome.
- b. Second level of response: The Senior Leader refers the incident(s) and response to the Board if further significant action is needed (for example, if harassing conduct or behavior continues or recurs), such as temporary suspension of WES membership. The Board and Senior Leader may turn to Safer Congregation Team to develop conditions for resumption of full membership, including a thoughtful process for return to right relations.
- c. Third level of response: The Board and Senior Leader may, in extreme cases, determine that the individual should be removed from membership permanently and excluded from church premises, with written notification to the individual.

Appendix F: Role Description for WES's Representative on the AEU Board

In accordance with American Ethical Union's [Board Volunteer Description](#), the WES Rep serves as a liaison between WES and the American Ethical Union. The WES Rep is expected to...

- Remain informed on the priorities and interests of the WES community through, for example, attending Society platforms and other events, talking with WES members, and/or attending meetings of the WES Board of Trustees;
- Inform the WES Board, Leader(s), and other interested WES members of significant developments within the AEU (the WES Board will apprise the Rep of its meeting schedule and invite the Rep to submit written reports in advance of those meetings, as appropriate);
- Seek input from the Board, Leader(s), and other interested WES members regarding business items to be taken up at AEU Board meetings;
- Convey official information from the AEU Board, officers, and staff to WES, and vice versa.

The WES Rep coordinates their work with the WES President, Senior Leader, and Administrator. The WES Rep is accountable directly to the WES Board. At least once per year the WES Board or its designee provides the WES Rep with feedback on their performance.

WES Bylaws Change History (as of March 26, 2024)

NOTE: This document is included with the Bylaws as reference, but it is NOT a part of the Bylaws.

List of Bylaws changes by date. See table for specifics of changes to Bylaws for each date.

- May 15, 2025
- April 17, 2025
- February 20, 2025
- March 26, 2024
- December 18, 2023
- April 30, 2022
- April 21, 2022
- July 14, 2020
- June 14, 2020
- March 15, 2020
- February 12, 2019
- December 13, 2018
- December 12, 2017
- October 8, 2017
- June 1, 2017
- May 11, 2017
- November 18, 2016
- November 16, 2016
- June 12, 2016
- May 8, 2016
- December 2, 2015
- March 8, 2015
- November 20, 2014
- October 23, 2014
- July 8, 2014

Date	Who	Change(s)	Adopted by BOT
May 15, 2025	Bylaws amendment by Board of Trustees	Bylaws IV.B.5 Revised “Care for resources” section that clarifies the policies regarding WES’s four types of funds—the operating fund, restricted funds, reserve fund, and Vision Fund.	May 15, 2025
April 17, 2025	Bylaws additions by Board of Trustees	Bylaws Appendix F New appendix describing the role of WES’s representative to the AEU Board. Callout to the appendix added in section III.J.4.	April 17, 2025
February 20, 2025	Bylaws amendments and additions by Board of Trustees	Bylaws III.E.5.g Authorized electronic note-taking; re-lettered former subparagraphs g-i as h-j. Bylaws III.E.8.a Authorized the Board to invite participation in executive sessions by people other than Trustees and the Senior Leader; re-lettered subparagraphs a-f as b-g. Bylaws III.E.10 New subparagraph 10 codified existing practice allowing the facilitator to invite participation by certain meeting visitors; corresponding changes to subparagraph c.	February 20, 2025

March 26, 2024	Bylaws amendments by Board of Trustees	Bylaws IV.B.5.b(2) Replaced previous requirement that a three-year capital budget be prepared annually with contingency plans in the event that a spring Membership Meeting ends without adoption of an operating budget for the following fiscal year.	March 26, 2024
December 18, 2023	Bylaws amendments and additions by Board of Trustees	Bylaws III.J Heading changed from “Speaking on Behalf of the Congregation” to “Communicating on Behalf of the Congregation.” Conforming edits to existing paragraphs 1 and 2. New paragraphs 3 and 4 added, codifying the Board’s authority to speak for WES in communicating with organizations of which WES is a member, and to appoint WES members to serve on governing or advisory groups of such organizations.	December 18, 2023
April 30, 2022	Typo correction, as noted by WES member and emailed to the Board	Bylaws IV.A Both IV.A and IV.B were listed as “Other Staff; Programs.” Corrected IV.A section to “Senior Leader.”	April 30, 2022
April 21, 2022	Bylaws addition by Board of Trustees; site in Bylaws approved April 21, 2022.	1. Bylaws III.F.1.c New section added: Personnel Committee 2. Bylaws III.A.4 New section added: Hiring of Interim Senior Leader 3. Bylaws V.B plus Appendix D New section added: Policies on Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Disruptive Behavior 4. Bylaws V.C plus Appendix E New section added: Procedures on Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Disruptive Behavior 5. Bylaws II.C.4 New section added: Recording membership meetings	April 21, 2022
June 14, 2020 July 17, 2020	Bylaws addition by Board of Trustees; site in Bylaws approved June 14, 2020. Location of addition in the text approved July 14, 2020	Bylaws III. Board of Trustees. New paragraph “Board of Trustees Personal ARAOMC Commitment Policy” added as Paragraph III B ; following paragraphs renumbered	June 14, 2020 July 14, 2020

March 15, 2020	Bylaws addition by Board of Trustees; site in Bylaws approved April 14, 2020	Bylaws IV.B.5 New paragraph a “Fiduciary Policy” was added to IV.B.5; following paragraphs in Bylaw IV.B.5 renumbered accordingly	March 15, 2020
February 12, 2019	Bylaws amendments and additions by Board of Trustees	1. All Bylaws Title of “Secretary” changed to “Information Officer” 2. Bylaws III.I. New paragraph—III.I.2.a-b added 3. Bylaws IV.B.3. New section added: Policy for Speaking on Behalf of the Congregation; previous sections IV.B.3 and 4 were renumbered to IV.B.4 and 5. 4. Bylaws III.H. Amendment to include “Written” in title of policy and first sentence	February 12, 2019
December 13, 2018	Bylaws addition by Board of Trustees	Bylaws III.H. New paragraph H was added: Policy for Handling Member Communications to the Board	December 13, 2018
June 12, 2018	Bylaws amendment by Board of Trustees	Bylaws I.B.2.a-b-c. I.B.2.a: “and update (as needed)” deleted (Ends can only be updated by whole membership vote.) I.B.2.b-c: Positions of b and c flipped for chronological relevance	June 12, 2018
December 12, 2017	Bylaws addition by Board of Trustees	Bylaws III.D.10 New section 10 was added: Visitors Policy for Board Meetings.	December 12, 2017
October 8, 2017	Bylaws addition by Board of Trustees	Bylaws III.D.9 New section 9 added: Online Collaboration and Decisions	October 8, 2017
June 1, 2017	Bylaws amendments from Governance Committee and Board Treasurer by Board of Trustees	Bylaws II.A.2 Amended to allow WES members designated by the Senior Leader to also run the path-to-membership process Bylaws III.C.4 Treasurer’s description amended to delete “and attends at least two Finance Team meetings per year.” (Finance Team disbanded.) Bylaws III.D.7.a Amended to allow a group of 2 Trustees, in addition to the president, to call an urgent meeting Bylaws III.E.1.a(2)(a) Task of governance committee to orient new trustees amended Bylaws IV.A.1.e	June 1, 2017

		<p>Amended to give Board sole responsibility to adjust senior leader salary</p> <p>Bylaws IV.B.4.c(2)</p> <p>New operating reserves policy added</p> <p>Bylaws VI.A.1.d(2)(e)</p> <p>Added subsection (e) requirement for senior leader to report on activities and disbursements of operating reserves at fall membership meeting</p>	
May 11, 2017	Bylaws amendments from Governance Committee by Board of Trustees	<p>All Bylaws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Clergy leaders/Leaders,” etc., changed to Senior Leader to update Bylaws to reflect current Society leader configuration - Use of “congregation/congregational” changed to Membership or Society where appropriate <p>Bylaws IV.B.2.b.(2).(a)-(b)</p> <p>Deleted (a) and (b) elements, which were never finished, given substance, or enacted.</p> <p>Bylaws IV.B.4.d.(2)</p> <p>The word “reasonable” was deleted since the Board and its designees have unrestricted access to financial records.</p> <p>Bylaws VI.B.2.a.</p> <p>Updated to reflect current process: the Board manages the Senior Leader review and not the CRC (<i>also see May 8, 2015</i>)</p> <p>Appendix B: Stepwise Management of Conflict at WES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In graphic, Leader for Congregational Life deleted; optional use of CRC added [CRC] - Paragraph 5.d.(2) renumbered - Paragraph 5.e added to explain [CRC] option 	May 11, 2017
Feb 23, 2017	Bylaws amendment from Governance Committee by Board of Trustees	<p>Bylaws II.B.2: Community Relations Committee</p> <p>Added a. and b. elements to update process and timing for electing members to the CRC</p>	Feb 23, 2017
Nov 18, 2016	Bylaw change by Board of Trustees	<p>Bylaws IV.B.4(3)(c).</p> <p>Revision allows Senior Leader to refinance an existing WES loan with Board authorization.</p>	Nov 18, 2017
Nov 16, 2016	Governance Committee/Kristin Hunter	<p>All Bylaws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic copyedit of Bylaws to correct typos and minor inconsistencies. 	Nov 16, 2016

		- Bylaws also updated to reflect Constitution amendment approved June 12, 2016.	
Jun 12, 2016	Constitution-- change approved by the Membership	Constitution II.B.2. Name of Committee on Community and Leadership Support (CCLS) changed to Community Relations Committee (CRC)	Jun 12, 2016
May 8, 2016	Governance Committee/John Mulligan	Constitution III.D.6.a - Change the time for submission of BOT minutes from four to seven days - "Leaders" changed to "Senior Leader"	May 8, 2016
Dec 2, 2015	Governance Committee/John Mulligan	Bylaws Appendix A Technical revisions to use of proxies at Membership Meetings: 1) make body and Appendix A consistent in allowing a proxy only once every 10 months, 2) clarify with consistent and accurate use of "principal" and "proxy agent," and 3) specify proxy revocation process.	Dec 2, 2015
Mar 8, 2015	Governance Committee/Ellen Post	Bylaws VI.B.2.a.–b. Change Leader Evaluation: Revised so that that the CCLS [<i>changed June 12, 2016, to CRC</i>] may delegate Senior Leader evaluation to the BOT (to whom the SL reports), and defines the process to be used in this case. Previously, the section defined a multi-person, multi-step process done every other year. The new process is seen as more practical and reflective of the actual line of authority from membership to Board to Senior Leader. <i>Note: The CCLS currently has a constitutional charge to "coordinate" leader evaluation (ratified June 9, 2013). If the constitutional charge is modified, this section of the Bylaws will need to be modified as well, most likely to remove the contingent delegation to the BOT, leaving the process the same.</i>	Mar 8, 2015
Nov 20, 2014	Board of Trustees/John Mulligan	Bylaws IV.B.3.a.–b. Remove "or Solo" (Leader) Bylaws IV.B.3.c. added: "The Senior Leader maintains the Leader's Caring Fund, a separately held and tracked fund that is disbursed at the discretion of the Senior Leader and monitored through regular financial monitoring systems by the Board. Uses might include supporting a member of WES with emergency financial needs, supporting WES members in engaging	Nov 20, 2014

		in lay leadership development otherwise out of their reach, and supporting emergency needs in the community at large.”	
Oct 23, 2014	Bylaws changed by Board of Trustees	Bylaws IV.B.3.c. Board approved Bylaws language on Leaders Caring Fund.	Formal adoption at next meeting
Jul 8, 2014	Governance Committee (John Mulligan)	Bylaws III.D.2 BOT Minutes: The main substantive change was to replace the previous process for electing officers with the process we actually used in June on a provisional basis.	Jul 8, 2014