

Constitution of the Tampa Bay Association of Black Journalists

Chapter 1

Article 1: Name and symbol

Section 1: The name of the organization is the Tampa Bay Association of Black Journalists.

Section 2: The symbol of the group is the acronym TBABJ.

Section 3: TBABJ shall be a non-profit organization. The group is organized for exclusively literary and educational purposes within the meaning of 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue code of 1954.

Article 2: Purpose

Section 1: The purpose of the TBABJ is to bring together people of African decent who work in the media, or media-related jobs throughout the Tampa Bay area. That area encompasses Hillsborough, Pinellas, Citrus, Hernando, Polk, Manatee and Pasco counties on the Suncoast of Florida.

Section 2: The TBABJ's goals are to help ensure diversity in area media and accurate, balanced coverage of communities of color while serving as a resource for both established and aspiring communicators of African decent by:

- a) Bringing together black journalists with those who work in related fields, such as public relations.
- b) Awarding scholarships to promising young black students who plan to pursue careers as journalists.
- c) Serving as a clearing house for employment opportunities within the media.
- d) Sponsoring events that encourage quality coverage of communities of color.
- e) Sponsoring events encouraging professional development among journalists of color.

Section 3: The TBABJ may, after membership approval, take stands and positions on journalism or media issues. Also upon membership approval, TBABJ may defend its members in related grievances.

Article 3: Affiliation

Section 1: The TBABJ shall be an affiliate chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists, bound by the regulations and bylaws required of chapter groups.

Article 4: Membership

Section 1: The organization will be comprised of journalists, media educators, broadcasters, public relations professionals and anyone else who is a member of a media or media-related profession.

Section 2: Members must pay annual dues set by the Executive Board. Dues are payable to the treasurer, securing membership for one calendar year. Membership is automatically revoked if dues are unpaid for a period of 60 days.

Section 3: Full members are defined as journalists who work either as staff employees or freelancers as writers, reporters, editors, photographers, columnists and artists employed by any newspaper, radio station, TV outlet, magazine, online service or wire service. Full members receive the full privileges of membership, including the right to vote and hold any office in the group.

Section 4: Associate members are defined as academics who study journalism or media-related fields, media sales personnel, public relations personnel and other communications related professions. The executive board will determine if an individual qualifies as an associate member. Associate members have all privileges of membership, including the right to vote and hold any office except President, Vice President of Print and Vice President of Broadcast.

Section 5: Student membership shall be available to full and part time students at accredited colleges and universities who are majoring in print or broadcast journalism, taking mass communications courses, or considering a career in journalism. Student members have the right to vote and can serve in appointed positions, but cannot hold an elective office.

Article 5: Compliance

Section 1: The constitution, as well as the bylaws shall be in compliance with federal, state and local laws that govern the transaction of TBABJ business. As a non-profit organization, TBABJ is organized with literary and educational purposes as a federally and state-recognized charity.

Chapter 2

Article 1: Officers of the organization

Section 1: Titles of officers are President, Vice President for Print, Vice President for Broadcast, Secretary, Treasurer and Parliamentarian.

Section 2: The Executive Board will consist of the six (6) officers. The Board of Directors will consist of the six officers plus committee heads. Directors will meet once every three months separately from the general membership meeting.

Section 3: The overall governing body of the organization shall be the membership. The Executive Board shall be the governing body on matters not brought before the membership.

Article 2: Duties and descriptions of the elected officers

Section 1: President – The President shall be the chief executive officer of the organization, presiding over all meetings of the membership and serving as chairman of the Executive Board.

Section 2: Vice President for Print and Broadcast – The Vice Presidents shall perform the duties as assigned by the President. The Vice Presidents shall act in the President's stead when the President is unable to perform his or her duties or at the direction of the President.

- a) The Vice President for Print shall come from the ranks of the print media.
- b) The Vice President for Broadcast shall come from the ranks of the broadcast media.

Section 3: Secretary – The Secretary shall have the responsibility of keeping a record of all meetings of the membership and Executive Board. The Secretary is responsible for all correspondences, notices and written documents of the TBABJ. The Secretary is the official custodian of the Constitution and Bylaws. The Secretary shall perform other duties at the behest of the President or Vice Presidents.

Section 4: Treasurer – The Treasurer shall have the responsibility of maintaining a thorough financial record of all monies received and or spent by the TBABJ. The Treasurer shall receive and account for all the funds of the organization; secure a bond to the organization in a sum sufficient to cover the probably amount of funds he or she will likely be called upon to handle while in office; and prepare an annual budget report for TBABJ in December. The Treasurer shall perform other duties at the behest of the President or Vice Presidents.

Section 5: Parliamentarian – The Parliamentarian shall have the responsibility of maintaining a thorough knowledge of the organization, its Bylaws and parliamentary procedure. The Parliamentarian shall act as sergeant-at-arms at meetings of the membership, Board of Directors and Executive Board.

Article 3: Eligibility for office, terms of office and removal

Section 1: Eligibility - To be eligible for office, members must have dues fully paid and be otherwise in good standing with the organization. The President and Vice Presidents must also be full members in good standing with the National Association of Black Journalists, as required of all affiliate chapters.

Section 2: Term of office - The Executive Board, comprised of six (6) officers in good standing, shall be elected once a year at a regular membership meeting. Each officer is elected for a one-year term. Officers are not limited in the number of terms they may serve.

Section 3: Mode of election - The membership shall elect officers from a field of candidates comprised of members in good standing. The election shall be held by blind ballot. Officers serve their terms from the date of their election until officer elections are held the following calendar year.

Section 4: Only members with dues fully paid and in good standing may vote for officers.

a) Members who cannot attend the election meeting may file a signed absentee ballot with the Parliamentarian seven (7) days before the election date.

b) A candidate for office wins by majority vote. In case of a run-off, candidates with equal votes immediately run again.

Section 5: Nominations - Potential candidates shall be requested during October's membership meeting; the slate of candidates shall be finalized at the November membership meeting for an election to be held at the December membership meeting.

Section 6: Removal – Proposals calling for the resignation or removal of an officer will be reviewed by the remainder of the Executive Board without the presence of the accused officer. However, if the accused chooses, he or she may designate two members in good standing to attend such a review. A vote two-thirds of the Executive Board shall be required to impeach an elected officer.

Section 7: Vacancy – The President shall appoint any member in good standing to replace officers who resign before the end of their term. Appointees shall serve until the next election.

Chapter 3

Article 1: Membership meetings, powers and voting

Section 1: Purpose – The membership shall assemble at least once a month at such times and places as may be determined by the executive board for the purpose of:

- a) Hearing and acting upon the reports of the chapter officers.
- b) Providing educational and professional development workshops.
- c) Hearing and acting on such business as may be presented by the membership.

Section 2: Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the president, by vote of the executive board or by written request from at least 10 members in good standing.

Section 3: Powers – The membership shall have the power to:

- a) Adopt amendments to the Constitution.
- b) Pass bylaws consistent with the Constitution.
- c) Elect an executive board every year.

Section 4: A majority vote of the membership present at any official meeting, to be no less than four dues paying members, is needed to activate any resolution.

Chapter 4

Article 1: Constitutional Amendments

Section 1: Proposal of amendments – Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by any member in good standing.

Section 2: The Constitution may be amended as follows:

a) By a vote of two-thirds of the membership present at the meeting where the vote takes place. Changes to this constitution must be submitted in writing to the executive board in advance of a vote. The proposed change must be introduced at one meeting for discussion and voted on at a subsequent meeting held at least two weeks later. The executive board must notify the membership of the coming vote via mail, telephone or email.

b) Amendments become effective immediately after the membership's approval.