

**GEORGIA ASSOCIATION  
OF  
ASSESSING OFFICIALS  
CONSTITUTION**



As Amended

November 18, 2019

## **PREAMBLE**

**The right of self-government is a sovereign right, inalienable, and indestructible. It is the life of this Organization and rightfully belongs to its members. Neither the officers nor any committees thereof established by this Constitution shall ever have the authority to irrevocably limit or restrain this right, and all acts whatsoever by said officers or committees to affect any of these purposes shall be and are hereby declared to be null and void for every purpose whatsoever. The rights of governing this Association shall always be under the complete control of and revocable only by its duly constituted voting members.**

# **CONSTITUTION**

## **ARTICLE I**

### **NAME AND OBJECTIVE**

#### **SECTION I. NAME**

The name of this Association shall be the GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF ASSESSING OFFICIALS.

#### **SECTION 2. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this Association shall be: To promote integrity and professionalism in assessment administration through education, leadership, and cooperation.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **SECTION 1. REGULAR MEMBERS**

Regular membership shall include (a) duly appointed/elected members of boards of assessors; (b) appraisers and support staff who are employed in the tax assessors' office; (c) any individual who is under contract to serve as the appraisal staff for a Class I county and (d) other county employees who are assigned to the tax assessors' office and whose duties are related to property tax valuation.

#### **SECTION 2. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

Any officer, official or active employee of any governmental agency in the State of Georgia and who is not eligible for regular membership. Associate members shall be ineligible to vote in general elections and/or committee meetings.

The Georgia Department of Revenue, Local Government Services Division and the Georgia Department of Audits shall be eligible for Agency Membership of up to twenty (20) employees per Department.

### **SECTION 3. SUBSCRIBING MEMBERS**

Any person not eligible for regular or associate membership and who has an expressed and bona fide interest in tax assessment and administration and who subscribes to the objectives of the Association. Subscribing members shall be ineligible to vote in general elections and/or committee meetings.

### **SECTION 4. HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBER**

This membership may be conferred upon any person in recognition of exceptionally distinguished service or some singularly outstanding accomplishment or contribution in behalf of the Association, and who has been elected to said honor by a two-thirds vote at any regular meeting of the Association. Provided that, Regular and Associate members so honored shall not revert to this status until their official retirement or honorable termination of employment from the position which qualifies them for Regular or Associate membership, so long as they remain so separated. Subscribing members or any other person so honored shall assume the Honorary Lifetime Membership upon election. Provided further that, such honorary memberships shall be conferred for life and such members, except those who retain active membership, shall not be required to pay dues nor shall they be eligible to vote nor be elected to office in the Association.

## **SECTION 5. GENERAL**

### **A. RIGHT TO HOLD OFFICE AND TO VOTE.**

The right to hold elective office and to vote is reserved only to those regular members who qualify under Article II Section I.

In order to be eligible to vote in the election held at the GAAO Fall Seminar meeting, paid membership in the G.A.A.O. is required no later than August 1 of that year.

### **B. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP.**

Transfers of membership shall only be permitted in cases where the members' dues are paid by his/her employer and such member resigns, retires, or otherwise vacates the position which qualifies him/her for membership during the period for which his/her dues have been paid. Such membership shall be transferred to his/her successor, for the unexpired portion of the dues period, upon request of the employer.

### **C. EXPULSIONS**

The Executive Board may expel any member of the Association, for violation of the Association's Code of Ethics or for cause duly shown, by a unanimous vote of the members present and voting at any meeting of the Board; provided that notice, in writing, stating the grounds for expulsion, shall have been delivered to the member or mailed to the last address carried on the records of the Association, and the member is afforded a hearing before the Board.

### **D. COMMITTEE MEETINGS.**

The Chairperson shall verify that a quorum of each committee is present before any voting action is taken by said committee. A quorum shall be defined as a majority of the members of the committee.

The Chairperson of the committee shall have the authority to declare the committee in executive session; thereby closing the meeting to any non-regular member of G. A. A. O.

**ARTICLE III**  
**OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD**  
**(DUTIES AND ELECTIONS)**

**SECTION 1. GENERAL**

A. QUALIFICATIONS.

A candidate for office shall have been a regular member in good standing for one (1) year immediately preceding his/her election.

B. SELECTION.

At each GAAO Fall Seminar meeting there shall be elected by the regular members in good standing a President-elect, Vice President, and two (2) members of the Executive Board in odd numbered years and three (3) members of the Executive Board in even numbered years. The President-elect shall succeed to the office of the President automatically at the end of the President-elect's term of office. The Executive Board shall select an Executive Director to serve at the pleasure of the Board. The Board shall provide for the Executive Director's duties and compensation by resolution. The Executive Director shall also serve as secretary-treasurer of the Association.

(1) DISTRICTS.

The Executive Board shall be selected by districts as follows:

METRO DISTRICT:

Comprising the counties of: Clayton, Cherokee, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale.

NORTH DISTRICT:

Comprising the counties of: Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Clarke, Dade, Dawson, Elbert, Fannin, Floyd, Franklin, Gilmer, Gordon, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Jackson, Lincoln, Lumpkin, Madison, Murray, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, Walker, White, Whitfield and Wilkes.

CENTRAL DISTRICT:

Comprising the counties of: Baldwin, Bibb, Burke, Butts, Carroll, Columbia, Coweta, Glascock, Greene, Hancock, Haralson, Heard, Jasper, Jefferson, Jones, Lamar, McDuffie, Meriwether, Monroe, Morgan, Newton, Pike Putnam, Richmond, Taliaferro, Spalding, Troup, Upson, Walton, Warren and Washington.

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT:

Comprising the counties of: Appling, Bacon, Bleckley, Brantley, Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Candler, Charlton, Chatham, Dodge, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Glynn, Jeff Davis, Jenkins, Johnson, Laurens, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, Montgomery, Pierce, Screven, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Twiggs, Ware, Wayne, Wheeler and Wilkinson.

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT:

Comprising the counties of: Atkinson, Baker, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brooks, Calhoun, Chattahoochee, Clay, Clinch, Coffee, Colquitt, Cook, Crawford, Crisp, Decatur, Dooly, Dougherty, Early, Echols, Grady, Harris, Houston, Irwin, Lanier,

Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Marion, Miller, Mitchell, Muscogee, Peach, Pulaski, Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Seminole, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor, Terrell, Thomas, Tift, Turner, Webster, Wilcox and Worth.

Provided that the two-year terms for Board members shall be staggered with North and Southeast being elected in odd numbered years and Southwest, Central and Metro being elected in even numbered years. Upon election, they shall take office as provided in the Constitution. Upon the declaration of the election results existing Board Members shall vacate their respective offices.

#### C. VACANCY IN OFFICE.

Whenever a vacancy in any office or on the Executive Board shall occur, except in the offices of President and President-elect, the Executive Board, by majority vote, shall elect any member in good standing to fill said vacancy and shall serve until the next annual election. Provided that when a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the president-elect shall immediately succeed thereto; and provided further, that when a vacancy occurs in the office of President-elect, the Vice-President shall immediately succeed thereto. Whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of President and the unexpired term is six (6) months or less, the successor thereto shall serve out the unexpired term and, in addition shall serve for the full term next succeeding.

#### D. PROHIBITION.

No GAAO member may be nominated or elected to hold office from any county while another GAAO member from the same county is holding or running for a position on the Executive Board, or serving as Vice-President, President-elect or President. In addition, no two members from the same county may be nominated for separate board positions that would violate this provision.



(1) Whenever any regular member, holding any office in the Association, shall for any reason vacate the official public position which made him/her eligible for regular membership, the office or position which he/she holds in the Association shall become vacant ninety (90) days thereafter, unless during said period such member has re-qualified himself/herself for regular membership.

## **SECTION 2. EXECUTIVE BOARD**

### **A. GOVERNING BODY.**

The Executive Board shall be the governing body of the Association. It shall have the authority to expend funds, incur liabilities, authorize contracts, and to conduct any business it may deem necessary to accomplish the objectives of the Association and to fulfill the purposes of the Association, provided such actions are not in conflict with any of the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws.

### **B. MEMBERSHIP.**

The Executive Board shall be comprised of the Association's President, President-elect, Vice-President, immediate Past President, and five duly elected Executive Board members.

### **C. QUORUM.**

For the purpose of transacting official business, a quorum shall consist of not less than five (5) members of the Executive Board.

### **D. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.**

An Executive Committee consisting of the President, President-elect, Vice President, Immediate Past President, and Executive Director shall act on behalf of the Association between meetings of the Executive Board. The Executive Director shall not be entitled to a vote on any matter coming before the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee may, by majority vote of its' members, exclude the Executive Director from discussions of matters directly concerning the Executive Director. All actions of the Executive Committee shall be reported to all members of the Executive Board within five (5) business days of the action. All actions taken by the Executive Committee shall cease and be null and void unless they are ratified by a majority of the Executive Board within said five business days.

### **SECTION 3. OFFICERS: DUTIES**

#### **A. DUTIES OF PRESIDENT.**

The President shall be the Chairperson of the Executive Board. He/She shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Board and of the Association. He/She shall appoint all committees and/or committee Chairperson and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him/her by the Executive Board. The President shall be the official Association delegate to the Annual Conference of the International Association of Assessing Officers.

#### **B. DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT.**

The President-elect shall exercise all the powers and execute all of the duties of the President during the latter's absence or inability to act, as determined by the Executive Board. He/She shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him/her by the President or the Executive Board. He/She shall be the alternate delegate to the Annual Conference of the International Association of Assessing Officers.

### C. DUTIES OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT.

The Vice-President shall exercise all the powers and duties of the President during the absence or inability to act of the President and the President-elect, as determined by the Executive Board. He/She shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him/her by the President or the Executive Board.

### D. DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

The Executive Director shall be responsible for the general, day-to-day administration of the affairs of the Association, subject to the provisions of this Constitution and such by-laws, the guidance of the President and such directions as may be adopted by the Executive Board. He/She shall perform the duties of Secretary/Treasurer, Editor and Chairperson of the Summer Conference Committee.

As Secretary/Treasurer of the Association, the Executive Director shall annually prepare a budget for the Association to be presented for approval at the Seminar meeting, and upon its approval by the Executive Board shall have the authority to spend the sum appropriated; shall be responsible for any moneys of the Association, keeping of the accounting records, and the preparing of financial statements in such form and in accordance with such procedure as may be required by the Executive Board; and may enter into agreements on behalf of the Association as will permit the performance of duties entrusted by the Executive Board.

The Executive Director shall give notice and keep minutes of all meetings, have custody of all funds, securities and legal instruments of the Association and shall be responsible for their safekeeping and the proper accounting thereof. He/She may, subject to the approval of the Executive Board, determine the place and manner of depositing and safekeeping of such funds, securities and legal instruments, and attest all necessary instruments.

As Editor, he/she shall publish, on a bi-monthly basis, the "*Georgia Property Tax News*" which shall be the official publication of the Association. It shall be published in the best tradition of the Association, in a timely manner and in accordance with the standards established by the Executive Board. He/She shall make distribution to each member of the Association and as prescribed by the Executive Board.

As Chairperson of the Summer Conference Committee, he/she shall serve as Chairperson of the Summer Conference Committee. Provided further that the Summer Conference Committee shall consist of the President, the President elect, and a Secretary appointed by the Chairperson. The Summer Conference Committee will be responsible for all education at the Summer Conference.

#### **SECTION 4. ELECTIONS**

A. The annual election of officers and members of the Executive Board shall be held during the GAAO Fall Seminar meeting.

##### **B. NOMINATING COMMITTEE.**

The President shall appoint each year, a nominating committee consisting of not less than five (5) regular members in good standing, who shall select not less than one name from among the regular members in good standing as a candidate for each of the offices of President-elect, and Vice President, when applicable, and seek to find no less than two (2) names for each place on the Executive Board to be filled for the ensuing year. Said nominating committee shall meet to consider nominations at a place and time to be designated by the Chairman thereof, and shall notify all G.A.A.O. members eligible to vote in the election of such place and time which shall be prior to the semi-annual Summer Conference meeting. The nominating committee shall make its presentation of selected nominees at the Summer Conference meeting.

After such presentation, the Chairperson will call for nominations from the floor. The names of all nominees shall be published in the next issue of the "*Georgia Property Tax News*".

Additional nominations may be made by petition signed by a minimum of twenty-five (25) regular members in good standing and submitted to the Executive Director so as to be in his/her hands no later than August 1.

If for any reason a nominated candidate should be removed from the list of candidates, the nominating committee shall reconvene and nominate candidates to fill such vacancy. Should this occur after the ballots have been printed, such change shall be printed in the "*Georgia Property Tax News*", provided time permits. In all such cases, the replacement candidates will be announced at the Election meeting and such nominees shall be write-in candidates.

No materials for campaign purposes shall be distributed by, or on behalf of, a candidate for office to the membership prior to the candidate's being approved by the Nominating Committee or being nominated from the floor at the Summer Conference business meeting.

### C. BALLOTS

The Executive Director shall cause the name of all nominees for elective office to be printed on the ballot to be used in the annual election. Said ballot shall contain, in the box for each office, a blank space for use by voting member who desire to write in the name of any other eligible candidate for whom he/she desires to vote.

## D. PROCEDURE.

### 1. GENERAL.

Voting in the annual election shall be by mail or electronic ballot and shall be conducted in accordance with the rules and procedures published by the Election Committee and with the provisions of this Constitution.

### 2. VOTING.

Each eligible voter of the Association will be sent an official ballot by the Executive Director no later than September 1. Such mailing will include specific voting instructions. The Executive Director shall include in the specific voting instructions the directions for casting an electronic ballot.

- a. VOTING BY MAIL. Two (2) envelopes, one of which shall be plain (ballot envelope) and the other shall be self-addressed to the Executive Director and provide for the return address of the voter and his/her signature (mail envelope). All ballots must be executed in accordance with the accompanying voting instructions and be in the hands of the Executive Director no later than October 1. Such ballots will be held by the Executive Director and properly secured until delivered to the Election Committee. All unidentifiable or unsigned mail envelopes will be considered as containing invalid ballots, which will not be counted in the vote.
- b. ELECTRONIC VOTING. The electronic votes will be cast through the official website of the Georgia Association of Assessing Officials, [www.gaaao.org](http://www.gaaao.org). The ballot will be placed in the "Members Only" section. Detailed instructions, as approved

by the Executive Board, for the procedure of casting the electronic vote will be available along with the ballot. In order for membership to cast a vote electronically, they must have a unique and verifiable login. All ballots must be executed in accordance with the supplied voting instructions and be cast no later 5:00 p.m. on October 1 of each election year. Such ballots will be verified by and properly delivered to the Elections Committee and the administrator of the website or a designee of the Executive Board. No electronic vote may be counted from an eligible voter who has also submitted a paper ballot. The paper ballot vote shall prevail.

c. NO PROXY VOTE. No member shall be permitted to vote by proxy in any election or referendum, or by proxy for any business coming before any meeting of the Association whatsoever.

E. RESULTS OF ELECTION.

Election will be by popular vote, the candidate with the most votes for each respective office wins. All ties will be broken by the secret written ballot vote of members present and shall concern only those opposing candidates whose vote counts were equal. The results of the annual election will be announced at the GAAO Fall Seminar meeting and shall be printed in the next issue of the "*Georgia Property Tax News*".

F. ELECTION COMMITTEE.

The President shall appoint an Election Committee of at least three regular voting members of the Association. Any person running for elective office shall not serve on the Election Committee. The Executive Director will provide tellers to the

Committee as requested by the Committee Chairperson. The Election Committee shall be responsible for the proper conduct of the election to include certification of voters and ballots, the vote count and the declaration of elected officials. It will, subject to approval of the Executive Board, adopt and promulgate such rules and procedures as may be necessary to ensure the proper and orderly conduct of the annual election, including provisions which safeguard the sanctity of the secret ballot and the right to vote and which protect against fraudulent ballots. Any such provisions shall not be in conflict with the explicit provisions of this Constitution.

#### G. TAKING OFFICE.

Officers and Executive Board members elected at the GAAO Fall Seminar meeting shall be duly installed and shall assume the duties of their respective offices at the meeting at which they were elected.

#### H. REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

If a member of the Executive Board is found to be in direct violation of the rules adopted by the Association in either the Constitution or By-Laws, or has been found in violation of the ethics rules adopted by the Association, or in any way conducts themselves in a manner unbecoming an officer of the Association or in direct conflict of the goals and objectives of the Association or Executive Board, the remaining members of the Executive Board may, by unanimous decision, remove the member from the position they hold on the Executive Board without delay, and without further disciplinary action. Examples of infraction that would warrant removal of a member of the Executive Board from office include, but are not limited to; physical or verbal assault, deliberately working to undermine a decision made by the Executive Board or Association, deliberately causing dissention within the ranks of the membership, or



deliberately causing harm to a member's character or integrity by verbal means or through the distribution of printed materials.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **MEETINGS**

#### **SECTION 1. SEMI-ANNUAL MEETINGS**

The Association shall hold semi-annual meetings. One meeting will be held during the annual Summer Conference, which is designated as the Summer Conference Meeting, and the other to be held during the GAAO Fall Seminar. Special meetings may be held at the call of the President or by a majority of the Executive Board.

A quorum shall constitute twenty-five (25) regular members.

No business of the Association shall be conducted in the absence of a quorum.

#### **SECTION 2. EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS**

The Executive Board shall hold quarterly meetings. One such meeting will be held in conjunction with the GAAO Fall Seminar and one in conjunction with the annual Summer Conference. The other two meetings will be held at a time and place to be determined by the President or a majority of the Executive Board.

Special meetings of the Executive Board may be held on the call of the President or a majority of the Executive Board.

A quorum shall constitute five (5) members of the Board.

No business shall be conducted by the Board in the absence of a quorum.

#### **SECTION 3. NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

The "Notice of Meeting" shall be a written document that must include the exact date, time and location of each meeting as well as the complete agenda for the meetings.

A. SEMI-ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS.

The 'Notice of Meeting' shall be published in the issue of the "*Georgia Property Tax News*," mailed, and/or posted to the official GAAO website, immediately preceding the Summer Conference meeting and the GAAO Fall Seminar meeting.

B. SPECIAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS.

The "Notice of Meeting" shall be mailed, to all members, via the U. S. Postal Service, published in the "Georgia Property Tax News" and/or posted to the official GAAO website at least 14 days prior to the meeting. Or the 'Notice of Meeting' shall be published in the issue of the "*Georgia Property Tax News*" immediately preceding the meeting.

C. QUARTERLY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS.

The 'Notice of Meeting' shall be published in the issue of the "*Georgia Property Tax News*", posted to official GAAO website, or electronically mailed immediately preceding the quarterly Executive Board meetings.

D. SPECIAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS.

The "Notice of Meeting" shall be mailed, to all Board members, via the U. S. Postal Service, at least 7 days prior to the meeting. Or the 'Notice of Meeting' shall be faxed, electronically mailed, or posted to the official GAAO website to all Board members at least 5 days prior to the meeting. Or the 'Notice of Meeting' shall be published in the issue of the "*Georgia Property Tax News*" immediately preceding the meeting.

It is the responsibility of each District Executive Board Member to inform the individual Chief Appraisers in his/her district of the agenda for each Special Executive Board meeting and to solicit input therefrom.

**ARTICLE V**

## **AMENDMENTS**

### **SECTION 1. HOW AMENDED.**

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the regular members in good standing, voting by paper ballot in any semi-annual meeting of the Association, by mail ballot or electronic ballot, approving said amendment, provided that the notice and the full text of said proposed amendment shall be given to all regular members not less than thirty (30) days prior to such meeting and same shall have been read at the semi-annual meeting next preceding. Said notice shall constitute the written ballot for voting on the amendment and may be published in the "*Georgia Property Tax News*" or may be electronically mailed to each member at his/her last known address, as approved by the Executive Board. Such mail ballots, bearing the members' printed names and signature on a sealed envelope or electronic ballots as cast through the official website of the Georgia Association of Assessing Officials, [www.gao.org](http://www.gao.org), and in accordance with the instructions of casting said electronic ballot, shall be in the hands of the Executive Director five (5) days prior to the next semi-annual meeting. No member shall be permitted to vote by proxy, but must vote by secret ballot on the form provided for that purpose.

### **SECTION 2. HOW PROPOSED.**

Amendments may be proposed by: 1) initiatory petition signed by not less than twenty-five (25) regular members; 2) by presentation of the Resolutions/Rules and By-Laws Committee; or 3) by resolution adopted by the Executive Board. Such petitions, presentations or resolutions shall be in the hands of the Executive Director at least sixty (60) days prior to any semi-annual meeting of the Association.

## **ARTICLE VI**

## **MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

### **SECTION 1. FISCAL YEAR.**

The fiscal year of the Association shall be from January 1 to December 31.

### **SECTION 2. DISSOLUTION.**

If the Association is dissolved, its assets shall be distributed to charitable organizations through a formula established by the Executive Board for dissolving the organization. In no case shall any assets revert to members.

**SECTION 3. “ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER (REVISED)”** shall prevail in the conduct of business when not in conflict with the Constitution and By-laws.

### **SECTION 4. INTERPRETATION.**

Official interpretations of the Constitution of the Georgia Association of Assessing Officials and its By-laws, shall be made by the Resolution/Rules, By-laws and Advisory Committee.