

## **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Northern Virginia Professional Pet Sitters Network (“Network”) is to provide business-related support and information to its members, to offer a support system of friends and peers, and to build an awareness of professional pet sitting in the Northern Virginia area. All activities and work by the Network are designed to benefit the membership and pet sitting industry as a whole, not just a few of the member pet sitting businesses.

## **II. MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in the Network is open to all licensed, bonded and insured pet sitting businesses with customers in Northern Virginia, Maryland, and/or Washington, DC. Network member firms must also hold a membership in either Pet Sitters International (PSI) or the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS). All members must reapply for membership with the Network by January 31 of each year, verifying that their membership in PSI and/or NAPPS is current.

A potential member must submit a completed application with payment, at which time s/he will be added to the YahooGroups email group. Dues are non-refundable, and all applications for membership must be accompanied by full dues payment. Dues are pro-rated for new members who join after the start of the year. Membership status will be provisional until the potential member attends a regular monthly meeting in order to introduce her/himself to the other network members. Once that requirement has been met, full member status will be granted, and the new member will be added to the novapetsitters.com website locator.

Each member must attend a minimum of three meetings per year, which includes general member monthly meetings, committee meetings, or participation in network events. For new members who join between July and December, the requirement will be waived until the following calendar year.

All members belong to the YahooGroups email group “novapetsitters@yahoogroups.com”. This email group was created as a way for members to communicate between meetings, share files, and vote on issues through the polls feature of the site.

Each member pet sitting business has the privilege of one vote, one membership, and one listing on the NVPPSN Website Locator. Proxy votes are permitted on all network business, except for Executive Committee (EC) elections. Employees of member pet sitting businesses may not hold individual membership or have their own vote, but are welcome to attend meetings and participate in select activities of the Network. All members are responsible for seeking new members from the community and for mentoring new members.

Each member will pay dues annually in the amount voted on and set by the membership the previous December. Membership dues will be used to pay for advertising in local publications, obtain trade show booths at local events, purchase marketing materials, maintain the network website, and to pay for other budgeted expenses. The EC will propose the annual budget to be voted on at the annual December business meeting. The membership may vote to spend additional funds on other items, such as website upgrades, legal fees, or convention costs for one or more of its members. Special assessments may be voted on during the year to pay for any additional expenses that are not built into the annual budget.

Network members must strive to uphold the professional standards set forth by their peers and by the national pet sitting organizations. Clients or others with comments about a Network member must state their claims in writing and mail or email them to the EC. The EC will forward the letter of complaint to the NVPPSN member in question and allow that member two weeks to respond to the complaint. The member’s response must also be in writing (email is acceptable). Upon receipt of the member’s response, the EC will collectively decide if further action is necessary. If there are three or more complaints about a member in one calendar year, a full membership discussion may be initiated. This discussion would include whether the complaints are serious enough to warrant a group vote regarding the revocation of Network membership or whether the complaints can be resolved without such action.

### **III. MEETINGS**

Monthly membership meetings will take place on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00PM. The location will be decided in advance and will be announced to the membership at least one week prior to the meeting. The December meeting will be a business meeting, devoted in large part to electing the EC, voting on the proposed budget and dues, voting on any proposed bylaw revisions, and prioritizing topics for discussion for the upcoming year. All items to be voted upon at the December meeting will be provided to the membership for review two weeks before the meeting.

Each member will receive email notification of every meeting no less than one week prior to the meeting date. Identified pet sitting businesses which are not members of the Network will also be sent meeting notice, encouraging their participation. The EC may call special, or emergency, meetings with three days notice by either written or verbal communication.

Within three days following each meeting, the Secretary must compile the minutes of that meeting, including summaries of discussion, votes, and action items. Minutes should be emailed to all Network members, as well as uploaded to the YahooGroups Files section.

### **IV. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Network operates with a formal structure of offices and officers that comprise the EC: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Each December a new EC is elected by the membership. The EC is responsible for the administrative business of the network, including: establishing and coordinating special committees, supporting and mentoring the members, and defining network priorities. EC positions carry a subsequent term limit of two years.

The President's responsibilities include coordinating and overseeing network committees, chairing the EC meetings, and mediating the monthly membership meetings.

The Vice President is responsible for arranging the guest speakers, securing meeting locations and sending out meeting notices to members, chairing the EC and mediating meetings in the absence of the President, and assisting the President in other duties as necessary.

The Secretary is responsible for preparing meeting minutes, tracking member attendance, and preparing any election ballots and proposed updates to the bylaws.

The Treasurer is responsible for managing the Network bank account, processing dues, tracking expenses, and preparing the annual budget.

It is the responsibility of the membership to identify and elect the EC. Members will be asked to nominate and second fellow members for EC positions, and each nominee must accept his/her nomination. All elections for EC positions must take place in person, by written ballot, at the December membership meeting

In the event that a new EC position is created, or an existing position is vacant due to a member leaving the network or otherwise abandoning the position, a special election will be held to fill the vacancy. Nominations will be accepted at the first subsequent meeting, with elections being held the following month, and votes collected by written ballot.

### **V. COMMITTEES**

The EC is responsible for creating committees within the Network. Committee involvement is on a volunteer basis; however, all network members are strongly encouraged to participate in one or more committee. Committees will designate their own chairperson and set their own goals, within the scope of the network's purpose. Each committee should submit a proposed budget for their anticipated expenses during the following year to the Treasurer no later than October 31.

## **VI. FINANCES**

The Network bank account is located at Wachovia Bank. Newly elected EC members must update the bank signature card by January 31 of each year. Collected dues and other income are deposited in this account, and expenses against the Network are paid from this account. No other Network checking, savings, or equity account exists, and all income and expenses must go through this account. A current record of source and amount must be kept for every transaction that goes through this account, and a receipt must accompany all expenditures. At the end of each calendar year, the EC may elect to designate a certain percentage of the remaining balance in the account to be set aside as a reserve for future unforeseen expenses, with the remaining percentage of leftover funds being donated to one or more charities of the network's choosing.

## **VII. DISSOLUTION**

If the Network should ever cease to exist, all equipment and capital goods will be disposed of, liabilities paid, and remaining assets distributed to the most recently chosen nonprofit groups to receive such donations, within 60 days of dissolution. No individual pet sitting business or member, past or present, has any claim to any asset of the Network.

Last amended November 19, 2008