

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
OF
RIPLEY HOSE COMPANY NO. 1**

Revised August 2, 2019

**ARTICLE I
NAME, PURPOSE AND TERRITORY**

SECTION 1

This organization shall be known as The Ripley Hose Company No. 1, Inc. of the Town of Ripley, New York, a volunteer organization under the applicable provisions of the laws of New York State.

SECTION 2

The objectives of this organization shall be as follows:

- (a) to protect the lives and property of the residents of the territory in which the operations of the organization are principally conducted, and to render Mutual Aid when requested and authorized.
- (b) To foster interest in all matters pertaining to the volunteer fire service and the welfare of volunteer firefighters.
- (c) To inculcate love of country, good citizenship, civic virtue and self-sacrifice, and to perpetuate the spirit which, from the earliest days, has motivated volunteer fire fighters in the rendering of service of the highest type in the protection of life and property from hazards*.

SECTION 3

The territory in which the operations of this organization shall be principally conducted is: Ripley Fire District No. 1

**ARTICLE II
ATTAINING MEMBERSHIP**

SECTION 1: Application

- (a) An application for membership must be in writing on a form provided by the Fire District; must be signed by the applicant and must be presented at a regular or annual meeting along with an interview report. Along with the application there shall be provided to the applicant a packet containing the organization By-laws for their review. Applicant is required to sign off that they received and read the By-laws.
- (b) Each member must be at least 18 years of age, a *legal resident of the United States, a resident of the township of Ripley or surrounding area pursuant to prior Fire District approval (Town Law 176), for one (1) year. Residency time may be modified at the discretion of the voting membership at a regular or annual meeting.
- (c) A transfer from another fire department into this organization shall be treated as an active member, contingent, upon the recommendation of the previous department, and a majority vote of members present and voting. Transfer member will serve a one (1) year probation.
- (d) Active membership in this organization will be limited to fifty five (55) active members.
- (e) Social membership shall be limited to 15 members

SECTION 2: Application review and decision

- (a) Each applicant shall be interviewed by 3 members - consisting of two members with minimum of 1-year service and one member with at least 5 years of service. The application shall include an INTERVIEW sheet to be filled out by the interviewers; and submitted with the application to the Secretary. After the report of the interview committee is received, a vote shall be taken by written ballot at the next monthly meeting. If accepted by a majority of the members present, the applicant shall be declared 'elected' as a probationary member. The applicant will be notified by the officer presiding at the meeting of his or her acceptance or rejection within 24 hours or as soon as practicable.
- (b) Each applicant elected as a probationary member is subject to the approval of the Board of Fire Commissioners before they may begin their duties.
- (c) No applicant who has been rejected shall be permitted to reapply for membership until the expiration of 6 (six) months from the date of rejection.

**ARTICLE III
MEMBERSHIP**

SECTION 1

The categories of membership shall be: probationary, active, exempt, honorary and social.

SECTION 2: Probationary Member

- (a) The probationary member shall serve a period of one year from the date of membership acceptance,
- (b) The participation of the Probationary member will be reviewed by the Executive Committee during the last month of the probation period and their recommendations will be presented at the next regular monthly meeting of the company. The Probationary member shall be voted upon by written ballot and if accepted by a majority of the members present and voting, said Probationary member shall be declared an Active member or Social member depending on the persons requested membership. If not accepted by the majority the Probationary member shall be rejected. Only one vote shall be taken on an application at the meeting at which it is presented.

Items that will be considered in this review for recommendation of probationary members are:

- Attendance to meetings (active and social)
 - Attendance to calls; training etc. (active)
 - Support to other Hose Company activities (active and social)
- (c) At the discretion of the Executive Committee, a second probation period of up to six (6) months may be recommended to the body.

SECTION 3: Active Member

- (a) It shall be the duty of an Active member to attend each meeting of the organization; to be in readiness to perform all duties; to respond to all alarms; to assist in keeping the apparatus clean and in proper condition; to attend all drills and work details as requested; to attend schools of instruction; to attend all company and district activities; to return and report to the Officer in Charge or Senior Member at the Fire Station after each alarm unless excused by the officer in charge.
- (b) It shall be the duty of each member to notify the Secretary of any change of address and other contact information.
- (c) It shall be the responsibility of each Active member, upon change or termination of membership to immediately return to a member of the Executive Committee all property issued or loaned by the company to include keyfobs, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)/Turnout Gear

Section 4: Member in Good Standing.

- (a) The Executive Committee shall do an annual review of participation of members with less than 5 years of service to determine if they meet the criteria of a member in good standing. Any member not meeting the requirements shall be notified via a certified letter and given a hearing by the Executive Committee. If no response received from the member, they will forfeit their membership in this organization. Any member's participation can be reviewed at any time at the discretion of the Executive Committee. Participation criteria to be considered are:
 - Participation in drills (active)
 - Participation in calls (active)
 - Participation in civic activities supported by the Hose Company (active and social)

Section 5: Exempt Member

- (a) Any Active member of the organization in good standing who shall have served as such for a period of five (5) or more consecutive years as an active volunteer firefighter shall automatically be granted a Certificate of Exemption.
- (b) An Active member who has obtained their Certificate of Exemption shall, at their request, have their name taken from the roster of Active members and placed on the roster of Exempt Members, and shall be entitled to all the privileges of an Active member except a vote at meetings.
- (c) Any person on the roster of Exempt members may again be placed on the roster of Active members by submitting a written request for such status. If the company roster is full, the exempt member requesting active status shall be placed on a waiting list. Names on the waiting list shall appear in the order in which requests are received. Such requests shall take precedence over new applications for membership. When the request comes before the membership, the request shall be voted upon by written ballot. If accepted by a majority of the members present and voting, the Exempt member shall be placed on the roster of Active members' subject to a satisfactory physical exam and will not be subject to the probationary period, but is subject to approval by the Board of Fire Commissioners.

SECTION 6: Life Member

- (a) Life member status shall be bestowed by the company to an Active member, in good standing, who shall have served twenty (20) years on the active list, or to a Past Chief of this company. Life membership may be granted to a member in acknowledgement for deeds and actions rendered voluntarily resulting in the companies' prestige or service to the public being enriched.
- (b) Life Members shall not be required to pay dues.

SECTION 7: Honorary Member

- (a) Any person shall be eligible to become an Honorary member, but shall have no rights nor privileges of any character by reason thereof, except on invitation of the organization.
- (b) Honorary membership may be conferred at any regular, special, or annual meeting by a majority vote of the members present and voting. There shall be no fee for Honorary membership.
- (c) Such membership shall be perpetual unless terminated or revoked by a majority vote of the members present at a regular or special meeting.

SECTION 8: Social Membership

- (a) Social members shall have all the rights and responsibilities of an active member except they will not respond to calls nor have voting rights for line officer selection. They are eligible to hold office, attend meetings but will NOT respond to or participate in any ALARMS. Social members not previously served as Hose Company members shall be accepted as probationary members for one year and shall be required to meet Member in Good Standing criteria for satisfactory participation. Social members will be subject to all the membership requirements of Article II Section 1 and 2 and Article III, Section 2 and Section 4.

**ARTICLE IV
VOTING**

SECTION 1

Voting rights shall be as follows:

- (a) Active members in good standing shall have voting rights in all Hose Company resolutions and membership elections and all officer elections.
- (b) Probationary members with 6 months of service shall be eligible to vote on Hose Company resolutions only.
- (c) Social members with 6 months of service shall be eligible to vote on Hose Company resolutions only. After 1 year of service is attained, social members shall be eligible to vote on all Hose Company resolutions and membership and Organization Officer elections.

SECTION 2

All officers shall be elected by written ballot at the Annual meeting. Election shall be by simple majority of those present.

SECTION 3

- (a) President is eligible to vote.
- (b) In the event of a tie, the organization shall discuss the vote and re-vote. If a tie happens again then a deciding vote shall be cast by the president, secretary, and highest ranking line officer present at the meeting.
- (c) Write-ins votes are not allowed

**ARTICLE V
OFFICERS AND THEIR SELECTION**

SECTION 1: Organization

The Organization Officers shall consist of: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Quartermaster

- (a) The Line officers of the Fire Department shall consist of Chief; First Assistant Chief; Second Assistant Chief; in addition, there shall be an Ambulance Captain and Ambulance Lieutenant.
- (b) The Chief and Assistant Chiefs are nominated by the company for approval by the Board of Fire Commissioners.
- (c) Officer may hold more than one office as long as the number of the Executive Committee members is not impacted.
- (d) All Officers shall be members in good standing at the time of their election and for the duration of their term.

SECTION 2: Term of Office

The term of office shall be as follows: Organization Officers shall serve for one year terms and Line Officers shall serve for two years.

SECTION 3: Nominating and Voting Process

- (a) Nominating committee shall consist of 2 or more non-probationary members appointed by the President at the February meeting.
- (b) The Committee shall present a slate of officers, in writing, at the March meeting. Additional nominations shall be allowed at the March meeting by floor nomination. Nominees shall accept in person, or if absent, shall provide their acceptance in electronic or written form.

- (c) In the event there are no nominees for a Line or Organization position, the Executive Committee has the option of appointing a qualified person for the position for a period of one year.
- (d) The Secretary will prepare two paper ballots for the April meeting, (one for Line officers and one Hose Company officers), with the slate of officers that were nominated at the March meeting. The social ballot will not include active line officer nominees. Ballots must be entered in pen, not pencil and placed in a ballot box for counting. Secretary shall prepare a ballot tally sheet. The Secretary shall provide a count of eligible voters and record that count on the tally sheet prior to handing the tally sheet to the appointed tellers.
- (e) President shall appoint three tellers at the time of election; the tellers shall receive and confirm the number of votes received with tally sheet, tally the ballots and give the results to the president who shall announce the vote to the body. The number of ballots cast shall not exceed the number of members eligible to vote attending the meeting and shall be entered on the tally sheet. The tally sheet shall be entered into the minutes as the official election results.
- (f) In the event of a Line or Organization officer resignation mid-term, the Executive Committee has the option of appointing a qualified person to fill the position for the remainder of the term of office.

**ARTICLE VI
QUALIFICATIONS FOR LINE OFFICERS**

Section 1

A candidate to be nominated for a Line Officer position shall meet the following qualifications.

(a) The nominee for Chief must have attained:

1. BEFO or equiv
2. Fire Officer 1 or equiv
3. HAZMAT Ops or equiv
4. ICS 100, 200, 300, 700
5. Must have served as an Assistant Chief in this organization for 2 years before running for Chief

(b) The nominee for Assistant Chief must have attained prior to or within first year of term:

1. BEFO or equiv
2. Fire Officer 1 or equiv
3. HAZMAT Ops or equiv
4. ICS 100, 200, 700

(c) The nominee for Ambulance Captain must have a current EMT certification and must maintain all credentialing for the duration of term of office. Ambulance Lieutenant can be past or present EMT.

**ARTICLE VII
DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

SECTION 1: President

It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the organization and of the Executive Committee in accordance with the recognized parliamentary procedure; to call special meetings when, in proper judgment, they are necessary, or upon the written request of five (5) members unless otherwise provided; to appoint all committees; to enforce the observance of the constitution and By-laws; and shall not make any motions. The President may invoke the Parliamentarian/By-laws Chair to interpret the Constitution and By-laws and to advise on Roberts Rules of Order.

SECTION 2: Vice President

The duties of the Vice President shall be those of the President, but only when the President is absent. Should the President be unable to perform his duties, the Vice President shall assume position of President and serve until the next annual election. The Vice President position will then be filled by special election at the next regular monthly meeting. In addition, the Vice President shall audit the Treasurer books on a quarterly basis. The Vice President or designee shall be responsible for distribution and recovery of all company property and for hall and equipment rentals.

SECTION 3: Secretary

The Secretary shall keep a correct record of the proceedings of the organization, shall call the roll of Active Members at every meeting. The Secretary shall also serve as Secretary of the Executive Committee; shall notify the Board of Fire Commissioners after each new probationary and active member is elected; shall maintain the membership rosters, including their residences, contact information, dates and terms of service as well as a record of training taken; The Secretary shall keep the accounts between the organization and its members; collect all dues and pay the same to the Treasurer within (30) thirty days after receiving same. At each meeting, the names of members owing dues shall be read, plus the amount of same. The Secretary shall make a written report of receipts and disbursements at each regular meeting. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as are incidental to the office or may be imposed by the organization or the Executive Committee. It shall be the Secretary's job to preserve the records of the Company and shall deliver all books and papers to a successor. As needed this office may be

combined with the office of Treasurer, at the discretion of the Hose Company.

SECTION 4: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall have charge of all the funds of the organization; shall receive all monies collected by the Secretary or otherwise due to the organization, giving a report of the same. The Treasurer shall pay all bills against the organization, within seven (7) days, as authorized; shall keep a correct account of all receipts and disbursements and submit an account to the organization or the Executive Committee or the auditing committee when called for. The Treasurer's books shall be audited quarterly by the Vice President. The Treasurer shall deposit all monies received belonging to the organization in the name of the organization, in the bank or banks designated by the Executive Committee. Deposits are to be made ten (10) days from receipt. The bank accounts shall be established in such manner that withdrawals may only be made upon the signatures of one of the following: President, Secretary or Treasurer. The Treasurer shall make a written report at the annual meeting covering all accounts for the past year. The Treasurer shall, upon the expiration of the term of office, turn over all funds, books, receipts, debit card; equipment and papers to a successor taking receipts for the same. As needed this office may be combined with the office of SECRETARY, at the discretion of the Hose Company.

SECTION 5: Quartermaster

Responsibilities include issue and inventory of any Hose Company and fire district property.

SECTION 6: Chief

- (a) It shall be the duty of the Chief to have general supervision of the apparatus room and all equipment; shall fulfill the duties as defined in Town Law, Section 176A.
- (b) The Chief or the next line officer acting in his absence shall call a funeral detail in the event of the death of a probationary, active or exempt member, or any member of their immediate family, after consulting with the family. Members of the immediate family are considered to be parents, spouse, children and parents-in-law. Funeral details are at discretion of the chief or designated line officer.

SECTION 7: Assistant Chiefs

It shall be the duty of these officers to assist the Chief at all times and to perform the duties of the Chief in the Chief's absence according to their rank and pursuant to Town Law Section 176A. 2nd Asst. Chief will be in charge of LT. training logs, truck checks, etc.

SECTION 8: Ambulance Captain

Duties shall be to maintain the Ambulance per the NYSDOH part 800.

SECTION 9: Ambulance Lieutenant

The Lieutenant shall perform all duties as directed by the Ambulance Captain.

ARTICLE VIII STANDING COMMITTEES

SECTION 1: Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Ambulance Captain, Chief and Assistant Chiefs, with the President serving as a Chairperson. The Executive Committee shall meet on all matters referred to them by any of those officers listed above or by the company. They may act on any matters of interest to the company and make recommendations for action by the members. The Executive Committee shall have the charge of the affairs of the organization between meetings. They shall designate the bank or banks in which the funds of the organization shall be deposited. They shall have the power to hear and act upon excuses for non-attendance at meetings, fires, drills and schools of instruction. The Executive Committee shall hold an annual meeting in the week/preceding the annual meeting of the organization and shall meet such other times as the President may designate. The President shall call a meeting of the Executive Committee upon request of two (2) members. They shall have the power at their discretion to examine the books and accounts of any of the officers. They shall make a report of their proceedings at each regular meeting and at the annual meeting and shall exercise such further powers and perform such other duties as may be delegated to them by the organization.

SECTION 2: Special

The President may appoint such other Special committees as may be required from time to time, or at the request of the organization.

**ARTICLE IX
MEETINGS**

SECTION 1

- (a) The regular meeting of this organization shall be held on the first Thursday of each month commencing at 7:00pm.
- (b) The Annual Meeting shall be held on the first Thursday in April.
- (c) 25% of the active roster of the Company, as determined by the Secretary's attendance book, or 10, whichever is smaller, shall constitute a quorum for all regular or special meetings.
- (d) The President or Vice President may call a special meeting when in their opinion, the interest of the organization requires it, or at the written request, stating the object thereof, of five (5) members in good standing. Each member shall be ordinarily notified at least three days prior to a special meeting. No other business shall be transacted the meeting.
- (e) Business meetings shall be conducted under Roberts Rules of Order, the revised edition.
- (f) By-laws Chair will be appointed by Executive Committee shall convene By-laws Committee meetings as deemed necessary.
- (g) Officers elected at the annual meeting in April will take over their elected office at the next regular monthly meeting.

**ARTICLE X
DUES AND ASSESSMENTS**

SECTION 1

- (a) Annual dues for the organization shall be two dollars (\$2.00) payable in advance.
- (b) Dues are eligible to be paid in January, and must be paid by April 1. Probationary members dues are payable by April 1. Members with unpaid dues will be delinquent and will not be a member in good standing. Letters of intent/delinquencies will be sent to delinquent members following annual meeting, if no response an executive meeting will be held after the May monthly meeting to determine membership status

**ARTICLE XI
MEMBER DISCIPLINE**

SECTION 1

Subject to the approval of the Executive Committee, members may be suspended or expelled by the Chief or anyone acting in his capacity as designated by the Chief for any of the following reasons:

- (a) Violating Department policies, rules, regulations, and Constitution and By-Laws;
- (b) Borrowing or taking any article belonging to the organization without permissions;
- (c) Acting in a manner unbecoming of a fire fighter and/or detrimental to the organization including, but not limited to: insubordination, reporting in a state of intoxication, use of profanity, disregard for life and property, or any other act that may bring disrepute upon the organization;
- (d) Marking, defacing or otherwise damaging any property belonging to the organizations, without repaying the costs of such damage to the organization;
- (e) Failure to come to order at any meeting or other function of the organization when so directed by the presiding officer.

SECTION 2

Any member who is suspended or expelled shall have the right to appear before the Executive Committee and show cause why such penalty shall not be confirmed. A two-thirds vote of the members of the entire Executive Committee shall be necessary to confirm such penalty.

SECTION 3

In addition to confirmation by the Executive Committee, all expulsions shall be further confirmed by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active and eligible members present and voting at a meeting called to hear the charges, provided the accused shall have been served with written charges at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting, together with a notice that the charges will be considered at the meeting and that the member will have the right to be heard at that time. The charges, together with the time and place of the hearing, may be served on the accused personally or by certified mail. The organization retains the right to determine what shall constitute sufficient cause for expulsion.

SECTION 4

A member expelled from the organization may, after a period of five (5) years, apply for membership as a probationary member.

**ARTICLE XII
RESIGNATIONS**

Resignations shall be presented in writing, signed and dated. No resignation shall be accepted unless all fines and dues and other obligations shall have been paid and all property of the organization returned to the organization. Any member declining to adjust accounts shall be dishonorably discharged, and subject to prosecution.

**ARTICLE XIII
LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Request for a leave-of-absence shall be in writing and for a period for no longer than one (1) year. In the event that a member of Ripley Hose Co. No. 1 becomes unable to perform their duties they may send a letter requesting removal from the roster until they request reinstatement of their membership. Persons serving in the military are not subject to the above regulation if they have provided a copy of their orders, and Organization time-of-service shall accrue at half-time.

**ARTICLE XIV
AMENDMENTS**

Changes to the bylaws shall be handled in the following manner:

- (a) Changes shall be submitted in writing and referred to the By-laws Chair who will form a By-laws committee for this review.
- (b) The committee is required to report back at the next regular monthly meeting at which time ratification will be at the discretion of the voting members.
- (c) The membership may defer ratification for further committee action.
- (d) Under no circumstances shall the By-law Committee stand in the way of a ratification vote.
- (e) Historical notes shall be added to the bylaws as changes are made.

**ARTICLE XV
ORDER OF BUSINESS AT MEETINGS**

- 1. Roster call – identify delinquent members
- 2. Reading of minutes of last regular or annual meeting and any intervening special meeting.
- 3. Treasurer's report of receipts and disbursements
- 4. Payment of dues and assessments
- 5. Reports of Officers
- 6. Reports of committees
- 7. Reports of sickness
- 8. Communications and bills
- 9. Resignations
- 10. Proposals of membership
- 11. Election of Members – identify any probationary members due for vote
- 12. Unfinished Business
- 13. New Business
- 14. Election of officers
- 15. Good of the organization
- 16. Adjournment