



FREE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

CONVENTION

2022

January 25th 2022

TO: Association Secretaries; Convention Delegates; and Party Members

The Constitution Committee extends sincere thanks and gratitude to the Party members and Organizations who devoted the time and energy necessary to make the Committee's work possible.

The Constitution of the Free National Movement provides its doctrinal foundation, and its amendment, revision, and updating remains a solemn and necessary task as we seek to engage more meaningfully with our membership and deepen, and demonstrate, our commitment to democratic principles.

Each member of the Free National Movement demonstrates a commitment to abide by and uphold the Party's Constitution and it is essential that the Constitution continues to speak to, and reflect, the values of Party members.

Attached hereto is a draft of the Constitution with the proposed 2022 amendments in red for Members consideration.

The amendments reflected in this draft Constitution represent the Committee's effort to reflect and implement the views of those who participated in this exercise and to ensure that the Constitution of the Free National Movement remains a vibrant and living document.

Constitution Committee
The Free National Movement



Name

1. The name of this organization shall be "the Free National Movement," hereinafter referred to as "the Party."

Aims and Objectives

2. The Aims and Objectives of the Party shall be:
 - a. To elect, establish and maintain in office a government which will truly reflect the political, social, cultural and economic aspirations of the people of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.
 - b. To affirm and preserve the principles of democratic government in Bahamas and to put into effect the programmes of the Party as outlined in its platform.
 - c. To establish and maintain an electoral system which shall be free, fair and democratic and which shall guarantee the right of all voters to choose their representatives without intimidation or hindrance.
 - d. To further develop Bahamian democracy by establishing and maintaining an effective system of Local Government.
 - e. To promote respect for the Constitution and the laws of The Bahamas and to uphold the rule of law and the ascendancy of justice.
 - f. To safeguard the freedom and human rights of all persons in The Bahamas, including protection from harassment, brutality, victimization, intimidation and invasion of privacy.
 - g. To secure, strengthen and broaden a sound economic base for The Bahamas so that both employer and employee will be assured of a just return on their respective contributions and to promote and foster equal opportunity and fair play for all.
 - h. To provide caring, competent and honest government for all the people of the Bahamas.
 - i. To foster a spirit of caring and sharing among the Bahamian people and to implement, as far as human and material resources allow, programmes designed to provide assistance in the areas of education, health, law, culture, employment and physical and spiritual well-being.
 - j. To promote accountability, high ethical standards and dedicated and efficient service to public life.

Membership

3. Every Bahamian who pledges support for the principles and objectives of the Party may be eligible, upon application either to a Constituency Association or the Executive, for individual membership in the Party and shall become a member of the Party upon approval of the application. The Executive Committee shall have the right to review any decision of the Constituency Association and to consider any appeal therefrom.
4. Every member of the Party shall be and remain a financial member by paying into the Party; through his Constituency Association or through the Party's Central Office, \$3.00 per month or \$36.00 per year. In case of hardship, a person may be admitted and remain in good standing without paying the said dues or any part thereof, with the consent of the Executive Committee. The money collected by way of dues shall go to the relevant Constituency Association.
 - a. Every Council Member shall pay through the Party's Central Office, \$5.00 per month or \$60.00 per year. The money collected by way of dues shall go to the general upkeep of the Party.

Group Association

5. Group Associations shall include:
 - a. Groups, organized for social, business and professional purposes, whose aims and objectives are consistent with those of the Party, may become associate members upon approval by the Central Council on recommendations from the Executive Committee; and
 - b. Where a Family Island is composed of two (2) or more Parliamentary Constituencies, the members thereof may elect an "Island Council" for the better coordination of political action which may cross Constituency boundaries or have an island -wide impact:
 - i. Such Island Councils shall have advisory powers only, and shall be comprised of such members executives and officers of the respective Constituency Associations as shall be decided jointly by the said Constituency Association and Island Council(s) and
 - ii. Upon approval by the Central Council an Island Council may elect one non-voting "observer to attend meetings of the Central Council and to report thereon to the Island Council.

Youth Group

6. Every member of the Party, aged thirty (30) years or younger, shall be eligible for membership in the official youth group known as the

Torchbearers Youth Association in accordance with the procedures for admission of members laid down in the Constitution of the Association.

7. The Torchbearers Youth Association shall be governed by a Constitution approved by the Central Council of the Party which shall stipulate the aims and objectives of the Association, procedures for the membership and the election of officers, and general guidelines for the conduct of its affairs.
8. The Torchbearers Youth Association shall have representation on the Central Council and the Executive Committee and shall have such delegate representation to the National Convention as determined by the Convention Committee or as provided for in this Constitution.
9. The Executive Committee shall have general supervisory responsibility for the Torchbearers Youth Association, including authority:
 - a. To review any decision by the Association likely to affect or prejudice the Party;
 - b. To monitor the expenditure of the Association's funds; and
 - c. To exercise supervisory disciplinary control over officers and members of the Association.

Women's Group

10. Every female member of the Party may be eligible for membership in the Women's Association of the Free National Movement in accordance with the procedures for admission of members as outlined in the Constitution of the Association.
11. The Women's Association of the Free National Movement shall be governed by a Constitution approved by the Central Council of the Party which shall stipulate the aims and objectives of the Association, procedures for membership, the election of officers, and general guidelines for the conduct of its affairs
12. The Women's Association of the Free National Movement shall have representation on the Central Council and the Executive Committee and shall have such delegate representation to the National Convention as determined by the Convention Committee or as provided for in this Constitution.
13. The Executive Committee shall have general supervisory responsibility for the Women's Association of the Free National Movement and shall have authority:
 - a. to review any decision by the Association likely to affect or prejudice the Party;

- b. to monitor the expenditure of the Association's funds, and
- c. to exercise supervisory disciplinary control over officers and members of the Association.

Group Association Guidelines

14. Guidelines for the structure of Group Associations are as follows
- a. The Women's Association, Torchbearers Youth Association and all or any Island Councils shall be governed by constitutions drafted in accordance with the rules which are set forth in Schedule A of this Constitution.
 - b. Said constitutions may only be amended by majority resolution passed by the respective membership of the said groups or associations in a specially called meeting after due notice. Amendments must be ratified by a majority of the Central Council. No proposed amendments shall have effect without the approval of the Central Council.

Constituency Associations

15. There shall be a Constituency Association for every Parliamentary Constituency in The Bahamas and each Association shall be governed by Bylaws approved by the Central Council. In any Constituency which, by reason of its subdivision into several settlement, it is desirable to have Component Branches of a Constituency Association, the same shall be governed by Bylaws making provision for the said Branches.

16. Every Constituency Association shall form part of the Free National Movement and as such shall be subject to this Constitution, the Platform of the Party, and to the general directives of the Executive Committee, the Central Council and the Party Convention. Any decision of an Association shall be subject to review by the Executive Committee.

17. A Constituency Association shall consist of the Member of Parliament for the constituency, any elected Local Government officials who are members of the party or, at election time, the candidate duly nominated by the Party, and such other persons being members of the party who are ordinarily resident in the constituency, provided always that, with the exception of Family Island Constituency Associations, all officers of an Association, including the Central Council Representative, must be ordinarily resident in the constituency. For the purpose of this provision, reference to Family Island should not include the island of Grand Bahama.

18.

- a. Each Constituency Association shall be entitled to tax its membership to raise funds to defray the expenses of the Association. An Association may also engage in fund-raising

activities and may solicit and accept donations from sundry sources, the receipt and disbursement of which shall be subject to review by the Executive Committee. Every Constituency Association shall pay to the party Treasurer a monthly, quarterly or annual subscription in an amount to be agreed by the Association and Executive Committee of the Party.

- b. Only members of a Constituency Association in good standing shall be eligible to vote at annual and general monthly or extraordinary meetings of that Association. For the purpose of this paragraph, a member shall not be in good standing unless that members are paid up in full for that financial year and has attended at least a quarter of the meetings in the preceding year.
19. There shall be a Central Council which shall be the principal governing body of the Party between conventions and shall be responsible for the implementation of the aims and objectives of the party, and for ensuring that the Party's Constitution is adhered to. The Council shall meet at least once per month. The Chairman of the Party may, whenever he deems fit, convene a Central Council meeting., Likewise, Central Council meetings shall be convened upon a requisition by members consisting of not less than one quarter of the membership entitled to sit and vote at a Central Council meeting.
20. The Central Council shall receive from the Executive Committee recommendations for the nomination of candidates in any general election or bye-election for the House of Assembly and shall make the final determination as to the nomination of every candidate.
21. The Central Council shall carry out the directives issued by the Party Convention.
22. The Central Council shall consist of:
 - a. The officers of the Party.
 - b. The Parliamentary Members of the Party.
 - c. A representative from each constituency who shall be elected by the Constituency Association provided that, where any constituency is comprised of two (2) or more separate islands, each of which has an autonomous Constituency Association, then each constituency Association may elect a Council Representative to represent the interests of that island at the Central Council, but so that in no event shall more than one (1) vote be cast in any division on behalf of the constituency as a whole.
 - d. Any former Leader or Deputy Leader or National Chairman of the FNM, who remains a member of this Party in good standing, ex-officio, as a Life Member.
 - e. Any Candidate for election to the House of Assembly, duly approved by the Central Council who is not otherwise a Council

- member shall be accorded membership for one (1) calendar year after a general election or until a new Candidate is selected.
- f. Two representatives each elected from the Torchbearers and the Women's Association respectively.
 - g. Such voting honorary life members called "Meritorious Council Members," numbering no more than **two** hundred (200), as may from time to time be appointed and ratified by the Party's Convention.
 - h. Such non-voting honorary life members called "Advisory Councilors" as may be qualified as hereinafter provided for and ratified by the Party's Convention.
 - i. Any elected and/or appointed member of the Executive Committee, if not otherwise a member, shall have all the rights and privileges afforded to Council Members, including the right to vote.

Party Officers

23. The national officers of the Party shall comprise:
 - a. The Leader;
 - b. The Deputy Leader;
 - c. The Chairman;
 - d. Two Deputy Chairmen;
 - e. Five Vice Chairmen;
 - f. The Secretary General;
 - g. Two Deputy Secretaries General;
 - h. Five Assistant Secretaries General;
 - i. The Treasurer;
 - j. Two Deputy Treasurers;
 - k. Five Assistant Treasurers;
 - l. The Chaplain;
 - m. Five Assistant Chaplains;
 - n. Ten Trustees;
 - o. The Sargeant-at-Arms;
 - p. Two Deputy Sargeants-at-Arms;
 - q. The Chief Protocol Officer; and
 - r. Five Deputy Protocol Officers
24. All Officers of the Party shall be elected at the Party Convention or a Special Convention called for that purpose, The Central Council may also elect officers to fill any vacancies arising between conventions.
25. The Leader shall be the head of the party. He shall be responsible for implementing and coordinating the Party's policies and political activities after consultation with the Executive Committee, the Parliamentary Members, Party Officers and other members of the Party at his discretion and as may be consistent with the Party's Platform and this Constitution. He may require any of them, at any time, to report to him or the Executive Committee on the progress of their work.

26. The Deputy Leader shall be the deputy head of the Party and shall, in the absence of the Leader, perform the functions of Leader. He shall assist the Leader in implementing and coordinating the Party's policies and political activities.
27. The Chairman shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Party and subject to general directives from the Executive Committee, shall superintend the general administration of the Party. He shall preside over all meetings of the Central Council and shall have overall responsibility for all Party elections, including the Central Council, Constituency Associations, Torchbearers' Youth Association, and Women's Association, and shall designate Party Officers to conduct the said elections.
28. The Deputy Chairmen shall assist the Chairman in the performance of his duties. In the absence of the Chairman, either of the Deputy Chairmen shall carry out the duties of the Chairman and shall have and exercise all powers of the Chairman. Together with the Secretary General, the Deputy Chairmen shall oversee the administration of the Constituency Association, one to be responsible for New Providence constituencies and one for Family Island constituencies.
29. The Vice Chairmen shall assist the Chairman and the Deputy Chairmen in the performance of their duties. In the absence of the Chairman and both Deputy Chairmen, a Vice Chairman shall carry out the duties of the Chairman and shall have and exercise all powers of the Chairman. Vice Chairmen shall carry out specific duties assigned to them by the Executive Committee.
30. The Secretary General shall be the administrative officer of the Party and, subject to the general instruction of the Chairman, shall be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Party and for the supervision of headquarters staff. The Secretary General shall attend meetings of the Central Council and of the Executive Committee and may attend other meetings of the Party. Specifically, he shall:
 - a. Carry out the instruction and directives of the Executive Committee;
 - b. Keep a roll of all members of the Party and such other records as the Executive Committee may direct;
 - c. Conduct the correspondence of the Party;
 - d. After consultation with the Leader and the Chairman, prepare the agendas for all meetings of the Executive Committee and Central Council, preserve minutes of the proceedings and keep a record of attendance of all members of the Central Council and Executive Committee;
 - e. Send a copy of the agenda of the Party Convention to all Constituency Association Secretaries and to all delegates at least seven (7) days before the beginning of the Convention;

- f. Receive any matter which the Party's Constituency Associations may wish to place before the Executive Committee and include such matter on the agenda of the meeting of the Executive Committee at the earliest opportunity.
31. The Deputy Secretaries General shall assist the Secretary General in the performance of his/her duties and, in the absence of the Secretary General, either one of the Deputy Secretaries General shall carry out the duties of the Secretary General and shall have and exercise all powers of the Secretary General. Together with the Deputy Chairmen, the Deputy Secretaries General shall oversee the administration of the Constituency Association, one to be responsible for New Providence constituencies and one for Family Island constituencies.
32. The Assistant Secretaries General shall assist the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretaries General in the performance of their duties and shall carry out specific duties assigned to them by the Executive committee. One of the Assistant Secretaries General shall be appointed by the Executive Committee to act as recording secretary and shall be responsible for recording minutes of all Executive Committee and Central Council meetings. In the absence of the Secretary General and both Deputy Secretaries General, an Assistant Secretary General shall carry out the duties of Secretary General and shall have and exercise all powers of the Secretary General.
33. The Treasurer shall function as the financial controller of the Party and shall:
 - a. Collect and maintain in the Party's name funds to carry out programmes, including a fund to finance the Party's election expenses. All such funds shall be kept in recognized commercial banks in The Bahamas. Withdrawals shall be on the signature of the Treasurer or such other person who acts as Treasurer and countersigned by the Chairman or the Leader.
 - b. Keep the accounts of the party and present a financial statement of the receipts and expenditures for the preceding month at the next meeting of the Executive Committee and the Central Council. Such financial statements shall include:
 - i. The financial commitments of the Party;
 - ii. The amount of money due and owing to the Party;
 - iii. The amount of money paid toward those commitments in the preceding month;
 - iv. The amount of cash on hand; and
 - v. A balance sheet and income statement.
 - c. Six weeks after the end of every calendar year^r, present to the Executive Committee a report for the preceding financial year, including an Income and Expenditure account and a balance sheet duly audited by auditors of the Party.
 - d. Submit for audit, when requested by the Executive Committee, the account books and vouchers of the Party and present to the

Convention of the Party such extracts of the accounts as may be determined by the Executive Committee.

- e. Audit the accounts of any Constituency Association or affiliated organization when so directed by the Executive Committee.
- f. Make all disbursements on behalf of the Party, including withdrawals from the party's bank accounts on the joint signatures of himself and the Chairman or Leader. All disbursements shall be supported by a voucher/requisition signed by the Secretary General.
- g. Present to the Party's Convention a Financial Statement extracted from the Financial Statements of the Party.

34. The Deputy Treasurers shall assist the Treasurer in the performance of his duties and in the absence of the Treasurer, the Deputy Treasurers shall carry out the duties of the Treasurer and for that purpose shall have and exercise all powers of the Treasurer. The Deputy Treasurers shall preside at meetings of the Fundraising Committee.

35. The Assistant Treasurers shall assist the Treasurers and Deputy Treasurers in the performance of their duties and shall perform such other functions as directed by the Executive Committee.

Executive Committee

36. There shall be an Executive Committee comprised of the Leader of the Party (who shall be the Chairman of the Committee), the Deputy Leader, the Chairman, the two Deputy Chairmen, five Vice Chairmen, the Secretary General, the two Deputy Secretaries General, the Treasurer, the Deputy Treasurers, the President of the Women's Association, the President of the Torchbearers' Youth Association, one member each of the Women's Association and the Torchbearers' Youth Association elected from among their members, and ten (10) members elected by the Central Council. Members of Parliament and Senators shall be ex-officio members of the Executive Committee, The Leaders, after consultation with the Executive Committee, may appoint any member of the party to be a full member of the Executive Committee, provided the number of such appointees does not exceed six (6).

37. The Executive Committee of the Party shall be responsible for:

- a. The general administration of the party;
- b. Establishing and keeping active an Association in each Constituency in The Bahamas.
- c. Considering and approving applications for membership in the Party in accordance with the procedure for admission.

38. The Executive Committee shall sit as and perform all the functions of a Candidates Committee and shall recommend for the approval and nomination of the Central Council a candidate or slate of candidates for election to the House of Assembly. The Executive Committee shall not recommend any candidate for approval of the Central Council before informing the relevant Constituency Associations. All recommendations

as submitted for the approval of the Central Council shall be accompanied by a written report of the views of the respective Constituency Association over the signatures of not less than two of their duly authorized officers, none of whom shall be the recommended candidate.

39. The Executive Committee shall:
- a. Meet at least once per month.
 - b. Make quarterly written reports of its activities to the Party's Central Council.
 - c. Investigate all matters of discipline and make recommendations to the Central Council.
 - d. Present to the Party's Convention a report covering its work and the progress of the Party.
 - e. Appoint a Public Relations Officer who shall be responsible to the Leader and the Executive Committee for all literature, press releases and other publicity material. He shall also be responsible for the maintenance of a Party Library.
 - f. Employ, dismiss and fix remuneration for persons deemed necessary for the proper functioning of the party.

Parliamentary Group

40. The Parliamentary Group of the Party shall comprise all Party members in the House of Assembly and the Senate. The management of the party in the House of Assembly shall rest with the Party Whip, who shall be appointed by the Leader.
41. There shall be regular meetings of the Parliamentary Group at which the party's legislative agenda, strategy, economic, social and political issues shall be discussed. Specific duties may be assigned to individual members.
42. In Government, Members of Cabinet shall maintain close and frequent contact with other Parliamentary Members by means of these meetings, with a view to maintaining political harmony and parliamentary solidarity.
43. The Chairman and Secretary General of the Party shall receive notices of, and be entitled to attend and participate in all meetings of the parliamentary Group.
44. The Leader, and in his absence the Deputy Leader, shall preside at all meetings of the Parliamentary Group.
45. The Parliamentary Group shall make regular and prompt reports of its activities to the Central Council.

Committees

46. The Chairman shall, after consultation with the Leader, appoint the following committees and shall set timetables for their work and reports.
- a. Finance Committee,
 - b. Fund-raising Committee,
 - c. Public Relations Committee

- d. Platform Committee
 - e. Convention Committee
 - f. Membership Committee
47. The Leader shall, after consultation with the Executive Committee, appoint the Campaign Co-ordination Committee.
48. The duties and responsibilities of the committees shall be as follows:
- a. The Finance Committee shall be responsible for raising money for an Election Fund for the purpose of financing election campaigns and for managing the collection of funds from the Party's regular contributors.
 - b. The Fund-raising Committee shall be responsible for the raising of money through events such a national fair and other public event.
 - c. The Public Relations Committee shall make recommendations to the Executive Committee for special public relations events and shall assist the Party's Public Relations Officers with research and the production of written material such as press releases, articles and speeches.
 - d. The Campaign Coordination Committee shall be responsible for the logistical, manpower, and supply planning and execution of every election campaign undertaken by the Party, including the preparation of a budget.
 - e. The Platform Committee shall produce for the consideration of the party a platform for each national general election, and in the interim keep the platform under review making periodic recommendations for amendments, modifications and elaborations, taking current developments into account.
 - f. The Convention Committee shall be responsible for organizing, regulating and producing the Party's National Convention.
 - g. The Membership Committee shall be responsible for planning and conducting, in conjunction with Constituency Associations, nationwide drives to increase and maintain the Party's membership.

Convention

49. A Party Convention shall be held at least once in every two years, **during the fourth week of February or as Central Council shall direct, at a time and place approved by the Central Council.**
50. The Convention shall consist of the Parliamentary Members, National Officers, voting members of the Central Council and not less than

seven delegates, one of which must be the Central Council Representative from each Constituency Association. Of these delegates, at least one (1) must be 30 years old or younger.

51. The Convention shall be the ultimate authority of the Party and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, shall deal with any or all matters affecting the party and in particular with:
- a) Proposed amendments to the Party's Constitution and Platform;
 - b) Resolutions and Reports from the Central Council, Constituency Associations and Committees;
 - c) Initiating and maintaining policies and programmes of the Party;
 - d) Reviewing the performance of the party in all aspects;
 - e) Election of officers of the Party;
 - f) Appointment and ratification of honorary life members of the Council, called Meritorious Council Members, from the ranks of distinguished Party members, such number not to exceed **two hundred (200)**.

Quorum

52. A quorum of the Convention, the Central Council and the Executive Committee shall each consist of one-fourth of their number. A quorum of the Parliamentary Group and all other committees shall each consist of one-half their number. For any amendment to the Party's constitution a quorum of the Convention shall consist of one-third of the number of delegates eligible to vote at such Convention.

Discipline

53. A) Any member of the Party who shall independently nominate to contest a Parliamentary election or by-election **against a candidate duly nominated by the Party, or shall publically oppose the Party's nominated candidate to contest any Parliamentary election or by-election or, or financially support any other party's candidate, or an independent candidate, nominated to contest a Parliamentary election or by-election against the Party's nominated candidate in any election** shall be conclusively deemed to have, thereby, resigned from membership in the Party and from any office, rank of honour, or affiliation of any kind with the Party or any of its subordinate associations.
- B) Wherever it shall come to the notice of the Executive Committee that a member of the Party may have acted contrary to the interests of the Party, its Platform, programmes, policies or principles the Executive Committee may, at its discretion, cause an investigation to be made. If, after such investigation, it considers that a charge should be made against the

member, the committee shall forward to the member a statement of the charge together with particulars of the allegation upon which the charge is based. Insofar as the charge and particulars of the allegation are still unclear, the Executive Committee may call upon the accused member to state in writing, within a reasonable time as shall be specified, but not less than seven days, any grounds on which he relies to exculpate himself.

54. If the member does not furnish a reply to any charge forwarded under Section 53(b) within the period specified, or if, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, he fails to exculpate himself, the Executive Committee shall cause a Tribunal consisting of three members of the Central Council to be appointed to inquire into the matter.
55. The Tribunal shall inform the accused member that on a specified day, of which not less than seven days written notice shall be given, the charge made against him will be investigated by them and that he will be allowed to appear before the Tribunal and be heard,
56. The procedure at such investigation shall be determined by the Tribunal. If witnesses are examined by the Committee at the hearing, the accused member shall be given an opportunity of being present and of putting questions on his behalf to the witnesses, and no documentary evidence shall be used against him unless he has been previously supplied with a copy thereof or given access thereto.
57. The Tribunal may permit the accused member to be represented by a member of the Party in good standing provided that the accused shall permit the Executive Committee to be so represented in the same manner.
58. The Tribunal, having inquired into such matter, shall arrive at a decision as to whether the charge has been proven. If in their opinion the charge has been proven, they shall impose upon the member any one of the following punishments:
 - (a) A reprimand,
 - (b) A fine not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100.00);
 - (c) Suspension for a period not exceeding one (1) year;

- (d) Suspension whether for a fixed or indefinite period of time of all ranks of honour previously conferred by the Party;
- (e) Expulsion from the Party.

59. A member disciplined under this head may, within thirty (30) days after the decision of the Committee has been communicated to him, appeal in writing against such decision to the Central Council; and on communicating to a member any such decision as aforesaid, the Committee shall inform the member, in writing, that an appeal may be made as mentioned above.
60. All appeals to the Central Council under Section 59 shall be heard as soon as is practicable and the Central Council shall prescribe its own procedure for the hearing of such appeals, provided always that the disciplined member shall have an opportunity of being heard, should be so desire.
61. The Central Council on any such appeal shall have power to do any of the following:
- (a) Allow the appeal if they think that the decision of the Committee should be set aside for any reason, or
 - (b) Dismiss the appeal, or
 - (c) Confirm the decision of the Committee except in regard to the punishment and substitute such other punishment warranted under Section 58 as the Central Council shall deem fit, and
 - (d) The Central Council may at any time review any punishment imposed under this Head.

Party Honours

62. There shall be three (3) Ranks of Honour, which may be awarded and/or ratified by the National Convention of the Party, namely:
- (a) Freedom Fighter, open to every deserving Party Member in good standing.
 - (b) Advisory Council Member, open to every past Members of the House of Assembly or the Senate and/or any Party Member who shall be in good standing.
 - (c) Meritorious Council Member, open to any Party Member in good standing who shall have attained the age of 55 years **and** have been a member of the Party for not less than twenty (20) years.

Interpretation and Amendments

63. In this Constitution where the context so required, words importing the masculine gender shall include the feminine or neuter gender, and the singular shall include the plural.
64. The Executive Committee shall be the final authority on matters of interpretation of this Constitution and shall resolve by majority vote any conflicts or anomalies arising therefrom.
65. Any proposed alterations or amendments to the Constitution must be submitted to the Secretary General not less than fifty-six (56) days prior to the date set for the convening of a Convention. A list of all proposed amendments must be submitted to each Constituency Association not less than twenty-eight (28) days prior to the date set for the convening of the Convention.

Schedule A Constituency Association Rules and Constitution

1. There shall be one Constituency Association for every parliamentary constituency in The Bahamas, and each such Association shall be governed by By-laws drafted in accordance with the guidelines contained in this Schedule, which forms part of the Party Constitution. In any constituency which, by reason of its subdivision into several settlements or other resident units, it is desirable to have Component Branches, the same shall be governed by By-laws and shall have its own Branch officers for the conduct of its affairs. In such instances the officers of the several branches shall form a Constituency Association and shall, from among themselves, elect the Association's officers.
2. All By-laws, mentioned in the preceding section drafted to govern the conduct of the affairs of any Constituency Association or any Branch thereof, shall be submitted for approval by the Central Council in accordance with the provision of the Party's Constitution.

Name

3. Every Constituency Association shall bear the name of the parliamentary constituency in which it is established and every branch of a Constituency Association shall bear the name of the settlement or residential area where it operates.

Objectives and Responsibilities

4. The Principal objectives of every Constituency Association and any branch thereof shall be to expand membership in the Party to ensure the success of every Party candidate in any parliamentary or local government election in the constituency. These objectives shall include promulgating Party policies and programs on any ongoing basis, exposing and illuminating current political issues and explaining the Party's position on them, and devising, directing and participating in community projects in order to enhance the cultural interests and social welfare of constituencies.
5. Every Constituency Association shall have responsibility for the direction, coordination and supervision of the Party's political activities in the constituency and shall be accountable to the Executive Committee of the Party for its performance. To this end the Association shall:
 - (a) Canvass the electorate regularly and maintain a confidential record of the Party's support in the constituency.
 - (b) On a regular basis conduct recruitment drives for new members, voter registration and transfer of registration of voters to ensure that all known Party supporters are properly registered.

- (c) Ensure at all times the close cooperation of all Party members, supporters and the Party's Parliamentary Representatives, if any, with the Executive Committee.
- (d) At election time organize a campaign machinery to get the maximum number of Party supporters to the polls and cooperate with the Party's Candidate to ensure his election,
- (e) Create opportunities for the interchange of ideas among members and the political education of constituents by means of study groups, debates, lectures, seminars, public meetings, or other means, and report community problems to the Party's Parliamentary Representative or the Executive Committee with the view of finding solutions to them.
- (f) **Prepare and submit to the Executive Committee of the Party an annual report providing a detailed account of its operation, attendance, membership, events, and finances.**

6. A Constituency Association shall consist of the Member of Parliament for the Constituency, elected Local Government officials who are members of the party, at election time the candidates duly nominated by the Party, the Central Council Representative, and such other members of the Party who are ordinarily resident in the constituency.
7. A Constituency Association may accept applications from persons for membership upon the signing of an application form and in accordance with the provisions of the Party's Constitution and any other procedures set out by the Executive Committee of the Party. The Association shall collect \$3.00 per month or \$36.00 per year as membership dues provided that in case of hardship, a supporter may be admitted and remain in good standing at the discretion of the executives. The money collected by way of membership dues shall be forwarded to the Secretary General for record keeping, and thereafter returned to the Constituency Association.
8. Each Constituency Association shall be entitled to tax its membership to raise funds to defray the expenses of the Association. Also, an Association may engage in fund-raising activities and may solicit and accept donations from sundry sources, the solicitation, receipt and disbursement of which shall be subject to review by the Executive Committee. Each Constituency Association shall pay to the Party Treasurer a monthly, quarterly, or annual subscription in an amount to be agreed by the Association and the Executive Committee of the Party.
9. In order to achieve its objectives and execute its responsibilities, the Constituency Association shall meet on a regular basis and no less than once per quarter. A quorum shall consist of not less than 30 percent of its membership.

Officers

10. The Officers of the Constituency Association shall be:
 - (a) Chairman
 - (b) Vice Chairmen
 - (c) Secretary
 - (d) Assistant Secretaries
 - (e) Treasurer
 - (f) Assistant Treasurers
 - (g) Youth Officer
 - (h) Chaplin
 - (i) Three Trustees and
 - (j) Central Council Representative

11. A Constituency Association or Branch shall not be prohibited hereby from increasing or reducing the number of officers in its draft By-laws which shall be subject to approval by the Central Council.

12. The Officers of the Constituency Association shall be elected every year during the Annual General Meeting of the Association **to be held during the last week of September** and shall be responsible for the administration of the Party in the constituency.

13. In the event of a vacancy occurring in the interim, the Association shall have the power to fill such vacancy by-election or by appointment, after consultation with the Executive Committee of the Party.

14. The Chairman shall call and preside over all meetings and shall have a casting vote. He shall appoint all committees, standing or ad hoc, deemed necessary for carrying out the objectives and administering the affairs of the Association. In the absence of the Chairman, a Vice-Chairman shall act and carry out the duties of Chairman. In the absence of both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the other officers shall choose a suitable person to chair the meeting.

15. The Secretary shall:
 - (a) Keep a book containing the names and addresses of members of the Association.
 - (b) Receive membership dues and other monies on behalf of the Association and pay the same over to the Treasurer.
 - (c) Attend all meetings of the Association and record the minutes of the proceedings.
 - (d) Prepare, in consultation with the Chairman, business agenda for the meetings of the Association,
 - (e) Deal with and keep in order all correspondence and documents.
 - (f) Prepare once in every year, in consultation with the Chairman, an annual report on the progress and affairs of the Association to be presented at its Annual General Meeting.

- (g) Keep in contact with all officials of the Constituency Association, Central Council Representative, the Party's Member of Parliament for the constituency (if any), and the Executive Committee of the Party.
16. The Treasurer shall receive and secure all monies paid into the Constituency Association and shall deposit such monies into a banking account. He shall report on the financial state of the Association at each regular meeting or whenever requested by the Chairman and shall pay out such monies as shall be authorized by the Association.
 17. The Council Representative shall attend all meetings of the Central Council and shall report on the activities of the Constituency Association whenever requested to do so by the National Chairman. When resident in the constituency, the Council Representative shall attend the meetings of the Association and, when resident outside the constituency, shall keep in contact and consult, regularly, with the officers of the Constituency Association. The Council Representative shall be a delegate ex-officio to the National Convention as provided in the Party's constitution. He shall seek to safeguard the interests of the Constituency Association he represents.

Executive Committee
 18. There shall be a Constituency Executive Committee, comprising the officers of the Constituency Association, which shall be responsible for the administration of the Party in the constituency. The Committee shall meet at least once per month and a quorum shall consist of not less than 50 percent of its membership.
 18. The Constituency Executive Committee shall:
 - (a) Carry out the decisions of the Constituency.
 - (b) Maintain an up-to-date register of all members of the Party residing in the Constituency.
 - (c) Organize recruitment of new members and voter registration of Party supporters in the constituency;
 - (d) Be responsible for the implementation of the aims, objectives, policies and programmes of the Party;
 - (e) Report to the Party's Secretary General quarterly on the activities of the Constituency Association.

Choice of Candidates

19. A Constituency Association may submit to the Executive Committee of the Party the names of persons it considers suitable candidates in any election for parliamentary or local government seats. In the event that the Executive Committee of the Party shall reject or fail to ratify any of the candidates whose names have been submitted by the Constituency Association as aforesaid, the Executive Committee shall forthwith communicate with the Constituency Association in writing so as to ascertain whether there may be other persons whom the Constituency Association may consider to be suitable candidates and the Executive Committee shall not ratify or nominate any such candidate until it shall have so consulted.