

# Austin IWW Bylaws

Current iteration approved by At-Large Austin Members 6.29.21

## Article I: Values

### Section 1

The Austin General Membership Branch (GMB) shall nurture workplace and industrial organizing and encourage and build worker solidarity. As part of the IWW, and in recognition of the fact that an injury to one is an injury to all, the Austin branch of the IWW actively opposes discrimination. No wage or salaried worker (as defined as eligible by the [IWW Constitution](#)) shall be excluded from the GMB because of race, ethnicity, sex, nationality, creed, disability, sexual orientation, age, or gender identity.

## Article II: Members and Jurisdiction

### Section 1

All members of the IWW who live or work in Travis County, TX **or surrounding counties (including Bastrop, Hays, and Montgomery County)** and pay dues through the Austin GMB shall be considered branch members. Other members may choose to affiliate if they feel they can reasonably participate and the branch votes to accept them.

### Section 2

If potential members outside of Travis County or surrounding counties are in what is considered an “active campaign” by the IWW Austin Organizing Board, they may apply to be members of the Austin GMB. Their membership must be voted on by members in the nearest business meeting by simple majority if quorum is met, or on the next business meeting with quorum until a closer GMB, Job Branch or IUB is formed. Once that body is formed, they must hold their own elections, their own meetings and move to establish their own working branch separate from the IWW Austin GMB.

### Section 3

All members of the Austin GMB in good standing are entitled to vote as part of the GMB, may be appointed to committees, and may run for an officer position.

# **Article III: Branch Officer Responsibilities**

## **Section 1: Roles**

Whereas the IWW Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) has allowed for the Branch Secretary-Treasurer position to be held by two discrete officers, our branch separates this into two or three offices of Branch Secretary, Branch Treasurer, and (optionally) Branch Correspondence Secretary. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by the IWW Constitution, the Manual of Policies and Procedures, and these bylaws.

## **Section 2: Branch Secretary**

The Branch Secretary shall be the responsible custodian of duties related to records and membership. Specifically, they shall:

- A. Be the main contact between the branch and its assigned member of the General Executive Board (GEB). Any issues that affect the union as a whole or need the larger support of the union (such as a major organizing campaign, a lawsuit, etc.) should be reported to the GEB through the branch's assigned board representative.
- B. Be the custodian of all branch records.
- C. Be responsible for maintaining the branch membership list.
- D. Endeavor to keep branch members aware of all referenda and news from GHQ.
- E. Fill out blank convention delegate credentials and return one copy to General Headquarters at least 15 days prior to the start of the convention.
- F. The Branch Secretary must retain all relevant documents within the requirements of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA).  
(<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/olms/compliance-assistance/record-keeping>).
- G. Coordinate with branch and committee chairs on general business meeting topics

## **Section 3: Branch Correspondence Secretary**

The Branch Correspondence Secretary is an optional position that may assist the Branch Secretary with duties related to correspondence (in the MPP enumerated 3,5,7 as of March 2020). If no Correspondence Secretary is elected, the Branch Secretary shall be responsible for these duties. Specifically, they shall:

- A. Be responsible for routing correspondence between parties via the branch email and phone and for answering general questions relating to the branch.
- B. Be responsible for maintaining online/digital accounts and assets.
- C. Be responsible for securing a consistent location for monthly branch meetings, notifying all members of the time and place of the meetings, and distributing a draft meeting agenda.
- D. Be responsible for ensuring that minutes of monthly branch meetings are distributed to all branch members.

## **Section 4: Branch Organizing Department Liaison (ODL)**

The Branch Organizing Department Liaison shall be the responsible custodian of duties related to the branch organizing committee.

Specifically, they shall:

- A. Be the main contact between the branch and the Organizing Department Board (ODB). All organizing leads from ODB will pass first to the Organizing Department Liaison, who shall act as intermediary to the branch organizing department.
- B. All organizing resources, assistance and funds shall be requested from the ODB by the ODL on behalf of the branch, organizing shop represented by the branch, or dues-paying members of the branch.
- C. Shall write monthly branch reports as requested by ODB and submit them in a timely fashion to the board.
- D. Shall chair regular meetings with the organizing committee and assign minutes taking and distribution
- E. Shall communicate as committee chair new business to the Branch Secretary in a timely fashion a minimum of two days prior to General Business Meetings.

## **Section 5: Branch Treasurer**

The Branch Treasurer shall be the responsible custodian of duties related to funds and supplies (in the MPP enumerated 4,9,10,11,12 as of March 2020). Specifically:

- A. They shall work with elected delegates to keep all members in good standing (caught up on dues).
- B. They shall be a responsible custodian of all funds and supplies. They are charged with keeping the financial records for their branch, including recording all income and expenses and securing the branch treasury. Records shall be kept of all transactions with delegates.
- C. They shall file the branch tax report annually with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The branch is registered with the Department of Labor (DoL) and the Branch Treasurer must file the necessary Labor Organization Information Reports.
- D. If the branch charter is revoked, the Branch Secretary and Treasurer should work with an authorized union representative to surrender the charter and union supplies, property, and funds to the General Administration.
- E. The IWW Branch Secretary's Monthly Financial Report, along with remittance of all dues and other union funds collected during the month, shall be sent to the General Secretary-Treasurer (GST) no later than the 10th day of the following month. Should any branch fail to do so, further supplies will be withheld until those reports are received. Failure to report monthly will cause headquarters' records to become out of date and list members in bad standing. These members will then not receive the General Organization Bulletin (GOB), referendum ballots, or the Industrial Worker (IW).

## Section 6: Harassment and Grievance Officer

The branch shall appoint at least one Harassment and Grievance Officer (HGO), who shall be responsible for receiving and processing complaints, including mediation (if chosen by the involved parties), coordination of any immediate relief and accountability measures, and any necessary escalation of complaints.

- A. This role may be shared among any number of elected branch members in good standing.
- B. If more than one HGO is elected, gender parity should be prioritized.

## Section 7: Branch Secretary-Treasurer Report

Branch officers must collaboratively produce the standard Branch Secretary-Treasurer Report and send it to GHQ monthly. The [BST Report template](#) is available on the IWW website. Reports should include as much of the following as is applicable:

- A. The consolidation of all delegate reports
- B. Copies of all delegate reports submitted for the month
- C. Remittance of all General Administration funds
- D. Membership applications
- E. Branch meeting minutes
- F. Updated branch bylaws
- G. Updated branch contact information
- H. Changes in elected branch officers
- I. Name of the branch member authorized to request Literature Department credit
- J. A report on the activities and prospects of the branch

## Section 8: Officer Elections and Removal of Officers

- A. Passwords to branch accounts will be changed when an officer vacates a branch.
- B. Removal from office will require a simple majority recall vote, held whenever five or more members of the GMB submit a petition for recall at a monthly or special branch meeting. Any officer who fails to report to the GMB for three months will be considered to have resigned. Any officer may resign at any time by submitting their resignation at the next GMB meeting. If an officer resigns, nominations will be taken at that meeting, with election of an interim officer taking place at the following GMB meeting.
- C. The term of office shall be for one year and the same shall commence on January 1. Officers may be elected to only two consecutive terms, but are not limited in total number of terms.
- D. All officers must be in good standing. Should an officer fall into bad standing, they will be given the option of either getting back into good standing or resigning.
- E. Elections of officers will use regular runoff voting. (If no one wins a majority of the vote, a runoff of the top two candidates will be held.) Votes will be on a secret ballot. The branch will vote for an election officiator to create, distribute, collect, and count the ballots. This vote will occur two months before the officer election, and the officiator cannot run for office in that election. Ballots must be retained by the branch for at least one year.

## **Section 9: Finances**

The branch shall maintain a bank account in its name for the purposes of organizing and union expenses. It shall be the responsibility of the Branch Treasurer to keep a balanced ledger of this account and to act as liaison between the branch and our bank.

- A. Donations made to the Austin branch will be retained in whole for branch use.
- B. The Branch Treasurer shall make financial records available within seven days upon request by any branch member or member of the General Executive Board.
- C. The fiscal year shall be from July 1st until June 30th.
- D. The Branch Treasurer will provide the branch membership with a monthly report outlining the current bank balance and all expenditures and incomes over the previous month.
- E. The previous month's budget will be available at the first meeting of every new month (e.g., August's budget report will be made available for September's first meeting).
- F. The Branch Treasurer and Branch Secretary will have check signing authority.
- G. The Branch Secretary and Treasurer are authorized to dispense budgeted funds and discretionary emergency expenditures not to exceed \$150 per month. All emergency expenditures must be reported to the branch.
- H. All expenditures greater than \$150 will require a branch motion.
- I. Each April, the branch will select a three-person Budget and Audit Committee that will gather delegate reports and banking records from the previous fiscal year. Using this information, the committee shall create a budget for the upcoming fiscal year and it will be voted on by branch membership at the first June meeting.

## **Section 10: Austin GMB Treasury**

In order to maintain equitable control of branch finances, at least the Secretary and Treasurer must be signers on the branch bank account at all times.

### **A. Officer Transition and Branch Treasury**

- a. Upon the election of new branch officers, the outgoing officers should facilitate removing themselves as signers of the branch bank account, typically by arranging a time for all outgoing and incoming officers to meet in person at the bank and hand over signer access.
- b. Once this transition is completed, the incoming Branch Treasurer must inform GHQ of the change of account signers and provide the names of the new signers.

### **B. Signatory Officer Offboarding**

- a. If the outgoing officers are unavailable to hand over signer access for any reason, the following procedure must be followed:
  - i. The incoming Branch Treasurer must contact GHQ (providing evidence of their election to the BT position, if this has not previously been communicated) and explain the need to override the current branch signers.
  - ii. GHQ must then produce a notarized statement stating the following:
    1. That Austin IWW is a chartered branch of the broader IWW.
    2. The names of all outgoing officers who are to be removed as signers of the bank account.
    3. The names and official positions of the new officers who are to be added as signers of the bank account.

C. The incoming Branch Treasurer and other incoming signer must then present the notarized statement to the bank and provide necessary personal information (contact numbers, SSNs, etc.) to have themselves added as signers of the bank account.

D. As stated above, the incoming Branch Treasurer must then inform GHQ of the change of account signers and provide the names of the new signers.

# **Article IV: Policies and Procedures**

## **Section 1: Voting Philosophy**

Decisions will be made using a simple majority vote.

## **Section 2: Voting Procedures**

We use the polling tool in our Discord channel to conduct online voting for votes between meetings. The Branch Secretary will be responsible for counting and reporting these motions and outcomes to the GMB. A. Quorum (five members in good standing) is interpreted as the minimum number of respondents in a vote. Members who do not respond to a vote are interpreted as not present; they are not presumed to be abstaining.

- B. Online votes must be open for a minimum of three days (72 hours). Votes may be extended by up to 30 days by the proposer at any time or by anyone until quorum is met.
- C. An emergency vote must receive at least 1.5 times quorum (1.5 times five members) (round up, up to the total number of members), pass with a simple majority, and be open for a minimum of one day (24 hours) or until a simple majority of all members in good standing have voted in favor. Emergency votes do not include options to abstain or block. If quorum is not met within three days (72 hours), the vote proceeds with normal non-emergency practice.
- D. Branch meetings will be the primary method of holding votes and regular quorum will apply.
- E. Only members of the branch in good standing may vote.

## **Section 3: Meetings**

The Austin IWW branch shall hold meetings every other week.

## **Section 4: Amendment of Bylaws**

Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed no later than prior to annual elections and will be voted on there by all eligible members of the Austin GMB. In extraordinary circumstances, amendments may be proposed before the next GMB meeting and voted on by the membership at that time. Amendment votes will require a simple majority to be passed.

# Article V: Harassment Policy

## Section 1: Harassment Grievance Procedure

In the interests of preserving solidarity within the branch, there shall be a localized process for handling harassment reports via internal mediation, particularly in regard to conflicts arising out of racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and other forms of discriminatory or hateful behavior. In addition, it shall be the responsibility of the branch to support internal discussion and education in regard to these issues. This process shall be used to deal with internal mediation amongst branch members in accordance with the IWW Constitution and bylaws where applicable. The process will proceed as follows:

1. The filing for internal mediation by one member of the branch against another, provided that the two parties do not belong to the same Industrial Union, Industrial Union Branch, or Job Shop, shall be heard by the branch. If the aggrieved party and the accused belong to the same Industrial Union, Industrial Union Branch, or Job Shop, and the respective body does not have a process for hearing internal mediation, the branch may be asked to hear the internal mediation.
2. The member filing for internal mediation shall do so by sending a letter to any branch delegate and the Branch Secretary stating their request with a description of the alleged offense(s), along with relevant documentation. The receiving officer(s) will be required to place the item on the agenda at the following business meeting, and such item shall be marked as "election of mediation committee."
3. The membership shall elect a committee of at least three members in continuous good standing for six months prior, none of whom are either of the parties involved in the dispute. The membership may vote to waive the six-month requirement if they deem it necessary.
4. The committee shall within 30 days conduct an inquiry of the issue(s), consult the parties involved, and upon consulting the party filing for internal mediation and the accused shall make a recommendation of action. This recommendation shall not be acted upon unless such action is agreeable to both parties and the committee, in which case it shall be read to the membership at the next business meeting, along with the complaint. Also, a statement may be made by each party involved if they wish.
5. If the mediation committee cannot reach a recommendation within 30 days, the committee may ask for an extension of time to complete the inquiry or recommend that the matter be referred to the GEB. 6. The aggrieved party may withdraw a mediation request at any time but may not refile within the branch for that offense and may not file for mediation locally if the matter has been settled by the GEB. 7. If the issue(s) cannot be resolved with the above process, the membership may call a special meeting to reach a solution.
8. No member shall be denied the use of the branch mediation process by any subordinate body, in accordance with these bylaws and the IWW Constitution.



9. No member shall be denied union representation on the job or voting privileges by the branch.

# Article VI: Safer Spaces

## Section 1: Acknowledgment of Values

The Industrial Workers of the World is a union committed to the emancipation of the working class. The working class is diverse and as a union we recognize that oppression is many-layered. In light of this, we strive to keep our common places free from oppressive action, behavior, and language. These oppressive actions and words include but are not limited to racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and any expression of disrespect and/or intolerance of size, gender identity, sexual identity/expression, (dis)ability, age, educational level, and cultural background. Because we want to learn from and educate each other, we will each be responsible for addressing these issues in ourselves and others. This policy is not about censorship but rather about opening a dialogue in a respectful way that can result in all members feeling safe and free to fully participate in their union's activities. If a member feels this policy has been violated, the following steps should be taken:

1. Reference the policy to the whole group: for example, "In the IWW, we have a Safer Space Policy that all members are mutually responsible to uphold. I feel this policy has been violated by talk of [comments made]. Please keep the Safer Space Policy in mind."
2. If the policy is still being violated, the issue should be brought up directly with the person in violation and/or the chair, an officer, a delegate, or a member whom you would like to act as an advocate on your behalf so that an effective plan of action can be instituted.
3. If you have no allies locally and invoking the Safer Space Policy fails, reach out to the Gender Equity Committee for assistance at [GEC@IWW.org](mailto:GEC@IWW.org).
4. If a member feels like this policy is being violated and is uncomfortable bringing this up personally, they are encouraged to seek an ally of their choosing to advocate for them. In a meeting, a person can ask for a point of personal privilege to take a break and discuss this with the necessary parties. Meeting chairs, officers, delegates, and members should be conscious of this policy and address issues as they arise.
5. Further, space shall be defined as any office, meeting, event (including trainings, celebrations, social gatherings, etc.), or internet platform (including listservs, Facebook, [we.riseup.net](http://we.riseup.net), Twitter, etc.) that is IWW-sponsored. This includes any body formally recognized by the IWW, such as General Membership Branches, Regional Organizing Committees and Regional Administrations, Industrial Union Branches, other committees, and any accountable subformation of the aforementioned bodies.

## **Article VII: Committees**

### **Section 1: Committee Establishment**

The Austin GMB may establish standing or special committees to carry out the tasks of the branch. Committee members shall be elected at the branch meeting that creates the committee, and committee membership may be altered or committees may be disbanded at later branch meetings. The branch shall specify when these committees shall report to the branch when they are created.

### **Section 2: Budget and Audit Committee**

Each April, the branch will select a three-person Budget and Audit Committee that will gather delegate reports and banking records from the previous fiscal year. Using this information, the committee shall create a budget for the upcoming fiscal year and it will be voted on by branch membership at the first June meeting.

### **Section 3: Branch Contact List**

The branch contact list is moderated by the Branch Secretary. Moderation will include adding new members of the branch onto the contact list and composing communications.

One other person, designated by the Branch Secretary, will have moderator access to the list. In August of each year, the Branch Secretary will work with GHQ and branch delegates to remove members of the list who have fallen into bad standing.

## **Article VIII: Conflicts Between Bylaws and the Constitution**

### **Section 1: Clarification**

All parts of these bylaws conflicting with the IWW Constitution are null and void.

## **Article IX: Criteria for Dissolving Branches**

### **Section 1: Criteria**

The Austin GMB will operate subject to the chartering and charter dissolution criteria as laid out in the [IWW Manual of Policies and Procedures, Section 8-2](#).

END OF BYLAWS