

Bylaws
Of
Ethiopian Community Association in
Atlanta
(ECAA)

March 28, 2010

Amendment Record:

1. Board Resolution Proposal No. 2009-1 as recorded in Board Meeting Minutes of July 9, 2009.
2. Board meeting motions as recorded in Board Meeting Minutes of November 24, 2009.
3. General Assembly decision as recorded in General Assembly Meeting Record of March 28, 2010.

ARTICLE 1 - PREAMBLE

We Ethiopians and Ethio-Americans, residing in Metropolitan Atlanta area:

COGNIZANT OF, the fact that the previous Ethiopian community association has failed to achieve its goals for lack of strong member support;

COGNIZANT OF, of the fact that the bylaw and organization structure of the previous Ethiopian community association was not inclusive of all facets of the community;

IN ORDER, to tackle common problems facing the community, to maintain beneficial customs of the community, to adapt to the customs, laws and life styles of the United States, and to be successful in our endeavors;

DESIRING, to have a strong organization that is independent from any racial, political and religious beliefs;

NOW, THEREFORE, abolish the old bylaws and adopt this bylaws of 2009.

CHAPTER I
ESTABLISHMENT

ARTICLE 2 – NAME

The association shall be known as Ethiopian Community Association in Atlanta, Inc or ECAA.

ARTICLE 3 - APPLICABILITY

This bylaw shall apply to members of the association who reside in the metro Atlanta area and throughout the State of Georgia.

ARTICHE 4 - ADDRESS

The Headquarters of the association shall be in metro Atlanta area. It may have branch offices in other parts of the State of Georgia, if needed.

ARTICLE 5 – DEFINITIONS

In this bylaws,

- 5.1. “Ethio-American” means a member who is native Ethiopian and citizen of the United States of America
- 5.2. “Metro Atlanta Area” means the area including the city of Atlanta and other parts of the State of Georgia
- 5.3. “Member” means member of the association who meets qualification for membership and discharges his/her duties and it includes members elected to offices of the association.
- 5.4. “Family” means the spouse, child, and parents who are also household members of a member.
- 5.5. “Association” means Ethiopian Community Association in Atlanta
- 5.6. “ECAA” means Ethiopian Community Association in Atlanta
- 5.7. “General Assembly” means the supreme organ of the association. It includes all members of the association who have discharged all their duties.
- 5.8. “Board” means an organ composed of individuals elected by and representing various religious, geographic, professional, age-based, gender-based, self-help, and etc constituent

organizations. It shall also include four members elected by the General Assembly of the association.

- 5.9 “Executive Committee” means a committee composed of members elected by the majority vote of the General Assembly and who shall discharge the day to day activities of the association.
- 5.10 “Director” means a member who is elected by the General Assembly and who heads the Executive Committee and represents the association.

CHAPTER II OBJECTIVES

ARTICLE 6

ECAA shall have the following objectives:

1. To bring Ethiopians and Ethio-Americans in Metro Atlanta closer, to create conducive common forums so as to promote their common history and tradition.
2. To create a powerful community that stands for every member of the association who accepts its bylaws irrespective of his/her religion, gender, race, age, or political opinion.
3. To advise and support members in times of death, sickness, accident, job loss, physical injury, and etc.
4. To establish, for the benefit of members and their families, multi-use community center that could be used for education, training, physical exercise, recreation, and etc.
5. To advise and train community members against crime, substance abuse, and bad customs; to provide rehabilitation.
6. To provide advice and counseling to community members who are new comers to metro Atlanta on how to adapt to traditions and life styles of the United States of America.
7. To prevent and cope with human rights violations and injustice community members may face .
8. To promote and strengthen participation of community members in political, economic, higher education and academic training.
9. To support the youth in obtaining free educational and social services.

ARTICLE 7 – REVENUE SOURCE

To achieve its objectives, ECAA shall have the following revenue sources:

1. Membership registration fees and annual dues.
2. Various revenue generating activities to be planned & executed.
3. Funds to be secured by submitting proposals to governmental and non-governmental charitable institutions.
4. **Sponsorship of initiatives, activities, or programs by individuals, businesses, or organizations.**
5. **Contribution or donation by individuals, businesses, or organizations.**

ARTICLE 8 – MEMBERSHIP DUES

1. Membership fee shall be \$10.00 for individual member, and \$15.00 for family.
2. **Annual membership dues amounts shall be established by the Board.**
3. Members who are in retirement, pursuant to relevant laws of the United States, will receive fifty (50%) discount from membership fee and annual dues.

CHAPTER III ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

ARTICLE 9 – GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly is composed of all members who discharge their duties, and shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

1. It is a final decision making authority on important issues and other matters referenced in the bylaw.
2. It elects members of the Executive Committee, Audit Committee , and four members of the Board.
3. Holds annual meetings with the Executive Committee, the Board, and Audit & Supervision Committee; makes decision and gives directives on operation and financial reports submitted to it.
4. It shall hold emergency meeting upon such request by chair person of the Board.
5. Holds election and fills vacant positions.
6. It shall approve annual budget & ensures its implementation.
7. Shall adopt the bylaw; may amend it when necessary.
8. A quorum in the General Assembly shall be satisfied upon presence of more than half (50%) of the members. If a quorum fails, a meeting may proceed with the agenda if $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) of members present vote for it. A meeting without satisfying quorum shall be held only if at least ten percent (10%) of all members of the association are present.

ARTICLE 10 – BOARD

ECAA Board is composed of individuals willing to be members and elected by and representing various religious, regional, gender, cooperative, age-based, professional, youth, and etc, organizations. It shall also include four members elected by the General Assembly of the association. It shall ensure the Executive Committee is operating in compliance with the bylaws. The Board is accountable to the General Assembly. Its detail functions and responsibilities are:

1. Ensures every activity of the Executive Committee is in compliance with the bylaws of the association. It may establish various committees to discharge this responsibility.
2. Ensures assets and funds of the association are well kept and spent for appropriate purposes.
3. Ensures activities of the Executive Committee regarding external relations are not contrary to the objectives of the association.
4. Reviews and approves short and long term plans as well as project proposal submitted to it by the Executive Committee.
5. It shall hold meetings every three months, review operation reports submitted to it by the Executive Committee and give directives for correction and approvals.
6. Board members shall register members, follow-up to ensure that timely payments are being made, ensure that they active members. Board members shall also maintain record and present inquiries forwarded to them from their electorate for decision by the Board.
7. If the Executive Committee requests for their help, Board members shall collect annual dues from their electorate and present to the Treasurer.
8. Board members shall research and submit to the Board methods to strengthen the association and increase participation of its members.
9. Sets encouragement pay for members of the Executive Committee; decides employment of permanent and temporary employee and their salaries. This provision shall apply only when the association has enough funds.
10. It may adopt its own bylaw that is not contrary to the bylaw of the association.
11. Board members shall maintain names and number of their electorate, get them to complete membership forms, and submit such to the Executive Committee. Board members shall also report changes.
12. It shall approve expenses in excess of \$1000.00.

- 13. The Board shall handle matters that are not clearly and specifically covered in the Bylaws, and decisions made to address such matters shall be supported by two-third (2/3) majority.**

ARTICLE 11 – BOARD CHAIRPERSON

The Board Chairperson shall be elected by Board members who are delegated and Board members elected by the General Assembly. S/he shall be accountable to the General Assembly. His/Her detail functions and responsibilities include:

1. Presides at meeting of the Board
2. Calls and presides at regular and special meetings of the General Assembly
3. Ensures Board and Executive Committee members are discharging their duties in compliance with the bylaws.
4. Encourages Board and Executive Committee members so as to discharge their duties effectively and in a diligent manner.
5. To support activities of the Executive Committee and to ensure its compliance with the bylaws, the Board Chair person shall nominate Board members to various committees, and implement their assignment upon approval by the Board.

ARTICLE 12 – BOARD VICE CHAIRPERSON

1. Acts replacing the chair person when s/he is not available
2. Executes duties assigned to him/her by the chair person
3. S/he shall be accountable to the chairperson

ARTICLE 13 – BOARD SECRETARY

1. Announces, with instruction from the chair person, meetings of the Board and special meetings of the General Assembly.
2. Records minutes of meeting of the Board and the General Assembly.
3. Reads minutes from previous meeting of the Board for approval.
4. Discharges secretarial duties of the Board; maintains documents and records.
5. Maintains official register of members.
6. Prepares outgoing letters for signature by the chairperson.
7. S/he is accountable to the Board chairperson.

ARTICLE 14 – AUDIT & SUPERVISION COMMITTEE

Audit & Supervision committee shall be composed of three members who are professionals in finance, business and management, and elected by the General Assembly. Their functions and responsibilities shall include:

1. Prepare the procedures of book-keeping and accounting for the association and to get it approved by the Board. Distribute the procedures to various departments.
2. It shall prepare audit reports on activities of the finance and accounting committee of the Executive Committee every six months and any other time as may be found necessary.
3. Prepares and submits annual detailed audit report to the Board, the Executive Committee and the General Assembly
4. At any time as may be necessary, it may conduct an audit on financial and/or operational matters and submit a report to the Board or the General Assembly.
5. It shall prepare detailed audit report two months prior to the end of term of office for the Board and the Executive Committee. It shall prepare transition documents to facilitate a smooth hand-over.
6. Ensures the association bylaws implemented in every department; ensures plans and projects are completed within the allocated budget and timetable
7. It shall be accountable to the General Assembly.

ARTICLE 15 – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall be elected by the General assembly and be responsible for the day to day activities of the association. It shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

1. Executes the day to day activities of the association
2. Keeps and maintains register of its members
3. Registers members
4. Is legal representative of the association, the Executive Committee shall represent the association with regard to external relations and negotiates with others.
5. Outlines plans that strengthen the association and submits to the Board for approval; implements the same upon approval by the Board.
6. Prepares written operational report every three months and submits to the Board.
7. Ensures members of the association are receiving appropriate services in accordance with the bylaws; follows up to ensure that members are discharging their duties.
8. Prepares association's annual budget and action plan and submits to the Board; implements the same upon approval.
9. Hires and manages temporary and permanent employees approved by the Board.
10. Outlines and submits to the Board for approval various activities designed to raise funds and materials needed to implement plans of the association; executes the same upon approval.
11. May establish temporary committees as may be needed to handle urgent matters upon approval by the Board.
12. Ensures assets, finance, and documents of the association are maintained carefully.
13. It shall hold regular meeting at least every month and evaluate operations of committees and gives directives.
14. To be present in the Executive Committee meeting shall be coordinators of committees, Secretary and the Director; other concerned committee members may be invited when necessary.
15. It shall obtain Board approval for expenses in excess of \$1000.00
16. The Director shall call and preside at meetings of the Executive Committee; the quorum shall be satisfied when one half (1/2) of committee members are present.

ARTICLE 16 – DIRECTOR

Director of ECAA heads the Executive Committee; the Director shall be elected by the General Assembly and be accountable to the Board. His/her detail functions and responsibilities include:

1. Leads operations of the Executive Committee.
2. Presides at meeting of the Executive Committee.
3. Participates, without voting power, in meeting of the Board.
4. Corresponds and negotiates with others representing the association.
5. Follows up to ensure members of the Executive Committee are discharging their duties pursuant to this bylaws.
6. Ensures plans and projects are executed within set timetables.
7. Promotes discussion and understanding between members of the Committee.
8. Ensures assets and funds of the association are well maintained; takes urgent corrective action to address wasteful and improper activities.
9. Writes letters to accounting and finance committee to release funds for operational expenses and related association activities; sign on bank checks.
10. Prepares internal procedures on member disciplinary action; implements it upon approvals by fifty (50%) per cent of the Committee members, and approval by the Board.
11. Carries out other duties assigned by the Board.

ARTICLE 16A – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

- 1. Acts as the Director when s/he is not available.**
- 2. Executes duties assigned to him/her by the Director.**
- 3. S/he shall be accountable to the Director.**

ARTICLE 17 – GENERAL SECRETARY

The General Secretary shall be elected by the General Assembly and s/he shall primarily run the office of the Executive Committee; s/he is accountable to the Director. Detail functions and responsibilities include:

1. Manages office of the Executive Committee
2. Receives outgoing and incoming letters; distributes to concerned bodies; indexes them chronologically.
3. Maintains register of members of the association.
4. Upon permission from the Director, the General Secretary shall call meetings of the Executive Committee; record minutes of meeting and shall maintain the minutes chronologically.
5. Outlines a plan to make association's office open for members; implement the plan upon approval by the Executive Committee.
6. Identify and budget for required office supplies.
7. Follows up and provides report to the Director on execution of projects of committees in the set time table and within allocated budget.
8. Carries out other duties that may be assigned by the Director.

ARTICLE 18 – PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Coordinator of public relations committee shall be elected by the General Assembly and accountable to the Director. It shall be lead by a professional who shall prepare documents on activities of the association for publication through mass media, flyers, radio and internet media. Detail function and responsibilities include:

1. Publishes objectives and activities of the association to the public through mass media
2. Manages association's web site; publishes updated information
3. Video records and files meeting of the General Assembly, the Board and the Executive Committee
4. Arranges a mechanism by which principal activities of committees are video documented and released to the public
5. Publishes association's magazine every six months and distributes to the public
6. Lists supplies necessary to carry out its duties with cost breakdown; implements upon approval
7. Prepares and distributes to members interviews with concerned professionals on current affairs
8. Recruits individuals willing to volunteer their service for the committee and implement it upon approval by the committee
9. Ensures all written and electronic interviews are pre-approved by the Director for publication
10. Carries out other duties assigned by the Director

ARTICLE 19 – ACCOUNTING & FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Accounting & Finance Committee shall be responsible to administer funds receive from members, donated to the association for execution of projects and received in other ways; the Coordinator and Treasurer of the Committee shall be elected from the General Assembly; the Accountant shall be accountable to the Director. Detail functions and responsibilities shall be the following:

1. Ensures every member pays the registration and annual dues

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2. Shall deposit in bank all funds received in 24 hours
3. The Coordinator and the Treasurer shall sign on outgoing checks
4. Shall ensure all outgoing checks are signed by the Director or his/her agent
5. Prepares revenue generating mechanisms in consultation with other concerned committees
6. Prepares and submits to the Director monthly Income and Expense Statements
7. Shall ensure Income and Expense Statement is done according to appropriate financial accounting method
8. Shall ensure association's account is readily available for audit at any time
9. Prepare list and cost break down of journals and articles that may assist for effective performance; implement upon approval
10. Shall issue sequentially numbered receipts with official seal for money received
11. Shall publish quarterly financial reports on association's web site
12. Carries out other duties that may be assigned by the Director.

ARTICLE 20 – PLANNING AND PROJECT RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Planning & Project Research Committee Coordinator shall be elected by the General Assembly; by recruiting planning, budget and project professionals, it shall prepare association's short and long term plans & budget; it shall also prepare project proposals. It is accountable to the Director and shall have the following detailed functions and responsibilities:

1. Shall prepare association's annual plan and budget after consultation with all committees
2. Shall prepare association's long term plan taking into account its desired end
3. Develops project proposals and, upon approval by the Executive Committee and the Board, ensures submission to donors
4. Oversees implementation of approved projects; timely submits project implementation documents to donors pursuant to a donation agreement
5. Researches and prepares list of governmental and non-governmental agencies that may support the association; submit proposals upon approval
6. Carries out other duties that may be assigned by the Director.

ARTICLE 21 – LEGAL & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Legal & Community Affairs Committee shall be elected by the General Assembly and it shall have Family Affairs Department; a voluntary Immigration law professional will provide a wide range of services and s/he shall be accountable to the Director. Its detail functions and responsibilities shall include:

1. Provide assistance and counsel to members who are suffering because of job loss, health problem, age, gender and related problems
2. Communicates with concerned governmental and non-governmental agencies so as to assist and counsel those in need
3. Shall develop a strategy to assist newcomer Ethiopians to adapt to the area with counseling and moral support; it may, upon approval, provide financial and material support for those in need.
4. Provides newcomer Ethiopians with job search & job referral services; it shall provide assistance in how to complete job application forms
5. Shall provide members with immigration law support and counseling, including assistance to bring their families
6. Coordinates, plans and administers "Ethiopian National Day"
7. Carries out other duties that may be assigned by the Director

ARTICLE 22 – HEALTH & SPORTS COMMITTEE

Whereas the Health & Sports Committee shall be elected by the General Assembly, it shall organize volunteer physicians, nurses and sports professionals and study how to provide services to members; it shall be accountable to the Director. Detail functions and responsibilities include:

1. Shall prepare lessons on current health issues and teach members by distributing via various mass media
2. Shall study local health issues and distribute to members lessons on prevention and control mechanisms
3. Shall assist members with no access to medical care on how to get one free; shall study and inform on discount group insurance for members with financial ability
4. Shall provide service to members with English language problem
5. To help abstain from evil activities, it shall train the youth and adults in sports and physical exercise; it shall study ways to establish sports and cultural center of the association; it shall implement it upon approval
6. Carries out other duties that may be assigned by the Director

ARTICLE 23 – EDUCATION & TRAINING COMMITTEE

Whereas, Education & training committee coordinator shall be elected by the General Assembly, it shall recruit volunteers who provide training in computer skills, English language improvement and Amharic language; it shall be accountable to the Director and discharge the following detail functions and responsibilities:

1. Provides English language improvement training to newcomers
2. Provides training for those who wish to learn computer skills
3. Provides children & youth training on reading and writing in Amharic
4. Teaches the youth the unique history and culture of Ethiopia
5. Prepares list of supplies necessary for projects with cost break down; implements it upon approval
6. Carries out other duties assigned by the Director

ARTICLE 24 – WOMEN’S & CHILDREN’S AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Whereas the Women’s & Children’s affairs committee coordinator is elected by the General Assembly, she shall recruit two volunteers and carry out activities focused on women & children. She shall be accountable to the Director. Detail functions and responsibilities include:

1. By receiving and investigating tips, she shall locate and assist member women who face challenges on account of their gender
2. She shall assist women to organize
3. She shall assist in obtaining legal and other counseling to women who face challenges at work and in their neighborhood
4. She shall plan events and assist women to display Ethiopian culture and cuisine to others
5. She shall develop strategies to create babysitting and after-school care opportunities for weak and aging parents engaged in other employment; implement it upon approval
6. Carries out other duties assigned by the Director

ARTICLE 25 – YOUTH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Whereas the youth affairs committee coordinator is elected by the General Assembly, s/he shall recruit two young volunteers and carry out programs focused on the youth. S/he shall be accountable to the Director. Detail functions and responsibilities include:

1. Encourages the youth to be members of the association
2. Helps the youth to acquaint with Ethiopian culture and become active participants
3. Mobilizes and teaches the youth about bad traditions and customs
4. Organizes youth meetings and invites excellent students, sport professional, and the like as role models; allows such meetings to be publicized.

5. organizes art shows to help the youth become respectful of their culture, love their families and others.
6. Recruit youth volunteers to tutor kids and others who have learning challenges on their free time.

CHAPTER IV **MEMBERSHIP**

ARTICLE 26 – QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To be a member, an individual shall meet the following criteria:

1. Be Ethiopian citizen or Ethio-American.
2. Complete membership application form and give informed consent to be bound by the bylaws of the association.
3. Pay membership and annual dues.
4. Be older than 18 years of age.

ARTICLE 27 – RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

1. Equal access to services of the association according to the bylaws.
2. Unlimited right to express opinions at meetings.
3. Right to elect and be elected for office according to the bylaws.
4. Right to have membership fee and annual dues waived if unable to pay because of job loss, sickness, accident, and etc.

ARTICLE 28 – DUTIES OF MEMBERS

1. To be present at meetings.
2. To comply with the bylaws.
3. To pay annual dues.
4. To conserve and efficiently use assets and services of the association.
5. To provide free community service if registration and annual dues are waived.

ARTICLE 29 – CANCELLATION FROM MEMBERSHIP

1. A member shall be expelled from membership if s/he fails for three consecutive times and without good reason to discharge duties stated in Article 28.
2. A member on default shall be given two written notices from the executive committee before being expelled from membership. A member who fails to cure the default within prescribed period shall be expelled from membership and notified by a written letter.
3. An expelled member won't receive any refund of payments.
4. An expelled member shall pay \$30.00 in penalty fee to re-register for membership.
5. A member shall be expelled from membership upon proof that s/he imposed his or her political, religious, racial and related opinions on other members.
6. The association is not bound to provide services to nonmembers and members who fail to discharge their duties without good cause.

CHAPTER V **MISCELENOUS PROVISIONS**

ARTICLE 30 – ELECTIONS

30.1 ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF BOARD

1. Election of members of the Board, the Executive Committee and Audit Committee shall be held every two years on the first Saturday of the month of December.

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2. The Board shall be composed of representatives of religious institutions, cooperative societies, professional, civic, sport, gender, age based and related organizations plus four members elected from the General Assembly.
3. Number of Board members representing other organizations:
 - 3.1 Organizations with the number of members between 8 – 50 may delegate one Board member
 - 3.2 Organizations with more than 50 members may elect and send two Board members.
4. Board members, delegated by constituent organization as well as those elected from the General Assembly, constitute the Board and shall elect their leaders.
5. Every Board member representing constituent organization, shall get members of that organization complete ECAA membership application form.
6. Newly formed associations may send representative Board member(s) six months after submitting a written request to the leadership of the Board; however, members of such associations can register to be members of ECAA without waiting for six months.

30.2. ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE & SUPERVISION COMMITTEES

1. Thirty days before election (i.e. in the month of November) the Board shall establish an election committee and announce to members by mass media and flyers the date of election and offices open for election.
2. The Election Committee shall solicit nominations from members for able and willing candidates to serve in office.
3. After carefully reviewing credentials of possible candidates, the election committee shall announce to members list of candidates for each open office.
4. Candidates shall introduce themselves to members through mass media and debate with competitors.
5. On Election Day, the General Assembly shall hold free, fair and transparent election. Candidates who receive highest vote shall be declared winners. The result of the election shall be released the same day.

ARTICLE 31 – COMMITTEES’ TERM OF OFFICE

1. Each committee shall have a two-year term of office.
2. Willing and nominated individuals elected for office may run for a second term.
3. No committee member may run or be delegated for office more than twice.

ARTICLE 32 – EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE BYLAWS

1. This bylaw shall be effective as of April 23, 2009.
2. This bylaw shall replace all previous bylaw as of its effective date.

ARTICLE 32 – AMENDMENT OF THE BYLAWS

1. This bylaw may be amended and replaced as needed.
2. **It shall be amended if the amendment is accepted by two-thirds (2/3) of the Board members.**
3. **If the Board cannot come to an agreement to amend the Bylaws by two-thirds (2/3) majority and Bylaws amendment is needed, the proposed amendment shall be submitted to the General Assembly.**