

The Masters Lodge

By-Laws

December 1, 2014

1101 Highland Avenue
Needham, Massachusetts 02492

The Masters Lodge

Updated January 2013

ARTICLE I

Composition

Section 1. The Masters Lodge shall be composed of the Master Masons named in its Charter, and all Master Masons who shall hereafter become members by signing the By-Laws of the Lodge.

Section 2. Honorary Membership may be conferred upon any affiliated Master Mason who, for distinguished service to this Lodge or to the Fraternity elsewhere, may be recommended therefore, to be affected by an election attended by the same formalities that are required in an election to ordinary membership. Honorary Members shall be exempt from the payment of Annual Dues. Honorary membership will be automatically offered to any member attaining the age of eighty-five (85) prior to September first of the current year. An honorary member may either elect to pay the annual lodge meal assessment or be subject to the "Guest rate" for the meal for any meeting attended.

ARTICLE II

Meetings

Section 1. A regular meeting of the Lodge shall be held on the third Wednesday of each month, provided however, that the meetings of June, July, August, and September or any of them, may be omitted at the discretion of the Worshipful Master and the dispensation of the Grand Master.

Section 2. The Annual Meeting of the Lodge shall be held at the regular meeting in October for the presentation of the reports of the officers and committees for the fiscal year ended August 31st and for the transaction of such other business as may regularly come before the meeting.

Section 3. Visitors shall not be permitted to be present during the transaction of business except by permission of the Worshipful Master.

ARTICLE III

Officers

Section 1. The officers shall be a Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Chaplain, Marshal, Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon, Senior Steward, Junior Steward, Inside Sentinel, Organist, Tyler, and such other officers as the Worshipful Master may appoint.

Nominating Committee

Section 2. At the regular meeting in February, the Worshipful Master shall appoint a Nominating Committee of three members who shall make their report at the March meeting.

Election

Section 3. The Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, a Trustee for three (3) years, one or more Auditors skilled in accounting, Proxy to the Grand Lodge, a Lodge Representative to the Needham Masonic Corporation, and a Lodge Representative to the Masonic Home shall be elected by the majority vote of the members present and voting at the March meeting.

Installation

Section 4. The officers shall be installed at the regular meeting in May or as soon thereafter as may be convenient for the Lodge, and shall retain their offices until their successors are installed.

Section 5. Immediately after his installation, the Worshipful Master shall appoint a Chaplain, Marshal, Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon, Senior Steward, Junior Steward, Inside Sentinel, Organist, Tyler, and such other officers and committees as he may deem appropriate.

ARTICLE IV

Duties of Officers

Section 1. The duties of the several officers shall be those specified by the Grand Constitutions and in the ritual of the Craft, together with the following:

Treasurer

Section 2. The Treasurer shall see that all moneys collected by the Secretary are deposited at least once each month in a bank approved by the Finance Committee or by vote of the Lodge, and shall pay all bills which have been approved by a majority of the finance Committee or by vote of the Lodge. His accounts shall at all times be subject to inspection by the Finance Committee. At the end of the fiscal year and previous to the Annual Meeting, he shall present his books for audit, and at the Annual Meeting he shall make a full report in writing of the financial condition of the Lodge. He shall deliver to his successor all funds and property of the Lodge in his possession.

Secretary

Section 3. The Secretary shall collect all fees, dues and assessments and shall pay them to the Treasurer, taking his receipt therefore or deposit such moneys at least once each month to the credit of the Lodge in the checking account of the Treasurer taking a receipt of the bank for his own records and sending a duplicate thereof to the Treasurer. His account shall at all times be subject to inspection by the Finance Committee. At the end of the fiscal year and previous to the Annual Meeting, he shall present his books for audit, and at the Annual Meeting he shall make a full report in writing of all moneys received by him and of the changes in the membership of the Lodge. He shall deliver to his successor all funds and property of the Lodge in his possession.

Auditor(s)

Section 4. The Auditor(s) shall examine the books of the Treasurer, Secretary, and Trustees of Special Funds at the end of each fiscal year and report thereon at the Annual Meeting.

Trustees of Special Funds

Section 5. (a) There shall be one Board of Trustees to administer any special funds of the Lodge. Said Board shall consist of the Worshipful Master, ex officio, and the Treasurer, ex officio, and three members of the Lodge who hold no other elective office therein. The elective members of this Board shall be chosen by ballot for terms of one, two and three years, respectively, and thereafter one member shall be elected for three years at the regular meeting in May of each year. Three (3) members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 5. (b) Each Trustee shall hold office until his successor has been duly elected. A vacancy in the Board shall be filled by the election of a Trustee as soon as practicable, due notice of the proposed election having been borne upon the notice of the meeting at which the election is to be held. While a vacancy exists, the Trustees then serving shall have all the power of the full Board.

Section 5. (c) It shall be the duty of the Board of Trustees to invest the funds under its direction and control, in such investments as in their best judgment will promote the financial interests of the Lodge. The

Trustees shall hold all bank accounts and other property in the name of the Trustees of The Masters Lodge, A.F. & A.M. for the benefit of the Lodge. The Trustees shall have full power to disburse, hold, invest, sell and convey any portion of the funds in their care. For purposes of investment, the Trustees may treat the several funds as one fund, apportioning the income to the several funds at least annually and in an equitable manner.

ARTICLE V

Standing Committees

Section 1. The Worshipful Master and Wardens shall constitute the Finance Committee with the Treasurer acting as a non-voting member. The Finance Committee shall prepare an operating budget for the Lodge for the next fiscal year; said budget, to be presented to the Lodge for action at the April Meeting. The Committee shall each month establish the “Guest Rate” for meals. The committee shall examine all bills and demands against the Lodge before directing payment of the same.

Section 2. The Worshipful Master, Wardens and a Chaplain shall constitute the Charity Committee whose duty it shall be to visit sick and needy members and contribute to their relief from the Charity Fund of the Lodge according to their judgment and with the approval of the Trustees of Special Funds.

Section 3. The By-laws committee shall be appointed by the Worshipful Master and consist of a minimum of three members of the lodge. It is the responsibility of the By-laws committee to review and make suggestions for changes and corrections to the by-laws at the request of the Worshipful Master.

ARTICLE VI - Special Funds

Permanent Fund

Section 1. The Permanent Fund shall consist of such portions of the fees for the degrees and membership as are by these By-Laws provided, and any other moneys designated therefore. The income from this fund shall be paid by the Trustees of Special Funds to the Treasurer annually for the general expenses of the Lodge. No part of the principal of the fund shall be expended for any purpose except by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present and voting at a regular meeting after due notice of the proposed action has been borne upon the notice of the meeting.

Charity Fund

Section 2. The Charity Fund shall consist of such portions of the fees for the degrees and membership as are by these By-Laws provided, and such other moneys as may be designated for charitable purposes. The Trustees of Special Funds may, upon request of the Charity Committee, authorize the expenditure of any part of the principal or income of the Charity Fund for the relief of distressed members, their widows and orphans, or for any other charitable purposes permitted by Masonic Law and Usages.

ARTICLE VII

Fees

Section 1. Each applicant for the degrees shall pay the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00), plus any required Grand Lodge dues, fees and assessments plus the prorated annual dollar amount due as specified in Article VIII, Section 2 which must accompany the application.

Section 2. The fee for membership by affiliation shall be two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00), plus any required Grand Lodge dues, fees and assessments plus the prorated annual dollar amount due as specified in Article VIII, Section 2 and shall accompany the application.

Section 3. Distribution of fees. From each fee for the degrees and for membership by affiliation there shall be transmitted to the Trustees one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for the Permanent Fund and ten dollars (\$10.00) for the Charity Fund.

ARTICLE VIII

Dues

Section 1. The annual dues for the support of the Lodge shall be one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125.00). payable as per the schedule detailed in Article VIII, Section 2.

Schedule

Section 2. Annual dues, together with the Lodge meal assessment and any required Grand Lodge dues shall be payable in September for the current fiscal year. The meal assessment monies due the Lodge for new Master Masons raised in this Lodge and newly accepted members by affiliation shall be prorated for their first fiscal year of membership by multiplying the current regular monies due times the number of meetings remaining in the fiscal year and dividing by the number of meetings held per year.

Meal Assessment

Section 3. An annual Lodge meal assessment, determined by the Finance Committee, will be assessed each member annually. The Finance committee will make a recommendation at the March meeting for vote at

the April meeting as to any adjustment in the Lodge meal assessment rate for the ensuing fiscal year. Any member may request a meal assessment exemption on an annual basis. Should a member be exempt from meals assessment, he will be charged the “Guest Rate” for the meal for any meeting attended.

Remission of Dues

Section 4. The Finance Committee shall have authority by unanimous vote to remit the dues of any member whose circumstances entitle him to special consideration; or the Lodge may take such action by majority vote at any regular meeting.

Failure to Pay Dues

Section 5. Any member whose dues are unpaid at the close of the regular meeting in April, unless the same shall have been remitted, shall be notified that his name will be reported to the Lodge at the next regular meeting for suspension or such other action as the Lodge may determine.

ARTICLE IX

Seal

Section 1. The seal of The Masters Lodge shall bear the words "THE MASTERS LODGE, A.F. & A.M." and the date "1983".

ARTICLE X

Amendments

Section 1. These By-Laws shall not be altered, amended or repealed, unless a proposition thereof has been made in writing and read in open Lodge specifying the Section or Sections to be altered; nor until such proposition has been considered by the By-laws Committee and borne upon the notice of the meeting at which action is to be taken. An affirmative two-thirds vote of the members present and voting shall be required for the approval of the proposed amendment.

The
Masters
Lodge

Traditions

December 1, 2014

1101 Highland Avenue
Needham, Massachusetts 02492

In June of 1983, a one-time invitation was extended to thirty-five “wearers of the purple apron” who were members of Lodges in the Waltham and Brighton Fifth Masonic Districts or who resided or were employed in the area encompasses by those districts. Each of the thirty-five signed a statement pledging adherence to the traditions of the Lodge.

“I the undersigned have a firm belief in the future of Freemasonry in Massachusetts and am committed to the concept of size and excellence within our lodges.”

It was originally intended that the Lodge would be patterned after English Lodges, and that all work would be done in the Northeast corner.

Also in the tradition of an English Lodge, the Lodge membership was to be limited. The initial number of members was set at thirty-five; that being the number of initial charter members. Unfortunately, prior to the Lodge being chartered, one of the original thirty-five, RW John Hall, passed away. The short-lived membership restriction of thirty-five was suspended as two other qualified candidates were soon invited to join as Charter Members, and the traditional limit of fifty members was established. In 2014 **it was further**

established that the Lodge may ballot on membership by affiliation, and thereafter immediately admit to membership, anyone elected to the office of Grand Master, notwithstanding any prior or contrary traditions of the Lodge, including, any limits on numbers of members. In 2014, **it was also further established** that the number of members be set at 55 and that as a normal practice the Lodge consider 53 members to be full membership, reserving two membership slots for a sitting Grand Master who may not already be a member of the Lodge. In 2014 **it was also further established** that in order to maintain the nature of membership in The Masters Lodge, it is the intention of the Traditions Committee not to consider any further increase in the maximum number of members for at least ten years.

Upon signing of the bylaws, the member, having a firm belief in the honorable fraternity of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and in particular, The Masters Lodge, vows to adhere to the bylaws and traditions of The Masters Lodge to the best of his ability.

It is established that all Members are to be prepared to serve The Masters Lodge in whatever office to which they may be elected or appointed with excellence and will commit to whatever participation is normally required in that office at Lodges of Qualification, Lodges of Instruction, Exemplifications, Visitations of the District Deputy Grand Master and at other required functions.

It is established that all Members affirm a commitment to regular attendance of The Masters Lodge; to work on its committees; to aid and support the needs of the Lodge on receiving proper notice, and to pay attention to all the duties of Masonry.

It is established that dress for each meeting for Officers and Members is tuxedo, members jewel and purple bow tie and an appropriate Grand Lodge purple apron, except for the January meeting, which will be casual. Guests are encouraged to wear tuxedos.

It is established that the Lodge will be opened in Due Form, unless time constraints dictate otherwise.

It is established that attendance by members is assumed unless the Worshipful Master receives a written request for absence prior (9:00 PM Sunday evening) to the meeting. A penalty will be imposed if a Member fails to comply. Such penalty will be at the discretion of the Master. Also, three consecutive absences or five absences within a year will constitute an issue of commitment. At the discretion of the Master, a letter of reprimand will be sent from the Lodge asking the member to reconsider his membership and commitment to the lodge.

It is established that tardiness is to be explained to the Lodge upon entrance, and from the West of the altar. The penalty for tardiness is at the discretion of the Worshipful Master.

It is established that as in the English tradition, the Immediate Past Master is recognized as an officer of the Lodge.

It is established that attendance by visitors is only by permission of the Worshipful Master. It has become a tradition that the Master plan a Brotherhood night as part of his term with each member allowed to bring a guest(s).

It is established that the January meeting is to be an informal “fun and games” night.

It is established that the May meeting will be reserved for the Installation of Officers by the Grand Master and his officers. It has also become the traditional Ladies night opening the Installation of officers to the ladies.

It is established that the June, July and August meetings are omitted at the discretion of the Master. The September meeting has traditionally been omitted by vote of the Lodge and with permission of the Grand Master.

It is established that the outgoing Master recites the regulations of Free and Accepted Masons of the Installation ceremony.

It is established that the appointed office of Constable exists to enforce the rules about written excuses and the wearing of Lodge collar jewels and ties by all members, exacting a (\$10.00 suggested) penalty for the failure to comply.

It is established that the singing of Auld Lang Syne concludes the meeting.

It is established that all members will assist in busing the dinner tables and returning the tables and chairs to storage after each meeting.

At the November 21, 1990 meeting, RW James R Franklin presented to the Lodge a procedure for proposing new members **thus codifying** the tradition of the Lodge. In accordance with the “Franklin” procedures, a Membership Committee of a Chairman, the Worshipful Master, Immediate Past Master and Wardens **was established.**

Membership in The Masters Lodge is by **invitation only.**

It is established that a member of the Lodge may make a recommendation of a qualified Mason for affiliation by first submitting his name to the Worshipful Master.

Members are reminded that to avoid any embarrassment, it is inappropriate to discuss membership with a prospective applicant until after a positive review by the Membership Committee.

- The Worshipful Master will announce the Brother's name in open Lodge.
- The name is then referred to the Membership Committee.

Members should feel free to express their opinions to any member of the Membership Committee. Once the name is submitted, it is inappropriate to inquire about the status of the committee's review.

- If, in the opinion of the Membership Committee that the Brother should be provided an application for affiliation, the secretary will be instructed to forward an application to the sponsor to be passed on to the prospective applicant. Along with the application, a copy of the traditions as well as the dues rate and fee requirements will be provided to ensure that the applicant is fully aware of the traditions and financial responsibilities associated with membership in The Masters Lodge.
- The applicant's signature on the application will serve as his acknowledgement of the traditions of the Masters Lodge.

It is established that each new member of the Lodge is presented a Member's Jewel. During our 25th anniversary in 2008, by direction of the Worshipful Master, the Lodge adopted the Instant Tradition of wearing purple bow ties at meetings. Lessons are provided for those who might be manually challenged with a freestyle bow tie. An anniversary watch fob is also presented as well as an official copy of the Traditions.

Members are reminded that failure to be properly attired at a meeting will result in a visit from the Constable.

In 2006, RW Richard A. Gesualdo presented a recitation of the "hour glass" in memory of a M.W. Fred Kirby Bauer. **This practice has been established** as a traditional memorial service to be presented on behalf of any brother obtaining admission to the Celestial Lodge above and will be presented at the next scheduled meeting.

It is established that the Worshipful Master extends to all widows of any Mason who was a members of the Lodge a personal invitation to the Ladies programs at no charge to the widow.

In 2007 **it was established** that the Worshipful Master will send a Lodge birthday card to each brother on celebration of the member's Birthday.

In 2007, RW William E. Holland **established** a practice of including in the Opening of the Lodge a brief ritualistic introduction to the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

*“Brethren, as we present our nations flag within these sacred confines, let all be reminded, that we meet in Liberty, practice our rites in safety, and worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences, because of **that** flag. It is the flag of **our** country; let us honor it in our hearts as we join together in our pledge of allegiance to it.*

It is the duty of every member to identify qualified individuals for potential membership in the Masters Lodge. After reviewing the recommendations for membership over recent years it has been determined that several members have not made any recommendations and, that most recommendations were made by a few members. To encourage broader participation, **it is established** that no member of The Masters Lodge shall propose more than one affiliated member in any Masonic year.

Traditions that have fallen into disuse

It is noted in the June 20, 1983 meeting notice that “we’ll need your sizes for blazers and slacks we’ll all be wearing at our meetings.” It may have been that the “uniform” suggested by the Grand Master (JPB) was cost prohibitive, and therefore the “uniform” became the usual tuxedos worn in all other Lodges.

The ancient charge of MW Thaddeus Mason Harris (1792) was initially employed in the closing ceremony but has since been omitted in the interest of time

In 2005, the tradition of membership within the fifth district was eliminated as a requirement of membership.