

ARTICLE I
NAME AND LOCATION

SECTION 1: NAME

The name of this corporation shall be Ridgely Volunteer Fire Department, Incorporated and shall hereinafter be referred to in these bylaws as the Corporation or Department.

SECTION 2: LOCATION

The principle location of the Corporation shall be 101 Sunset Blvd, Ridgely, Maryland.

ARTICLE II

MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1: The Corporation shall have seven (7) classes of members. Membership in the Corporation shall be awarded without regard to race, color, creed, sex, age (except as stipulated under the minimum age requirements), national origin, marital status, political or religious opinion or affiliation, sexual orientation, and physical or mental handicap (except in such cases where the department assigned physician determines that the disability or condition would preclude the individual from adequately performing the tasks involved).

Members may hold more than one class of membership provided they meet the minimum active service standards and membership requirements for each class being held. The designation, qualification and rights of members of such class shall be as follows:

- A. Firefighter / Medical – Shall meet the requirements for Firefighter / Medical membership as stipulated in Article III and as established and approved by the Corporation. Firefighter / Medical members shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
- B. Life – Any member who shall have served in an active capacity for at least twenty (20) years shall automatically become a Life Member of the Corporation. Life members may remain active provided they continue to meet the requirements for their primary class of membership as stipulated in Article III and as established and approved by the Corporation.
- C. Honorary – Any active member who shall retire because of age or illness. Recommended by the Board of Directors and approved by the corporation by a two thirds (2/3) majority secret ballot vote of those present and voting shall become an Honorary member.

- D. Probationary – All applicants approved for membership shall serve at least a 12-month probationary period. During this time, the member shall complete all entry level training requirements.

- E. Cadet – Shall meet the requirements for cadet membership as stipulated in Article III and as established and approved by the corporation. Cadet members shall be within the ages of 16 and 17.

- F. Administrative Member – Shall meet the requirements for administrative member as stipulated in Article III and as established and approved by the corporation.

- G. Junior Cadet – Shall meet the requirements set forth by the Board of Directors annually. Youth members of the community ages 12 through 15 are eligible for Junior Cadet Membership. Junior Cadets candidates shall be approved by the Board of Directors only

SECTION 2: APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

All probationary member applications shall be appointed elected by a secret ballot vote at any regular meeting. An affirmative simple majority vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those members present and voting shall be required for membership approval.

Members who have completed their probationary period and fulfilled their training requirements may apply for regular membership. Regular membership shall also require a simple majority, secret ballot vote affirming the completion of probationary membership status at the next regular meeting of the corporation.

SECTION 3: UNSUCCESSFUL PROBATIONARY MEMBERS

Probationary members not being voted out of probationary membership shall be considered terminated and receive no credit for their length of service. Former probationary members shall have no preference on any membership waiting list.

SECTION 4: WAITING PERIOD

Probationary members not being voted out of probationary membership or any member dismissed from the corporation may not reapply for a period of one (1) year from the date of last action upon his membership status.

SECTION 5: REINSTATEMENT OF MEMBERS

- A. Any past active member of the Department, having resigned within the last three-(3) years in good standing may seek reinstatement in the Corporation. By being approved at any regular or special meeting by a simple majority of those members present and voting, whereupon they shall assume all obligations and privileges of active membership and be credited with time previously served.
- B. Reinstated members shall require the approval of the Chief prior to response to emergencies.
- C. Any member requesting reinstatement that has been absent from the Corporation for longer than three (3) years shall be required to apply for Probationary membership.
- D. All applicants for reinstatement shall be required to undergo preliminary procedures as required of Probationary applicants, including an interview with the Membership Committee.

Former members applying for any class of membership other than that held at the termination of membership shall be required to undergo all procedures required under “Period of Supervision”, Article III, Section 4.

- E. Any member of the corporation, except probationary members, having resigned or been dismissed from the department shall be credited with previous time served upon reinstatement.

SECTION 6: SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. A member may be suspended or expelled for cause after appropriate actions are followed by the Board of Directors and or general membership in accordance with established policy and accepted personnel practices.
- B. Any member who becomes ineligible for membership, or who is recommended for dismissal by the Board of Directors, may have their membership terminated by a majority vote of any regularly constituted meeting.
- C. The Board of Directors shall establish a policy regarding annual minimum activity requirements for members. Members not meeting the annual minimum activity requirements shall automatically be expelled by the Board of Directors. The corporate body shall have no vote in this matter.

SECTION 7: RESIGNATION

Any member may resign by filing a written resignation with the secretary, the same to become effective upon the return of all corporation equipment issued to said member and upon the payment of all assessments and other charges there-to-fore accrued and unpaid.

SECTION 8: TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. Any member desiring a transfer of membership status shall submit such a request in writing to the Membership Committee Board of Directors. Any request for transfer of membership class shall require approval of the Board of Directors.

SECTION 9: LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Board of Directors may grant any member of the corporation a leave of absence from the duties and privileges of their membership class. While on "Leave of Absence" status the member shall accrue no time toward their length of service in the corporation.

Military and or Educational leave shall be granted to all members requesting such leave in writing to the Board of Directors. Member shall be reinstated as an active member upon written notice to the Board. Members qualifying for Military or Educational leave within three (3) months of their return to the Ridgely area shall inform the Board. Failure to inform the Board of Directors may result in loss of membership.

Members attending higher education institutions, trade schools or public safety academies and living away from the Ridgely area can remain active members of the corporation with a modified active service standard as approved by the Board of Directors.

SECTION 10: CRIMINAL RECORD

Any member of the corporation convicted of a felony, by any court of law, shall automatically have their membership in the corporation terminated. Any applicant for membership with a record of any felony conviction, by any court of law, shall automatically be ineligible for membership.

Any member of the corporation charged with committing any crime or major traffic offense (must appear) shall notify the Chief and/or President of the RVFD within 72 hours

Any member charged with committing any minor traffic offense (payable) shall advise the Chief and/or President prior to operating any department owned vehicles.

Any member charged with a crime that is a felony will be placed on administrative leave, pending adjudication.

Members charged with committing a misdemeanor crime or ANY traffic offense will be reviewed by the Board of Directors, who will determine if any action is necessary pending adjudication.

Any members convicted of a misdemeanor crime will be reviewed by the Board of Directors to determine if any action is warranted in regards to their membership status. The RVFD Board of Directors will take into account the type of crime, severity of the crime, and number of past incidents when conducting their review and making a final determination.

Any member convicted of a must appear or payable traffic offenses will be subject to the disciplinary actions stipulated in RVFD SOP 400.07
“Apparatus Operator”

SECTION 11: DISABILITY

The Board of Directors shall establish and maintain a departmental policy regarding short and long-term disabilities of the membership.

Any member that suffers a line of duty disability, as certified by a department assigned physician, shall be entitled to hold their membership class for the duration of their disability and shall be credited with service time for that class of membership.

SECTION 12: MATERNITY LEAVE

The Board of Directors shall establish and maintain a departmental policy regarding maternity leave.

SECTION 13: VOTING

Members of the corporation may vote according to the privileges of their membership status. All members must meet the approved Active Service Standards to be eligible to vote or hold office in Corporate, Fire line, or Medical officer elected positions at any election.

Firefighter / Medical: May vote for all Corporate, and Fire line officer, Medical officer elected positions at any election. This member shall also have one vote in all other matters brought forth to the body except where otherwise stated in these by-laws.

Life: Life members who continue to meet Active Service Standards shall be permitted to vote and run for elected office in accordance with their primary class of membership. Life members not meeting Active Service Standards shall be eligible to vote for all Corporate Officer elected positions only. Life members shall have one vote in all other matters brought forth to the body except where otherwise stated in these by-laws.

Honorary: Honorary members shall have no vote in the corporation.

Probationary: Probationary members shall hold no vote for Corporate, Fire line, or Medical officer elected positions at any election. This member shall have one vote in all other matters brought forth to the body except where otherwise stated in these by-laws.

Cadet: Cadet Members shall hold no vote for Corporate, Fire line, or Medical officer elected positions at any election. This class of membership shall have one vote as a body in all other matters brought forth to the body except where otherwise stated in these by-laws.

Administrative: Administrative members shall be eligible to vote for all corporate officer elected positions only, at any election. This member shall also have one vote in all other matters brought forth to the body except where otherwise stated in these by-laws.

Junior Cadet: Junior Cadet Members shall hold no vote in matters of the Fire Department.

ARTICLE III
MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

SECTION 1: DUTIES OF MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

It shall be the duty of each member to execute the duties and responsibilities of their office in good faith, to obey lawful orders, and to comply with the rules and regulations, policies, procedures, and by-laws of the corporation to the best of their ability.

SECTION 2: ACTIVE SERVICE STANDARDS

Active Service Standards and Membership Requirements shall be approved by the corporation annually. The membership committee shall prepare the policy for presentation and approval to the Board of Directors no later than February 15th. Upon approval by the Board of Directors the policy will be presented to the corporation for approval.

Should the Corporation fail to amend the Active Service Standards by March 31st the Active Service Standards in effect on January 1st shall remain in force.

Active service standards may also be revised upon two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the membership entitled to vote at any regular meeting. Written notice shall be mailed to the membership at least fifteen (15) days prior to voting upon said standards or requirements.

All members are required to work fundraisers in accordance with policies established by the Board of Directors. All members will be assigned to work minimum hours of fundraising as set forth by the active service standards.

SECTION 3: FAILURE TO MEET STANDARDS

Members failing to meet the requirements set forth under Active Service Standards shall lose their right to vote for and hold elected offices. The membership committee shall be responsible for maintaining and posting membership records quarterly.

SECTION 4: REQUIREMENTS OF PROBATIONARY MEMBERS

- A. Upon application for probationary membership each applicant shall select choose a class of membership.
- B. Probationary members shall be subject to all of the rules, regulations, and by-laws of the corporation.
- C. The membership committee shall provide periodic reports to the Board of Directors on all probationary members regarding the probationary member's activity and training requirements.
- D. All Suppression and EMS probationary members will be required to obtain Health Care Provider Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certification, Hazardous Materials Operations certification, and National Incident Management System Level 100 certification, as part of their entry level training requirements.
- E. Suppression entry level training requirements include a minimum of MFRI Firefighter I certification or equivalent Pro-Board certification.
- F. EMS entry level training requirements include a minimum certification of Maryland Emergency Medical Technician at the Basic Level.

- G. Administrative Members will be required to obtain Health Care Provider CPR and National Incident Management System Level 100 certification, as part of their entry level training requirements.
- H. A Probationary Member may request that the Board of Directors extend their probationary period to complete their training requirements, if necessary. The Board of Directors may extend a members probationary period for a maximum of one (1) year.
- I. Probationary Members unable to meet the training requirements for firefighter /medical can be offered administrative membership, or may be terminated by the Board of Directors.
- J. Probationary Members may be dismissed for cause by the Board of Directors at any time during their probationary period.

ARTICLE IV

MEETINGS

SECTION 1: REGULAR MEETINGS

Corporate business meetings shall be held monthly on the first Tuesday of each month at 19:30 hours. Meetings shall be held at the Ridgely Volunteer Fire Department Headquarters presently located at 8 W First Street, Ridgely, Maryland.

SECTION 2: ANNUAL MEETINGS

A meeting of the members shall be held annually at the fire station on the first meeting night in December. For the purpose of electing officers and directors and for the transaction of any other business authorized or requested to be transacted by the members. The new officers and directors will take office January 1.

SECTION 3: SPECIAL MEETINGS

The Board of Directors, President, Chief or the Ambulance Captain, may call a special meeting of the members upon giving three days written notice of the time and place thereof and business to be transacted. The three-day written notice may be waived by the Board of Directors on an emergency basis only, provided that the appropriate notice is given to all available members and documentation of notice is provided at the special meeting and such notice is entered as part of the minutes.

SECTION 4: QUORUM

15 members present in person shall constitute a quorum. In the event that members of the corporation absent themselves during any meeting, causing the lack of a quorum, adjournment shall be immediately called. No other business shall be conducted absent the required quorum, except adjournment.

SECTION 5: ORDER OF BUSINESS AT MEETINGS

- A. Roll Call
- B. Appointment of presiding officer in absence of President and Vice President.
- C. Readings of proceedings of last meeting and approval.
- D. Treasurer's reports
- E. Chief's report
- F. Ambulance Captain's report
- G. President's report
- H. Report from other officers
- I. Reports from standing committees
- J. Reports from other committees
- K. Old Business
- L. New Business
- M. Proposals for membership and election of members
- N. Good of the order
- O. Adjournment

SECTION 6: RULES

In the absence of any provision to the contrary in these by-laws, Articles of Incorporation, or statute, all meetings held by members, Directors, and Committees shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE V
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1: MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors shall consist of (9) nine members in good standing, five (5) of which shall include the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Chief. The remaining (4) four members shall be elected from the corporation at large, in accordance with Section 2 of this article.

SECTION 2: ELECTION

The Board of Directors shall be elected from Active Firefighter,/ Medical, Administrative and/or Active Life members of the corporation at the annual meeting of members. Directors shall serve for the time of one year from January 1 or until their successor is duly elected and qualified.

SECTION 3: VACANCIES

Vacancies in the Board of Directors shall be filled by the vote of the Active Firefighter/, Medical, Administrative, and/or Active Life Members of the corporation. Elections shall be held as soon as practical after the vacancy but not before the next regular business meeting. The Nominating Committee shall be activated for the purpose of taking nominations and determines eligibility. The person so elected shall hold office for the remainder of the term of his/her predecessor.

SECTION 4: DIRECTOR'S MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held once a month, at the call of the President. The President or any three Directors may call a special meeting of the Board and notice thereof shall be given to the Directors.

SECTION 5: QUORUM

Five Directors present at any regular meeting or duly notified special meeting shall constitute a quorum. In the event that Directors absent themselves during any meeting, causing the lack of a quorum, adjournment shall be immediately called. No other business shall be conducted absent the required quorum, except adjournment.

SECTION 6: POWERS

The entire management and direction of the Corporation shall be vested in the Board of Directors, with full authority to regulate, conduct and do all lawful acts and things that are not by statute required to be exercised by the members. The Board of Directors from time to time may appoint other committees or additional officer(s) as necessary, who shall act according to the instructions of the Board of Directors and who shall serve at the pleasure of the Board.

SECTION 7: LIMITATION OF POWER

The Directors must obtain approval from the membership of the Corporation for transaction of business in the following specified areas:

- A. Election and Dismissal of Members of the Corporation, except that Probationary members and members in violation of Article II Section 6 letter B may be dismissed by the Board of Directors.
- B. Sell, or otherwise transfer ownership of property of the Corporation.
- C. Amendments/changes to the Corporate Charter or By-Laws.
- D. Disbanding the Corporation.
- E. Incurring a Corporate debt in excess of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).
- F. Purchases in excess of seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7500.)

ARTICLE VI
CORPORATE OFFICERS

SECTION 1: CHAIN OF COMMAND

The Officers of the Corporation shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.

Members of the Board of Directors are also officers of the corporation. Special Officers of the corporation shall be the Chaplain, and Parliamentarian.

SECTION 2: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

- A. President. The President shall preside at all meetings of the membership and of the Board of Directors, preserve order therein, take the question on all motions made and recorded, convene special meetings as required by these by-laws, or whenever in their judgment the interests of the corporation shall require it; appoint the membership of all standing committees and such other committees deemed necessary.

The President shall enforce the by-laws and rules of the corporation in a strictly impartial manner. The President shall have the power to implement procedures to guide the daily administrative operations of the corporation. The President has the power of emergency suspension as enumerated in these by-laws.

The President shall be entitled to vote by ballot in all elections, and in all company matters where the vote would change the result of any motion under consideration. This officer shall be bonded as required by the Board of Directors. The President shall serve as an “ex-officio” member of all presidentially appointed committees.

- B. Vice-President. The Vice-President shall perform all duties of the president in the President’s absence and such other duties as shall be assigned by the President. This officer shall be bonded as required by the Board of Directors.

- C. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep a corporation roster, list the absentees of the meetings, keep the minutes of the meetings, maintain files on the business of the corporation, shall attend to the giving and serving of all notices, shall have custody of the seal of the corporation and shall do any other acts required by the President, Board of Directors or the members by a majority vote at any regular or special meeting thereof.

The Secretary shall act as President Pro Tem at any meeting, when the president and Vice-President are absent, until a chairman shall be chosen.

The Secretary shall surrender to their successor all books, documents and records of the Corporation. The Secretary shall be bonded as required by the Board of Directors.

- D. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall certify all bills passed by the membership; collect all fines; receive all monies and give receipt for the same; pay such bills as are approved by the corporation, keep a correct account of all receipts and disbursements, render a financial report annually and whenever required by the Corporation.

The Treasurer shall turn over to their successor all monies belonging to the Corporation and surrender all books and documents of said corporation.

The Treasurer shall be the President Pro Tem in the absence of the President, Vice-President, and the Secretary, until such time as a chairman shall be chosen. The Treasurer shall act as Secretary only in the absence of the Secretary and Assistant Secretary. This officer shall be bonded as required by the Board of Directors.

- E. Assistant Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer with such duties as may from time to time be requested. The Assistant Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining the RVFD Special Checking Account. The Assistant Treasurer shall hold no vote on the Board of Directors and may only attend a meeting of the Directors upon their invitation. This officer shall be bonded as required by the Board of Directors.

SECTION 3: DUTIES OF SPECIAL OFFICERS

- A. Chaplain – The Chaplain shall perform the duties customary to those of a Chaplain. The Chaplain shall hold no vote in the corporation unless the requirements for a specific class of membership are fulfilled.
- B. Parliamentarian – The Parliamentarian shall perform the duties customary to those of a Parliamentarian shall hold no vote in the corporation unless the requirements for a specific class of membership are fulfilled.

ARTICLE VII

OPERATIONAL OFFICERS

SECTION 1: CHAIN OF COMMAND

The Emergency Operations of the Corporation shall function under the authority of the Chief of the Department. Chain of command shall function at all times to ensure the authority of the Chief. The Chief shall bear full responsibility for firefighting and medical components of the corporation and all emergency operations.

- A. The active fire fighting organization of the said corporation shall consist of the following officers and persons to be chosen as hereinafter provided; a Chief, Deputy Chief, Assistant Chief, and such additional persons as the Chief may deem necessary to maintain full strength.

- B. The medical service shall consist of the following officers chosen as hereinafter provided: an Ambulance Captain and Ambulance Lieutenant, and such additional persons as the Ambulance Captain and Chief may deem necessary to maintain full strength.

SECTION 2: DUTIES

- A. Chief. It shall be the duty of the Chief to have full control of the department at all emergencies, training and drills. The Chief has responsibility to see that the apparatus and every article appertaining thereto, be kept in good order. The Chief may direct members of the several departments at emergencies, training sessions, and drills. The Chief shall ensure that every member under his command performs their duty. The Chief shall enforce the by-laws of the Corporation rigidly and impartially, and shall have the power of Emergency Suspension as enumerated in these By-Laws.

The Chief shall make a written report at least annually to the Directors on the needs, repair, and neglect of the apparatus and equipment owned or operated by the department. The Chief shall also report, in writing, to the Directors any condition or situation that impacts the ability of the department to authorize emergency expenditures. Shall keep an accurate record of all fires at which the Ridgely Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. shall do services, stating if possible, the origin of the fire, the building destroyed or damaged, the owner thereof and the estimated gross loss sustained. In the absence of the Chief, the duties required of him/her shall be exercised by the Chain of Command in the order that it appears in Section 1 of this Article.

- B. Ambulance Captain. It shall be the duty of the Ambulance Captain and assistant to have control of the Medical units, under the direction of the Chief, and to see that the ambulances, and every article appertaining thereto, be kept in good order. It shall be the duty of the Medical officers to coordinate medical services according to the orders of the Fire Line Officer in charge of an incident. The Ambulance Captain shall keep an accurate record of all ambulance calls at which the Ridgely Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. shall do service.

In the absence of the Ambulance Captain, the duties required shall be exercised by the Ambulance Lieutenant. Ambulance Captain and Lieutenant shall be considered line officers and shall have a rank equal to the Fire Captain and Fire Lieutenant respectively.

ARTICLE VIII

NOMINATION, ELECTION, APPOINTMENT & REQUIREMENTS OF OFFICERS

SECTION 1: ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible to be a candidate for an office a member shall meet the requirements for the office and shall be eligible to vote for that office as described in Article II, Section 13.

SECTION 2: REQUIREMENTS OF OFFICERS

- A. The President shall have at least five (5) years of membership in the Corporation and shall have served for at least two (2) years as Chairperson of at least (1) standing committee or two (2) years as a corporate, firefighting or medical officer.
- B. The Vice-President shall have at least two (2) years of membership in the Corporation and shall have served for at least one (1) year as the Chairperson of a standing committee or one (1) year as a corporate, firefighting or medical officer.
- C. The Secretary shall have served at least two (2) years of membership in the corporation. The Secretary and Treasurer shall have the ability to be bonded.
- D. The Treasurer shall have served at least five (5) years of membership in the corporation. The Treasurer shall have the ability to be bonded.

- E. Board of Directors at large shall have served at least two (2) years of membership in the corporation.

- F. The Chief shall have at least six (6) years of firefighting experience with at least five (5) years as a member of the corporation. The Chief shall be a certified Fire Officer II, under the requirements of the Maryland Fire Service Professional Qualifications Board or another nationally recognized Professional Qualifications Board. The Chief shall successfully complete an approved Incident Safety Officer Class and Pumps Class. The Chief shall have served at least three (3) years as a Fire Line Officer, one of which as the Assistant Chief or Deputy Chief.

- G. The Deputy Chief shall have at least five (5) years of fire service experience and at least (4) years as a member of the corporation. The Deputy Chief shall be a certified Fire Officer I, under the requirements of the Maryland Fire Service Professional Qualifications Board or another nationally recognized Professional Qualifications Board. The Deputy Chief shall successfully complete an approved Incident Safety Officer Class and Pumps Class. The Deputy Chief shall have served at least two (2) years as a fire line officer.

- H. The Assistant Chief shall have at least four (4) years of fire service experience and at least three (3) years as a member of the corporation. The assistant Chief shall be a certified Fire Officer I, under the requirements of the Maryland Fire Service Professional Qualifications Board or another nationally recognized Professional Qualifications Board. The Assistant Chief shall successfully complete an approved Incident Safety Officer Class and Pumps Class. The Assistant Chief shall have served at least two (2) years as a fire line officer.

- I. The Fire Captains and Lieutenants shall have at least three (3) years fire service experience and at least two (2) years as a member of the corporation. Fire Captains and Lieutenants shall be a certified Fire Fighter II, under the requirements of the Maryland Fire Service Professional Qualifications Board or another nationally recognized Professional Qualifications Board.

- J. All Medical Officers shall be Maryland certified at the EMT level or higher. These officers shall maintain medical certification for the duration of their term of office. Medical officers shall have at least two (2) years of membership in the corporation.

SECTION 3: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- A. The term of office for all officers shall be one year.

- B. All officers shall assume their duties on January 1 of each year and shall maintain their office until December 31, or until a successor is named.

- C. All elections shall be by secret ballot and be tallied by the nominating committee in the presence of the membership. Only the final tally of all votes shall be announced to the membership. Individual votes shall not be announced during or after the tally process.

- D. With Board of Directors advanced approval the President shall appoint a person or persons to tally the votes, should a member of the committee be nominated for a particular office.

E. The nominating committee shall consist of three active members. They shall serve a three-year term each. One member shall be elected each year to serve three years. The member with the most tenure on the committee shall chair the committee.

F. In situations where more than two (2) persons are nominated for a single elective office there shall be two voting periods. The first vote shall eliminate all but the top two candidates. Once the top two candidates are determined by vote, a second vote shall take place to determine the person elected to the office. In the case of tie votes that result in more than two top vote receivers a runoff vote will occur.

G. In situations where more than eight (8) persons are nominated for the AT LARGE Board of Directors positions there shall be two voting periods. The first vote shall eliminate all but the top eight candidates. Once the top eight (8) candidates are determined by vote, a second vote shall take place to determine the persons elected to the office. In the case of tie votes that result in more than eight (8) top vote receivers a runoff vote will occur.

SECTION 4: ABSENTEE BALLOT

A. The Nominating Committee shall develop and adopt an Absentee Vote policy. The chairperson of the Nominating Committee, from time to time, shall establish administrative procedures to conform to that policy.

SECTION 5: VACANCIES

A. Any vacancies in elected positions shall require a special election. Nominations shall be made from the floor and the election held at the next succeeding regular membership meeting of the corporation.

- B. All vacancies of appointed positions within the department shall be filled by the original appointing authority. In addition, any appointment may be rescinded by the same authority that granted the appointment.

- C. If no qualified candidates exist for an office, the Board of Directors may waive the requirements for that office so that it may be filled.

- D. The Board of Directors by two-thirds (2/3)-majority vote, shall have the power to remove any officer from elected office with cause. Article VIII, Section 3, Subsection A shall apply to any vacancy created in this manner and a special election shall be held.

SECTION 6: INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

The newly elected officers will raise their right hand and state the following: “I, (name), do solemnly swear to uphold the By-Laws, Rules, and Regulations of the Ridgely Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. I will most faithfully carry out the duties of the office to which I have been elected. I will hand over on the completion of my term all records and equipment entrusted to me, and I will do my utmost to preserve and promote the Ridgely Volunteer Fire Department. So help me, God.”

ARTICLE IX
POLICIES, RULES AND REGULATIONS

SECTION 1: ESTABLISHING POLICIES, RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Board of Directors shall have the authority and responsibility to establish Policy, Rules and Regulations that govern membership and the methods of operation. Establishing policies, rules and regulations require a 2/3 majority vote of the Board of Directors present.

All Rules, Regulations and Policies shall be published and available to the membership.

Rules, Regulations and Policies shall comply with all applicable laws governing non-profit corporations and the fair treatment of its members.

SECTION 2: STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES GUIDELINES and
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Chief and President shall have the authority to write and approve written Standard Operating Procedures, Guidelines, Rules, or Regulations, within their respective areas of responsibility.

SECTION 3: DECLARING RULES, REGULATIONS AND SOPS INVALID

Board of Directors shall have the authority to declare any written procedure or rule invalid by a three-quarters (3/4)-majority vote at any regular or special meeting.

SECTION 4: DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Disciplinary procedures shall be outlined in a policy adopted by the Board of Directors.

SECTION 5: EMERGENCY SUSPENSION

The Chief and President, or appointed designee in their absence, shall have the authority of Emergency Suspension. Emergency Suspensions shall be immediately reported in writing to the Board of Directors within 24 hours, and a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors will be scheduled without delay. Emergency Suspension shall not exceed 10 days.

SECTION 6: MEMBERS SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Every member of the department shall be subject to the Disciplinary Procedures, By Laws, Rules or Regulations of the Corporation and agrees to accept punishment if found guilty of infractions as a condition of membership of said Corporation.

ARTICLE X
FINANCE AND BUDGET

SECTION 1: BUDGET

Each year the President, Chief, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Budget Committee shall prepare an annual budget for the Corporation. The proposed budget shall be submitted to the Board of Directors by the first meeting in March. The approved budget shall be submitted to the membership at the next meeting.

SECTION 2: FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year for the Corporation shall be July 1 – June 30.

SECTION 3: ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET

Adoption of the annual budget shall be the sole responsibility of the Board of Directors. They shall have full power to cancel, amend, or alter the budget, except for the restrictions enumerated in Article V (Directors), Section 7.

SECTION 4: EXPENDITURES

After adoption of the budget, expenditures may be made, as detailed in the budget, provided purchasing procedures are followed with Board of Directors approval.

SECTION 5: PURCHASING PROCEDURES

The Treasurer shall develop and may periodically revise purchasing procedures to ensure accountability of Corporation funds. Purchasing procedures must be approved by the Board of Directors.

SECTION 6: PURCHASING AUTHORITY

No member of the Corporation shall have any authority to obligate the Corporation in any manner unless the same has been approved by the Board of Directors or membership by the budgetary appropriation or otherwise. The President and or Chief may authorize emergency expenditures. Emergency expenditures shall be reported to the Board of Directors as soon as possible.

SECTION 7: CONTRACT AUTHORITY

The President and Treasurer shall have the authority to sign legal contract documents on behalf of the Corporation, provided appropriate approvals have been granted by the Board of Directors or membership.

All contracts entered into by the Corporation require two authorized signatures.

ARTICLE XI
COMMITTEES

SECTION 1: APPOINTMENTS

The President shall appoint the following standing committees and shall charge them with objectives and duties for the duration of their tenure.

Each standing committee shall elect their chair and chair and shall report same to the Board of Directors by the First meeting in February.

- A. Budget. The Budget committee shall consist of the President, Chief, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and three active members. The Budget committee shall prepare an annual budget for the approval by the Board of Director, and shall establish procedures for the expenditure of Corporation funds.

The committee shall periodically review budget, allocation, and expenditure of Corporation funds to ensure that the budgetary procedures are followed. The committee shall ensure an annual independent audit of corporate financial records.

- B. By Laws. The By-Laws committee shall review and, when necessary, propose changes to the Corporation Charter and By-Laws. The By-Laws committee shall communicate with the Corporation's attorney to ensure that all proposed changes to the Charter and By-Laws are compatible with local, state, and national laws. Review by the attorney will ensure that Corporation Charter and By-Laws do not conflict with commonly accepted rules of order. The By-Laws committee may also assist, as requested, with the writing of Rules, Regulations, House Rules, Membership Requirements, and other written documents of importance to the Corporation.

- C. Historical. The Historical committee shall maintain corporate archives; compile photographs, pictures, press and other articles of interest to the Corporation. Company photographers shall serve on this committee.

- D. House. The House Committee shall consist of the Vice President and two (2) members of the Corporation. It shall be the responsibility of the House committee to enforce the house rules, superintend the maintenance of the buildings, fixtures and furniture, and report its need in open meetings to be acted upon by the Board of Directors or membership. The House committee shall designate a member to supervise and direct the custodians of the buildings.

- E. Membership. The Membership committee shall be responsible for maintaining all requirements and records pertaining to membership. They shall propose annual membership requirements, investigate and interview applicants for membership or membership transfers, perform a criminal background check, verify all reference (including employment, health status, and previous membership in other emergency service organizations), and conduct exit interviews on members leaving the Corporation.

- F. Planning. The Planning committee shall be a standing committee of not less than five members who shall prepare a minimum five (5) year plan of action for the Corporation. Said plan of action shall be prepared in cooperation with President and Chief and be approved by the Board of Directors annually.

SECTION 2: OTHER COMMITTEES

The President shall have the power to appoint such other committees they shall deem necessary. All presidentially appointed committees shall be charged with specific duties to execute and shall expire upon the execution of said duties, upon dismissal, or upon the election of the next President, whichever comes first.

ARTICLE XII
AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS

SECTION 1: AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be suspended, altered, amended or repealed by the members at any regular meeting or meeting called for that purpose; provided that the nature of the changes by presented at least one month prior to the vote. A two-third majority vote shall be required.

SECTION 2: NOTIFICATION

The By-Laws committee and the Board of Directors shall receive at least thirty (30) days written notice prior to the introduction of any proposed by-law changes. Notification shall consist of the exact written form of the proposed change or changes.