

OTTO Constitution

Article I

Name and Affiliations

Section 1. This organization shall be known as the Old Town Teachers Organization (OTTO), Local # 909, IFT, AFT, AFL-CIO.

Section 2. This organization shall maintain affiliation with the following organizations:

- a. The American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. Whenever possible, OTTO will send delegates to the AFT's convention. The delegates will be elected by procedures consistent with Article VII of this Constitution.
- b. The Illinois Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. Whenever possible, the union will send delegates to the IFT's convention. Delegates will be elected by procedures consistent with Article VII of this Constitution.
- c. The Illinois American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations.
- d. The Chicago Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO.

Article II

Objectives

Section 1. To secure full trade union rights, including the rights to exclusive recognition and collective bargaining, for all Teaching Artists of the Old Town School of Folk Music who are eligible for membership.

Section 2. To advance the economic, social, and political well-being of the membership.

Section 3. To promote the improvement of standards in the employment situation of the membership and to ensure their full and active participation at all levels of decision making within the institution.

Section 4. To encourage mutual understanding, aid, and cooperation among the membership.

Section 5. To promote the interests of the students, the families, and the larger community of the Old Town School of Folk Music.

Section 6. To promote the effectiveness and quality of the institution in which our members work by ensuring their full and active participation at all levels of decision making within the institution.

Section 7. To promote democracy, equality, and trade unionism in the society at large.

Article III Membership

Section 1. All Teaching Artists employed full time and part time at the Old Town School of Folk Music who are not supervisors or managers are eligible for membership in this organization.

Section 2. No person shall be denied membership, nor shall this organization ever discriminate against individual members or applicants for membership on the basis of race, creed, color, sex/gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical or mental disability, social, political, or economic status or national origin.

Section 3. Discipline of members. To ensure fairness and due process, a system for dispute and conflict resolutions between members and between members and the organization shall be put in place.

- a. A member may be disciplined by the organization for actions contrary to this Constitution or to the interests of the union or its membership. Such action may only be initiated by the bringing of written and signed charges to the Steering Committee by two or more members of the local; these charges must include a specific and detailed accounting, including any documentation, of the allegations against the member.
- b. Upon receipt of the charges, the Steering Committee shall cause a preliminary investigation to be conducted in order to determine whether the charges have merit. In addition, at this time, the Steering Committee shall give a copy of the charges to the accused member.
- c. Following the preliminary investigation, the Steering Committee shall vote on the question of whether a disciplinary hearing should be held. If a majority of the Steering Committee votes to hold a hearing, the member shall be given at least ten (10) days written notice of the hearing.
- d. At a disciplinary hearing, the accused member shall have the right to be represented by a person of their choice and shall have the right to question the charges and present evidence and witnesses to support their defense. At the conclusion of the hearing, a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Steering Committee shall be required for discipline. If a member of the Steering Committee has brought the charges against the member, that Steering Committee member shall recuse themselves from the vote.
- e. A disciplined member may appeal the decision of the Steering Committee to the membership by requesting a vote at the next regular meeting. A simple majority of the members voting shall be sufficient to overrule the decision of the Steering Committee to discipline.

Section 4. A member in good standing is defined as a member who is current in payment of dues to the organization.

Section 5. Associate/Emeritus Members:

- a. shall be subject to the approval of the Steering Committee.
- b. shall not be entitled to vote, hold office, or serve on committees.
- c. Shall be persons not eligible for full membership in any other AFT local affiliate.

Article IV Officers

Section 1. Officers shall be elected in May of odd years. Terms of office shall be two years. The organization will elect the following officers: Two Co-Presidents, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

Section 2. The Co-Presidents shall:

- a. either together or in alternation, be the presiding officer(s) at all meetings of the membership and the Steering Committee;
- b. be ex-officio members of all standing committees except the Elections Committee; They may divide these responsibilities as they see fit.
- c. together appoint, with the approval of the Steering Committee, the chairs of all standing and special committees except the Elections Committee;
- d. be the principal executive officers of the organization; They may divide these responsibilities as they see fit.
- e. receive, report and respond to correspondence of the organization; They may divide these responsibilities as they see fit.
- f. supervise all employees of the organization; They may divide these responsibilities as they see fit.
- g. shall foster and promote accountability among the Stewards Council and Steering Committee members.
- h. each be one of the responsible financial officers of the organization and shall be authorized to co-sign financial instruments and make regular and usual disbursement of funds;

- i. either together or in alternation, serve as the primary contacts for our affiliates (IFT, AFT, etc.) and to the Labor Community at large.
- j. either together or in alternation, represent the organization before bodies of the employer, and all other executive and legislative officials;
- k. either together or in alternation, represent the organization before the public, community organizations and the news media;
- l. either together or in alternation, be, by office, a delegate to the Chicago Federation of Labor, and the Illinois AFL-CIO;
- m. either together or in alternation, be, by office, a delegate to the convention of the American Federation of Teachers and meetings or conventions of its affiliated bodies;
- n. together make an annual report to the organization's membership; and
- o. together be able to delegate the responsibilities of the office except where otherwise specified by the Constitution.

Section 3. the Secretary shall:

- a. maintain the non-financial files and records of the organization;
- b. be the custodian of the seal and the charter of the organization;
- c. record and keep accurate minutes of the meeting of the membership and the Steering Committee or delegate that responsibility as necessary.
- d. assist the President in handling the correspondence of the organization;
- e. oversee the work of, and receive and certify the reports of the Election Committee;
- f. perform other duties as delegated by the President, or assigned by the Steering Committee;
- g. perform duties of the office as required by the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act;
- h. serve as an additional contact for our affiliates (IFT, AFT, etc.) and to the Labor Community at large, and

- i. where appropriate, the local may merge the offices and duties of the Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 4. The Treasurer shall:

- a. receive, record and deposit all dues monies and other income in the name of the organization;
- b. maintain accurate membership records;
- c. issue membership cards and notices of delinquency;
- d. be one of the responsible financial officers of the organization and be authorized to co-sign financial instruments and make regular and usual disbursement of funds;
- e. maintain all financial records of the organization;
- f. arrange for an independent audit of the finances of the organization annually and make same available to the Steering Committee and membership;
- g. transmit per-capita payments, and provide relevant financial information on a regular basis to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Illinois Federation of Teachers;
- h. oversee the work of and receive reports of the Finance/Budget Committee;
- i. perform other duties as delegated by the President or assigned by the Steering Committee;
- j. perform duties of the office as required by the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, and the guidelines developed by the AFT;
- k. serve as an additional contact for our affiliates (IFT, AFT, etc.) and to the Labor Community at large, and
- l. where and when appropriate, OTTO may merge the offices of the Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 5. All officers elected by the general membership of the organization shall serve as members of the Steering Committee.

Article V Steering Committee

Section 1. The Steering Committee shall meet semi-monthly, or at the call of the President, or at the call of two (2) or more of its members, for the purpose of initiating, overseeing or revising the program of the organization and to conduct other business of the organization that is within its authority. A quorum for the Steering Committee shall be one more than one-half of its members.

Section 2. The Steering Committee shall determine the agenda for all Membership Meetings.

Section 3. The Steering Committee shall employ all professional, technical, clerical and support staff of the organization.

Section 4. The Steering Committee shall establish the salary, benefits and expense guidelines of any general officer who is employed by the organization.

Section 5. The Steering Committee shall be empowered to make contracts and incur liabilities including the purchase of services, equipment and real property, to borrow money, to secure such obligations by mortgage or other instrument, and to otherwise engage in financial transactions to the extent permitted by applicable law or statute. The Steering Committee shall have the power to sue, complain and defend on behalf of the membership.

Section 6. The Steering Committee shall approve the chairperson and membership of all standing and special committees of the organization, except the Elections Committee, and receive regular reports from such committees.

Section 7. The Steering Committee shall be responsible for adherence to and enforcement of the Constitution and By-Laws of the organization.

Section 8. The Steering Committee shall issue regular reports, including an annual report, to the membership.

Article VI Committees

Section 1. The standing committees of the organization shall be:

- a. Stewards Council
- b. Grievance
- c. Defense
- d. Professional Development
- e. Finance/Budget

Section 2. The Steering Committee, either on its own initiative, or at the direction of the Membership Meeting, may establish special and/or ad hoc committees.

Section 3. The Co-Presidents, with the approval of the Steering Committee, shall appoint all committee chairs and committee members, with the exception of the chair of the Election Committee.

Section 4. Each committee shall present its annual program of action to the Steering Committee and the Membership Meeting.

Section 5. The Stewards Council shall serve as a forum for Stewards for the purposes of strategy, solidarity, and accountability; shall be composed of all Stewards; shall facilitate two-way communication between the members and the Steering Committee, to take grievance information, and represent all members within their trust; shall develop programs and activities that shall cause all eligible persons to join and participate in the organization and shall conduct activities that promote the social well-being of the membership and are attractive to potential members and promote community among organized labor and in the society at large.

Section 6. The Grievance Committee shall work with the officers in the resolution of contractual and non-contractual disputes in the workplace; shall maintain records of grievances and their disposition; and shall be responsible for the processing of grievances and disputes beyond the immediate work location. The grievant may appeal these last decisions to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall develop and adopt a policy that governs how it shall approach grievances not referred to arbitration, as well as other litigation and/or administrative appeals. The Grievance Committee shall follow this policy.

Section 7. The Defense Committee shall be responsible for monitoring internal and external events and developing appropriate responses to any threats against the organization; shall be responsible for monitoring government actions that may affect the membership; shall develop appropriate responses to such action in cooperation with affiliated organizations; shall be responsible for coordinating collective union activities and/or actions.

Section 8. The Professional Development Committee shall identify the professional and work-related educational and training needs of the membership and develop programs and activities that meet said needs, taking into consideration the resources of the state and national affiliates; shall work to educate and provide guidance to the membership in matters related to labor organizing and management of the organization; shall work to develop future leaders of the organization.

Section 9. The Finance and Budget Committee shall be responsible for the yearly budget. The Treasurer shall serve as chairperson of the Finance/Budget Committee.

Section 10. Committees shall meet on a regular basis to be determined in the by-laws.

Section 11. All committee chairs of the organization shall serve as members of the Steering Committee.

Article VII Elections

Section 1. Elections shall be conducted in accordance with AFT Constitution and the standards set out by the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA).

Section 2. To be eligible for office a person must be a member in good standing of the organization for a period of six months prior to the date of the election.

Section 3. The Elections Committee shall conduct all general and special elections and referenda of the organization, including ratification of this constitution, future amendments to said constitution, and future by-laws.

- a. The Elections Committee shall consist of three members in good standing appointed by the President and with the approval of the Steering Committee. The elections committee shall elect its chair.
- b. Any member of the Elections Committee nominated for or seeking office must vacate their position and be replaced by a member nominated by the President and approved by the Steering Committee.

Section 4. Thirty (30) days prior to the date of the election, the Elections Committee shall notify all members of the opening of nominations for officers, the offices to be filled and of the date of the election by first class U.S. Mail to the members' last known home address.

Section 5. the nomination of candidates for office shall be conducted as follows:

- a. To be nominated a candidate must submit to the Elections Committee a petition containing the signatures of ten (10) percent of the membership, or twenty-five (25) members, whichever is less. Said petitions must be submitted no later than fifteen (15) days following the notice of the opening of nominations.
- b. Members nominated to run for office must affirmatively accept their nomination.
- c. The Election Committee shall determine whether the nominations were timely and if the nominees are eligible for office.

Section 6. At least fifteen (15) days prior to the election, The Election Committee shall notify all members of the election date and the candidates for offices. (NOTE: provided the local has already provided notice by first class U.S. Mail, as other means such as, member mailboxes, union bulletin boards, electronic newsletter, email, and/or the local's website).

Section 7. The Elections Committee shall conduct an election for officers at the Session Three Membership Meeting of odd years. The vote shall be by secret ballot. The majority of the ballots cast shall determine the outcome of the election.

Section 8. In the absence of a majority, the Elections Committee shall conduct a run-off election between the two candidates who have received the most votes for the office in question.

Section 9. Challenges and objections to the election must be submitted in writing, with a statement of supporting reasons that includes specific facts as well as any documentation, to the Elections Committee within five (5) days of the count. The Elections Committee shall issue its written opinion regarding the objections no later than ten (10) days after receipt of such objections.

Section 10. The election results will be published and distributed to the membership within thirty (30) days of the count. All election materials, including the ballots, will be kept in a secure location for one (1) year.

Section 11. Successful candidates shall assume office within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the election or at the next Membership Meeting, whichever comes sooner.

Section 12. With the exception of the Co-Presidents, or in case of a recall, the Steering Committee will have the power to fill vacancies in its membership until the next general election of officers.

Section 13. A petition signed by forty-five percent of the membership, and alleging constitutional violations, fiduciary breaches or acts clearly detrimental to the union, shall be sufficient to require the Steering Committee to vote on whether to conduct a recall election of the officer identified in the petition. The officer subject to recall and any Steering Committee member signing the petition shall not vote on the question of a recall election. If a majority of the Steering Committee approves a recall election, the Elections Committee shall supervise the recall election.

Article VIII Membership Meetings

Section 1. The legislative power of the organization shall be vested in the Membership Meeting. Unless otherwise stipulated in the Constitution, action items and elections shall require a simple majority of votes cast in the Membership Meeting. The Membership Meeting shall approve the annual budget; shall receive and approve committee reports, including the required annual financial report or audit; and shall develop and vote on resolutions to guide the policy of the organization.

Section 2. The Membership Meeting shall meet six times per year being once per eight-week session at a predetermined time and place, or more or less often as approved by

the majority vote of assembled members in the regularly constituted Membership Meeting. The Membership Meeting shall not take place during the first or last week of a session, nor on or around holidays. All attempts will be made to schedule the Membership Meeting so as to draw the greatest number of members.

Section 3. Quorum for the Membership Meeting shall be ten percent (10%) of total membership of the organization. Should there not be a quorum, members shall be free to discuss issues, report, etc. However, no votes, scheduled or unscheduled, may take place.

Section 4. Special meetings may be called by one or both of the Co-Presidents (or acting President), by a majority of the Steering Committee or by petition to the Steering Committee of fifteen (15%) of the members in good standing. The notice of the special meeting and the agenda shall be circulated to all members at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting. Items not included on the agenda for the special meeting will not be addressed. All special meetings shall be adequately advertised and conducted according to the provisions of this Constitution.

Article IX Revenues

Section 1. The dues of this organization shall be 0.175% of salary, plus the prevailing per capita amounts for the AFT, IFT, and AFL-CIO local and state affiliates, and insurance premiums. Whenever the dues of a required affiliate increases, the dues of the local shall automatically and simultaneously increase by the same amount.

Section 2. Special assessments for specific purposes may be levied by the Steering Committee provided that the actions required for a referendum have not been initiated within thirty (30) days of the decision of the Steering Committee.

Section 3. The local union will be responsible for collecting agency fee and shall adopt procedures consistent with local, state and federal law and Article VIII, Sections 1 (a) – (d) of the AFT By-Laws.

Article X Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern this organization and all of its subordinate bodies in all matters not expressly covered by this Constitution or the By-Laws of this organization.

Article XI Amendment

Section 1. Thirty percent (30%) of the membership may present, by petition, a proposed amendment to this Constitution to the Secretary, who shall notify the membership of the proposed amendment no later than thirty (30) days prior to the next Membership Meeting. Alternatively, a majority of the Steering Committee may vote to present a proposed amendment to the members at the next Membership Meeting. A copy of the proposed amendment, along with an explanation of said amendment, shall be distributed to all members at a reasonable time prior to the Membership Meeting at which the amendment will be introduced and discussed.

Section 2. A quorum for any meeting at which constitutional amendments are to be considered and adopted shall consist of forty (40) percent of the membership of the organization.

Section 3. The membership shall vote on all amendments to the Constitution.

- a. Following the Membership Meeting at which the proposed amendment was introduced, the Election Committee will hold a (secret ballot) vote on the amendment at the next Membership Meeting.
- b. In the alternative, following the Membership Meeting at which the proposed amendment was introduced, a special Membership Meeting for the purpose of voting on the proposed amendment may be called by the Steering Committee. The special meeting shall be conducted in accordance with the terms of Article VIII, Section 4.
- c. The Elections committee will tally the results. Two-thirds (2/3) of the membership present at the meeting shall be required for passage of the amendment.

Article XII

Availability of Constitution

Section 1. Three copies of this Constitution and all subsequent amendments shall be submitted to the office of the Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of Teachers.

Section 2. One copy shall be sent to the similar office of each organization with which this organization is affiliated.

Section 3. The Secretary shall make available upon request a copy to any member of the organization.

This Constitution was adopted by the membership on _____, 20____;

Old Town Teachers Organization (OTTO)

Signed: _____ (co-president)

Signed: _____ (co-president)

(SEAL)

Attest: _____ (secretary)