



Federal Volunteer Brigade

By-Laws

January 24th, 2020

Article 1 Mission

The Federal Volunteer Brigade (FVB) is formed as a living memorial, to provide living historians a means to honor the soldiers who fought to preserve the Union during the War of the Rebellion from 1861 through 1865, and the families who supported them. The Federal Volunteer Brigade members pledge to accurately portray the Civil War period with honor, dignity and respect to themselves, each other and to the memory of those they represent.

Article 2 Definitions

Brigade Commander (BC) –elected by eligible Companies for a period of three years. The elected BG is the absolute commander of all FVB field events and is expected to exercise command and control as authority mandates. This authority does not extend to individual Company sponsored/hosted events unless invited to command. The BG manages FVB governance and business matters in cooperation with the Board of Company Commanders (BCC). The BG serves as the non-voting Chairman of the Board of Company Commanders (BCC). He is permitted a tie-breaker vote in the event of an impasse on any issue.

Company – Defined as the base foundational unit of any Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery, along with the Engineer and Medical groups in service with the FVB and not subject to staff appointment by the elected BG. A Company obtaining full FVB membership must contain, at least, six soldiers and one officer/senior NCO commanding. Companies will continue in probationary status until this requirement is met.

Unless specifically stated in these by-laws, staff personnel appointed by the elected BG are not to be considered a “Company” and do not have individual or collective voting rights. Their vote is expressed through their parent Company. These non-voting positions include Chief of Staff or Deputy Chief of Staff, Provost Marshall, Regimental Commanders and all other appointed staff positions.

Board of Company Commanders (BCC)– a quorum of Company Commanders, or their designee, as defined by each individual company, eligible to vote on FVB governance issues and business affairs. Each eligible commander, or their designee, has one vote. This includes all combat Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery Companies along with the Engineer Company and Medical Company assigned to the Brigade. The board is chaired by the elected Brigade Commander (BC).

Field Events – All FVB designated reenactments, parades, living history and other Brigade/Regimental level activities being conducted to portray soldiers and civilians of the Civil War period.

Eligible commander – Any FVB Company Commander or designee whose Company has participated in at least two (2) brigade level events (not to include meetings) during the one calendar year prior to any subject vote.

Quorum – The FVB establishes that two thirds of the eligible company representatives will constitute a quorum.

Drug and alcohol policy- The FVB has a zero-tolerance policy for the use of any illegal drugs or underage drinking.

Standard Operating Procedure-All members of the Brigade shall abide by the safety SOPs of the FVB

Article 3 *Company Membership*

The FVB welcomes and encourages all perspective Companies and/or Regiments which share our vision and support our mission to apply for membership. No dues or entrance fees will be charged by the FVB.

- A) All impressions and military sub-components must adhere to FVB authenticity standards.
- B) Each new perspective Company will serve one year probation and be assigned a mentor Company by the BC to ensure their successful transition into the FVB. A perspective Company must be voted into full membership by a majority vote of the BCC after a period of one year probation.
- C) The FVB strongly encourages participation in all Brigade events.
- D) Organization within a Company is the sole responsibility of that Company
- E) Member Companies will obtain their own insurance, either through the FVB provider or other company, and be responsible for the conduct of their members
- F) Individual persons seeking membership will be referred to a member Company or Companies within their geographical area

Article 4 *FVB Business Meetings*

FVB business will be conducted at winter meetings or during emergency meetings called by the Chairman or membership of the BCC. All meetings will be operated under the provisions of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

- A) A meeting will be held each year in November and in January/February.
 - 1) The purpose of the November meeting is to review the previous year performance and to present by-law amendments and other proposals for discussion. Items presented and deemed appropriate for a vote will be

placed on the January/February meeting agenda. Every third year beginning 2014, candidates for the Brigade Commander (BC) position will present themselves for nomination by the November meeting with elections in January. No nominations for Brigade Commander will be accepted after the November meeting.

2) The January/February meeting is the primary voting meeting of the FVB. A two-thirds vote of eligible Company commanders, or their designee, (BCC) is required for a vote on:

- i. By-law amendments,
- ii. Removal of a Company from membership
- iii. Removal of an elected Brigade commander (BC).

3) A majority vote is required to:

- i. Accept a new Company/Regiment into membership
- ii. Elect a new Brigade Commander (BC) every third year beginning in 2015 or in the year immediately following any BC removal for cause
- iii. Select annual events for FVB participation
- iv. Any other business not otherwise defined

4) Voting in January will be in person through the Company Commander or their designee, or proxy. Voting on all non-emergency matters will occur only during the January/February meeting.

- i. All designees or proxy voters must be made known in writing to the BC 30 days in advance of the meeting.

B) Meetings may be called at any time by members of the BCC or the Chairman (BC) to address emergency/interim appointments, removal of a Company, removal of the elected BC, problems with appointed staff or other matters of immediate concern.

Article 5 *Selection and authority of the Brigade Commander*

Brigade Commanders are elected by a majority vote of eligible Company commanders or their designee (BCC) The Brigade Commander will carry the rank of Brigadier General and have absolute authority during field events (reference Article #2). Candidates for the position of BC must have displayed a commitment to the FVB and have demonstrated the appropriate experience and knowledge to hold the position as determined by the BCC. The Brigade Commander will Chair the BCC and can convene this body as required.

A) The Brigade Commander will appoint Brigade staff from within the FVB as he deems appropriate. The appointed staff serves at the pleasure of the BC. A Brigade is more than one Regiment. Primary Staff shall be limited to:

- 1) Chief of Staff with a rank no higher than Colonel and two Personal Staff officers of the BC's choosing with rank no higher than Major. (Ex: Chief of Staff, Adjutant, Etc.). The BC may also appoint additional enlisted staff as needed with

rank no higher than Sergeant. All current members of Brigade staff, as of this date, are grandfathered in position and rank. As positions become vacant, the bylaws will apply to future appointments.

2) Departmental Staff, with ranks at the discretion of the BC, to consist of:

- i Surgeon
- ii Engineer
- iii Quartermaster
- iv Provost

3) When the FVB is in overall command of an event, Departmental Staff may be breveted for the duration of the event to sufficient rank in order to fulfil their duties in command of their respective departments.

B) Regimental Commanders will have the rank of Colonel, be appointed by and also serve at the pleasure of the BC.

C) Regimental Commanders will appoint their staff. A Regiment is two or more Companies. Regimental Commanders do not have independent votes in FVB business, but instead their views must be represented by their parent Companies. Regimental Commanders have absolute authority over their Regiments during field events; superseded only the BC. In the Regimental Commander's absence, the regiment will be commanded by the ranking regimental officer present. Regimental Staff may be, but are not limited to, or may be appointed at the discretion of the regimental commander on an as needed basis:

- 1) One Adjutant with rank of Lt/Captain
- 2) One Sergeant Major
- 3) Wing Commanders as necessary with rank of Captain/Major/Lt. Col.
- 4) Quartermaster Officer with rank of Lt/Captain
- 5) Provost Officer with rank of Lt/Captain

D) If the Brigade Commander (BC) is unable to attend an event, must leave the field or is delayed while executing command staff business, he has full authority to temporarily delegate his authority down to the Regimental Commander he determines suitable to assume his role and will notify the Brigade by writing in advance of the event. In the event that the BC fails to attend an event and no notifications were made, the Senior ranking line officer will assume command.

Article 6 *Board of Company Commanders – Authorities*

The BCC is comprised of all Company Commanders, or their designee, whose Companies have attended at least two (2) FVB events during the preceding one calendar year prior to any vote. (Reference lines #45-47 above). Member Companies who have not met the two (2) FVB field event attendance requirement will not have voting rights until attendance requirements are met unless waived by the BCC for extraordinary circumstances. The BCC is charged with deciding all organizational and administrative matters of the FVB not specifically assigned to the BC. The following authorities are specifically assigned to the BCC:

- 179 A) Voting for the BC every three years beginning in 2015 – requires majority vote
- 180 B) Acceptance of a new Company/Regiment into membership – requires majority vote
- 181 C) Voting for FVB events annually – majority vote
- 182 D) FVB By-Law Amendments – two-thirds vote required
- 183 E) Removal of a Brigade Commander (BC), their respective Regimental Commander, or
- 184 a member Company – two-thirds vote required
 - 185 a. Removal of a BC or member Company must be for “cause”. Exhibited lack of
 - 186 integrity, poor performance, incompetence, or legal problems which portray
 - 187 the FVB in a negative light are some, but not all, examples of “cause”
 - 188 b. Upon proposed removal of a member Company or the elected BC, the BCC
 - 189 will be established
 - 190 c. A quorum, as described in Article 2, lines #49-50, must be obtained for any
 - 191 vote to occur and before the BCC is formed. Voting eligibility will be
 - 192 determined according to Article 6, lines 169-176, and be attested to by the
 - 193 appropriate member of the staff who has final word on BCC eligibility.
 - 194 i. If the vote concerns removal of a Company, the BCC Chairman (BC)
 - 195 will manage the meeting, vote and process
 - 196 ii. If the vote involves the removal of the BC, the meeting will be
 - 197 chaired by an impartial BCC member chosen by the group
 - 198 d. Reasons for proposed removal will first be stated by initiating party
 - 199 e. All involved persons will be given the opportunity to present their position to
 - 200 the BCC
 - 201 f. A two-thirds vote of the BCC is required to remove a Company from
 - 202 membership or an elected Brigade Commander from his position (reference
 - 203 Article 4, Section A, sub-section 2). These proceedings and subsequent vote
 - 204 can occur in-person or electronically within a prescribed period of time
 - 205 g. If a BC is removed from his position or resigns, nominations must be taken
 - 206 and an election held immediately to fill the void until the next
 - 207 January/February permanent election. During emergency elections, BCC
 - 208 member’s nominations and votes may be taken in person. A mutually
 - 209 acceptable member of the BCC will be chosen from the FVB to coordinate the
 - 210 emergency election and report the results.
- 211 F) The BCC is authorized to form committees for special projects deemed necessary for
- 212 the betterment of the FVB
- 213 G) A company's right to vote is dependent on that company having delivered 50% or
- 214 more of its reported expected attendance, as reported to their respective
- 215 regimental adjutant, for the majority of FVB events in the previous calendar year
- 216 H) The BCC shall designate a Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, both active members of
- 217 the FVB, to administer the funds upon approval from the BCC. Both will serve the
- 218 same term length as the BC.
 - 219 a. The Treasurer is responsible for presenting a report on FVB finances at the
 - 220 annual business meetings, or as requested.
 - 221 b. In conjunction with the bylaws review, the BCC will appoint a committee of
 - 222 three, separate from the Treasurer and Co-Signer, to audit the finances of
 - 223 the FVB. The audit shall coincide with each election of the BC.
 - 224

- l) Other business as determined to be appropriate and within the scope of responsibilities outlined

Article 7 Dissolution Clause

Dissolution of the FVB may only occur by a two-thirds vote of the BCC at the January/February meeting. Written notice must be provided to all Companies at least 30 days prior to the scheduled meeting and vote on dissolution. Prior to the voting on dissolution being taken the BCC will decide by majority vote where all remaining assets, after the payment of final bills, will be donated should the vote on dissolution pass; remaining assets may only be donated to a Civil War related non-profit organization.

These By-Laws are ratified this 20th day of October, 2014, revised in 2019, by a quorum of the Federal Volunteer Brigade and shall remain so until a mandatory review every five years from the last revision or such time as deemed appropriate by the Board of Company Commanders.

Note: The Bylaws Committee recommends a separate safety committee should be formed by the BCC to draft a SOP