

Solidarity Lodge No. 1457 A. F. & A. M.
Lodge By-Laws
Revised April 13, 2016

Article I

Name of the Lodge

This Lodge was chartered on the 4th day of December 1993, and shall be known by the name and style of Solidarity Lodge No. 1457, of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons.

This Lodge subscribes to and shall be governed by the Constitution, Laws, Resolutions, and Edicts of The Grand Lodge of Texas.

Article II

Meeting of the Lodge

Section 1: The Stated Meetings shall be held every second Friday of every month, at 7:30 p.m.

Section 2: Called meetings may be made by the Worshipful Master (or in his absence or his inability to serve, by the Senior Warden, or in the absence of both Master and Senior Warden, then by the Junior Warden), at such times as they, or either of them, having the right to act, may think important, or to the interest of the craft.

Section 3: As many members as possible should be notified of such called meetings, and no business shall be transacted at same, except such as was specified in the call.

Article III

Officers of the Lodge

The officers of this Lodge shall be a Worshipful Master, Senior and Junior Wardens, Treasurer, Secretary, Chaplain, Senior and Junior Deacons, Senior and Junior Stewards, and Tiler. (Marshal, Master of Ceremonies, and/or Musician is optional).

Article IV

Elections of Officers of the Lodge

Section 1: The Worshipful Master, Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary shall be elected; all other officers shall be appointed.

Section 2: In the election of officers, should only one name be placed in the nomination, the vote may be taken without the ballot; but should more than one Brother be placed in the nomination, **elections shall be made by secret ballot**, the members shall prepare their ballots, which shall be taken up and counted at the Secretary's desk, and the number of votes received by each Brother reported to the presiding officer, and he shall declare the Brother receiving a majority of all votes cast duly elected.

In the event that there are more than two candidates for the same position and nobody has received a majority vote, the process shall be repeated for the top two (2) vote getters only. For clarity, a Majority Vote here is defined as 50% of the total votes cast plus one (1).

Section 3: In the event no Brother has such majority, the ballot shall be repeated until such result is attained.

Article V

Duties of the Officers

Section 1: Worshipful Master – It shall be the duty of the Worshipful Master to see that the By-Laws of the Lodge, as well as the Constitution and Regulations of the Grand Lodge are duly observed, and that the officers attend strictly to their duties.

Section 2: Treasurer – It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to hold all deeds, certificates of stocks, notes, obligations or other property of a financial character, belonging to the Lodge, and to collect and receive the same when directed to the Lodge; to receive all monies from the hand of the Secretary, passing his receipt for the same; and pay them out upon the order of the Worshipful Master and consent of the Lodge.

He shall keep a correct account of the same, and report minutely the financial condition of the Lodge at the stated meeting next succeeding the festival of St. John the Baptist, and at such other times as Lodge may direct.

Section 3: Secretary – It shall be the duty of the Secretary to carefully observe the proceedings of the Lodge, make a correct record of all things proper to be written, and to receive all monies due the Lodge; turning them over to the Treasurer, taking his receipt for the same.

It shall be also the duty:

- (1) To keep all books and papers relating to the proceedings of the Lodge.
- (2) To authenticate all official papers and documents emanating from the Lodge with the seal of

the same.

(3) To notify all Brethren of their election to office, if not present at the time of the election.

(4) To notify the Grand Secretary as prescribed by law, of the suspension or expulsion of members, and of the rejection of applicants, to issue all summons, demits and notices as he may be directed; to make out and transmit to the Grand Secretary the annual returns of this Lodge; remit also to him the Grand Lodge per capita taxes; report to the Grand Secretary the names of all Brethren elected to parent or plural memberships; and perform all other duties appertaining to his office.

Section 4: Tiler – It shall be the duty of the Tiler to see that the Lodge room is kept clean and in order; and that the various articles of furniture are in their appropriate places; to strictly guard the door during the sitting of the Lodge; to summon the members of the Lodge to all called meetings where a summons is necessary, and be punctual in attendance.

Article VI

Standing Committees

Section 1: The Worshipful Master, Senior and Junior Wardens shall constitute standing committees on Fraternal Assistance, Sickness and Arbitration, a majority of whom may at all times act, and are responsible to the Lodge.

Their duties are as follows:

(1) **Fraternal Assistance** – It is their duty to examine all claimants for assistance, and if necessary they draw upon the Treasurer in each instance for an amount not exceeding twenty-five dollars; reporting the facts in each case to the Lodge at its next stated meeting thereafter.

(2) **Sickness** – It shall be their duty to visit all sick Brethren (unless it would be dangerous or imprudent to do so), and ascertain their condition and necessities; and to take such actions as they may deem proper and necessary, both in regard to the Brother and his Family.

(3) **Arbitration** – It shall also be the duty of this committee to settle all differences between Brethren, unless the parties prefer to bring the matter before the Lodge.

Section 2: Committee on Finance – It shall be the duty of the Worshipful Master at the first stated meeting after the 24th of June, to appoint a standing Committee on Finance, to be composed of discreet Master Masons, members of this Lodge, and if possible, men practically

acquainted in bookkeeping.

Section 3: It shall be the duty of this committee at the close of each Masonic Year, as soon as appointed, and oftener if required, to carefully examine and check up the reports, books and vouchers of the Secretary and Treasurer, and any other financial matters referred to them, and make a full and accurate report at the stated meeting of the Lodge, showing the condition of the books and accounts. And should any inaccuracies be found, recommend the necessary steps for their correction. In the matter of ordinary accounts referred to them, they may, if satisfied, report instant.

Section 4: The reports of the said committee on finance thus made, shall be read in open Lodge and spread upon the minutes, noting the actions taken by the Lodge; and all accounts and claims against the Lodge, when demanded by any Brother, shall be referred to this committee before being allowed.

Section 5: Capital Fund Committee – It shall be the duty of the Worshipful Master, at the first stated meeting after his installation, to appoint a standing Capital Fund Committee, composed of discreet Master Masons of this Lodge, and if possible, Brethren having knowledge of finance, investment, or real property matters.

It shall be the duty of this committee to oversee the stewardship, preservation, investment, and reporting of the Capital Fund as established in Article XIV. The committee shall monitor compliance with the principal benchmark provisions and make recommendations to the Lodge concerning capital expenditures and long-term property matters.

The committee shall establish and administer a Capital Fund Recognition Program, track pledge participation and fulfillment, and make recommendations to the Lodge concerning appropriate recognition of contributors. Such recognition shall be honorary in nature and shall not confer any governance authority or special rights within the Lodge.

The committee shall present written reports to the Lodge at the stated meetings held in August, November, February, and May of each Masonic year detailing the balance, benchmark status, and earnings of the Capital Fund. The committee shall act in an advisory capacity only, and no funds shall be expended without approval of the Lodge as provided in Article XIV.

Article VII

Fees of Degrees

The Fees for the degrees in this Lodge shall be an amount not less than prescribed in Article 307 of the Constitution and Laws of The Grand Lodge of Texas, and set by this Lodge from time to

time. In addition to the regular fees collected by the Lodge for the Master's Degree, a \$25.00 donation to the Texas Masonic Charities Foundation, Inc. shall be collected from the candidate.

In addition to the regular fee for Initiation, a \$5.00 donation to the George Washington National Memorial shall be collected from the candidate for the Entered Apprentice Degree.

Article VIII

Demits

A member is chargeable with the pro rata of his dues as provided in Article 317 **of the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas.**

Article IX

Lodge Dues

Section 1: Each member of this Lodge (unless herein exempted) shall pay dues from the time of his raising or affiliation, an amount set by the Lodge from time to time provided that they are not less than prescribed in Article 311 of the Constitution and Laws. A member however shall not be required to pay such dues if he purchased an Endowed Membership in accordance with the Laws of The Grand Lodge.

Section 2: Dues for Solidarity Lodge consist of two parts: a Lodge **portion** ~~part of \$56.50 per year,~~ and The Grand Lodge per capita ~~tax.~~ **The amount of the Lodge portion shall be established and governed by the Rules and Regulations of the Lodge and may be amended therein from time to time.**

Section 3: Only the Lodge part of the dues will be prorated for ~~affiliations and~~ demits, as the per capita is not prorated by The Grand Lodge.

Article X

Visiting Brethren

Section 1: A visitor shall not be admitted except upon examination or lawful avouchment.

Section 2: In the event that the visiting Brother is a stranger and hails from some Lodge in another Grand Jurisdiction, it shall be the duty of the Secretary to notify the visitor's Lodge that we have had the pleasure of a visit by one of its members, giving the name and date.

Article XI

Miscellaneous Regulations

~~Weapons, neither defensive nor offensive, shall not be carried into the Lodge Room.~~

~~Additional regulations not provided for or in conflict with the Constitution and Laws of The Grand Lodge may be added to this article.~~

Section 1: Annual Budget: The Worshipful Master shall present his annual budget for approval at the first stated meeting following the 24th of June, or no later than the second stated meeting of his term. Prior to its formal presentation for approval, the Worshipful Master may present a proposed budget at a called meeting, at such time as may be convenient to the members, for review and discussion. Prior to his installation, the Worshipful Master-Elect shall confer with the Treasurer and shall ensure that a proposed budget for the ensuing Masonic year is prepared.

Article XII

Business

At Stated Meeting after opening the Lodge in due and Ancient form, a quorum being present, the Order of Business, unless otherwise ordered by the Lodge or the Worshipful Master, shall be as follows:

1. Reading (if required), Correcting and Approval of minutes of previous meetings (in accordance with Article 337 of the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas)
2. Receiving and referring to Committees of Petitions and Applications
3. Reports of Special Committees
4. Balloting on Petitions and Applications
5. Reports of Standing Committees
6. Communications from the Grand Master and the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Texas
7. Unfinished Business
8. Motions, Resolutions and New Business
9. Examinations for Proficiency in the proper degree
10. Voting on Proficiency
11. Claims and Accounts

Article XIII

Rules of Business

The rules of conducting business in this Lodge shall be as nearly as possible the same as those

prescribed for The Grand Lodge, and in addition as follows:

Section 1: When a question is decided, the same matter shall not be acted on during that meeting unless on motion to reconsider, which can only be made by a member voting in the majority, and at that or the next stated meeting, when there must be an equal or greater number of members present than when the action was taken. **Once a question has been decided, it may not be considered again at the same meeting except by a motion to reconsider. Such motion may be made only by a member who voted with the prevailing side and must be made at the same meeting or at the next stated meeting. The motion may be acted upon only if at least as many members are present as were present when the original decision was made.**

Section 2: All questions of order shall be decided by the Worshipful Master without appeal or debate; but the Master may ask the advice of any member before deciding; and he has the right, at any time, to declare the Lodge closed or called off, for the purpose of stopping angry debate or confusion.

Article XIV

Special Funds

Section 1: Sunshine Fund: Solidarity Lodge shall maintain a Sunshine Fund for the purpose of relief to our Brethren and Families. The administration and specific usage of this fund will be established by a special committee and approval of the Lodge, with funds distributed by consent of the Lodge, but in no case will more than \$200.00 or 50% of the fund balance, whichever is less, be distributed per one incidence. The Lodge shall appropriate a yearly amount of \$200.00 towards the fund plus 10% of the net proceeds from any fund raising activities.

Section 2: Endowed Membership Fund: Solidarity Lodge shall maintain an Endowed Membership Fund for the purpose of assisting Brethren in the purchase of Endowed Membership as defined by Article 318a of the Constitution and Laws of The Grand Lodge of Texas. The administration and specific usage of this fund will be established by a special committee and approval of the Lodge and in accordance with all applicable Grand Lodge of Texas regulations, with funds loaned consented by the Lodge, but in no case will more than \$300.00 or 50% of the fund balance, whichever is less, be distributed to one Brother.

The money for this fund will come strictly from voluntary contributions, and may be invested in secure bank instruments with maturity dates sufficiently early in June of each year that funds are available to purchase Endowments before the deadline for such purchases at Grand Lodge.

Section 3: Capital Fund: Solidarity Lodge shall maintain a Capital Fund for the exclusive purpose of securing and sustaining suitable facilities for Lodge use, including the payment of

long-term rental or lease obligations, and for acquiring, constructing, improving, maintaining, and preserving real property and facilities for Lodge purposes.

The primary funding source of the Capital Fund shall be a voluntary multi-year pledge program designed to allow members to contribute over time at levels comfortable to them. Participation in such a program shall be voluntary and shall not affect dues, voting rights, eligibility for office, or membership status. Additional funding may be derived from fundraising events, surplus funds approved by the Lodge, designated donations, memorial gifts, or other contributions specifically directed toward capital purposes.

All monies of the Capital Fund shall be deposited in a separate account and judiciously invested with the aim of preserving the principal. The principal benchmark of this fund shall be Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000.00), which shall be preserved and not expended. Only earnings, interest, dividends, or realized gains in excess of the established benchmark may be used for the purposes described herein unless otherwise approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a stated meeting and confirmed at the next stated meeting.

The Lodge may, by vote at a stated meeting, transfer designated capital monies to a duly organized charitable entity for the purpose of property acquisition, ownership, construction, or long-term stewardship. Any such transfer shall require approval of the Lodge and shall be recorded in the minutes. Nothing herein shall obligate the Lodge to transfer funds nor grant automatic authority to any external entity without Lodge approval.

Permitted uses of the Capital Fund shall include rental or lease payments; utilities, storage, insurance, and facility-related operational and maintenance costs; improvements to rented or owned property; the purchase of land; planning, design, construction, renovation, furnishing, maintenance, and preservation of a Lodge facility; and all reasonable architectural, engineering, consulting, legal, permitting, inspection, closing, and financing-related expenses directly associated with acquiring, leasing, constructing, renovating, or maintaining property for Lodge use.

All expenditures from this fund shall require approval of the Lodge at a stated meeting and shall be recorded in the minutes. The Capital Fund shall not be used for general Lodge operating expenses unrelated to property or facility purposes. Quarterly reports detailing the balance, benchmark status, earnings, and investment position of the Capital Fund shall be presented to the Lodge in August, November, February, and May.

Oversight of the Capital Fund shall be vested by a standing committee called the Capital Fund Committee, which shall supervise stewardship, investment compliance, reporting, and adherence to the provisions of this Article. The composition, appointment, and duties of the Capital Fund

Committee shall be as provided in Article VI of these By-Laws.

Article XV

Special Distributions

~~**Section 1:** Solidarity Lodge shall provide the incoming Worshipful Master, each year, \$200.00 for his use in defraying the expenses of the Installation of Officers; any expense beyond that amount is the responsibility of the New Worshipful Master.~~

~~**Section 2:** Solidarity Lodge shall award a Master's Plaque to the outgoing Worshipful Master and may provide but not to exceed \$150.00, if the finances of the Lodge will warrant, to the outgoing Worshipful Master each year, for purchase of Masonic regalia of his wish, such as, but not limited to Past Master's Jacket or coat (including patch), ring, watch, tie tacks, lapel pins, gavel, Past Master's Apron or Apron case.~~

Section 1: Solidarity Lodge may provide for the incoming Worshipful Master such support as may be necessary for defraying the expenses associated with the Installation of Officers. The Lodge may also award a Master's Plaque to the outgoing Worshipful Master and may provide for the purchase of Masonic regalia of his wish, including but not limited to a Past Master's Jacket or coat (including patch), ring, watch, tie tacks, lapel pins, gavel, Past Master's Apron, or Apron case, provided the finances of the Lodge will warrant.

The amounts and specific provisions for such distributions shall be established and governed by the Rules and Regulations of the Lodge and may be amended therein from time to time without further amendment to these By-Laws.

Article XVI

Amendments of By-Laws

Section 1: No amendments of these By-Laws, either by alteration or addition, shall be made, unless in the following manner:

Section 2: The proposed amendments shall be in writing, signed by the proposer, and presented and read at a stated meeting of this Lodge, at which time, it may be discussed and amended, if necessary.

Section 3: At the next stated meeting of this Lodge, it shall be considered and voted upon without further amendment; and if approved by a majority of votes of the members present, shall become a part of these By-Laws, upon compliance with the other provisions of this article.

Section 4: All amendments of these By-Laws must be submitted to the Grand Lodge for its approval before they take effect, except for the following:

1. Fixing, raising, or lowering the fee for each degree, or the annual dues, within the limitations fixed by the Laws of the Grand Lodge, except as provided in Article 309.
2. Adapting its own regulations as to the payment of its Treasurer, Secretary and Tiler.
3. The day and hour of meeting, or the number of stated meetings per month may be changed to suit its convenience. Whenever the change in the number of meetings per month, or the day of meeting is made, the Grand Secretary must be notified at once.

The above By-Laws having been approved by the said Solidarity Lodge of Texas, on the 12th day of June A.D. 2026, of which witness my hand and seal.

By order of the Lodge.

_____, Secretary

The above By-Laws having been approved by the M:W: Grand Lodge of Texas, on the _____ day of _____ A.D. _____

_____, Grand Secretary