

# CONSTITUTION

## Article I: Name and Objectives

### **Section 1.**

The name of the club shall be **WESTMORELAND COUNTY OBEDIENCE TRAINING CLUB (WCOTC)**. All training activities and events sanctioned by the American Kennel Club (AKC) will be promoted and conducted under this name.

**Section 2.** The objectives of the Westmoreland County Obedience Training Club (hereinafter referred to simply as the club) shall be:

- (a) to promote the training of purebred dogs for obedience, for dog sports and as versatile companions to mankind.
- (b) to provide general knowledge and conduct training classes for the public in order to make all dogs better citizens of society.
- (c) to conduct trials, tests and sanctioned matches (for example, obedience, agility, rally and/or tracking) under the rules and regulations of the American Kennel Club as the Westmoreland County Obedience Training Club.
- (d) to promote cooperation and good sportsmanship at all events and among its members in the training and exhibition of dogs.

**Section 3.** The club shall not be conducted or operated for profit and no part of any profits or remainder or residue from dues or donations to the club shall inure to the benefit of any member or individual.

**Section 4.** The members of the club shall adopt and may from time to time revise such bylaws as may be required to carry out these objectives.

# BYLAWS

## Article I: Membership

**Section 1. Classes of membership.** The club recognizes five classes of membership. These are:

- (1) Full membership
- (2) Associate membership
- (3) Junior membership
- (4) Family membership
- (5) Provisional membership

### **Section 2. Eligibility.**

- (1) Full member – A member who participates in club activities such as dog training, sanctioned events, public demonstrations, pet therapy work and/or club governance is considered to be a full member. A full member is eligible to vote and hold office, and also receives the club newsletter and other member benefits. A full member is required to pay full dues in conformance with Article I, Section 3. These dues shall not exceed \$50 per year.
- (2) Associate member – A member who is unable to participate in club activities due to special circumstances such as disability, family needs, job demands, etc. may elect to become an associate member. An associate member is not eligible to vote or hold office, but receives the club newsletter and other club benefits. An associate member is allowed to pay reduced dues in conformance with Article I, Section 3. These dues shall not exceed \$25 per year. Associate members may request conversion back to full membership privileges in any calendar year by paying full dues for that year and resuming their participation in club activities.

- (3) Junior member - A member between the ages of 8 to 18 who participates in club activities is considered to be a junior member. A junior member is not eligible to vote and hold office, but receives the club newsletter and other club benefits. A Junior member is allowed to pay reduced dues in conformance with Article I, Section 3. These dues shall not exceed \$25 per year. A Junior member may request conversion to Full membership privileges once he or she turns 18 by paying full dues for that year and participating in at least one club event.
- (4) Family membership -- if multiple club members (full, associate and/or junior) reside in one household and wish to receive only one copy of the club newsletter, they may request a family membership. A family is required to pay the equivalent of 1.25 times the full membership dues in conformance with Article 1, Section 3. These dues shall not exceed \$62.50 per year. This membership shall be limited to no more than two votes provided that both persons are full members.
- (5) Provisional member – A member whose application has been read but not yet voted on in accordance with Article I, Section 3c below is considered to be a Provisional member. Provisional members receive the club newsletter and are encouraged to participate in club activities, but may not vote, hold office or receive other club benefits. Provisional members pay a reduced dues in conformance with Article 1, Section 3

All members must be in good standing with the American Kennel Club and subscribe to the objectives of the club. While membership is unrestricted as to residence, the club's primary purpose is to serve and be representative of the trainers and exhibitors in its immediate area.

**Section 3. Dues.** Membership dues shall be recommended by the board of directors and approved by a majority vote of the full members present at a general club membership meeting. Dues for associate and junior members will generally be set at one-half (1/2) the full club dues. During the month of November, each member will be sent a statement of dues for the ensuing year. Dues will be payable on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of January of each year. No member may vote whose dues are not paid for the current year.

Provisional members who are elected to full membership between January 1 and June 30 shall pay full dues for that calendar year. Provisional members who are elected to full membership between July 1 and November 30 shall pay one-half (1/2) of the set dues for that calendar year. A provisional member who is elected to full membership at the club meeting in December shall be sent a statement of dues for the ensuing year.

**Section 4. Election to Membership.**

- (a) A person may attend meetings of the club as a guest on an invitation basis. At any time after the first attended meeting, they may file a provisional membership application.
- (b) Each applicant for membership shall apply on an approved form which shall provide that the applicant agrees to abide by the constitution and bylaws and the rules of the Westmoreland County Obedience Training Club and the American Kennel Club. The application shall state the name, address and occupation of the applicant as well as other pertinent information, and it shall carry the endorsement of two full members in good standing. Accompanying the application, the prospective member shall submit a non-refundable application fee of one-half the full membership dues at that time.
- (c) All applications are to be filed with the Corresponding Secretary and each application is to be read at the first meeting of the club following its receipt.
- (d) A provisional member may apply for membership in the club at any time after six months but no longer than one year from the reading of their application. During this time, the provisional member may attend meetings and is encouraged to participate in club activities but is not allowed to vote or hold office.
- (e) An application for membership will be voted upon at the next general meeting of the club membership after the request has been made. If a quorum is not reached at that meeting, the vote will be deferred to the subsequent general meeting of the club membership. An affirmative vote of 2/3 of the full members present and voting by secret ballot (with the applicant not present) shall be required for election to club membership.

- (f) Applicants for membership who have been rejected by the club may not reapply within six months after such rejection.

#### **Section 5. Termination of Membership.**

Memberships may be terminated:

- (a) by resignation. Any member in good standing may resign from the club upon written notice to the Corresponding Secretary, but no member may resign when in debt to the club. Obligations other than dues are considered a debt to the club and must be paid in full prior to resignation.
- (b) by lapsing. A membership will be considered as lapsed and automatically terminated if such member's dues remain unpaid 30 days after the first day of January; however, the club may grant an additional 60 days of grace to such delinquent members in meritorious cases. In no case may a person be entitled to vote at any club meeting whose dues are unpaid as of the date of that meeting.
- (c) by expulsion. A membership may be terminated by expulsion as provided in Article VI of these by-laws.

### **Article II: Meetings and Voting**

**Section 1. Club Meetings.** Meetings of the club shall be held each month in Delmont PA or within the central Westmoreland County area on the second Tuesday at such hour and place as may be designated by the membership. Written notice of each such meeting along with an agenda of items to be discussed shall be mailed or emailed by the Recording Secretary at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting. If the club regularly distributes a newsletter to all of its members, notice of the club meeting and agenda may be published in that newsletter in lieu of a special notice mailed by the secretary. The quorum for general membership meetings shall be 20 percent of the full members in good standing. Any general membership meeting which fails to achieve this quorum shall be considered to be a meeting of the board of directors, provided a majority of board members are present. Under these circumstances, the board of directors shall be empowered to transact such normal club business as may be pressing, and approve motions which were published in advance on the agenda.

**Section 2. Special Club Meetings.** Special club meetings may be called by the President, or by a majority vote of the members of the board of directors who are present and voting at any regular or special meeting; and shall be called by the Recording Secretary upon receipt of a petition signed by five full members of the club who are in good standing. Such special meetings shall be held in Delmont PA or within the central Westmoreland County area at such place, date and hour as may be designated by the person or persons authorized herein to call such meetings. Written notice of such a meeting shall be mailed or emailed by the Recording Secretary at least five days and not more than 15 days prior to the date of the meeting, and said notice shall state the purpose of the meeting, and no other club business may be transacted thereat. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 20 percent of the full members in good standing. Any special membership meeting which fails to achieve this quorum shall be considered to be a special meeting of the board of directors provided a majority of board of directors members are present. Under these circumstances, the board of directors is empowered to transact urgent or emergency club business and approve motions pertaining to the purpose of the special meeting as stated in the mailed notice.

**Section 3. Board of Directors Meetings.** Meetings of the club's board of directors shall be held at least bimonthly in Delmont PA or within the central Westmoreland County area at such date, hour and place as may be designated by the board of directors. Notice of each such meeting shall be mailed or emailed by the Recording Secretary to the general membership at least five days prior to the date of the meeting. If the club regularly distributes a newsletter to all of its members, notice of the board of directors meetings may be published in that newsletter in lieu of a special notice mailed by the secretary. The quorum for such a meeting shall be a simple majority of the board of directors. Members of the club who are not members of board of directors may attend board of directors meetings to voice opinions or raise issues of concern, but will not be counted toward quorum and may not vote on the recommendations issued at these meetings.

Motions for proposed club actions should generally be discussed first at the standing committee level, then brought to the board of directors. The board can return such motions to committee if deficiencies are found, or they can forward the motion to the club along with a recommendation to adopt the motion, reject the motion or substantially revise the motion. The final decision on all motions for proposed club actions will be made by a majority vote of full members at a general membership meeting.

**Section 4. Special Board of directors Meetings.** Special meetings of the board of directors may be called by the President; and shall be called by the Recording Secretary upon receipt of a written request signed by at least three members of the board of directors. Such special meetings shall be held in Delmont PA or within the central Westmoreland County area at such place, date, and hour as may be designated by the person authorized herein to call such meeting. Written notice of such meeting shall be mailed or emailed by the Recording Secretary at least five days and not more than 10 days prior to the date of the meeting. Any such notice shall state the purpose of the meeting and no other business shall be transacted thereat. The quorum for such a meeting shall be a majority of the board of directors.

**Section 5. Voting.** Each member in good standing whose dues are paid for the current year shall be entitled to one vote at any general membership meeting of the club at which he or she is present. Proxy voting will not be permitted at any club meeting or election.

### **Article III: Directors and Officers**

#### **Section 1. Board of Directors**

- (a) The board of directors shall be comprised of five club officers (President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer) and fifteen other persons (six directors-at-large and nine directors elected to chair the standing club committees). The directors elected to chair each standing committee shall be selected by the Nominating Committee as provided in Article IV below to ensure they have the appropriate expertise and background to direct their committee functions. All members of the board shall be elected for one-year terms at the club's annual meeting as provided in Article IV and shall serve until their successors are elected.
- (b) General management of the club's affairs shall be entrusted to the board of directors. The board of directors will serve as the formal conduit through which standing committees shall submit motions for approval at general club meetings. The board of directors will coordinate financial planning and budgeting; review the reports and plans of standing club committees; and recommend motions to be brought to the general membership for final decision.
- (c) Budgets for anticipated committee expenses will be submitted by each standing committee to the Finance Committee before the annual planning meeting in November. Once reviewed by the board of directors, these budgets will be sent to the full club membership for approval at the annual general membership meeting in December. Any expenditures which have been properly requested and approved as part of a yearly budget can be executed by the club without further membership approval.
- (d) The board of directors can approve up to \$500 of emergency expenditures on a simple majority vote. Unbudgeted expenditures and emergency expenditures over \$500 must be approved by a majority vote of the full members present at a general club membership meeting.

#### **Section 2. Officers.**

The club's officers, consisting of the President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer, shall serve in their respective capacities both with regard to the club and its meetings and the board of directors and its meetings. An officer may serve as the director in charge of a standing club committee if they have been properly nominated and elected as provided in Article IV (for example, the treasurer may direct the finance committee, or the corresponding secretary may direct the membership committee). In such cases, the person holding both offices may cast only a single vote at board of directors meetings and the total membership of the board shall be reduced by one during the time such offices are combined.

- (a) The **President** shall preside at all meetings of the club and of the board of directors, and shall have the duties and powers normally appurtenant to the office of President in addition to those particularly specified in these bylaws. Specified duties include overseeing the club's liaison to the American Kennel Club and coordinating any revision of the club's constitution and bylaws. No one person shall hold the office of President for more than two consecutive elected terms.
- (b) The **Vice President** shall have the duties and exercise the powers of the President in case of the President's death, absence or incapacity. The Vice President will also coordinate educational programming for members at general club meetings. No one person shall hold the office of Vice President for more than two consecutive elected terms.
- (c) The **Recording Secretary** shall keep a record of all meetings of the club and of the board and of all matters of which a record shall be ordered by the club. The Recording Secretary shall make and distribute copies of the minutes to be approved at subsequent meetings, and shall notify club members, through mail or email, of all general and special meetings. The Recording Secretary shall be responsible for summarizing all club motions at the end of each official year, and shall also carry out such other duties as are prescribed in these bylaws.
- (d) The **Corresponding Secretary** shall have charge of club correspondence, keep a roll of the members of the club with their addresses, accept and read new member applications and notify new members of their election to membership, notify officers and directors of their election to office, and shall also carry out such other duties as are prescribed in these bylaws.
- (e) The **Treasurer** shall collect and receive all moneys due or belonging to the club. Moneys shall be deposited in a bank designated by the board of directors, in the name of the club. The books shall at all times be open to inspection by the board of directors and by club members, and a report shall be given at every meeting on the condition of the club's finances and every item of receipt or payment not before reported; and at the annual meeting an accounting shall be rendered of all moneys received and expended during the previous fiscal year. The Treasurer's records shall be audited by at least four club members, one of whom shall be the Treasurer, one officer, the head of the Finance Committee and at least one club member at large. The audit should be initiated at the end of the club's fiscal year and should be completed before the February general membership meeting.

### **Section 3. Directors.**

Directors shall have the duty of maintaining long-term stability and continuity on the board and ensuring equity in the distribution of the club's resources. There shall be a total of fifteen elected directors on the board. Nine directors will be nominated in accordance with Article IV below and elected each year at the Annual Meeting for one-year terms to direct the nine standing club committees. Six directors-at-large will be nominated in accordance with Article IV below and elected each year at the Annual Meeting for one-year terms. The directors at large will equally represent and serve as ombudsmen for the obedience, agility and other interests of the club and shall generally be expected to serve for two one-year terms (if nominated and elected in accordance with Article IV below) to provide continuity on the board.

### **Section 4. Vacancies.**

Any vacancies occurring on the board or among the offices during the year shall be filled until the next annual election by a majority vote of the full members of the club present and voting at the first regular meeting following the creation of such vacancy, or at a special club meeting called for that purpose; except that a vacancy in the office of President shall be filled automatically by the Vice President and the resulting vacancy in the office of Vice President shall be filled by a majority vote of the full members of the club present and voting as the next regular meeting of the club.

## **Article IV: The Club Year, Annual Meeting, Elections**

**Section 1. Club Year.** The club's fiscal year shall begin on the first day of January and end on the last day of December. The club's official year shall begin at the conclusion of the annual meeting in December and shall continue until the conclusion of the following December annual meeting.

**Section 2. Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting shall be held as the general club membership meeting in the month of December, at which officers, directors and standing committee heads for the ensuing year shall be elected by secret ballot from among those officers and directors nominated in accordance with Section 4 of this Article and those committee chairs selected in accordance with Article V Section 1. Officers, directors and committee heads shall take office immediately upon the conclusion of the election and each retiring officer, director or committee chair shall turn over to the successor in office all properties and records relating to that office within 30 days after the election. Incoming and outgoing club officers, directors and committee heads will hold an annual change-over meeting sometime between the club's annual meeting and January 1, in order to facilitate the transfer of such property and records.

**Section 3. Nominations.** No person may be a candidate in a club election who has not been nominated.

- (a) Prior to the month of August, the board of directors shall recommend six members to serve as the Nominating Committee, to be approved by a vote of the general membership at the August club meeting. No more than one of the Nominating Committee members may also be a member of the board of directors. Once confirmed, the members of the Nominating Committee shall choose a chair and it shall be that person's duty to call a Nominating committee meeting, which shall be held on or before September 1.
- (b) The Nominating Committee shall poll standing committees, outgoing officers and club members to gather suggestions for candidates. The committees shall nominate one candidate for each club office and each of the fifteen director's position. After securing the consent of each person so nominated, the committee shall report their nominations to the Corresponding Secretary in writing.
- (c) Upon receipt of the Nominating Committee's report, the Corresponding Secretary shall, at least 10 days before the October general membership meeting, notify each club member in writing of the candidates so nominated. If the club regularly distributes a newsletter to all of its members, notice of the candidates nominated to serve as club officers and directors may be published in the November newsletter in lieu of a special notice mailed by the secretary.
- (d) Additional nominations may be made at the October meeting by any member in attendance, provided that the person so nominated does not decline when their name is proposed, and provided further that if the proposed candidate is not in attendance at this meeting, the proposer shall present to the Secretary a written statement from the proposed candidate signifying willingness to be a candidate.
- (e) Nominations cannot be made at the annual meeting or in any manner other than as provided in this Section.

**Section 4. Elections.** The nominated candidate receiving the greatest number of votes for each office shall be declared elected. In the case a quorum is not reached at the Annual Meeting, a special meeting must be called to reschedule the election.

#### Article V: Committees

##### **Section 1. Standing Committees**

(a) The board may each year appoint standing committees to advance the work of the club in such matters as event planning, training classes, membership care and other club functions which may well be served by committees. Such committees shall always be subject to the final authority of the board. Special committees may also be appointed by the board to aid it on particular projects.

##### **Section 2. Committee Duties.**

The major duties of standing committees are listed below, but could also include other duties and tasks that may be recommended by the board. Standing committees will meet on schedules determined by their members to carry out the duties assigned to them by the board. Proposals for new club actions must first be discussed and approved in committee before being submitted to the board of directors and the general club membership for final approval.

#### Article VI: Discipline

<b>Committee Name</b>	<b>Duties</b>
Obedience Training	Plan and run obedience, rally & freestyle classes, obedience and rally seminars, CGC tests, show-and-gos and other run-thrus
Agility Training	Plan and run agility classes, agility seminars and run-thrus
Obedience Trial	Coordinate the work of trial chairs & secretaries for obedience trials
Agility Trial	Coordinate the work of trial chairs & secretaries for agility trials
Pet Therapy	Coordinate therapy visits, therapy training and TDI testing
Building & Property	Maintain club equipment, building and grounds and cleaning schedules
Communications	Coordinate web site, newsletter, rescue and breeder referral, safety programs, public outreach, event publicity, etc.
Member Care	Coordinate annual awards banquet, hospitality, picnics and parties, educational programming, club logo clothing, sunshine & library
Finance	Coordinate committee budgets, audits, ways & means, taxes and insurance

**Section 1. American Kennel Club Suspension.** Any member who is suspended from the privileges of The American Kennel Club automatically shall be suspended from the privileges of this club for a like period.

**Section 2. Charges.** Any member may prefer charges against a member for alleged misconduct prejudicial to the best interests of the club. Written charges with specifications must be filed in duplicate with the Secretary together with a deposit of \$25, which shall be forfeited if such charges are not sustained by the board following a hearing. The Secretary shall promptly send a copy of the charges to each member of the board or present them at a board meeting, and the board shall first consider whether the actions alleged in the charges, if proven, might constitute conduct prejudicial to the best interests of the club. If the board considers that the charges do not allege conduct which would be prejudicial to the best interests of the club, it may refuse to entertain jurisdiction. If the board entertains jurisdiction of the charges, it shall fix a date for a hearing by the board not less than three weeks nor more than six weeks thereafter. The Secretary shall promptly send one copy of the charges to the accused member by registered mail together with a notice of the hearing and an assurance that the defendant may personally appear in his own defense and bring witnesses if he wishes.

**Section 3. Board Hearing.** The board shall have complete authority to decide whether counsel may attend the hearing, but both complainant and defendant shall be treated uniformly in that regard. Should the charges be sustained after hearing all the evidence and testimony presented by complainant and defendant, the board may by a majority vote of those present reprimand or suspend the defendant from all privileges of the club for not more than six months from the date of the hearing. And, if it deems that punishment insufficient, it may also recommend to the membership that the penalty be expulsion. In such case, the suspension shall not restrict the defendant's right to appear before his fellow members at the ensuing club meeting which considers the board's recommendation. Immediately after the board has reached a decision, its finding shall be put in written form and filed with the Secretary. The Secretary, in turn, shall notify each of the parties of the board's decision and penalty, if any.

**Section 4. Expulsion.** Expulsion of a member from the club may be accomplished only at a meeting of the club following a board hearing and upon the board's recommendation as provided in Section 3 of this Article. Such proceedings may occur at a regular or special meeting of the club to be held within 60 days but not earlier than 30 days after the date of the board's recommendation of expulsion. The defendant shall have the privilege of appearing in his own behalf, though no evidence shall be taken at this meeting. The President shall read the charges and the board's finding and recommendation, and shall invite the defendant, if present, to speak in his own behalf if he wishes. The members shall then vote by secret ballot on the proposed expulsion. A 2/3 vote of those present and voting at the meeting shall be necessary for expulsion. If expulsion is not so voted, the board's suspension shall stand.

**Article VII: Amendments**

**Section 1.** Amendments to the constitution and bylaws may be proposed by the board of directors or by written petition addressed to the Recording Secretary signed by 20 percent of the membership in good standing. Amendments proposed by such petition shall be promptly considered by the board and must be submitted to the members with recommendations of the board by the Recording Secretary for a vote within three months of the date when the petition was received by the Secretary.

**Section 2.** The constitution and bylaws may be amended by a secret vote of the membership in good standing present and voting at any regular or special meeting called for the purpose, provided the proposed amendments have been included in the notice of the meeting and mailed to each member at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

#### **Article VIII: Dissolution**

Section 1. The club may be dissolved at any time by the written consent of not less than 2/3 of the members in good standing. In the event of the dissolution of the club other than for purposes of reorganization whether voluntary or involuntary or by operation of law, none of the property of the club nor any proceeds thereof nor any assets of the club shall be distributed to any members of the club, but after payment of the debts of the club its property and assets shall be given to a charitable organization for the benefit of dogs selected by the board of directors.

#### **Article IX: Order of Business**

##### **Section 1. General membership meetings.**

At meetings of the club, the order of business, so far as the character and nature of the meeting may permit, shall be as follows:

- Roll Call
- Minutes of last meeting
- Report of club officers (president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, treasurer)
- Reports of committees
- Election of officers and board directors (at annual meeting)
- Election of new members
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Adjournment

##### **Section 2. Board of directors meetings.**

At meetings of the board of directors, the order of business, unless otherwise directed by majority vote of those present, shall be as follows:

- Minutes of last meeting
- Report of Recording Secretary
- Report of Corresponding Secretary
- Report of Treasurer
- Reports of committees
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Adjournment

#### **Article X: Parliamentary Authority**

**Section 1.** The rules contained in the current edition of "Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised," shall govern the club in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any other special rules of order the club may adopt.