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**Bylaws of the**  
**Savannah Area REALTORS® , Inc.**  
**(Ratified by SAR members on 02/13/2025)**

**Article I – Name**

(Requires verbatim adoption by Member Boards – Selected Uniform Provision)

**Section 1. Name.** The name of this organization shall be the Savannah Real Estate Board Inc, (dba) Savannah Area REALTORS® hereinafter referred to as the "association."

**Section 2. REALTORS®.** Inclusion and retention of the Registered Collective Membership Mark REALTORS® in the name of the association shall be governed by the *Constitution and Bylaws of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®* as from time to time amended.

**Article II – Objectives**

The objectives of the association are:

**Section 1.** To unite those engaged in the recognized branches of the real estate profession for the purpose of exerting a beneficial influence upon the profession and related interests.

**Section 2.** To promote and maintain high standards of conduct in the real estate profession as expressed in the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

**Section 3.** To provide a unified medium for real estate owners and those engaged in the real estate profession whereby their interests may be safeguarded and advanced.

**Section 4.** To further the interests of home and other real property ownership.

**Section 5.** To unite those engaged in the real estate profession in this community with the Georgia Association of REALTORS® and the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, thereby furthering their own objectives throughout the state and nation and obtaining the benefits and privileges of membership therein.

**Section 6.** To designate, for the benefit of the public, individuals authorized to use the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® as licensed, prescribed, and controlled by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

REVISED: JUNE 1989, JUNE 1991, OCTOBER 1991, MAY 1992 (Reprinted 9/92), APRIL 1993, JULY 1993, SEPTEMBER 1994, OCTOBER 1995, SEPTEMBER 1997, SEPTEMBER 1998, JUNE 1999, SEPTEMBER 1999, MARCH 2000, JANUARY 2001, MARCH 2002, OCTOBER 2002, MAY 2004, SEPTEMBER 2006, JULY 2007, OCTOBER 2008, APRIL 2009, NOVEMBER 2010, NOVEMBER 2011, MARCH 2012, AUGUST 2012, OCTOBER 2012, NOVEMBER 2012, JUNE 2014, NOVEMBER 2014, JANUARY 2015, DECEMBER 2020, NOVEMBER 2022, MAY 2023, SEPTEMBER 2024, FEBRUARY 2025

## Article III – Jurisdiction

**Section 1.** The territorial jurisdiction of the association as a Member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® is: Bryan County, Chatham County, Effingham County in the State of Georgia.

**Section 2.** Territorial jurisdiction is defined to mean:

(a) The right and duty to control the use of the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS®, subject to the conditions set forth in these Bylaws and those of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, in return for which the association agrees to protect and safeguard the property rights of the National Association in the terms.

## Article IV – Membership

**Section 1.** There shall be seven classes of members, as follows.

(a) **REALTOR® Members.** REALTOR® Members, whether primary or secondary shall be:

(1) Individuals who, as sole proprietors, partners, corporate officers, or branch office managers, are engaged actively in the real estate profession, including buying, selling, exchanging, renting or leasing, managing, appraising for others for compensation, counseling, building, developing or subdividing real estate, and who maintain or are associated with an established real estate office in the state of Georgia or a state contiguous thereto. All persons who are partners in a partnership or all officers in a corporation who are actively engaged in the real estate profession within the state or a state contiguous thereto shall qualify for REALTOR® membership only, and each is required to hold REALTOR® membership (except as provided in the following paragraph) in an association of REALTORS® within the state or a state contiguous thereto, unless otherwise qualified for Institute Affiliate membership, as described in Section 1(b) of Article IV.

In the case of a real estate firm, partnership, or corporation, whose business activity is substantially all commercial, only those principals actively engaged in the real estate business in connection with the same office or any other offices within the jurisdiction of the association in which one of the firm's principals holds REALTOR® membership, shall be required to hold REALTOR® membership unless otherwise qualified for Institute Affiliate membership, as described in Section 1(b) of Article IV.  
(Amended 1/05)

**NOTE:** REALTOR® members may obtain membership in a "secondary" association in another state.

(2) Individuals who are engaged in the real estate profession other than as sole proprietors, partners, corporate officers, or branch office managers and are associated with a REALTOR® member and meet the qualifications set out in Article V.

(3) Franchise REALTOR® Membership. Corporate officers (who may be licensed or unlicensed) of a real estate brokerage franchise organization with at least one hundred fifty (150) franchisees located within

the United States, its insular possessions, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, elected to membership pursuant to the provisions in the NAR Constitution and Bylaws. Such individuals shall enjoy all of the rights, privileges, and obligations of REALTOR® membership (including compliance with the Code of Ethics) except obligations related to association mandated education, meeting attendance,

or indoctrination classes or other similar requirements; the right to use the term REALTOR® in connection with their franchise organization's name; and the right to hold elective office in the local association, state association, and National Association. (Adopted 1/96)

(4) **Primary and Secondary REALTOR® Members.** An individual is a primary member if the association pays State and National dues based on such member. An individual is a secondary member if state and National dues are remitted through another association. One of the principals in a real estate firm must be a Broker in Charge member of the association for licensees affiliated with the firm to select the association as their "primary" association.

(5) **Designated REALTORS® Members.** Each firm (or office in the case of firms with multiple office locations) shall designate in writing one REALTOR® member who shall be responsible for all duties and obligations of membership, including the obligation to arbitrate (or to mediate if required by the association) pursuant to Article 17 of the Code of Ethics and the payment of association dues as established in Article X of the Bylaws. The Designated REALTOR® Members must be a sole proprietor, partner, corporate officer, or branch office manager acting on behalf of the firm's principal(s) and must meet all other qualifications for REALTOR® membership established in Article V, Section 2 of the Bylaws. (Amended 11/11)

**(b) Institute Affiliate Members.** Institute Affiliate members shall be individuals who hold a professional designation awarded by an Institute, Society, or Council affiliated with the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® that addresses a specialty area other than residential brokerage or individuals who otherwise hold a class of membership in such Institute, Society, or Council that confers the right to hold office. Any such individual, if otherwise eligible, may elect to hold REALTOR® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® membership, subject to payment of applicable dues for such membership. (Amended 1/02)

**(c) Affiliate Members.** Affiliate members shall be real estate owners and other individuals or firms who, while not engaged in the real estate profession as defined in paragraphs (a) or (b) of this section, have interests requiring information concerning real estate and are in sympathy with the objectives of the association.

Affiliate membership shall also be granted to individuals licensed or certified to engage in real estate practice who, if otherwise eligible, do not elect to hold REALTOR® membership in the association, provided the applicant is engaged exclusively in a specialty of the real estate business other than brokerage of real property.

**(d) Public Service Members.** Public Service members shall be individuals who are interested in the real estate profession as employees of or affiliated with educational, public utility, governmental, or other similar organizations, but are not engaged in the real estate profession on their own account or in association with an established real estate business.

**(e) Honorary Members.** Honorary members shall be individuals not engaged in the real estate profession who have performed notable service for the real estate profession, for the association, or for the public.

(f) **Student Members.** Student members shall be individuals who are seeking an undergraduate or graduate degree with a specialization or major in real estate at institutions of higher learning, and who have completed at least two years of college and at least one college-level course in real estate, but are not engaged in the real estate profession on their own account or not associated with an established real estate office.

(g) **REALTOR® Emeritus.** A REALTOR® Member who has held membership in the National Association as a REALTOR®, REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®, or both, for a cumulative period of forty (40) years, is eligible for REALTOR® Emeritus status.

Proof of one (1) year of service at the National Association level. "Service" is defined as serving as an NAR officer, director, committee member, Federal Political Coordinator, Global Ambassador, or Global Coordinator to a country with which NAR holds a reciprocal agreement.

## **Article V – Qualification and Election**

### **Section 1. Application**

(a) An application for membership shall be made in such manner and form as may be prescribed by the board of directors and made available to anyone requesting it. The application form shall contain among the statements to be signed by the applicant (1) that applicant agrees as a condition to membership to thoroughly familiarize himself/herself with the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Rules and

Regulations of the association, the State and National Associations, and if elected a member, will abide by the

Constitutions and Bylaws and Rules and Regulations of the association, State and National Associations and, if a REALTOR® member, will abide by the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, including the obligation to arbitrate (or to mediate if required by the association) controversies arising out of real estate transactions as specified by Article 17 of the Code of Ethics, and as further specified in the *Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual* of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, as from time to time amended, and (2) that applicant consents that the association, through its membership committee or otherwise, may invite and receive information and comment about applicant from any member or other persons, and that applicant agrees that any information and comment furnished to the association by any person in response to the invitation shall be conclusively deemed to be privileged and not form the basis of any action for slander, libel, or defamation of character. The applicant shall, with the form of application, have access to a copy of the Bylaws, Constitution, Rules and Regulations, and Code of Ethics referred to above. (Amended 11/11)

### **Section 2. Qualification**

**For associations that maintain a license requirement for REALTOR® membership.**

(a) An applicant for REALTOR® membership who is a sole proprietor, partner, corporate officer, or branch office manager of a real estate firm shall supply evidence satisfactory to the association, through its membership committee or otherwise, that he/she is actively engaged in the real estate profession, and maintains a current, valid real estate broker's or salesperson's license or is licensed or certified by an appropriate state regulatory agency to engage in the appraisal of real property, has a place of business within the state or a state contiguous thereto (unless a secondary member), has no record of recent or pending bankruptcy\*, has no record of official sanctions involving unprofessional conduct\*\*, agrees to

complete a course of instruction covering the Bylaws and rules and regulations of the association, the Bylaws of the State Association, and the *Constitution and Bylaws* and Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, and shall pass such reasonable and nondiscriminatory written examination thereon, as may be required by the committee, and shall agree that if elected to membership, he/she will abide by such *Constitution, Bylaws, rules and regulations, and Code of Ethics.* (Amended 1/05)

\*No recent or pending bankruptcy is intended to mean that the applicant or any real estate firm in which the applicant is a sole proprietor, general partner, corporate officer, or branch office manager, is not involved in any pending bankruptcy or insolvency proceedings or, has not been adjudged bankrupt in the past three (3) years. If a bankruptcy proceeding as described above exists, membership may not be rejected unless the association establishes that its interests and those of its members and the public could not be adequately protected by requiring that the bankrupt applicant pay cash in advance for association and MLS fees for up to one (1) year from the date that membership is approved or from the date that the applicant is discharged from bankruptcy (whichever is later). In the event that an existing member initiates bankruptcy proceedings, the member may be placed on a "cash basis" from the date that bankruptcy is initiated until one (1) year from the date that the member has been discharged from bankruptcy.

\*\*No record of official sanctions involving unprofessional conduct is intended to mean that the association may only consider:

- A. judgments against the applicant within the past three (3) years of violations of (1) civil rights laws, (2) real estate license laws, and (3) or other laws prohibiting unprofessional conduct against the applicant rendered by the courts or other lawful authorities
- B. criminal convictions if (1) the crime was punishable by death or imprisonment in excess of one year under the law under which the applicant was convicted, and (2) no more than ten (10) years have elapsed since the date of the conviction or the release of the applicant from the confinement imposed for that conviction, whichever is the later date (Amended 5/07)

**NOTE 1:** One or more of the requirements for REALTOR® membership set forth above in Article V, Section 2(a) may be deleted at the association's discretion. However, associations may NOT adopt membership qualifications more rigorous than specified in the *Membership Qualification Criteria for REALTOR® Membership*, approved by the Board of Directors of the National Association.

**NOTE 2:** Article IV, Section 2, of the NAR *Bylaws* prohibits Member Boards from knowingly granting REALTOR® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® membership to any applicant who has an unfulfilled sanction pending which was imposed by another association of REALTORS® for violation of the Code of Ethics. (Adopted 1/01)

**For associations that maintain a license requirement for REALTOR® membership.**

(b) Individuals who are actively engaged in the real estate profession other than as sole proprietors, partners, corporate officers, or branch office managers, in order to qualify for REALTOR® membership, shall at the time of application be associated either as an employee or as an independent contractor with a Designated REALTORS® member of the association or a Broker in Charge member of another association (if a secondary member) and must maintain a current, valid real estate broker's or salesperson's license or be licensed or certified by an appropriate state regulatory agency to engage in the appraisal of real property, has no record of official sanctions involving unprofessional conduct\*, shall complete a course of instruction covering the Bylaws and rules and regulations of the association, the Bylaws of the State Association, and

the *Constitution and Bylaws* and Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, and shall pass such reasonable and nondiscriminatory written examinations thereon as may be required by the membership committee, and shall agree in writing that if elected to membership he/she will abide by such *Constitution, Bylaws, rules and regulations, and the Code of Ethics.* (Amended 5/07)

\*No record of official sanctions involving unprofessional conduct is intended to mean that the association may only consider:

- A. judgments against the applicant within the past three (3) years of violations of (1) civil rights laws, (2) real estate license laws, and (3) or other laws prohibiting unprofessional conduct against the applicant rendered by the courts or other lawful authorities.
- B. criminal convictions if (1) the crime was punishable by death or imprisonment in excess of one year under the law under which the applicant was convicted, and (2) no more than ten years have elapsed since the date of the conviction or the release of the applicant from the confinement imposed for that conviction, whichever is the later date (Adopted 5/07)

**The following Section 2(c) may be adopted at the discretion of the local association.**

(c) The association will also consider the following in determining an applicant's qualifications for REALTOR® membership:

- 1. All final findings of Code of Ethics violations and violations of other membership duties in this or any other REALTOR® association within the past three (3) years
- 2. Pending ethics complaints (or hearings)
- 3. Unsatisfied discipline pending
- 4. Pending arbitration requests (or hearings)
- 5. Unpaid arbitration awards or unpaid financial obligations to this or any other REALTOR® association or REALTOR® Association MLS
- 6. Any misuse of the term REALTOR® or REALTORS® in the name of the applicant's firm

"Provisional" membership may be granted in instances where ethics complaints or arbitration requests (or hearings) are pending in other associations or where the applicant for membership has unsatisfied discipline pending in another association (except for violations of the Code of Ethics; see Article V, Section 2(a), NOTE 2), provided all other qualifications for membership have been satisfied. Associations may reconsider the membership status of such individuals when all pending ethics and arbitration matters (and related discipline) have been resolved or if such matters are not resolved within six (6) months from the date that provisional membership is approved. Provisional members shall be considered REALTORS® and shall be subject to all of the same privileges and obligations of REALTOR® membership. If a member resigns from another association with an ethics complaint or arbitration request pending, the association may condition membership on the applicant's certification that he/she will submit to the pending ethics or arbitration proceeding (in accordance with the established procedures of the association to which the applicant has made application) and will abide by the decision of the hearing panel. (Amended 11/09)

### **Section 3. Election**

The procedure for election to membership shall be as follows.

(a) Applicants for REALTOR® (and REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®, where applicable) membership shall be granted provisional membership immediately upon submission of a completed application form and remittance of applicable association dues and any application fee. Provisional members shall be considered REALTORS® (or REALTOR-ASSOCIATES®) and shall be subject to all the same privileges and obligations of membership. Provisional membership is granted subject to subsequent review of the application by the board of directors. If the board of directors determines that the individual does not meet all of the qualifications for membership as established in the association's Bylaws, or, if the individual does not satisfy all of the requirements of membership (for example, completion of a mandatory orientation program) within 90 days from the association's receipt of their application, membership may, at the discretion of the board of directors, be terminated.

(b) Dues shall be computed from the date of application and shall be non-refundable unless the association's board of directors terminates the individual's membership in accordance with Subsection (a) above. In such instances, dues shall be returned to the individual less a prorated amount to cover the number of days that the individual received association services and any application fee.

(c) The board of directors may not terminate any provisional membership without providing the provisional member with advance notice, an opportunity to appear before the board of directors, to call witnesses on his/her behalf, to be represented by counsel, and to make such statements as he/she deems relevant. The board of directors may also have counsel present. The board of directors shall require that written minutes be made of any hearing before it or may electronically or mechanically record the proceedings.

(d) If the board of directors determines that provisional membership should be terminated, it shall record its reasons with the chief staff executive. If the board of directors believes that termination of provisional membership may become the basis of litigation and a claim of damage by a provisional member, it may specify that termination shall become effective upon entry in a suit by the association for a declaratory judgment by a court of competent jurisdiction of a final judgment declaring that the termination violates no rights of the individual. (Adopted 1/98, Amended 1/05)

### **Section 4. New Member Code of Ethics Orientation**

Applicants for REALTOR® membership and provisional REALTOR® members (where applicable) shall complete an orientation program on the Code of Ethics of not less than two (2) hours and thirty (30) minutes of instructional time. This requirement does not apply to applicants for REALTOR® membership or provisional members who have completed comparable orientation in another association, provided that REALTOR® membership has been continuous, or that any break in membership is for one (1) year or less.

Failure to satisfy this requirement within 90 days of the date of application (or, alternatively, the date that provisional membership was granted), will result in denial of the membership application or termination of provisional membership.

**NOTE:** Orientation programs must meet the learning objectives and minimum criteria established from time to time by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®. (Adopted 1/01)

## **Section 5. New Member Fair Housing Orientation**

Applicants for REALTOR® membership and provisional REALTOR® members (where applicable) shall complete Fair Housing training of not less than two (2) hours of instructional time. This requirement will be satisfied upon presentation of documentation that the member has completed a course of instruction conducted by this or another REALTOR® association, the State Association of REALTORS®, the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, or the Institutes, Societies, and Councils, which meets the learning objectives and minimum criteria established by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® from time to time. Fair Housing training approved by a state licensing authority for an existing Fair Housing requirement to gain or maintain licensure shall also fulfill this requirement, provided it also meets the learning objectives and minimum criteria established by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® from time to time. This requirement does not apply to applicants for REALTOR® membership or provisional members who have completed comparable orientation in another association, provided that REALTOR® membership has been continuous, or that any break in membership is for one (1) year or less.

Failure to satisfy this requirement within 90 days of the date of application (or, alternatively, the date that provisional membership was granted), will result in denial of the membership application or termination of provisional membership.

## **Section 6. REALTOR® Code of Ethics Training Continuing**

### **REALTOR® Code of Ethics Training.**

That Code of Ethics training shall be required every three years. Each REALTOR® member of the association (with the exception of REALTOR® members granted REALTOR® Emeritus status by the National Association) shall be required to complete ethics training of not less than two (2) hours and thirty (30) minutes of instructional time. This requirement will be satisfied upon presentation of documentation that the member has completed a course of instruction conducted by this or another association, the State Association of REALTORS®, the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, or any other recognized educational institution or provider which meets the learning objectives and minimum criteria established by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® from time to time. REALTOR® members who have completed training as a requirement of membership in another association and REALTOR® members who have completed the New Member Code of Ethics Orientation during any three (3)-year cycle shall not be required to complete additional ethics training until a new three (3)-year cycle commences.

Failure to satisfy the required periodic ethics training shall be considered a violation of a membership duty. Failure to meet the requirement in any three (3)-year cycle will result in suspension of membership for the first two months (January and February) of the year following the end of any three (3)-year cycle or until the requirement is met, whichever occurs sooner. On March 1 of that year, the membership of a member who is still suspended as of that date will be automatically terminated.

### **Discipline of REALTOR® Members.**

Any REALTOR® member of the association may be disciplined by the board of directors for violations of the Code of Ethics or other duties of membership, after a hearing as described in the *Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual* of the association, provided that the discipline imposed is consistent with the discipline authorized by the Professional Standards Committee of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® as set forth in the *Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual* of the National Association.



### **Enforcement of the Code.**

The responsibility of the association and of association members relating to the enforcement of the Code of Ethics, the disciplining of members, and the arbitration of disputes, and the organization and procedures incident thereto, shall be governed by the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, as amended from time to time, which is by this reference incorporated into these Bylaws, provided, however, that any provision deemed inconsistent with state law shall be deleted or amended to comply with state law. *(NAR amended 2017)*

### **Section 6. Continuing Fair Housing Training**

Effective January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2027 and for successive three year periods thereafter, each REALTOR® member of the association (with the exception of REALTOR® members granted REALTOR® Emeritus status by the National Association) shall be required to complete Fair Housing training of not less than two (2) hours of instructional time. This requirement will be satisfied upon presentation of documentation that the member has completed a course of instruction conducted by this or another REALTOR® association, the State Association of REALTORS®, the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, or the Institutes, Societies, and Councils, which meets the learning objectives and minimum criteria established by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® from time to time. Fair Housing training approved by a state licensing authority for an existing Fair Housing requirement to maintain licensure shall also fulfill this requirement, provided it also meets the learning objectives and minimum criteria established by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® from time to time. REALTOR® members who have completed Fair Housing training as a requirement of membership in another association shall not be required to complete additional Fair Housing training until a new three year cycle commences.

Failure to satisfy the required periodic Fair Housing training shall be considered a violation of a membership duty. Failure to meet the requirement in any three year cycle will result in suspension of membership for the first two months (January and February) of the year following the end of any three year cycle or until the requirement is met, whichever occurs sooner. On March 1 of that year, the membership of a member who is still suspended as of that date will be automatically terminated.

New Member

### **Section 7. Status Changes**

A REALTOR® who changes the conditions under which he/she holds membership shall be required to provide written notification to the association within 30 days (30 recommended). A REALTOR® (non-principal) who becomes a principal in the firm with which he/she has been licensed or, alternatively, becomes a principal in a new firm which will be comprised of REALTOR® principals may be required to satisfy any previously unsatisfied membership requirements applicable to REALTOR® (principal) members but shall, during the period of transition from one status of membership to another, be subject to all of the privileges and obligations of a REALTOR® (principal). If the REALTOR® (non-principal) does not satisfy the requirements established in these Bylaws for the category of membership to which they have transferred

within 30 days of the date they advised the association of their change in status, their new membership application will terminate automatically unless otherwise so directed by the board of directors.

A REALTOR® (or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®, where applicable) who is transferring his/her license from one firm comprised of REALTOR® principals to another firm comprised of REALTOR® principals shall be subject to all of the privileges and obligations of membership during the period of transition. If the transfer is not completed within 30 days of the date the association is advised of the disaffiliation with the current firm, membership will terminate automatically unless otherwise so directed by the board of directors. (Amended 1/98)

- a) The board of directors, at its discretion, may waive any qualification which the applicant has already fulfilled in accordance with the association's Bylaws.)
- b) Any application fee related to a change in membership status shall be reduced by an amount equal to any application fee previously paid by the applicant.
- c) Dues shall be prorated from the first day of the month in which the member is notified of election by the board of directors and shall be based on the new membership status for the remainder of the year. (Amended 1/05)

## **Article VI – Privileges and Obligations**

**Section 1.** The privileges and obligations of members, in addition to those otherwise provided in these Bylaws, shall be specified in this Article.

**Section 2.** Any member of the association may be reprimanded, fined, placed on probation, suspended, or expelled by the board of directors for a violation of these Bylaws and association rules and regulations consistent with these Bylaws, after a hearing as provided in the *Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual* of the association. Although members other than REALTORS® are not subject to the Code of Ethics, nor its enforcement by the Georgia Association of REALTORS®, such members are encouraged to abide by the principles established in the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and conduct their business and professional practices accordingly. Further, members other than REALTORS® may, upon recommendation of the membership committee, or upon recommendation by a hearing panel of the Georgia Association of REALTORS®, be subject to discipline as described above, for any conduct, which in the opinion of the board of directors, applied on a nondiscriminatory basis, reflects adversely on the terms REALTOR® or REALTORS®, and the real estate industry, or for conduct that is inconsistent with or adverse to the objectives and purposes of the local association, the State Association, and the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

**Section 3.** Any REALTOR® member of the association may be disciplined by the Georgia Association of REALTORS® for violations of the Code of Ethics or other duties of membership, after a hearing as described in the *Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual* of the association, provided that the discipline imposed is consistent with the discipline authorized by the Professional Standards Committee of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® as set forth in the *Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual* of the National Association.

**Section 4.** Resignations of members shall become effective when received in writing by the association, provided, however, that if any member submitting the resignation is indebted to the association for dues, fees, fines, or other assessments of the association or any of its services, departments, divisions, or subsidiaries, the association may condition the right of the resigning member to reapply for membership upon payment in full of all such monies owed.

**Section 5.** If a member resigns from the association or otherwise causes membership to terminate with an ethics complaint pending, that board of directors may condition the right of the resigning member to reapply for membership upon the applicant's certification that he/she will submit to the pending ethics proceeding and will abide by the decision of the hearing panel.

(a) If a member resigns or otherwise causes membership to terminate, the duty to submit to arbitration (or to mediation if required by the association) continues in effect even after membership lapses or is terminated, provided that the dispute arose while the former member was a REALTOR®. (Amended 1/00 and 11/11)

**Section 6.** REALTOR® Members. REALTOR® members, whether primary or secondary, in good standing whose financial obligations to the association are paid in full shall be entitled to vote and to hold elective office in the association; may use the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS®, which use shall be subject to the provisions of Article VIII; and have the primary responsibility to safeguard and promote the standards, interests, and welfare of the association and the real estate profession.

(a) If a REALTOR® member is a sole proprietor in a firm, a partner in a partnership or an officer in a corporation, and is suspended or expelled, the firm, partnership or corporation shall not use the terms REALTOR® or REALTORS® in connection with its business during the period of suspension, or until readmission to REALTOR® membership, or unless connection with the firm, partnership or corporation is severed, or management control is relinquished, whichever may apply. The membership of all other principals, partners, or corporate officers shall suspend or terminate during the period of suspension of the disciplined member, or until readmission of the disciplined member or unless connection of the disciplined member with the firm, partnership, or corporation is severed, or unless the REALTOR® who is suspended or expelled removes himself/herself from any form or degree of management control of the firm for the term of the suspension or until readmission to membership, whichever may apply. Removal of an individual from any form or degree of management control must be certified to the association by the member who is being suspended or expelled and by the individual who is assuming management control, and the signatures of such certification must be notarized. In the event the suspended or expelled member is so certified to have relinquished all form or degree of management control of the firm, the membership of other partners, corporate officers, or other individuals affiliated with the firm shall not be affected, and the firm, partnership or corporation may continue to use the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® in connection with its business during the period of suspension or until the former member is admitted to membership in the association. The foregoing is not intended to preclude a suspended or expelled member from functioning as an employee or independent contractor, providing no management control is exercised. Further, the membership of REALTORS® other than principals who are employed or affiliated as independent contractors with the disciplined member shall suspend or terminate during the period of suspension of the disciplined member or until readmission of the disciplined member, or unless connection of the disciplined member with the firm, partnership, or corporation is severed, or management control is relinquished, or unless the REALTOR® member (non-

principal) elects to sever his/her connection with the REALTOR® and affiliate with another REALTOR® member in good standing in the association, whichever may apply.

If a REALTOR® member other than a sole proprietor in a firm, partner in a partnership, or an officer of a corporation is suspended or expelled, the use of the terms REALTOR® or REALTORS® by the firm, partnership or corporation shall not be affected. \*

\*Concerning Article VI, Section 6(a), associations are advised to select one rule from the two alternatives. The association may wish to consult with legal counsel prior to adoption.

(b) In any action taken against a REALTOR® member for suspension or expulsion under Section 6(a) hereof, notice of such action shall be given to all REALTORS® employed by or affiliated as independent contractors with such REALTOR® member and they shall be advised that the provisions in Article VI, Section 6(a) shall apply.

(c) Lockboxes The SAVANNAH AREA REALTORS® (association) offers Lockboxes to every REALTOR®, and every non-principal broker, sales licensee and licensed or certified appraiser who is affiliated with a REALTOR® Member in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the association, Section 1, Central Lockbox System. Nothing shall prevent the owner's right to refuse to have a Lockbox on his / her property.

**Section 7.** Institute Affiliate Members. Institute Affiliate members shall have rights and privileges and be subject to obligations prescribed by the board of directors consistent with the *Constitution and Bylaws of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®*.

**NOTE:** Local associations establish the rights and privileges to be conferred on Institute Affiliate members except that no Institute Affiliate member may be granted the right to use the term REALTOR®, REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®, or the REALTOR® logo; to serve as president of the local association; or to be a participant in the local association's multiple listing service. (Amended 1/02)

**Section 8.** Affiliate Members. Affiliate members shall have rights and privileges and be subject to obligations prescribed by the board of directors.

**Section 9.** Public Service Members. Public Service members shall have rights and privileges and be subject to obligations prescribed by the board of directors.

**Section 10.** Honorary Members. Honorary membership shall confer only the right to attend meetings and participate in discussions.

**Section 11.** Student Members. Student members shall have rights and privileges and be subject to obligations prescribed by the board of directors.

**Section 12.** Certification by REALTOR®. Designated REALTORS® members of the association shall certify to the association annually on a form provided by the association, a complete listing of all individuals licensed or certified in the REALTOR®'s office(s) and shall designate a primary association for each individual who holds membership. Designated REALTORS® shall also identify any non-member licensees in the REALTOR®'s office(s) and if designated

REALTOR® dues have been paid to another association based on said non-member licensees, the Designated REALTORS® shall identify the association to which dues have been remitted. These declarations shall be used for purposes of calculating dues under Article X, Section 2(a) of the Bylaws. Designated REALTORS® members shall also notify the association of any additional individual(s) licensed or certified with the firm(s) within 10 days of the date of affiliation or severance of the individual. *Also added to policy and procedures*

**Section 13. Legal Liability Training.** Within two (2) years of the date of election to membership, and every two (2) years thereafter, each REALTOR® member of the association shall be required to demonstrate that they have completed a course of instruction on antitrust laws, agency laws, civil rights laws or the REALTORS® Code of Ethics, its interpretation and meaning and/or the procedures related to its enforcement.

This requirement will be considered satisfied upon presentation of evidence that the member has completed an educational program conducted by another Member Board, the State Association of REALTORS®, the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® or any of its affiliated Institutes, Societies or Councils, or any other recognized educational institution which, in the opinion of the board of directors, is an adequate substitute for the training programs conducted by the association.

Failure to satisfy this requirement biennially will result in membership being suspended from the date it otherwise would be renewed until such time that the member provides evidence of completion of the educational requirements.

**NOTE:** Any education requirement must comply with Interpretation No. 37 of Article I, Section 2, *Bylaws*, and NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

**Section 14. Harassment.** Any member of the association may be reprimanded, placed on probation, suspended, or expelled for harassment of an association or MLS employee or association officer or director after an investigation in accordance with the procedures of the association. As used in this section, harassment means any verbal or physical conduct including threatening or obscene language, unwelcome sexual advances, stalking, actions including strikes, shoves, kicks, or other similar physical contact, or threats to do the same, or any other conduct with the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating a hostile, intimidating or offensive work environment. The decision of the appropriate disciplinary action to be taken shall be made by the investigatory team comprised of the president, and president-elect and/or vice president and one member of the board of directors selected by the highest ranking officer not named in the complaint, upon consultation with legal counsel for the association. Disciplinary action may include any sanction authorized in the association's Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual. If the complaint names the president, president-elect or vice president, they may not participate in the proceedings and shall be replaced by the immediate past president or, alternatively, by another member of the board of directors selected by the highest ranking officer not named in the complaint.

## **Article VII – Professional Standards and Arbitration**

(Requires verbatim adoption by Member Boards – Selected Uniform Provision)

**Section 1.** If the association opts to comply with state law and adopts and incorporates into its Bylaws the *Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual* of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, as recommended, then the following language for Article VII, Section 1 **must be adopted**:

**Section 1.** The responsibility of the association and of its members relating to the enforcement of the Code of Ethics, the disciplining of members, and the arbitration of disputes, and the organization and procedures incident thereto, shall be governed by the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, as amended from time to time, which is by this reference incorporated into these Bylaws, provided, however, that any provision deemed inconsistent with state law shall be deleted or amended to comply with state law.

**Section 2.** It shall be the duty and responsibility of every REALTOR® member of this association to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws and the rules and regulations of the association, the Constitution and Bylaws of the State Association, the *Constitution and Bylaws of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®*, and to abide by the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, including the duty to arbitrate controversies arising out of real estate transactions as specified by Article 17 of the Code of Ethics, and as further defined and in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual of this association, as from time to time amended.

**Section 3.** The responsibility of the association and its members relating to the enforcement of the Code of Ethics, the disciplining of members, the arbitration of disputes, and the organization and procedures incident thereto, shall be consistent with the cooperative professional standards enforcement agreement entered into by the association, which by this reference is made a part of these Bylaws.

## **Article VIII – Use of the Terms REALTOR® and REALTORS®**

**Section 1.** Use of the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® by members shall, at all times, be subject to the provisions of the *Constitution and Bylaws of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®* and to the Rules and Regulations prescribed by its board of directors. The association shall have the authority to control, jointly and in full cooperation with the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, use of the terms within its jurisdiction. Any misuse of the terms by members is a violation of a membership duty and may subject members to disciplinary action by the board of directors after a hearing as provided for in the association's Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual. (Amended 5/06)

**Section 2.** REALTOR® members of the association shall have the privilege of using the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS® in connection with their places of business within the state or a state contiguous thereto so

long as they remain REALTOR® members in good standing. No other class of members shall have this privilege. (Amended 1/96)

**Section 3.** A REALTOR® member who is a principal of a real estate firm, partnership, or corporation may use the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS®, only if all the principals of such firm, partnership, or corporation who are actively engaged in the real estate profession within the state or a state contiguous thereto are REALTOR® members or Institute Affiliate members, as described in Section 1(b) of Article IV.

(a) In the case of a REALTOR® member who is a principal of a real estate firm, partnership, or corporation whose business activity is substantially all commercial, the right to use the term REALTOR® or REALTORS® shall be limited to office locations in which a principal, partner, corporate officer, or branch office manager of the firm, partnership, or corporation holds REALTOR® membership. If a firm, partnership, or corporation operates additional places of business in which no principal, partner, corporate officer, or branch office manager holds REALTOR® membership, the term REALTOR® or REALTORS® may not be used in any reference to those additional places of business. (Amended 1/01)

**Section 4.** Institute Affiliate members shall not use the terms REALTOR® or REALTORS®, nor the imprint of the emblem seal of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

### **Article IX – State and National Memberships**

**Section 1.** The association shall be a member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and the Georgia Association of REALTORS®. By reason of the association's membership, each REALTOR® member of the Member Board shall be entitled to membership in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and the Georgia Association of REALTORS® without further payment of dues (refer to option below). The association shall continue as a member of the State and National Associations, unless by a majority vote of all of its REALTOR® members, decision is made to withdraw, in which case the State and National Associations shall be notified at least one month in advance of the date designated for the termination of such membership.

**Section 2.** The association recognizes the exclusive property rights of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® in the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS®. The association shall discontinue use of the terms in any form in its name, upon ceasing to be a member of the National Association, or upon a determination by the board of directors of the National Association that it has violated the conditions imposed upon the terms.

**Section 3.** The association adopts the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and agrees to enforce the Code among its REALTOR® members. The association and all its members agree to abide by the *Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations*, and policies of the National Association and the Georgia Association of REALTORS®.

### **Article X – Dues and Assessments**

**Section 1. Application Fee.** The board of directors may adopt an application fee for REALTOR® membership in reasonable amount, not exceeding three (3) times the amount of the annual dues for REALTOR® membership, which shall be required to accompany each application for REALTOR® membership and which shall become the property of the association upon final approval of the application. (Amended 1/02)

**Section 2. Dues.** The annual dues of members shall be as follows.

(a) REALTOR® Members. The annual dues of each Designated REALTOR® member shall be in such amount as established annually by the board of directors, plus an additional amount to be established annually by the board of directors times the number of real estate salespersons and licensed or certified appraisers who

(1) are employed by or affiliated as independent contractors, or who are otherwise directly or indirectly licensed with such REALTOR® member, and (2) are not REALTOR® members of any association in the state or a state contiguous thereto or Institute Affiliate members of the association. In calculating the dues payable to the association by a Designated REALTOR® member, non-member licensees as defined in (1) and (2) of this paragraph shall not be included in the computation of dues if the Designated REALTOR® has paid dues based on said non-member licensees in another association in the state or a state contiguous thereto, provided the Designated REALTOR® notifies the association in writing of the identity of the association to which dues have been remitted. In the case of a Designated REALTOR® member in a firm, partnership, or corporation whose business activity is substantially all commercial, any assessments for nonmember licensees shall be limited to licensees affiliated with the Designated REALTOR® (as defined in (1) and (2) of this paragraph) in the office where the Designated REALTOR® holds membership, and any other offices of the firm located within the jurisdiction of this association. (Amended 1/05)

(1) For the purpose of this section, a REALTOR® member of a Member Board shall be held to be any member who has a place or places of business within the state or a state contiguous thereto and who, as a principal, partner, corporate officer, or branch office manager of a real estate firm, partnership, or corporation, is actively engaged in the real estate profession as defined in Article III, Section 1 of the Constitution of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®. An individual shall be deemed to be licensed with a REALTOR® if the license of the individual is held by the REALTOR®, or by any broker who is licensed with the REALTOR®, or by any entity in which the REALTOR® has a direct or indirect ownership interest and which is engaged in other aspects of the real estate business (except as provided for in Section 2(a)(1) hereof) provided that such licensee is not otherwise included in the computation of dues payable by the principal, partner, corporate officer, or branch office manager of the entity.

A REALTOR® with a direct or indirect ownership interest in an entity engaged exclusively in soliciting and/or referring clients and customers to the REALTOR® for consideration on a substantially exclusive basis shall annually file with the association on a form approved by the association a list of the licensees affiliated with that entity and shall certify that all of the licensees affiliated with the entity are solely engaged in referring clients and customers and are not engaged in listing, selling, leasing, renting, managing, counseling, or appraising real property. The individuals disclosed on such form shall not be deemed to be licensed with the REALTOR® filing the form for purposes of this section and shall not be included in calculating the annual dues of the Designated REALTOR®. Designated REALTORS® shall notify the association within three (3) days of any change in status of licensees in a referral firm.

The exemption for any licensee included on the certification form shall automatically be revoked upon the individual being engaged in real estate licensed activities (listing, selling, leasing, renting, managing, counseling, or appraising real property) other than referrals, and dues for the current fiscal year shall be payable.

Membership dues shall be prorated for any licensee included on a certification form submitted to the association who during the same calendar year applies for REALTOR® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® membership



in the association. However, membership dues shall not be prorated if the licensee held REALTOR® or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® membership during the preceding calendar year. (Amended 11/09 and 11/14)

(b) REALTOR® Members. The annual dues of REALTOR® members other than the Broker in Charge shall be as established annually by the board of directors. (Amended 1/05)

(c) Institute Affiliate Members. The annual dues of each Institute Affiliate member shall be as established in Article II of the Bylaws of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

**NOTE:** The Institutes, Societies, and Councils of the National Association shall be responsible for collecting and remitting dues to the National Association for Institute Affiliate members as determined by the National Association of REALTORS®. The National Association shall credit \$35 to the account of a local association for each Institute Affiliate Member whose office address is within the assigned territorial jurisdiction of that association, provided, however, if the office location is also within the territorial jurisdiction of a Commercial Overlay Board (COB), the \$35 amount will be credited to the COB, unless the Institute Affiliate member directs that the dues be distributed to the other association. The National Association shall also credit \$35 to the account of state associations for each Institute Affiliate member whose office address is located within the territorial jurisdiction of the state association. Local and state associations may not establish any additional entrance, initiation fees or dues for Institute Affiliate members, but may provide service packages to which Institute Affiliate members may voluntarily subscribe. (Amended 11/2013)

(d) Affiliate Members. The annual dues of each Affiliate member shall be as established annually by the board of directors. (Amended 1/05)

(e) Public Service Members. The annual dues of each Public Service member shall be as established annually by the board of directors. (Amended 1/05)

(f) Honorary Members. Dues payable, if any, shall be at the discretion of the board of directors. (Amended 1/05)

(g) Student Members. Dues payable, if any, shall be at the discretion of the board of directors. (Amended 1/05)

**NOTE about provisional membership:** When the association adopts Article V, Section 3. Election, Option 3 for provisional membership, the language in Article X, Section 3 **must be revised** to state:

**Section 3. Dues Payable.** Dues for all members shall be payable annually in advance on the first day of January. Dues for new members shall be computed from the date of application and granting of provisional membership. (Adopted 1/98, Amended 1/05)

(a) In the event a sales licensee or licensed or certified appraiser who holds REALTOR® membership is dropped for nonpayment of association dues, and the individual remains with the Designated REALTOR firm, the dues obligation of the Designated REALTOR® (as set forth in Article X, Section 2 [a]) will be

increased to reflect the addition of a non-member licensee. Dues shall be calculated from the first day of the current fiscal year and are payable within thirty (30) days of the notice of termination.

**Section 4. Nonpayment of Financial Obligations.** If dues, fees, fines, or other assessments including amounts, **as determined by the board of directors annually**, owed to the association or the association's multiple listing service are not paid within 30 calendar days after the due date, the nonpaying Member is subject to suspension at the discretion of the board of directors. 60 calendar days after the due date, membership of the nonpaying member may be terminated at the discretion of the board of directors. 90 calendar days after the due date, membership of the nonpaying Member shall automatically terminate unless within that time the amount due is paid. However, no action shall be taken to suspend or expel a member for nonpayment of disputed amounts until the accuracy of the amount owed has been confirmed by the board of directors. A former member who has had his/her membership terminated for nonpayment of dues, fees, fines, or other assessments duly levied in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws or the provisions of other rules and regulations of the association or any of its services, departments, divisions, or subsidiaries may apply for reinstatement in a manner prescribed for new applicants for membership, after making payment in full of all accounts due as of the date of termination.

**Section 5. Deposits and Expenditures.** Deposits and expenditures of funds shall be in accordance with policies established by the board of directors. (Amended 1/05)

**Section 6. Notice of Dues, Fees, Fines, Assessments, and Other Financial Obligations of Members.** All dues, fees, fines, assessments, or other financial obligations to the association shall be noticed to the delinquent association member in writing setting forth the amount owed and due date.

**Section 7.** The dues of REALTOR® members who are REALTOR® Emeritus (as recognized by the National Association), past presidents, and past treasurers of the National Association or recipients of the Distinguished Service Award shall be as determined by the board of directors. (Amended 11/2013)

**NOTE:** A Member Board's dues obligation to the National Association is reduced by an amount equal to the amount which the association is assessed for a REALTOR® member, times the number of REALTOR® Emeriti (as recognized by the National Association), past presidents and past treasurers of the National Association, and recipients of the Distinguished Service Award of the National Association who are REALTOR® members of the association. The dues obligation of such individuals to the local association should be reduced to reflect the reduction in the association's dues obligation to the National Association. The association may, at its option, choose to have no dues requirement for such individuals except as may be required to meet the association's obligation to the State Association with respect to such individuals. Member Boards should determine whether the dues payable by the association to the State Association are reduced with respect to such individuals. It should be noted that this does not affect a Designated REALTOR® dues obligation to the association with respect to those licensees employed by or affiliated with the Designated REALTOR® who are not members of the local association. (Amended 11/2013)

## ARTICLE XI - OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

**Section 1. Officers.** The elected officers of the Board shall be a President, a President-Elect, a Vice President of Professional Development, a Vice President of Public and Community Relations, a Vice President of Member Services and a Vice President of Governmental Affairs. To serve as an Officer, a member must have served at least one year as a member of the Board of Directors. To serve as President-Elect, a member must have served at least one year as an officer of BOARD and shall not serve concurrently as an SMLC Officer or Director except for the SMLC representative. They shall be elected for terms of one year, or until successors are elected. No member shall serve more than four consecutive years as a Vice-President. The President-Elect shall succeed to the office of President. Only the office of President-Elect is automatic for election to the office of President the following year. The election to any other executive position is not necessarily a prerequisite to ultimate election to the office of President-elect, and/or President in subsequent years.

(a) The Executive Committee composition for the Savannah Area REALTORS is the SAR President, SAR President-Elect, SAR Immediate Past President, the SMLC President, the Vice-President of Government Affairs, the Vice-President of Member Services, the Vice-President of Community Services, the Vice-President of Professional Development, the CEO, who does not vote on motions and serves as the secretary for the committee.

**Section 2. Duties of Officers.** The duties of the Officers shall be such as their titles, by general usage, would indicate and such as may be assigned to them by the Board of Directors. It shall be the duty of the Association Executive to keep the records of the Board and to carry on all necessary correspondence with the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and the GEORGIA REALTORS®.

(a) The President shall be the official spokesperson of the Savannah Area REALTORS®.

(b) The President-Elect, in the absence of the President, or at any time when requested to do so by the President, shall discharge the duties of the President. The President-Elect shall succeed to the office of President.

**Section 3. Board of Directors.** The governing body of the Board shall be a Board of Directors consisting of elected officers and twelve (12) REALTORS® Members of the Board. To serve as a director, a member must have been a member of and attended meetings of two or more committees or workgroups within the past 24 months. Directors shall be elected to serve for terms of three years, except that at organization one-third of the elected Directors shall be elected for terms of one, two, and three years respectively, or for lesser terms as may be deemed necessary to complete the first fiscal year. Thereafter, as many Directors shall be elected each year as are required to fill vacancies. Directors shall be limited to two consecutive terms and shall not serve concurrently as an SMLC Officer or Director except for the SMLC representative. In addition to the twelve (12) REALTORS® Members of the Board, the immediate Past President, the President of WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF REALTORS®, the President of the SAVANNAH MULTI-LIST CORPORATION, a Representative of the Past President's Advisory Workgroup, the Chairperson of the SAVANNAH YOUNG COUNCIL OF REALTORS®, and the President of the RCA Board shall be voting Members of the Board of

Directors. No firm shall have more than three (3) voting Directors at any one time serving on the Board of Directors. If any representatives are from a firm with three (3) elected Directors, they shall appoint a REALTOR® Member from their elected officers, council, or committee to represent them subject to the approval of the BOD.

**Section 4. Election of Officers and Directors.** (a) At least two (2) months before the annual election, a Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Board of Directors. The Nominating Committee shall consist of five REALTOR® members and three alternates (2 at large alternates and one past president alternate able and willing to serve) appointed as follows: Chairman: Past President twice removed (note: if the Past President twice removed cannot serve, the President shall appoint the Chairman. The Chair must be a Past President, more than twice removed, and hold an active membership with SAR.), two most recent Past Presidents of BOARD able and willing to serve, and one at-large member chosen by the BOARD President and two alternates, and one at-large member and one alternate chosen by the current President Elect. No BOARD Past President may serve as an at-large member. The alternate shall serve only in the event a Member of the nominating committee is unable to attend. The alternate(s) shall be notified and attend all nominating committee meetings with no voice or vote. In the event a Member of the committee is unable to attend, the alternate will become a voting Member of the committee with voice and vote. The Nominating Committee shall select one candidate for President Elect and 4 candidates for Vice Presidents and one candidate for each place to be filled on the Board of Directors. In the event there are not a sufficient number of applications to fill the available positions, the Chair of the Nominating Committee shall give notice to the membership of an additional five (5) days from the deadline to procure additional applications. Prior to the report of the nominating committee going out the President Elect will designate which Vice President candidate shall fill each of the four positions. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be electronically transmitted to each Member eligible to vote at least three (3) weeks preceding the election. Additional candidates for the offices to be filled may be placed in nomination by petition signed by at least 5% of the Members eligible to vote. The petition shall be filed with the Chief Executive Officer at least two (2) weeks before the election. The Chief Executive Officer shall send notice of such additional nominations to all Members eligible to vote at least seven (7) days before the election.

(a) The election of officers and directors shall take place at the annual meeting.

(b) If there is only one nominee for President-Elect, then the election may be by voice vote. If there is more than one nominee for President-Elect, then the election shall be by secret written ballot. When any nominee receives a majority vote from those voting, that nominee is duly elected to the position. If no nominee receives a majority vote on any ballot taken, then the nominee with the lowest number of votes on that ballot shall be dropped from the ballot, and the remaining nominees shall be voted on in the next ballot. Abstentions are not considered a vote, and any ballot for a single position with more or less than one nominee selected on the ballot shall be disqualified and not counted in the vote.

(c) If there are only four nominees for the Vice President positions, then the election may be by voice vote. If there are more than four nominees for the four Vice President positions, then the election shall be by secret written ballot(s) with each director casting a vote for different nominees equal to the exact number of

positions available. When only one nominee receives a majority vote from those voting, then that nominee is duly elected to the position of Vice President, and the remaining nominees shall be voted on again by written ballot. When more than one nominee receives a majority vote from those voting, then the nominee receiving the highest number of votes shall be duly elected to the position of Vice President, and the remaining nominees shall be voted on again by written ballot. If no nominee receives a majority vote on any ballot taken, the nominee with the lowest number of votes on that ballot shall be dropped from the ballot, and the remaining nominees shall be included on the next ballot. In the event a nominee is dropped from a ballot because no nominee received a majority vote, that nominee shall be included on the first ballot following the election of Vice President. Written ballots shall be taken until four Vice Presidents are elected. Abstentions are not considered a vote, and any ballot with more or less than the exact number of names of nominees voted on for the position(s) available shall be disqualified and not counted in the vote. (For example, in the first ballot taken, there will be four Vice President positions available; therefore, on that ballot, each director voting must vote for no more nor less than four nominees. If the ballot is taken with only three positions remaining available, then any ballot with more or less than three nominees selected shall be disqualified and not counted in the vote. If the ballot is taken with only two positions remaining available, then any ballot with more or less than two nominees selected shall be disqualified and not counted in the vote. If three Vice Presidents have been elected by majority vote, then only one position remains and any ballot with more or less than one nominee selected to fill the position available shall be disqualified and not counted in the vote.)

(d) The president, with the approval of the board of directors, shall appoint an election committee of not less than five (5) REALTOR® members to conduct the election. In case of a tie vote, the issue shall be determined by drawing names out of a hat by the chair of the election committee.

**Section 5. Vacancies.** Vacancies among the officers and the board of directors shall be filled by a simple majority vote of the board of directors until the next annual election. The Board of Directors must ratify any wholly owned subsidiary appointments due to vacancies of officers and directors, provided the candidates for the vacancy meet the qualifications for an officer or director.

**Section 6. Removal of Officers and Directors.** If an officer or director is deemed to be incapable of fulfilling the duties for which elected, but will not resign from office voluntarily, the officer or director may be removed from office under the following procedure.

(a) A petition requiring the removal of an officer or director and signed by not less than one-third of the voting membership or a majority of all directors shall be filed with the president, or if the president is the subject of the petition, with the next-ranking officer, and shall specifically set forth the reasons the individual is deemed to be disqualified from further service.

(b) Upon receipt of the petition, and not less than twenty (20) days or more than forty-five (45) days thereafter, a special meeting of the voting membership of the association shall be held, and the sole business of the meeting shall be to consider the charge against the officer or director, and to render a decision on such petition.

(c) The special meeting shall be noticed to all voting members at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting and shall be conducted by the president of the association unless the president's continued service in office is being considered at the meeting. In such case, the next-ranking officer will conduct the meeting of the hearing by the members. Provided a quorum is present, a three-fourths vote of members present, and voting shall be required for removal from office.

**Section 7. Chief Executive Officer.** There shall be a chief executive officer (CEO), appointed by the board of directors, who shall be the chief administrative officer of the association. The Chief Executive Officer shall have the authority to hire, supervise, evaluate, and terminate all staff, including staff of wholly owned subsidiaries. The CEO has the responsibility of administering the association budget and shall perform such other duties as prescribed by the Board of Directors.

**Section 8. State Directors.**

Written or electronic notice of the elected / appointed State Directors and Alternates from Member Boards and the designated representative from each of the Institutes, Societies, and Councils must be provided to the Georgia Association no later than **December 1** each calendar year. Effective January 1, 2021 the qualifications as adopted by the GAR Board of Directors in the GAR Policies and Procedures Manual under "STATE DIRECTORS" must be met for all State Directors and Alternates, prior to participating as a State Director.

**Article XII – Meetings**

**Section 1. Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting of the association shall be held each year; the date, place, and hour to be designated by the board of directors.

**Section 2. Board of Director Meetings.** The board of directors shall designate a regular time and place for meetings. Absence from three (3) regular meetings, in calendar year, shall be construed as resignation by that officer or director. A quorum for the transaction of business shall be a majority vote of the directors' present over fifty percent (50%), except as may otherwise be required by state law.

**Section 3. Notice of Board of Director Special Called Meetings.** With approval from a simple majority of officers or twenty-five (25%) of the current board of directors a special meeting can be called. Written notice shall be given to every director entitled to participate in the meeting at least three (3) calendar days in advance of the specially called meeting. If a special meeting is called, it shall be accompanied by a statement of the purpose of the meeting, an agenda, and any supporting documentation. This includes electronic meetings.

**Section 4. Membership Meetings.** Meetings of the members may be held at other times as the president or the board of directors may determine, or upon the written request of at least 10% of the members eligible to vote. This includes electronic meetings.

**Section 5. Notice of Membership Meetings.** Written notice shall be given to every Member entitled to participate in the meeting at least one (1) week preceding all meetings. If a special meeting is called, it shall be accompanied by a statement of the purpose of the meeting.

**Section 6. Quorum for Membership Meetings.** A quorum for the transaction of business at general membership and/or special meeting of the membership shall consist of 5% of the members present and eligible to vote at the meeting, except as may otherwise be required by state law.

**Section 7. Electronic Transaction of Business.** To the fullest extent permitted by law, the board of directors or committees may conduct business by electronic means.

## Article XIII – Committees

**Section 1. Standing Committees.** The President shall appoint from the REALTOR® Members, subject to confirmation by the Board of Directors, the following standing committees: Budget & Finance, Bylaws, and Professional Development with rights and privileges subject to the Board of Directors. Absence from three (3) scheduled meetings within a calendar year will constitute automatic resignation from the committee.

**Section 2. Committees.** The president shall solicit from the general membership REALTOR® members eligible to serve on association committees.

**Section 3. Special Committees.** The president shall appoint, subject to confirmation by the board of directors, special committees as deemed necessary. Electronic conferencing is permitted at the discretion of the chair based on the scope of the meeting and agenda.

**Section 4. Organization.** All committees shall be of such size and shall have duties, functions, and powers as assigned by the president or the board of directors except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws.

**Section 5. President.** The president, president-elect and CEO shall be an *ex-officio* member of all committees and shall be notified of their meetings.

**Section 6. Quorum.** A quorum for committee meetings shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members eligible to vote. A quorum for standing committee meetings shall consist of a minimum of five (5) members eligible to vote. A majority vote by such members present shall be required for passage of motions. Electronic conferencing is permitted at the discretion of the chair based on the scope of the meeting and agenda.

**Section 7. Attendance by Telephone.** Members of a committee may participate in any meeting through the use of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Electronic conferencing is permitted at the discretion of the chair based on the scope of the meeting and agenda.

## Article XIV – Fiscal and Elective Year

**Section 1.** The fiscal year of the association shall be January 1 to December 31.

**Section 2.** The elective year of the association shall be January 1 to December 31.

## Article XV – Rules of Order

**Section 1.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall be recognized as the authority governing the meetings of the association, its board of directors, and committees, in all instances wherein its provisions do not conflict with these Bylaws.

## **Article XVI – Amendments**

**Section 1.** These Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the members present and qualified to vote at any meeting at which a quorum is present, provided the substance of such proposed amendment or amendments shall be plainly stated in the call for the meeting.

### **Subsection (a):**

(a) When Bylaws amendments are mandated by NAR policy, these Bylaws may be automatically amended to reflect the mandate as of the effective date of the mandatory policy authorized by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®. The association shall provide notice of that change in regular or special membership communication.

**Section 2.** Notice of all meetings at which amendments are to be considered shall be mailed to every member eligible to vote at least one (1) week prior to the meeting.

**Section 3.** Amendments to these Bylaws affecting the admission or qualification of REALTOR® and Institute Affiliate members, the use of the terms REALTOR® and REALTORS®, or any alteration in the territorial jurisdiction of the association shall become effective upon their approval as authorized by the board of directors of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.

## **Article XVII – Dissolution**

**Section 1.** Upon the dissolution of this association, the board of directors, after providing for the payment of all obligations, shall distribute any remaining assets as determined by majority vote of the Savannah Board of Directors, to the Savannah Area REALTORS® Disaster Relief Fund.

## **Article XVIII – Multiple Listing**

### **Subsidiary Multiple Listing Corporation**

#### **Section 1: Authority**

The association of REALTORS® shall maintain for the use of its members a multiple listing service which shall be a lawful corporation of the state of Georgia, all the stock of which shall be owned by this association of REALTORS®. **M**

#### **Section 2: Purpose**

A Multiple Listing Service is a means by which cooperation among Participants is enhanced, by which information is accumulated and disseminated to enable authorized Participants to prepare appraisals, analyses, and other valuations of real property for bona fide clients and customers; by which Participants engaging in Real Estate Appraisal contribute to common databases; and is a facility for the orderly correlation and dissemination of listing information so participants may better serve their clients and the



public. (Amended 8/24) **M**

### **Section 3: Governing Documents**

The board of directors shall cause any multiple listing service established by it pursuant to this article to conform its corporate charter, constitution, bylaws, rules, regulations, policies, practices, and procedures at all times to the constitution, bylaws, rules, regulations, and policies of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®. **M**

### **Section 4: Participation**

Any REALTOR® of this or any other Association who is a principal, partner, corporate officer, or branch office manager acting on behalf of a principal, without further qualification, except as otherwise stipulated in these bylaws, shall be eligible to participate in multiple listing upon agreeing in writing to conform to the rules and regulations thereof and to pay the costs incidental thereto.\*\* However, under no circumstances is any individual or firm, regardless of membership status, entitled to multiple listing service membership or participation unless they hold a current, valid real estate broker's license and cooperate, or are licensed or certified by an appropriate state regulatory agency to engage in the appraisal of real property.\*\* Cooperation is the obligation to share information on listed property and to make property available to other brokers for showing to prospective purchasers and tenants when it is in the best interests of their clients. Use of information developed by or published by an association multiple listing service is strictly limited to the activities authorized under a participant's licensure(s) or certification and unauthorized uses are prohibited. Further, none of the foregoing is intended to convey participation or membership or any right of access to information developed by or published by an association multiple listing service where access to such information is prohibited by law. The REALTOR® principal of any firm, partnership, corporation, or the branch office manager designated by said firm, partnership, or corporation as the participant shall have all rights, benefits, and privileges of the service, and shall accept all obligations to the service for the participant's firm, partnership, or corporation, and for compliance with the bylaws and rules and regulations of the service by all persons affiliated with the participant who utilize the service. (Amended 8/24) **M**

\*\*Optional qualifications which may be adopted at the local association's discretion: Any applicant for MLS participation and any licensee (including licensed or certified appraisers) affiliated with an MLS participant who has access to and use of MLS-generated information shall complete an orientation program of no more than eight (8) classroom hours devoted to the MLS rules and regulations and computer training related to MLS information entry and retrieval within thirty (30) days after access has been provided. (Amended 11/96)

Associations are not required to establish prerequisites for MLS participation beyond holding REALTOR® (principal) membership in an association. However, if the association wishes to establish these requirements for MLS participation or for access to MLS-generated information, the requirement of attendance at an orientation program is the most rigorous requirement that may be established. (Adopted 2/94)

Mere possession of a broker's license is not sufficient to qualify for MLS participation. Rather, the requirement that an individual or firm cooperate means that the participant actively endeavors during the operation of its real estate business to list real property of the type listed on the MLS, share information on listed property and make property available to other brokers for showing to prospective purchasers and tenants when it is in the best interests of their client(s). "Actively" means on a continual and ongoing basis

during the operation of the participant's real estate business. The "actively" requirement is not intended to preclude MLS participation by a participant or potential participant that operates a real estate business on a part-time, seasonal, or similarly time-limited basis or that has its business interrupted by periods of relative inactivity occasioned by market conditions. Similarly, the requirement is not intended to deny MLS participation to a participant or potential participant who has not achieved a minimum number of transactions despite good faith efforts. Nor is it intended to permit an MLS to deny participation based on the level of service provided by the participant or potential participant as long as the level of service satisfies state law. (Amended 8/24)

The key is that the participant or potential participant actively endeavors to cooperate with respect to properties of the type that are listed on the MLS in which participation is sought. Cooperation is the obligation to share information on listed property and to make property available to other brokers for showing to prospective purchasers and tenants when it is in the best interests of their clients. This requirement does not permit an MLS to deny participation to a participant or potential participant that operates a "Virtual Office Website" (VOW) (including a VOW that the participant uses to refer customers to other participants) if the participant or potential participant actively

endeavors to cooperate. An MLS may evaluate whether a participant or potential participant potential participant actively endeavors during the operation of its real estate business to offer or accept cooperation only if the MLS has a reasonable basis to believe that the participant or potential participant is in fact not doing so. The membership requirement shall be applied in a nondiscriminatory manner to all participants and potential participants. (Amended 8/24) M

### **Provision for Establishing Nonmember Participatory Rights (Open MLS)**

Participation in the service is also available to nonmember principals who meet the qualifications established in the Association's Bylaws and MLS Rules and Regulations. However, under no circumstances is any individual or firm, regardless of membership status, entitled to Multiple Listing Service participation or membership unless they hold a current, valid Real Estate Broker's license cooperate or are licensed or certified by an appropriate state regulatory agency to engage in the appraisal of real property. Cooperation is the obligation to share information on listed property and to make property available to other brokers for showing to prospective purchasers and tenants when it is in the best interests of their clients. Use of information developed by or published by an association multiple listing service is strictly limited to the activities authorized under a participant's licensure(s) or certification and unauthorized uses are prohibited. Further, none of the foregoing is intended to convey participation or membership or any right of access to information developed by or published by an association multiple listing service where access to such information is prohibited by law. The nonmember principal of any firm, partnership, corporation, or the branch office manager designated by said firm, partnership, or corporation as the participant shall have only those rights, benefits, and privileges as specified by the service, and shall accept all obligations to the service for the participant's firm, partnership, or corporation, and for compliance with the bylaws and rules and regulations of the service by all persons affiliated with the participant who utilize the service. (Amended 8/24)

Mere possession of a broker's license is not sufficient to qualify for MLS participation. Rather, the requirement that an individual or firm offers or cooperate means that the participant actively endeavors during the operation of its real estate business to list real property of the type listed on the MLS share information on listed property and make property available to other brokers for showing to prospective

purchasers and tenants when it is in the best interests of their client(s). “Actively” means on a continual and ongoing basis during the operation of the participant’s real estate business. The “actively” requirement is not intended to preclude MLS participation by a participant or potential participant that operates a real estate business on a part time, seasonal, or similarly time-limited basis or that has its business interrupted by periods of relative inactivity occasioned by market conditions. Similarly, the requirement is not intended to deny MLS participation to a participant or potential participant who has not achieved a minimum number of transactions despite good faith efforts. Nor is it intended to permit an MLS to deny participation based on the level of service provided by the participant or potential participant as long as the level of service satisfies state law. (Amended 8/24)

The key is that the participant or potential participant cooperate with respect to properties of the type that are listed on the MLS in which participation is sought. Cooperation is the obligation to share information on listed property and to make property available to other brokers for showing to prospective purchasers and tenants when it is in the best interests of their clients. This requirement does not permit an MLS to deny participation to a participant or potential participant that operates a “Virtual Office Website” (VOW) (including a VOW that the participant

uses to refer customers to other participants) if the participant or potential participant actively endeavors to cooperate. An MLS may evaluate whether a participant or potential participant actively endeavors during the operation of its real estate cooperate only if the MLS has a reasonable basis to believe that the participant or potential participant is in fact not doing so. The membership requirement shall be applied in a nondiscriminatory manner to all participants and potential participants. (Amended 8/24)

## **Section 5: Subscribers**

Subscribers (or users) of the MLS include non-principal brokers, sales associates, and licensed and certified appraisers affiliated with participants. (Optional provision: Subscribers also include affiliated unlicensed administrative and clerical staff, personal assistants, and individuals seeking licensure or certification as real estate appraisers who are under the direct supervision of an MLS participant or the participant’s licensed designee.) (Adopted 4/92) **M**

## **Section 6: Removal of Officers and Directors**

In the event that an officer or director of the multiple listing service is deemed to be incapable of fulfilling the duties for which elected, but will not resign from office voluntarily, the officer or director may be removed from office under the following procedure:

1. A petition requiring the removal of an officer or director and signed by not less than one-third of the participants or a majority of all directors of the MLS shall be filed with the president of the MLS, or if the president is the subject of the petition, with the next- ranking officer, and shall specifically set forth the reasons the individual is deemed to be disqualified from further service.
2. Upon receipt of the petition, and not less than twenty (20) days or more than forty-five (45) days thereafter, a special meeting of the participants of the MLS shall be held, and the sole business of the meeting shall be to consider the charge against the officer or director, and to

render a decision on such petition.

3. The special meeting shall be noticed to all participants at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting and shall be conducted by the president of the MLS unless the president's continued service in office is being considered at the meeting. In such case, the next- ranking officer will conduct the meeting or the hearing by the participants. Provided a quorum is present, a three-fourths vote of participants present and voting shall be required for removal from office.
4. Any vote taken by the participants to remove an officer or director must ultimately be confirmed by a majority vote of the directors of the shareholder(s). Notwithstanding the foregoing, the shareholder(s) may remove an officer or director by a majority vote of the directors of the shareholder(s). (Adopted 11/96)

#### **Article XIX**

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, to the fullest extent of the law, the SAR Board of Directors or membership may conduct business by electronic means except for membership meetings.