

Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians



Tribal Rules and Regulations

“The first element of sovereignty, and the last which may survive successive statutory limitations of Indian tribal power, is the power of the tribe to determine and define its own form of government. Such power includes the right to define the powers and duties of its officials, the manner of their appointment or election, the manner of their removal, the rules they are to observe in their capacity as officials, and the forms and procedures which are to attest the authoritative character of act if done in the name of the tribe.”

—Excerpt from Felix Cohen's handbook of Federal Indian Law.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians is to provide economic enhancement of the Varnertown Community; to educate its members in their history and culture; to provide opportunities for its people to share their arts and culture; to preserve the history and traditions of its ancestors; and to promote public awareness of the community's contribution and existence in the general population.

Tribal Infrastructure

1. The tribe is an incorporated, not-for-profit organization formed to serve its members and the people of the Varnertown Indian community.
2. The tribe is governed by an Executive Board, which consists of the Spiritual Leader, Administrative Officer, and five elected Tribal Council members.
3. Other appointed tribal positions include the Secretary/Treasurer, Tribal Archivist/Enrollment Officer, and Tribal Historian.
4. All Executive Board positions are filled through election of the Tribal membership.
5. All appointed Tribal positions are filled through a majority vote by the Tribal Executive Board.
6. All tribal offices are 4-year terms and each Executive Board position must be filled by an announced election.
7. The tribe will also have a Council of Elders who serve in an advisory capacity to the Executive Board. Members are honorary and can serve a life term.
8. Tribal membership, the Executive Board, and all other tribal positions are regulated by the tribal By-Laws created and adopted by the Tribe.

Tribal Membership

1. The tribe will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, age, or gender.
2. Membership is restricted to the descendants of Varnertown Indian community consisting of the surnames of Broad, Burbage, Clark, Dangerfield, Driggers, Huff, Varner, and Williams.
3. Each member must be age 18 years or older and of direct blood line to at least one of the family surnames.
4. Each member must complete a tribal application.
5. Each member must supply a copy of their birth certificate listing their parent's names.
6. Each member must complete a genealogy chart.
7. Members must provide a copy of birth certificates of any dependent children so their parent listing can be on file.

8. Members may be required to provide birth or death certificates for any member listed on their genealogy chart to trace or prove their lineage.
9. Once ancestry is supported or proven, a membership card will be provided with an assigned membership number.
10. Once a minor reaches age 18, a tribal application must be completed before a membership card can be issued.
11. Spouses are automatically adopted in the tribe once a copy of their marriage certificate has been submitted.
12. Spouses can participate in all tribal activities, but cannot vote or obtain a tribal membership card.
13. The Tribe's Executive Board can revoke any membership or adoption if a member commits a criminal act or violates tribal by-laws.
14. Membership with another tribe will automatically revoke membership in the Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians.

Tribal Dues

1. In order to help support the mission of the Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians, Tribal Dues have been implemented to sustain the functioning of the tribe.
2. Tribal Dues of \$25.00 must be paid each year in order for members to remain in active status. The fiscal year runs from August 1st – July 31st.
3. Tribal dues must be paid by October 31st of each year or a \$10 late fee will be charged.
4. Once a membership falls into inactive status due to failure to pay tribal dues, the account will remain inactive until all Tribal Dues and late charges have been paid in full.
5. Inactive members may be removed from tribal mailing lists until they become current in their tribal dues.
6. No one can be nominated to run for Tribal Offices while they remain in inactive status.
7. If an Executive Board member fails to pay their tribal dues, their voting privileges will be suspended until they become current.
8. If an Executive Board member remains in suspended status for more than 3 months, they may be removed from office by a majority vote of the remaining board members due to a violation of Tribal Bylaws.

Tribal Council

1. The tribal council will consist of five (5) elected tribal members.
2. Only Tribal members can fill the position of council member.

3. The position of council member cannot be filled by a member already filing another position on the Executive Board.
4. The tribal council is a part of the Executive Board and will work in conjunction with the Spiritual Leader and Tribal Administrator to govern the tribe.
5. The position of Council member is voluntary. Any member can remove him/herself from office at anytime.
6. The position of Council Member is for a 4-year term. There is no limitation on the terms a member can serve in this position.
7. Spouses cannot serve on the Tribal Council together.

Executive Board

1. The Executive Board will consist of the Spiritual Leader, Administrative Officer, and five (5) tribal council members.
2. Only a tribal member can fill the position the position of Executive Board member.
3. Any member serving as a tribal council member cannot fill the position of Spiritual leader or Administrative Officer in the same term on the Executive Board.
4. Spouses cannot serve together on the Executive Board during the same term.
5. The Executive Board will meet once a month at a pre-arranged time and place at the call of the Executive Board chairperson.
6. The Chairperson of the Board will be chosen from the Executive Board members at the beginning of the term of office.
7. The title of Chairperson of the Board does not carry a vote.
8. All motions will be passed by a majority vote of two-thirds (2/3) by the Executive Board.
9. Any Executive Board member who misses more than three (3) meetings within the elected term without sufficient reason can be removed by a majority vote of the Executive Board.
10. Any person removed from office due to non-participation cannot serve on the board for 2 consecutive terms from their last term of service.
11. The Executive Board will have the power to fill vacant seats on the board by a 2/3 majority vote until the next scheduled election.
12. The Executive Board duties are to govern the tribal affairs, assess needed in the Varnertown Community, to approve spending of \$500.00 or less, to actively seek resources to fulfill the tribal mission statement, and to promote the advancement of the tribe.
13. The Executive board must approve all tribal correspondence sent to other tribes, businesses, media, or government bodies. Executive Board approval must also be given

before any video, tapes, memos, or any other Tribal property is shown or given to entities outside the tribe.

14. In order to ensure only sanctioned correspondence is sent from officials representing the Wassamasaw Tribe, the tribe will adopt official letterhead, only accessible by the Tribal Secretary. The Secretary will type and mail official letters, giving the duplicate copy to the Tribal Archivist to keep on file.

Tribal Elections

1. Tribal elections are held every four years to elect members into tribal Executive Board positions.
2. Tribal elections will be held in July of the appointed years for tribal Council positions and the positions of Administrative Officer and Spiritual Leader.
3. All nominations for election must be tribal members, and must accept the nomination.
4. All nominees for election will be placed on the tribal ballot to be voted on by the tribe.
5. All nominees must currently be an active member of the tribe.
6. An active member is defined as a member who has volunteered and participated in all tribal meetings and events held during the previous 12 months. Exceptions will be reviewed on a case by case basis.
7. To have an official election, the tribal membership should be given a three (3) week notification of where in when to meet.
8. Once all tribal election nominations are received, the nominees will be notified to meet with the tribal council prior to being placed on the election ballot. This meeting will be scheduled at least 2 weeks in advance and all nominees notified by mail.
9. Nominees who fail to meet with the tribal council at the designated meeting times will not be added to the tribal ballot.
10. Once the vote is made, the ballots will be counted and announced at the end of the tribal meeting.

Executive Board Appointments

1. The positions of Secretary, Financial Officer, Tribal Archivist, Enrollment Officer, and Historian will be appointed every 4 years by a majority vote of the Tribal Executive Board.
2. All nominees serve on a voluntary basis and are responsible for attending all Executive Board meetings and tribal events.
3. Persons appointed to these positions are tribal members and/or adopted members of the tribe.

Tribal Adoption

1. Any person requesting tribal adoption must make a formal request to the Executive board.
2. Any person requesting tribal adoption cannot be qualified for membership to any other tribe.
3. Tribal adoption can only be approved by a 2/3 majority vote of the Executive Board.
4. Tribal adoption can be revoked if any adopted member commits a criminal act or violates by-laws.
5. Any person admitted in the tribe under adoption can participate in tribal activities but cannot hold a tribal executive board position or attain a tribal membership card.

Tribal Etiquette

1. Any member found violating tribal by-laws can have all membership benefits suspended by the Executive Board.
2. Any member in a tribal position who violates his/her job duties or any tribal by-laws can be removed from the position by a 2/3 majority vote of the Executive Board.
3. In order to address any complaint made against a tribal member, action will be taken by the Executive Board in accordance to the severity of the complaint made.
4. If a major allegation is made, the member must be notified in writing to attend a special meeting to address the charges brought against him or her.
5. If a minor complaint is made, a committee appointed by the Executive Board will go to the member and privately address the issue to determine the validity and necessary actions to take to rectify the problem.
6. Based on the findings of their investigation, the Executive Board may temporarily suspend, or even remove a tribal member from any elected office they hold.

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