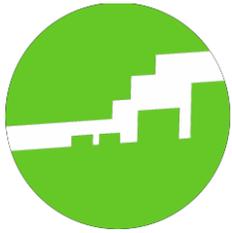


**Hillsborough County
City-County
Planning Commission**

Policies of the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission

August 2021



Hillsborough County
City-County
Planning Commission

Planning Commission

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MISSION

The Planning Commission, under the mandates of Chapter 163 Florida Statutes, the County Charter and Chapter 97-351, Laws of Florida, as amended, is the independent planning agency for Hillsborough County and municipalities therein. It is led by appointed citizens and serves all citizens of Hillsborough County by providing a vision for improving the quality of life.

The Planning Commission and its staff serve as agents to promote and coordinate the involvement of all citizens within Hillsborough County in comprehensive planning, public participation, growth management and environmental protection. The Planning Commission monitors the implementation of planning efforts and encourages innovation and creativity in achieving the Vision.

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of these Policies is to establish a framework to guide the performance of the staff of the Planning Commission in accomplishing its responsibilities and mission.

2.0 STRUCTURE

2.1 THE PLANNING COMMISSION, as the Local Planning Agency for Hillsborough County, Plant City, Tampa, and Temple Terrace, is a consolidated organization consisting of a commission (board) and a staff of technical, professional and support personnel. The official position of the Planning Commission is that adopted by the Planning Commission, and the Chair (or designee) shall be the spokesperson for the Planning Commission.

2.2 ROLE OF STAFF: The primary function of the staff is to assist the Executive Director in his or her responsibilities in achieving the Work Program, Goals and Objectives of the Planning Commission. The staff performs a variety of professional, technical, and support tasks, at the direction of the Executive Director.

2.3 ORGANIZATION: The professional staff shall be organized under the direction of the Executive Director.

3.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The role of the Executive Director of the Planning Commission is to lead the staff of the Planning Commission and to be the primary contact with the Commissioners, as well as between the staff and staffs of other agencies with which they interact. Leading the staff includes directing the development and allocation of resources, planning for the development of the agency and ensuring that the agency accomplishes its legislative mandate and Mission. The Executive Director is accountable for the overall programmatic, operational, and fiscal integrity of the agency.

- 3.1 **MONITORING:** The Executive Director shall monitor the Work Program and Budget of the Planning Commission and shall prepare periodic reports relating to the accomplishment of the Work Program and the status of the Budget.
- 3.2 **PERSONNEL:** The Executive Director shall manage the day-to-day activities of the personnel of the Planning Commission.
- 3.3 **PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION:** The Executive Director shall be responsible for the professional and technical assistance provided to the Planning Commission in the performance of the Work Program.
 - 3.3.1: A request for existing data or information from a Planning Commissioner shall be provided as soon as practical.
 - 3.3.2: A request for data or information that must be compiled or generated will be provided based on availability of staff time and other resources. The Executive Director may bring a request to the Planning Commission for review and approval before acting upon it, depending on factors such as time limitation, appropriateness, or magnitude of the request.
- 3.4 **REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL STUDIES & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:** The Executive Director shall report to the Planning Commission, from time to time, on requests for technical assistance or special studies.
- 3.5 **MEETINGS:** The Executive Director or other designated staff members shall be present as technical experts, as needed, at all regular and special meetings, hearings, and workshops of the Planning Commission, as well as at all meetings of other public bodies where the Planning Commission appears in its official capacity. The Executive Director shall report to the Planning Commission actions taken by other public bodies with respect to Planning Commission business.

4.0 PUBLIC INFORMATION

- 4.1 **CLIENT AND CITIZEN INFORMATION:** An ongoing information stream will be provided for clients and citizens highlighting the services, work efforts and accomplishments of the Planning Commission, for example: broadcasting meetings; hosting websites; issuing public notices and press releases; scheduling radio spots or television appearances; providing public forums, open houses, or interactive web events; and providing brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, and reports.
- 4.2 **ANNUAL REPORT:** There shall be an Annual Report of activities of the Planning Commission. The Annual Report shall provide information about the agency's budget and financial performance and describe the progress in achieving the Goals and Objectives of the Planning Commission in the previous year.

- 4.3 COMMUNITY DESIGN AWARDS PROGRAM: There shall be an annual Community Design Awards Program of the Planning Commission. The Community Design Awards Program shall be organized by the Executive Director or designee, with the assistance of the Public Information Committee.

5.0 GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

- 5.1 PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS: The staff shall provide professional and technical assistance to public officials in accordance with the annual Work Program. Except as provided herein for special requests, the scheduled public assistance functions shall be limited to technical or professional planning matters.
- 5.2 THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION: There shall only be one official position of the Planning Commission, which shall be the position adopted by either a consensus or a vote of the Planning Commission. When the position of the Planning Commission is requested of the professional staff in the absence of the Chair, the official position of the Planning Commission shall be presented by staff.

6.0 GOALS, WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET

- 6.1 GOALS: The Planning Commission's strategic plan and its Goals and Objectives shall be reflected in each annual Work Program and Budget.
- 6.2 WORK PROGRAM: The Executive Director shall prepare a Work Program based on legislative mandates, ongoing requirements, requested studies, technical assistance and the direction and priorities of the Planning Commission, reflecting the formal/informal input of the jurisdictions and other clients. The Work Program shall accompany the Requested Budget and be submitted to the Planning Commission.
- 6.3 REQUESTED BUDGET: The Executive Director, with the guidance of the Planning Commission Budget Committee, shall prepare the Requested Budget for Planning Commission review and approval.
- 6.3.1 Requested Budget: The Executive Director shall prepare a Requested Budget based upon the Planning Commission direction and priorities and with formal/informal input from Hillsborough County, Tampa, Temple Terrace, Plant City and others receiving Planning Commission services. The Requested Budget, including (1) previous year's expenditures, (2) the current year's Budget and (3) expenditures to date, shall be presented to the Planning Commission for consideration. The Executive Director shall also report on the expected need for significant equipment purchases. Upon approval by the Planning Commission, it shall be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).
- 6.3.2 Adopted Budget: Upon adoption of the final BOCC Budget each

ear, the Executive Director shall report to the Planning Commission, and if necessary, prepare a revised budget for review and approval.

7.0 CODE OF PROFESSIONALISM

- 7.1 APOLITICAL: The staff members of the Planning Commission shall confine their work time activities to the technical or professional planning assistance required of them as staff members. When, during the course of their employment, staff members are called upon to present their technical or professional planning views or recommendations, such staff members shall not express their personal political views or opinions.
- 7.2 GIFTS TO STAFF MEMBERS: In order to retain their independence, staff members shall politely decline all gift offers from members of the communities they serve; however, the Executive Director and the staff shall be at liberty to accept dining and event invitations not otherwise prohibited by law from any member of the community they serve.
- 7.3 EQUAL ASSISTANCE TO ALL: Staff members shall treat all members of the community they serve with respect and consideration, without exception.
- 7.4 STANDARDS: The Planning Commission advocates standards of professionalism, including participation in recognized professional organizations and striving to improve and broaden technical knowledge through office automation.

8.0 PLAN AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

In order to simplify the procedures for Comprehensive Plan adoption and amendment, procedures (e.g., manuals, agreements) shall be prepared for unincorporated Hillsborough County, Tampa, Temple Terrace and Plant City. These procedures should be simple and clear and shall be reviewed by the staff with subsequent changes brought before the Planning Commission for approval.

9.0 ATTORNEY

The Planning Commission shall be represented by an attorney since many of the responsibilities of the Planning Commission involve legal matters. The attorney is considered a key source of advice for both the staff and the Planning Commission.

- 9.1 PRESENCE AT MEETINGS: The attorney shall, at the request of the Chair or a majority of the Planning Commission or the Executive Director, be present at the regular meetings of the Planning Commission or at special meetings, hearings, and workshops of the Planning Commission. The attorney shall attend committee meetings upon the request of the chair of the committee or the Executive Director.

- 9.2 REVIEW OF ALL OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS: The attorney shall review all official documents of the Planning Commission prior to their being brought before the Planning Commission. Official documents include but are not limited to proposed resolutions, procedures manuals, contracts, reports, and other documents selected by the Executive Director for review by the attorney.
- 9.3 WORKING RELATIONSHIPS: The attorney shall give advice to both the staff and the Planning Commission. When advice is sought by the staff, it shall be coordinated through the Executive Director.
- 9.4 SELECTION AND REPLACEMENT: The selection and replacement of the attorney shall be proposed by a majority of the Members (defined in the By-Laws) of the Planning Commission.

10.0 CONTRACTUAL SERVICES

Selection of professional consultants and service providers (“Contractual Services”) for the Planning Commission shall be in accordance with all State and local laws governing the selection and this Policy. Solicitations for Contractual Services shall be communicated in a manner reasonably calculated to ensure notice and the opportunity for interested consultants and service providers to submit qualifications and proposals.

10.1 CONTRACTUAL SERVICES NOT EXCEEDING \$50,000: The Executive Director shall cause an appropriate scope of services to be prepared for each service required and shall have the authority to approve contracts for Contractual Services not exceeding \$50,000 (“Minor Contracts”), according to the following procedures. Price may not be the determining factor, but the rationale for selection of the Contractual Services provider shall be documented in writing, including, but not limited to, experience of the firm or individuals, availability of personnel, capabilities, qualifications, past performance, and quality of service.

10.1.1 Minor Contracts: After reviewing at least three (3) written proposals, the Executive Director is authorized to select the Contractual Services provider having the qualifications best suited to the task or project. (Written proposals shall include facsimile or other electronic communications.) In the event the Executive Director or designee determines that the desired services are only available from a single source, or if less than three (3) proposals are obtained, the Executive Director may contract with the sole source or the preferred Contractual Services provider. Prior to entering into a sole source contract, the Executive Director shall make reasonable efforts to obtain competing proposals and provide documentation for the determination. Modifications or amendments to Minor Contracts shall not exceed a total of 50% of the original contract amount or a cumulative total of \$50,000, whichever is less.

10.1.2 Alternative Process for Minor Contracts: In lieu of the selection process set forth in Subsection 10.1.1 above, the Executive Director

may, with the assistance of a staff committee (the "Staff Committee"), develop a list(s) of approved Contractual Services providers for specialized services routinely utilized by the agency, for example, consultants providing certain types of services such as group or meeting facilitators. To initiate this process, the Executive Director shall invite requests for qualifications, and the Staff Committee shall develop standards or criteria for use in certifying (for purposes of creating the list) that the interested Contractual Services provider is qualified to render the required services (an "Approved Provider"). Subsequently, at least biennially for as long as the services may be needed, the Executive Director shall issue a renewed request for qualifications. Interested Contractual Services providers may also make application for certification at any time by submitting the information required per the most recent request for qualifications. The Executive Director may select any Approved Provider from the list and shall document the file as to the rationale for selection.

10.1.3 Emergency: If the Executive Director determines in writing that an immediate danger to the public health, safety, or welfare, or other substantial loss to the Planning Commission requires emergency action, the Executive Director may procure Minor Contracts necessary to avoid the immediate danger or loss without regard to the requirements of Section 10.1.

10.2 CONTRACTUAL SERVICES EXCEEDING \$50,000: For any Contractual Services contract in excess of \$50,000 ("Major Contracts"), the professional staff shall evaluate the proposals for such contracts in accordance with the criteria set forth in this Section. Major Contracts shall be approved by the Planning Commission, upon the recommendation of the professional staff.

10.2.1 Scope of Services: The scope of services for Major Contracts shall be carefully prepared, and expert assistance may be obtained when deemed necessary by the Executive Director.

10.2.2 Evaluation Criteria: The selection process for Major Contracts shall utilize the following evaluation criteria, where appropriate, which shall be scored according to the value assigned to each category relative to the importance of that particular criterion to the project:

- (a) Special experience with the type of project;
- (b) Qualifications of the firm;
- (c) Qualifications of the staff designated for the project;
- (d) Firm's current capability to undertake the project;
- (e) Performance on similar projects;
- (f) Quality of the written proposal submitted;
- (g) On time;

- (h) Cost;
- (i) Failure on similar projects;
- (j) Originality on approach to project;
- (k) Grasp of scope, needs, and special circumstances of project;
- (l) Sensitivity to local issues (e.g., citizen/political concerns);
- (m) Conflict of interest – other clients, investments, relationships to interested boards, commissions, authorities, councils; and
- (n) Schedule.

10.3 CONTRACT DOCUMENTS: The Planning Commission and the Contractual Services provider shall execute a written contract which includes standard contract language, a budget (i.e., the mutually agreed upon price), the description/scope of the work to be performed, and a date for completion. A "short form" standard contract approved by the Planning Commission Attorney may be used by the Executive Director for Minor Contracts. Contract documents for Major Contracts and those not utilizing the Planning Commission's "short form" contract shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission Attorney.

10.4 WAIVER: In the case of emergency or extraordinary circumstances, the Planning Commission staff may find it necessary to recommend a waiver of the above policies and procedures for certain Major Contracts. In such event, consideration of the staff recommendation for a waiver shall be placed on the Planning Commission meeting agenda as a separate item for consideration and determination prior to consideration of the proposed contract. No waivers or contracts shall be approved if prohibited by state or local laws.

10.5 MONTHLY REPORTING: At each regular meeting of the Planning Commission, the Executive Director shall provide a report on the status of all Contractual Services contracts, and other such contracts which are expected to be negotiated in connection with the Work Program. The report shall include, without limitation, the scope of services, the purpose or need for the services, and a timeline for the services and the related project. Each calendar quarter, the Executive Director shall provide a report to the Planning Commission summarizing all pending and anticipated Contractual Services contracts.

10.6 CONSULTANT AND SERVICE PROVIDER DIVERSITY: The Planning Commission seeks to assure diversity in the selection of consultants for Contractual Services and in the procurement of commodities. For procurement of commodities, it shall be the policy of the Planning Commission to utilize Hillsborough County's purchasing and procurement system.

10.6.1 Ensuring Diversity: Participation of Certified Minority Businesses (DBE) shall be encouraged in the Planning Commission's solicitation and selection process for Contractual Services. The Executive Director shall ensure that Planning Commission's standard operating procedures accommodate this diversity policy.

10.6.2 Non-Discrimination: No person or firm shall be excluded from participation in or discriminated against in any manner whatsoever, in connection with the Planning Commission's award of any Contractual Services contract, on the grounds of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, political affiliation or marital status. The Planning Commission will monitor workforce demographics biennially and make every effort to ensure workforce percentages match the labor market in terms of race and gender.

10.6.3 Annual Report: The Executive Director shall prepare an annual report for the Planning Commission identifying the Contractual Services contracts executed during the previous twelve (12) month period, including utilization of Minority Business Enterprises.

11.0 EMPLOYMENT

11.1 PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE: Recruitment of employees shall be with the aim of attracting the very best and dedicated personnel to the Planning Commission and be done by highlighting the conditions of employment with the Planning Commission as a total package.

11.2 STAFF DEVELOPMENT: Incentives shall be developed and implemented to encourage the pursuit of excellence of the staff. These incentives shall be developed by the Executive Director and included in the Budget as necessary.

11.3 EXIT INTERVIEWS: The Executive Director shall request an exit interview with each member of the professional staff who is terminating employment with the Planning Commission for reasons other than those covered in sections 11.5 and 11.6 below.

11.4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY: The Planning Commission shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, political affiliation, or marital status in any form or manner against its employees or applicants for employment.

11.5 SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY: The Planning Commission has a strong commitment to its employees to provide a safe environment and to promote high standards of employee health. Consistent with this commitment, we are obligated to have a drug/alcohol free workplace. The full policy is in the Planning Commission Employee Handbook.

11.6 REDUCTION IN FORCE: It is the policy of the Hillsborough County

Planning Commission that whenever due to changes in programs, lack of funds, reorganization, or a decrease in work, or for other business reasons, it becomes necessary to reduce the number of employees, a standard reduction-in-force (RIF) procedure will be followed. This policy is designed to provide an equitable, efficient, and orderly procedure to identify and process employees for layoffs. This policy does not apply to unclassified employees. Unclassified employees may be laid off without respect to the procedures covered in this policy. The Executive Director retains authority to resolve any RIF issue not clearly addressed by this policy.

11.6.1 Identifying Positions

- (a) The Executive Director will inform the TPO Executive Director and the Financial Manager that a RIF is necessary and will coordinate with them to identify the affected job classifications. The Executive Director will:
 - (i) Identify the need for the RIF.
 - (ii) Identify and list all of the classifications of positions and the number of positions to be reduced within each affected classification through the entire agency.
- (b) The Executive Director will cause the notification of the affected employees whose positions may be included in the RIF. This notice will be in writing.
- (c) Before any classified employee is laid off, temporary employees and employees serving in their initial evaluation period in the affected job classifications will be dismissed. Classified employees serving in their trial period in the affected job classification will be returned to their former job classification by seniority in that class.
- (d) Employees in an acting status (as defined in the Planning Commission Employee Handbook) will be included on the retention roster for their original position. Classified employees who are assigned to limited duration positions will be included in the retention roster for their former job classification where their original position resides if their former job classification is subject to RIF.

11.6.2 Retention Points

- (a) After the position(s) to be eliminated are identified, all classified employees in the impacted positions will be ranked on a retention roster based on the employees' total retention points by classification.

- (b) If an entire classification is to be laid off, no retention points need to be calculated because all those affected employees will be laid off. If any affected job classification has only a single employee, no retention points will be calculated.
- (c) All remaining employees within the affected job classification will be evaluated to determine their retention standing by applying the following formula to combine the factors of performance, seniority, and veterans' preference into a single score. Hillsborough County Planning Commission will allocate additional points to veterans pursuant to Section 295.07, *Florida Statutes*. The start date to measure performance in the past one to five years will be the date the Executive Director identifies the need and job classification for the RIF (aka date of notification of RIF).
- (d) Total retention points will be calculated as follows:
 - (i) Tenure: ½ point for each calendar month of continuous, tenured service with Hillsborough County Government (any Appointing Authority covered by the former Hillsborough County Civil Service Law). Tenured service will be calculated from the start date of employment in a classified position. Honorably discharged veterans also receive a ½ point for each calendar month of active-duty military service. Continuous service refers to employment without break-in-service. A break-in-service is defined as an interruption of continuity of employment of no more than 30 calendar days with Hillsborough County Government.
 - (ii) Performance Evaluation: Points corresponding to the employee's overall performance rating in that given year's annual performance evaluation, limited to the five most recent annual performance evaluations, will be added together and then divided by number of evaluations (the average). The average will be the number included in the retention calculation. The points are as follows:

Rating	Points
Remarkable	+20
Commendable	+15
Exceeds Expectation	+10
Meets Expectations	+5
Below Expectations	-20

(iii) Discipline: Retention points will be **deducted** in the following manner for disciplinary actions as documented during the five years immediately preceding the date of written notification of RIF by the Executive Director:

Disciplinary Year	Written Reprimand
1 st year proceeding notice	10 Points for each
2 nd year proceeding notice	8 Points for each
3 rd year proceeding notice	6 Points for each
4 th year proceeding notice	4 Points for each
5 th year proceeding notice	2 Points for each

In the case of demotions for disciplinary reasons or suspensions without pay (includes resolution with or without a hearing), 35 points will be **deducted** for each occurrence of involuntary demotion or suspensions during the five years immediately preceding the date of notification of RIF. This is in addition to the schedule above.

(iv) Veterans' Preference: Employees eligible for Veterans' Preference will have 5 points, 10 points or 15 points **added** to their total retention points depending on the category of veterans' preference pursuant to Section 295.07, *Florida Statutes*.

(e) The affected employees will be provided the calculation of their retention points and an opportunity to meet with the HR Manager to discuss this calculation.

(f) No later than (5) working days after meeting with the HR Manager, each affected employee must certify the computation of their retention points as complete and accurate or request a review. This review is initiated by the employee by forwarding a written request to the HR Manager, together with documentation concerning the employee's justification for disputing the calculation of their retention points. If such a written request is timely submitted by an employee, the HR Manager shall evaluate the merits of the request together with the Executive Director, who shall make a final determination and provide written notice to the employee within ten (10) business days after the date the request is submitted. The decision of the Executive Director on the request for review shall be final as to computation of the

employee's retention points. Absent timely submittal of a request for review, an employee's failure, or refusal to certify the computation of retention points shall constitute a waiver and acceptance that the computation is accurate.

- (i) The request for review by the Review Committee is a challenge to the application of the Planning Commission's RIF calculations, not a grievance.

11.6.3 Layoff

- (a) In determining the order of employees to be laid off, employees with the least combined total of retention points in the impacted position(s) in the affected area(s) will be laid off first.
- (b) Should two or more employees have the same combined total of retention points, and none are eligible for Veterans' Preference, the employee with the least points for the performance evaluation criterion, discussed in paragraph B4(4) above, will be laid off first. Should a tie continue to exist, then the employee with the shorter length of service in the affected position will be laid off first. Should a tie continue to exist, the Executive Director will review those employees' overall employment histories to determine who shall be retained.
- (c) Should two or more employees have the same combined total of retention points and one or more are eligible for Veterans' Preference, the employee(s) ineligible for Veterans' Preference shall be laid off first. Should a tie continue to exist, the employee with the least points for the performance evaluation criterion, discussed in paragraph B4(b) above, will be laid off first. Should a tie continue to exist, then the employee with the shorter length of service in the affected position will be laid off first. Should a tie continue to exist, the Executive Director will review those employees' overall employment histories to determine who shall be retained.
- (d) Pursuant to Rule 55A-7.015, Florida Administrative Code, the agency shall provide no less than 60 days' notice to affected veterans prior to beginning implementation of a workforce reduction or layoff plan. This notice shall describe the different categories of preference-eligibility, shall provide employees a minimum of 30 days to provide documentation of eligibility, and designate an appropriate point of contact within organization for employees to submit this documentation.

- (e) All other employees identified for layoff will be given written notice of termination at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the date of layoff.
- (f) Upon receiving the notice of layoff and in lieu of being laid off, an impacted employee may request a voluntary demotion or transfer within the Agency to the last position held by the employee if they had successfully completed the initial or trial period for that position, and if the employee meets the minimum qualifications specified for the position as reflected in the current job description. Such requests for demotion or transfer may only be considered for vacant, funded positions.
- (g) Requests for voluntary demotion or transfer as described above must be in writing and submitted within seven (7) working days after receiving the written notice of layoff.
- (h) No demotion or transfer will result in an employee moving to a higher grade, salary, or classification.
- (i) Upon demotion, the employee will be placed in the same relative salary range for the reduced classification as the employee enjoyed in the former classification, e.g., mid-range salary in the RIF classification will result in mid-range salary for the reduced classification.

11.6.4 Re-employment

- (a) Employees separated as a result of a RIF will be afforded the right of first refusal for future vacant positions within the agency, starting with those having the highest number of retention points, who are qualified for the same or a lower job classification having the same scope of duties from which the employee was laid off.
- (b) Such right of first refusal will become effective the date of layoff and continue for one (1) year. The right of first refusal will be lost when the employee accepts or declines a bona-fide offer of employment with the Planning Commission regardless of whether the pay grade of the offered job is equal to or lower than the pay grade of the job from which the employee was separated due to RIF.
- (c) The following provisions will apply when an employee who is separated due to RIF is re-employed by this Agency within one (1) year of the effective date of layoff:
 - (i) All service which was creditable on the date of the layoff will be included when computing the employee's length of service.

- (ii) All benefits to which the employee was entitled on the date of layoff, and for which not otherwise compensated, will be re-established on the date of re-employment. No further benefits will accrue during the actual period of layoff.
- (iii) If re-employed in the same classification, the employee will be paid at the same salary as was being paid at the time of layoff.
- (iv) If re-employed in a different classification, regardless of pay grade, the employee will be paid in accordance with the Planning Commission's Employee Handbook.
- (v) The employee must be re-instated for at least 6 months before eligible for an annual performance review.

12.0 VIOLATIONS

The Executive Director and the entire staff shall abide by these policies. Violators shall be reprimanded, and consistent violators shall be dismissed.

13.0 DEFINED TERMS

Capitalized terms not otherwise defined in these Policies shall have the meaning defined in the By-Laws.