



American Federation of Government Employees
Local 1969
Constitution and Bylaws
2023

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Approved by Local Body: May 2022

ARTICLE I
Name

SECTION 1. This local union shall be known as the American Federation of Government Employees, Local No. 1969, AFL-CIO, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Minneapolis/St. Paul Minnesota as set forth in its charter. See AFGE National Constitution, Article XIX, Section 1.

SEC . 2. The headquarters and mailing address of this local shall be prescribed in the local's bylaws.

ARTICLE II
Objectives and Methods

SECTION 1. This local does not advocate the overthrow of the Constitutional form of government in the United States. The local does not discriminate with regard to race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, political affiliation, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or preferential or non-preferential civil service status; and is not subject to corrupt influences or influences opposed to basic democratic principles.

SEC . 2. In the event any member(s) of the local is employed within a unit represented by an AFGE national bargaining council, the local shall affiliate with the national council(s). See AFGE National Constitution, Article XXI. The local shall pay dues and/or per capita tax to the national council for those members of the local employed within the unit represented by the council, as may be prescribed by the constitution of the council. See AFGE National Constitution, Article XXI, Section 1.

SEC . 3. This local is a separate, independent organization functioning in conformance with the AFGE National Constitution. Neither the local nor its officers, employees, members, or other persons has the authority to act, nor shall it be deemed to act on behalf of or as agent for the Federation or any of its other affiliates, unless such authority as applicable is expressly granted by the Federation by written authorization of the National President, or by an affiliate by written authorization in accordance with its governing procedures.

ARTICLE III
Membership

SECTION 1. All persons eligible for AFGE membership as prescribed by Article III of the AFGE National Constitution and who come within the local's jurisdiction as defined by its charter shall be eligible for membership in this local.

ARTICLE IV
Dues and Initiation Fees

SECTION 1. Dues shall be established and adjusted as may be necessary to ensure that they allow adequate funds for the payment of per capita tax and sufficient funds for the operating expenses of the local. See AFGE National Constitution, Article XIX, Section 4(a)(6) and 4(b)(6). Any change in the dues structure shall be accomplished by:

(a) Majority vote by secret ballot of the members in good standing voting at a general or special membership meeting after reasonable notice of the intention to vote upon such question; or (b) By majority vote of the members in good standing voting in a membership referendum conducted by secret ballot.

SEC . 2(a). The local shall establish in its bylaws the amount of its initiation fee and the amount of its membership dues. See AFGE National Constitution, Article XIX, Section 4(a)(4)-4(a)(6) and 4(b)(4)-4(b)(6). Dues may be paid by payroll deduction, EDues through afge.org, or by advance payment for such intervals as prescribed by the local: quarterly, semiannually, or annually. If payroll deduction is available, a local may adopt a bylaw requiring payment of dues by this method. The local may establish a separate dues rate for retired members.

SEC . 2(b). Members may be dropped if dues are not paid by Tuesday of the last full workweek of the month, provided, however, that a reasonable amount of time after notice of delinquency is given.

SEC . 2(c). Local representatives, collectors, and shop stewards shall make remittance of all dues and initiation fees collected to the Treasurer within ten days and no later than the Tuesday of the last full workweek of the month.

ARTICLE V
Financial Records and Reporting

SECTION 1. All receipts, checks, and cash disbursements shall be properly recorded and accounted for in the financial records.

SEC . 2. The Treasurer shall sign and the President shall countersign checks covering proper expenditures for the local. In the absence of either the Treasurer or the President, such other officer as prescribed by the local's bylaws may sign in place of the absent officer.

SEC . 3. The officers, agents, shop stewards, or other representatives or employees of this local who handle funds or property thereof shall be bonded in accordance with law and applicable regulations. See AFGE National Constitution, Article XXIV, Section 8.

SEC . 4. In order for the bond to be effective, the local shall file with the National Secretary-Treasurer a copy of its annual audit in the format prescribed by Article XXIV, Section 8(d) of the AFGE National Constitution.

SEC . 5. All books, records, and financial accounts at all times shall be open to the inspection of the national officers or accredited representative of the National Executive Council and any duly authorized and accredited representative of the local. See AFGE National Constitution, Article XXIV, Section 9.

ARTICLE VI
Elected Officers

SECTION 1(a). The general officers shall be elected by the total membership and shall constitute the Executive Board of this local, and shall consist of the President, Treasurer, and Secretary and such others as the local's bylaws may prescribe. The local may adopt a bylaw combining the offices of Treasurer and Secretary.

SEC . 1(b). The local may establish bylaws which provide for the election of officers who are elected solely by members of a particular unit or work area and may provide that these officers will serve on the Executive Board.

SEC . 2. It shall be the duty and obligation of all local officers and all other official representatives of the local, whether elected or appointed, to support, advance, and carry out all provisions of the AFGE National Constitution, the standard local constitution and bylaws, official policies of the Federation and, to the extent not inconsistent with the foregoing, all official policies of the local. See AFGE National Constitution, Article XX, Section 2.

SEC . 3. The President shall be the executive officer of this local; he or she shall exercise general supervision over the affairs of the local and see that other officers comply with the responsibilities of their office and constitutional duties; comply with the National and standard local Constitutions; keep the membership apprised of the goals and objectives of the Federation; serve as an ex-officio member of all committees except the Election Committee, Audit Committee, and committee of investigation, or trial committee when he or she is bringing the charges or is directly or indirectly involved in the matter which gave rise to the charges; automatically serve by virtue of election to office as a local delegate to the district caucus, council meetings, the AFGE National Convention, and such other meetings participated in by this local as the local may be entitled; preside at all local meetings; and sign all documents pertaining to the office. If the President is unable to perform his or her regular duties because of sickness, leave, TDY, or for some other legitimate reason, he or she shall delegate the responsibilities of that office to the officer designated in the local's bylaws as provided for in Section 4 of this Article.

SEC . 4. The local shall prescribe in its bylaws that the Treasurer or Secretary (or such other officer as the local may establish) shall assist the President in performing the duties of that office. If the President is absent from a local meeting, the officer so designated will preside. In the absence of the President and the officer so designated to assist him or her, a chair will be chosen by the members from among those in attendance.

SEC . 5. The duties of the Treasurer shall be to maintain a bookkeeping system as prescribed by the National Secretary-Treasurer; make a financial report at each regular meeting; keep an up- to-date roll of the members; receive all monies and/or dues paid into the local and receipt thereof; keep records of all transactions; deposit money in the bank to the credit of the local; make regular monthly reports to the NST, which includes furnishing names and addresses of all new members or members who have severed their affiliations with the local and furnishing notification of changes in members' addresses; forward per capita tax to the National Headquarters in accordance with the requirements of the AFGE National Constitution (For regular locals per capita tax is payable before the end of each month, and all monies owed the Federation must be forwarded to the NST not later than the 20th day of the following month. See AFGE National Constitution, Article XXIV, Section 5(a). For insured locals per capita tax is payable in advance to the NST before the first day of each month. See AFGE National Constitution, Article XXIV, Section 5 (b).); and perform additional duties and responsibilities as outlined in the *AFGE Financial Officers Manual* . Disbursements for payment of current bills (other than per capita tax, and approved budgeted expenditures) shall be approved by the local.

SEC . 6. The duties of the Secretary shall be to keep a complete record of the minutes of all meetings; maintain all election related documents (including copies of those pertaining to nominations, notices of meetings, and the minutes of any meetings, all of which must be sealed and preserved for one year after the election unless the records are requested by higher authority in the election appeal process or are still relevant), see AFGE National Constitution, Appendix A, Part I, Section 5(j); keep up-to-date the official copy of the bylaws of the local; conduct correspondence when directed by the President; and send out notices of meetings when required.

SEC . 7. No officer or agent of the local shall engage in any business or financial activities with or on behalf of this local which conflict with his or her fiduciary obligation to the local.

ARTICLE VII
Election Procedures

SECTION 1. The local's elections shall be conducted in accordance with the AFGE National Constitution and Appendix A thereof. Officers shall be elected for such terms as prescribed by the local's bylaws. No term shall exceed three years.

SEC . 2(a). In accordance with Appendix A, Part I, Section 1(e) of the AFGE National Constitution, the minimum qualifications for candidacy to local office are that a member must:

(1) Be a member in good standing; (2) Be a member for one year of an AFGE local, immediately preceding the closing of the nomination process. This requirement does not apply to newly created locals or to unit- specific positions in new units; and (3) Not be a member in any labor organization not affiliated with the AFL-CIO. See AFGE National Constitution, Appendix A, Part I, Section 1(e).

SEC . 2(b). Candidates shall not run for more than one office in the same local election; however, candidacy as a delegate shall not be considered to be covered by this provision.

SEC . 2(c). No person who is identified with corrupt influences or who is affiliated with the Communist party or other totalitarian movements may serve as an officer of the local.

SEC . 3. The local shall prescribe in its bylaws the manner by which its elections will be conducted (*choose one*): manual ballot *or* mail ballot *or* secure and electronic option(s).

SEC . 4. In the case of a vacancy in the office of President, such officer as may be prescribed by the local's bylaws shall fill the office for the unexpired term. Vacancies in any other office unless otherwise prescribed by the local's bylaws shall be filled for the unexpired term by appointment by the Executive Board.

ARTICLE VIII
Executive Board and Committees

SECTION 1. The Executive Board shall meet at the call of the President.

SEC . 2. It shall be the duty of the Executive Board to devise and initiate such actions as may be necessary in the interim between the local's meetings, but such actions shall not be inconsistent with the objectives of the Federation and shall be subject to local approval.

SEC . 3. Expenditures by the Executive Board in excess of \$500 per month must have prior approval of the local's members either as authorized by the budget approved by the local or by separate vote of the local's members. All expenditures authorized by the Executive Board will be reported in writing at the next regular meeting of the local. Upon request a copy of such report will be made available to any member in good standing of the local.

SEC . 4. The Executive Board shall prepare an annual budget subject to the membership's approval, which shall ensure at a minimum that the local's revenues are sufficient to meet its financial obligations.

SEC . 5. Standing and special committees may be established in the manner prescribed by a local's bylaws.

ARTICLE IX
Delegates

SECTION 1. Delegates, alternate delegates, and proxy delegates to the AFGE National Convention, district caucus, and council meetings must be elected by name and in accordance with applicable provisions of the AFGE National Constitution. See AFGE National Constitution, Article VI, Article VIII and Appendix A, Part I, Section 6.

SEC . 1(a). The local's President if elected to that office shall serve as a delegate to the AFGE National Convention, district caucus, council meetings, and such other meetings at which the local is entitled to representation.

SEC . 2. If the local is entitled to additional delegates, the additional delegates shall be elected by an election called for that purpose, unless the local's bylaws prescribe that the local's other officers shall serve as delegates by virtue of election to their office. In filling a vacancy without an election, only a person who is appointed or succeeds from a position in which the person was a delegate by virtue of election to the office may be a delegate by virtue of office in the new position.

ARTICLE X
Offenses, Trials, Penalties, Appeals

SECTION 1. All offenses, trials, penalties, and appeals shall be accomplished in accordance with the AFGE National Constitution. See AFGE National Constitution, Article IX, Section 5 and Article XXIII.

ARTICLE XI
Bylaws

SECTION 1. The local shall establish bylaws, establishing among other things the frequency and location of regular meetings, provisions for calling special meetings, a regular order of business, provisions for a quorum, the date, manner and location of nominations and elections, and other operating procedures of the local.

SEC . 2. No bylaw shall conflict with the provisions of the AFGE National Constitution, this constitution or, if applicable, the constitution of a national bargaining council.

SEC . 3. Bylaws shall be adopted and amended only after a one month notice to the local's membership and by two-thirds vote of members, either present at a membership meeting and voting, with provision for absentee vote, or by mail ballot. Such bylaws do not require NEC approval. Locals shall send a copy of their bylaws, the notice and membership meeting minutes to the district office.

SEC . 4. Copies of this constitution and the local's bylaws shall be available upon request to the Secretary to all members in good standing of the local.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES BYLAWS for LOCAL 1969

THE CONSTITUTION OF AFGE LOCAL 1969 IS SET FORTH IN APPENDIX B OF THE AFGE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

Section 1. This Local Union shall be known at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as Local Number 1969, American Federation of Government Employees, AFL – CIO.

Section 2. The headquarters of this Local shall be the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), Local 1969, Veterans Administration Medical Center, 1 Veterans Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55417. Said headquarters may be moved to another location only with the recommendation of a majority of the Executive Board and approval by the membership at any monthly meeting.

Section 3. Regular meetings of the Local shall be held on the third Thursday of the month.

Section 4. Special meetings may be called by the President, two-thirds vote of the Executive Board or upon a written petition of at least eight (8) percent of the membership. Five (5) days written notice of the specific purpose of the meeting must be given to the membership.

Section 5. Only members of the local in good standing shall be allowed to vote.

Section 6. The regular order of business shall be:

(a) Roll call of officers (b) Reading of the minutes of the previous meeting (c) Report of financial condition by Local Treasurer (d) Reports of committees (e) Unfinished business (f) New business (g) Comments for the good of the local (h) Adjournment

Section 7. A quorum of the local shall consist of at least eight (8) members including the Executive Board. Four (4) executive board members shall constitute a quorum of the Executive Board. A quorum of any committee shall consist of a majority of the members thereof.

Section 8. Unless otherwise specified by law (e.g.; secret ballot election or dues) or by constitution, all questions before the local will be decided by vote of the members present first by voice vote, then by a showing of hands.

Section 9. The time allowed for debate of any particular issue before the local and the time allowed for speeches will be five (5) minutes. The time allowed for debate may be extended by a majority of those present and voting.

Section 10(a). The general officers of this Local will comprise the Executive Board are as follows:

- President (*from any division or Local 1969 entity*)
- 1st Vice President (*from any division or Local 1969 entity*)
- 2nd Vice President (*from any division or Local 1969 entity*)
- 3rd Vice President (*VHA - If no member of the VHA is nominated or accepts nomination, the position may be filed by any member*)
- 4th Vice President (*VBA - If no member of the VBA is nominated or accepts nomination, the position may be filed by any member*)
- 5th Vice President (*DMC or NCA- If no member of the DMC or NCA is nominated or accepts nomination, the position may be filed by any member*)
- Treasurer (*from any division or Local 1969 entity*)
- Secretary (*from any division or Local 1969 entity*)
- Sergeant-at-Arms (*from any division or Local 1969 entity*)

If any elected Executive Board officer leaves office for any reason, the Executive Board, by majority vote, may replace the officer with any member regardless of division. Division designations are for elections only. If an officer leaves office, the replacement may come from any division.

In the event of any tie vote within the Executive Board on any topic, including the replacement of executive board members, the Union President's vote shall determine the end result.

(b). The 1st Vice President shall assume the duties of the President if the President is absent or unavailable. If the First President is also unavailable or declines to serve in the role of President, the 2nd Vice President shall be deemed the next in line of succession. The Union line of succession and Union Hierarchy shall be as follows: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, 3rd Vice President, 4th Vice President, 5th Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Sergeant At Arms.

(c). In the case of a vacancy in the office of President, the 1st Vice President shall fill the office for the unexpired term. See standard local constitution, Article VII, Section 4.

Section 11. A Sergeant-at-Arms shall be elected by vote of the local's membership. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall ensure that no one enters the meetings without proper authority: assist the presiding officer in the maintenance of order, welcome and introduce guests, see that each member's presence is recorded in a log, provide a roll to call should the recording of individual votes be necessary, and perform other duties as may be assigned by the presiding officer.

Section 12. The Chief Steward may be appointed by the President for each division, subject to approval of the Executive Board, and shall be directly responsible to the President. The appointment of a Chief Steward is at the discretion of the Union President at any time. If the President opts to not nominate a Chief Steward to the Executive Board for approval, or if the Executive Board declines/rejects the President's nomination for a Chief Steward, the ranking Executive Board official in each division shall assume the role and duties assigned to a Chief Steward. Stewards of the local will be appointed by the President, with concurrence of the Executive Board. The Chief Steward or ranking Executive Board member shall train stewards, ensure they are available in the Local to meet the representational needs of the Local, direct assignment of stewards to areas to organize in cooperation with the Organizing Committee, and other duties as assigned by the President.

(a). The President may immediately suspend, (pending continued suspension, removal or any other appropriate action deemed appropriate, any Chief Steward or steward at any time. Said action must be presented to the executive Board within 60 days for review. Majority vote of the Executive Board will either sustain the President's action or reinstate the steward to their former role. It is understood that the suspension power only applies to appointed positions. The Local President cannot summarily suspend anyone in an elected position.

(b). The Chief Steward, or ranking Executive Board member, in their respective division, may suspend any steward in their division at any time, (pending continued suspension, removal or any other appropriate action deemed appropriate by the executive board). Said action must be presented to the executive Board within 60 days for review. Majority vote of the Executive Board will either sustain the action, reinstate the steward to their former role, or take whatever action the Executive Board deems appropriate. It is understood that the suspension power only applies to appointed positions. The Chief Steward, or ranking Executive Board member cannot summarily suspend anyone in an elected position.

(c). The Executive Board may establish rules and criteria for anyone to be appointed as a steward or remain as a steward, to include Chief Steward. Said criteria is not subject to membership ratification as stewards serve at the discretion of the President and Executive Board. Said rules and criteria are subject to modification at the discretion of the President and Executive Board.

Section 13. An Election Committee shall be elected by majority vote of local members present and voting at a meeting preceding the start of the nomination procedure. The Election Committee shall be made up of an odd number of members and from that number a chair person will be elected. See AFGF National Constitution, Appendix A, Part I, Section 2. Duties of the committee will include; mailing of notices of nominations and elections to all members in good standing, preparing the ballots, distribution of ballots, tallying the ballots, preparing a written report and informing the membership of the results.

Section 14. Nomination of officers shall be held in the month of October. The election of officers shall be held in the month of November after proper notice has been given to all members of the local. A quorum is not required for nomination and/or elections. Candidates shall not run for more than one elected office; however, running as a delegate shall not be in conflict with an elected officer position. Terms of office shall not exceed three (3) years. A runoff election, if necessary, shall be held as soon as possible at the same meeting, or by mailed ballot. See AFGE National Constitution, Appendix A, Part I, Sections 1, 3 & 4. The election procedure shall be conducted in accordance with the Mail out Ballot procedures.

Section 15. All candidates for office shall be treated equally with respect to the availability of lists of members. Each candidate shall be afforded an opportunity to have an observer, who is a member in good standing, present throughout the election procedure, including the tallying of ballots.

Section 16. All officers will be administered the "Oath of Union Officers" contained in the AFGE National Constitution upon their installation in office.

Section 17. The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the proceedings of all meetings of the local, when not inconsistent with the provisions of the standard local constitution, the AFGE National Constitution, or these bylaws.

Section 18. The local's delegates to the AFGE National Convention, District caucus, and national council meetings shall be the local President who, if elected to that office, serves by virtue of office. If the local is entitled to additional delegates, the additional delegates shall be elected by an election called for that purpose. Up to three (3) alternate delegates shall be nominated and elected in conjunction with officer elections. The local shall vote at regular monthly meetings upon the number of delegates to attend the National Convention, caucus, or council meetings and authorization of funds for the delegates' attendance at such sessions prior to the commencement of such sessions. See AFGE National Constitution, Appendix A, Section 6(d).

Section 19. Expenditures by the Executive Board in excess of \$500.00 per month must have prior approval of the local's members either as authorized by the budget approved by the local or by separate vote of the members. See Standard Local Constitution, Article VIII, Section 3. All expenditures authorized by the Executive Board will be reported in writing at the next regular meeting of the local. Upon request, a copy of such report will be made available to any member in good standing of the local.

Section 20. Such committees as may be established by the local shall be comprised of members appointed by the President, subject to approval of the Executive Board (except for the election committee) or elected by the local's members.

Section 21. Times of scheduled meetings:

- (a) Officers Meeting – 2nd Wednesday of the month
- (b) Regular Union meeting – 3rd Thursday of the month

Section 22. (a) When the AFGE National Convention, National VA Council, Council 259, or the Minnesota State AFL-CIO approves a monthly increase in per capita tax, the biweekly dues of each member on dues withholding shall be increased automatically by the exact amount of the monthly increase in per capita tax. Semi-annual or annual dues also shall be increased to ensure that the dues collected from these groups are exactly equal to the amounts collected from the members in the same group on dues withholding. Any action to absorb the increase must be undertaken not later than two months from the effective date of the per capita tax increase. This provision may not be removed without the approval of the National Executive Council.

(b) The dues shall be \$18.00 per pay period for members who do not fall under Bylaw Section 22(b)(i) noted below.

- (i) In accordance with AFGE Constitution, Article XXIV, Section 1(c)(1) Employees on a regular part time weekly schedule of 25 hours per week or less will be assessed per capita tax at a rate of 50%, and this rate will be applied to any employees who fall under the lowest pay scale in the federal sector (equivalent to below grade GS-4, Step 1). The dues shall be \$9.00 per pay period for members falling into this category.

(c) Dues of retired members shall be \$25.00 per year and will be paid one (1) year in advance. Payment is due in the month of January.

(d) When the AFGE National Convention, National VA Council, Council 259, or the Minnesota State AFL-CIO approves a monthly increase in per capita tax, the biweekly dues of each member on dues withholding shall be increased automatically by the exact amount of the monthly increase in per capita tax. Semi-annual or annual dues also shall be increased to ensure that the dues collected from these groups are exactly equal to the amounts collected from the members in the same group on dues withholding. In implementing the provisions of this section, the Local, by vote of the membership, may elect to absorb the increase in per capita tax in its existing dues structure. Any action to absorb the increase must be undertaken not later than two months from the effective date of the per capita tax increase. This provision may not be removed without the approval of the National Executive Council.

(e) Following the lifting of a trusteeship, direct submission of the dues withholding allotment of the Local from the agency to the Federation shall continue. The dues shall go directly from the agency to the Director of the Finance and Information Services, 80 F St NW, Washington, DC 20001. The Director shall retain the per capita tax portion of the dues withholding allotment for the Federation and councils of which the Local is a member, and shall forward to the Local its portion of the dues allotment. This provision may not be removed without the approval of the NEC.

Section 23. An audit committee comprised of three (3) members shall inspect the financial records annually (prior to January 30th or when a change in officers (president and treasurer), or at the discretion of the President. The three (3) members shall be comprised of one (1) non-signatory Executive Board member and two (2) members of the body as determined by the body at a monthly meeting. The committee will make a report, of their findings, to the body at the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting.

Section 24. Copies of this constitution and by-laws shall be available to all members in good standing upon written request to the Secretary.

Section 25. The Local should develop a strategic action plan each year to include goals in all of, but not limited to, the following areas: Organizing and Workplace Representation to include Legislative and Political Mobilization, Strengthening the Local, Education, and Communications.

Section 26. No person may represent, lobby, or engage in any steward or Union duties on behalf of AFGE Local 1969 without having been appointed as a Steward, subject matter expert, or delegate by the Executive Board and then approved by the membership.