

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Northern Virginia Professional Pet Sitters Network (NVPPSN) 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 NVPPS Network are to be designed to benefit the membership and pet sitting industry as a whole, and are not to be designed to benefit just a few of the member pet sitting businesses.

II. MEMBERSHIP

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

Any potential member must submit a completed application with payment, at which time she will be added to the Yahoo!Groups email group. Membership status will be provisional until the potential member attends a regular monthly meeting in order to introduce herself 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.

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.

Each member pet sitting business has the privilege of one vote, one membership. Proxy votes are permitted on all network business, except for Leadership Committee (LC) 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 and potential members.

Each member will pay dues annually in the amount voted on and set by the membership the previous December. 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. Funds raised through dues will be used to send out information to members and potential members, hold network events, and to pay for other budgeted expenses. The Leadership Committee 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 meeting speakers, cost of refreshments for our guests, or convention costs for one or more of its members. Special assessments may be voted on during the year to pay for special events such as trade shows.

All members belong to the Yahoo!Groups email group “novapetsitters”. 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.

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 NVPPSN member must state their claims in writing and mail or email them to the Leadership Committee. The Leadership Committee 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 LC will collectively decide if further action is necessary. Repetitive complaints about a member (three or more in one calendar year) will automatically be brought before the membership for discussion. This discussion would include whether the complaint(s) are serious enough to warrant a group vote regarding the revocation of Network membership or whether the complaint(s) 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. The December meeting will be a business meeting, devoted in large part to electing the Leadership Committee, voting on the proposed budget and dues, determining tentative meeting dates and locations, and prioritizing topics or issues for the upcoming year. The Leadership Committee will also present proposed bylaw revisions to be reviewed at the December meeting. 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 Leadership Committee 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, and email the minutes to the group. Minutes and will also be uploaded to the Files section of Yahoo!Groups.

IV. STRUCTURE: LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

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

The President's responsibilities include: coordinating and overseeing network committees; chairing the Leadership Committee meetings; and mediating the monthly membership meetings.

The Vice President is responsible for: arranging for guest speakers; securing meeting locations and sending out meeting notices to members; chairing the Leadership Committee 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 Leadership Committee. Elections will be conducted by first accepting nominations at the November membership meeting and voting at the December membership meeting. All elections for Leadership Committee positions must take place in person, by written ballot.

In the event that a new Leadership Committee 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 Leadership Committee 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. Newly elected Leadership Committee 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 Leadership Committee 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 a charity 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 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.

Amended December 13, 2006