

# Vasa Order of America

A Swedish-American Fraternal Organization

District Lodge Pacific Southwest No. 15



BYLAWS

2024

ORGANIZED

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA., JUNE 14, 1914



District Lodge Pacific Southwest No. 15

Bylaws

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## **ARTICLE I – NAME, ORIGIN AND JURISDICTION**

**Section 1.** District Lodge Pacific Southwest No. 15 (the "District Lodge"), Vasa Order of America, was instituted June 14, 1914, in Los Angeles, California, chartered by the Grand Lodge, Vasa Order of America.

**Section 2.** The District Lodge shall have jurisdiction over Local Lodges in Southern California, including Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties of California, and Clark County of Nevada.

## **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE MOTTO AND AIM**

**Section 1.** The District Lodge shall perpetuate the noble heritage of our forefathers and foster Nordic cultural activities by example and encouragement to the Local Lodges under its jurisdiction.

**Section 2.** With our motto, GENEROSITY, TRUTH AND UNITY, as a foundation, the District will endeavor to perpetuate the moral and social standards of its membership in order to strengthen the high ideals and reputation of its people.

**Section 3.** The District Lodge shall promote the growth and development of Local Lodges within its jurisdiction by encouraging its membership to participate in Grand, District, Local and inter-Lodge activities.

**Section 4.** The District Lodge shall seek to interest and assist the younger generations in the aims and purposes of the Order by organizing, maintaining, and supporting children's and youth clubs within the Order.

## **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1.** The membership of the District Lodge is composed of Active, Passive, Honorary Life, and Honorary members.

**Section 2.** Active membership in the District Lodge with the right of voice and vote at the District Lodge Convention shall be the currently elected District Officers, District 15 Past District Masters, duly elected District delegates, and District 15 Honorary Life members. (2024)

**Section 3.** Passive membership shall be Local Lodge members who have formerly served as delegates in the District Lodge. They shall be entitled to attend District Lodge meetings with right of voice but shall not be entitled to vote.

**Section 4.** District Lodge Honorary Life membership is bestowed upon a deserving Vasa Order of America member by majority vote of the District Lodge membership in regular session at the District Lodge Convention. (2024)

- A. Nominee shall be an active or passive District 15 Vasa Order of America member in good standing.
- B. Nominations shall be made by a member of the District Lodge stating the nominee's qualifications.
- C. Voting may be done by acclamation. A secret ballot may be requested. (2024)

**Section 5.** District Lodge Honorary membership may be conferred upon non-Vasa Order of America members who are worthy of special recognition for contributions to and support of the Vasa Order of America within this District by majority vote of the District Lodge membership in regular session at the District Lodge Convention. (2024)

- A. Nominations shall be made by a member of the District Lodge stating the nominee's qualifications.
- B. This membership carries no right to attend District Lodge meetings or claim special privileges.
- C. A separate secret ballot shall be used to vote for each nominee.

#### **ARTICLE IV – DISTRICT LODGE DELEGATES**

**Section 1.** Every Local Lodge within the jurisdiction of the District Lodge which has paid the assessment prior to the District Lodge Convention shall be entitled to representation at the District Lodge Convention. The number of District Lodge delegates from each Local Lodge shall be determined by its last annual report to the District Lodge according to the following scale: (2024)

- A. Up to 50 Lodge members – two delegates
- B. One additional delegate for each additional fifty members or portion thereof.

**Section 2. Suspension.** A Local Lodge is under suspension if the assessment is not paid to the District Lodge when due. A suspended Local Lodge may not send delegates to the District Lodge Convention. (2024)

**Section 3. Qualifications.** A Local Lodge member shall meet the following qualifications to be elected a District Lodge delegate or alternate. The Local Lodge Secretary, at a regularly stated business meeting before the District Lodge Convention, shall read the names of all those who qualify. (2024)

- A. Preference shall be given to Past Chairmen or Past Chairmen by Degree.
- B. A member shall be in good standing and shall have attended a majority of Local Lodge meetings during the year or given valid reasons for absence.
- C. A member must be present at the time of election at the Local Lodge or submit a written notice of intent to serve.
- D. A member should be interested in District Lodge affairs and be willing to accept an active role in the District Lodge.

**Section 4.** Election of District Lodge delegates shall take place as follows:

- A. Election shall occur by January 15 each year.
- B. Delegates and alternates shall be elected, the first alternate to fill the first vacancy, and so forth.
- C. The names of District Lodge delegates and alternates must be forwarded to the District Secretary immediately after election, indicating if a Past Chairman status applies and if each delegate and alternate has previously served as a District Lodge delegate.

**Section 5.** Each elected District Lodge delegate shall present a Delegate's Registration Certificate from the Local Lodge to the Credential Committee prior to the formal opening of the District Lodge Convention. The certificate shall (2024)

- A. Be stamped with the Local Lodge seal.
- B. Be signed by the Local Lodge Chairman and Recording Secretary.

- C. Indicate the District Lodge delegate was duly elected and is entitled to active membership.
- D. Indicate new District Lodge delegates to be initiated into the District Lodge.

**Section 6.** The term for District Lodge delegates and alternates shall be one year from the date of acceptance of the delegate certificates until the next District Lodge Convention. In the event of a Special District Convention, any vacancy of delegate or alternate shall be filled by special election at the Local Lodges. (2024)

## **ARTICLE V - MEETINGS**

**Section 1. Regular. District Lodge.** The District Lodge Regular Meeting shall be designated as the District Lodge Convention and convene annually on the last Saturday in February at time and place approved at the preceding District Lodge Convention with all voting members registered to the Credential Committee, or by the District Executive Board. (2024)

**Section 2.** The District meeting shall be conducted under the general rules of the Grand Lodge of the Vasa Order of America. Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall be used when questions arise which are not covered by the general rules of the Vasa Order of America.

**Section 3.** Annual reports of the District Officers and committees shall be submitted to the District Secretary at least 45 days before the opening of the District Lodge Convention. (2024)

### **Section 4. Special District Conventions**

- A. Shall be called by the District Master in conjunction with the District Executive Board.
- B. May be called by the District Executive Board if requested by a majority of the Local Lodges.
- C. Shall have time and place decided by the District Executive Board.
- D. Shall consider only matters as stated in the call.
- E. Shall be made known to active District Lodge members at least 30 days in advance.
- F. Shall have a quorum consisting of a majority of the District Lodge officers and delegates present at the previous District Lodge Convention. (2024)

**Section 5.** Executive Board minutes, agenda and list of active District Lodge members for the current year shall be sent to the active District Lodge members and Local Lodge secretaries four weeks before the opening of a District Lodge Convention. (2024)

## **ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS**

**Section 1.** The District Lodge shall have the following elected officers:

- A. Members of the District Executive Board
  - District Master
  - Vice District Master
  - Past District Master
  - District Secretary
  - Assistant District Secretary
  - District Treasurer
  - District Cultural Leader
  - Executive Board Members – four

- B. Other/Ceremonial Officers
    - District Chaplain
    - District Master of Ceremonies
    - Assistant District Master of Ceremonies
    - District Inner Guard
    - District Outer Guard
    - District Historian - may be elected or appointed
- District Trustees – three  
 District Auditors – three

**Section 2.** The outgoing District Master shall become the Past District Master.

**Section 3.** The obligations of District Lodge officers shall be to

- A. Uphold the Grand Lodge Constitution and Articles of Agreement, and the District Lodge Constitution and Bylaws.
- B. Perform all functions as required by the District Lodge.
- C. Give all materials and records upon retirement to elected or appointed successor.

**Section 4. Reimbursements** to District Lodge officers must be approved at the District Lodge Convention prior to election and disbursed at the end of the term. (2024)

**Section 5. Nominations.** To be elected as a District Lodge officer, the candidate must

- A. Be a currently elected officer, appointed to an elected office, duly elected delegate, or Past District Master if necessary.
- B. Have served as a member of the Executive Board one full year to be elected District Master or Vice District Master.
- C. Have served as a District Lodge delegate at a prior District Lodge Convention to be elected one of the four Executive Board Members. (2024)

**Section 6.** Executive Board Election

- A. Each office shall be separately elected by secret ballot. When only one person is nominated, the Chair shall declare the nominee elected. Officers shall be elected for a term of one year, unless otherwise specified. A majority vote is required for election of:

District Master  
 Vice District Master  
 District Secretary  
 Assistant District Secretary  
 District Treasurer  
 District Cultural Leader  
 District Executive Board Members - four

- B. Executive Board Members
  1. Each of the four Executive Board Members shall be elected for a term of two years. Vacancies shall be filled first.
  2. Two of the four Executive Board Members' two-year positions shall expire at each District Lodge Convention. (2024)

3. No more than two of the four Executive Board Members may be elected from any one Local Lodge. (2024)
4. Executive Board Members may be elected for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

**Section 7. Ceremonial Officers Election.** Each officer shall be separately elected by secret ballot. When only one person is nominated, the Chair shall declare the nominee elected. A plurality vote is required for election of:

District Chaplain  
District Master of Ceremonies  
Assistant District Master of Ceremonies  
District Inner Guard  
District Outer Guard

**Section 8. District Trustee.** A majority vote is required for election of District Trustee. Election shall be by secret ballot. When only one person is nominated, the Chair shall declare the nominee elected.

- A. One District Trustee shall be elected at each District Lodge Convention for a term of three years. Vacancies shall be filled first. (2024)
- B. Nominee for District Trustee must be a Past District Master.
- C. Nominees for District Trustee must be 21 years of age or older.

**Section 9. District Auditor.** A majority vote is required for election of District Auditor. Election shall be by secret ballot. When only one person is nominated, the Chair shall declare the nominee elected. One District Auditor shall be elected at each District Lodge Convention for a term of three years. Vacancies shall be filled first. (2024)

**Section 10. Unexpired Term.** The unexpired term of a District Lodge officer shall be completed by the vice or assistant of that office and thereafter by appointment of the District Master with approval of the Executive Board with the full rights of a duly elected District Officer.

**Section 11. Duties of Officers.** In addition to the duties listed under Duties of Officers in the Constitution for District Lodge, the following duties apply: (2024)

- A. The **District Master** is the highest-ranking administrative officer of the District Lodge and shall:
  1. Have general supervision over district activities.
  2. Actively guide and initiate development and progress of the district.
  3. Preside over all District Lodge and District Executive Board meetings.
  4. Appoint a District Deputy for each Local Lodge to serve as the District Master's personal representative.
  5. Appoint officers, standing committees, convention committees and ad-hoc committees, as needed and sanctioned by these District Lodge Bylaws. (2024)
  6. Appoint qualified members to fill vacancies as approved by the District Executive Board.
  7. Remove, with the approval of the District Executive Board, any officer or committee



member who does not perform the duties of the office.

8. Submit an annual report and make recommendations to the District Lodge in session.
9. Be custodian of the District Lodge Charter, Regalia, Sister District Lodge Table Flag and Bridal Crown. (2024)
10. Appoint each of the four elected Executive Board Members to serve on at least one Standing Committee each. (2024)
11. Send a summary approved by the District Master to the Local Lodge District Deputies of the decisions made at regular Executive Board meetings within two weeks of the Executive Board Meeting. (2024)

B. The **Vice District Master** shall

1. Aid and assist the District Master and assume all the duties of the District Master in his/her absence.
2. District Directory/Calendar Committee. Serve as a member of the District Directory and Calendar Committee.

C. The **Past District Master** shall

1. Assist the District Master.
2. Fulfill the duties of the District Master in the absence of both the District Master and the Vice District Master.
3. Serve as a member of a Standing Committee. (2024)

D. The **District Secretary** shall

1. Act as Corresponding and Recording Secretary, keeping accurate and impartial records of all proceedings of the District Lodge and District Executive Board.
2. Attend to all District Lodge correspondence.
3. Prepare minutes of the District Lodge Convention for approval at the first Executive Board meeting. Prepare a signature sheet for members of the District Executive Board to sign following approval of the minutes of the District Lodge Convention. (2024)
4. Send approved minutes of the District Lodge Convention to the active members of the District Lodge and Local Lodge Secretaries within 30 days of the first Executive Board meeting. (2024)
5. Keep Membership Lists up to date and send updates to the Directory Chairman and the Grand Lodge Secretary.
6. Receive and record all monies paid to the District Lodge and transfer it to the District Treasurer against official receipts.
7. Issue vouchers for all authorized bills to the District Treasurer for payment.
8. Have available an adequate quantity of official supplies needed by Local Lodges.

9. Maintain separate and up-to-date files of District and Local Lodge bylaws, regulations and all changes thereto.
10. Submit an annual report of membership, income and disbursements to the District Lodge in session.
11. Delegates. Prepare a list of Local Lodges of Past District Masters, delegates and alternates to the District Lodge Convention. Indicate Past Chairman and previous delegate status where applicable. (2024)
12. Maintain the District Delegate Record Book and make it available to the Credentials Committee.
13. Yearly Reports. Furnish the Yearly Report of the District Lodge to the Grand Secretary as required, no later than March 1, including assessment card/payment.
14. District Lodge Convention. Receive and submit proposals to the District Lodge in session for Hosts of future District Conventions. (2024)
15. Resolutions. Receive and submit proposals to the District Lodge in session for Amendments of Bylaws.

Proposals must be submitted to the District Secretary in writing and be received 90 days before the opening of a District Lodge Convention. The date received shall be recorded on the proposal. The District Secretary must then notify all Local Lodge Secretaries no later than 60 days before the District Lodge Convention. (2024)

16. Notification of action taken by the District Executive Board shall be made within one week of the Board meeting to Committee Chairmen, members, and/or Local Lodges of requests made to the Board.
17. Furnish a surety bond for the performance of all duties as required by the District Lodge, which should pay the established premium.
18. Seals.
  - A. District Lodge Seal. Be responsible for the District Lodge seal.
  - B. Local Lodge Seal. Maintain a file of the individual gold seal impressions of every Local Lodge under the jurisdiction of the District Lodge.
19. Forward to the Grand Cultural Director, USA/Canada or Sweden as appropriate, the name and address of:
  - A. The new Cultural Leader for the District Lodge following the District Lodge Convention and (2024)
  - B. The new Cultural Leader for each of the local lodges in the district following the completion of all installations.

E. The **Assistant District Secretary** shall

1. Assist the District Secretary at the District Lodge Convention and Executive Board Meetings. (2024)
2. Perform other duties as requested by the District Secretary.

3. District Directory Committee. Serve as a member of the District Directory/Calendar Committee.
4. Fulfill duties in the absence of the District Secretary.

F. The **District Treasurer** shall

1. Have charge of all monies, bonds, stocks, and special funds belonging to the District Lodge. (2024)
2. Receive all monies from the District Secretary and pay all bills after vouchers have been issued by the District Secretary. All payments shall be made by checks issued by the District Treasurer and countersigned by any two of the following:

District Master, Vice District Master or District Treasurer.

3. Submit a detailed Financial Report at each Executive Board meeting and an Annual Report to the District Lodge in session and other reports as requested by the District Master.
4. Furnish a surety bond for the faithful performance of duties to the District Lodge, which shall pay the established premium.
5. Issue an official receipt for monies received from the District Secretary.
6. Administer funds in accordance with regulations and rules of the District Lodge or its Executive Board.
7. Investment Committee. Serve as a member of the Investment Committee.

G. The **Executive Board Members**

The four Executive Board Members' duties are to serve as members of the Executive Board and other committees as requested by the District Master. (2024)

H. The **District Cultural Leader** shall

1. Seek guidance from and cooperate with the Grand Cultural Director concerning planned cultural programs.
2. Plan and/or promote cultural activities for the study of Swedish and other Nordic languages, literature, arts and music. (2024)
3. Plan and promote the observance of special Nordic and American holidays.
4. Plan with the District Youth Supervisor, special events for the youth of the District.
5. Encourage travel to cultural events relating to Nordic heritage.
6. Give detailed reports of cultural activities at Executive Board meetings and an annual written report to the District Lodge Convention. (2024)
7. Serve on the District Directory/Calendar Committee. (2024)

I. The **District Trustees** shall

1. Have knowledge of and supervision over all property, bonds, and funds of the District

- Lodge and submit an annual report at the District Lodge Convention. (2024)
  - 2. Make certain that all monies are deposited according to the rules and decisions of the District Lodge.
  - 3. Be present at the Auditors' annual meeting preceding the District Lodge Convention for the purpose of witnessing the audit of the District Lodge records. (2024)
  - 4. Serve as District Lodge delegates to the Vasa Park Association.
  - 5. Record the location of all District properties.
  - 6. Accord the position of Chairman of Trustees to the senior Trustee.
- J. The **District Auditors** shall
- 1. Notify the Trustees, District Master, District Secretary, and District Treasurer of the time and place for the Annual Audit Committee Meeting for the purpose of a complete and accurate audit of the records and books maintained by the District Secretary and the District Treasurer.
  - 2. Submit a written report of the Annual Audit including any recommendations to the District Lodge Convention. (2024)
  - 3. Accord the position of Chairman of Auditors to the senior Auditor.
- K. Additional specific duties may be requested of any officer by the District Master, the District Executive Board or the District Lodge in session.

## **ARTICLE VII – EXECUTIVE BOARD DUTIES**

### **Section 1. The District Lodge Executive Board shall**

- A. Manage the affairs and have general supervision over all business pertaining to the District Lodge between the District Lodge Conventions. (2024)
- B. Executive Board Meetings. Hold five regular Executive Board meetings during the year and special Executive Board meetings as ordered by the District Master.
- C. Special Executive Board Meetings. Any three members of the eleven person Executive Board may request Special Executive Board meetings.
- D. Quorum. The quorum needed to transact any business of the Executive Board shall be the percentage of the filled Executive Board positions specified in the Grand Lodge constitution, rounded down to the nearest integer. (2024)
- E. Study and act on all proposals or additions to Local Lodge bylaws. A majority vote of the Executive Board is required to approve changes.
- F. Nominating Committee. Elect the Nominating Committee - last meeting of the year.
- G. Examine and approve bills submitted to the District Lodge.
- H. Approve and sign the minutes of the District Lodge Convention at the first Executive Board meeting. (2024)
- I. Be responsible for publishing an annual District Directory/Calendar.

## ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES

**Section 1. Standing Committees** are the operational committees of the organization. The District Master shall appoint Committee Chairmen to serve during their term. The District Master shall communicate the charge of each committee to the Committee Chairperson and District Executive Board at the first Executive Board Meeting. (2024)

A. Standing Committees may include:

- Budget (2024)
- Bylaws (2024)
- Convention Planning (2024)
- District Directory/Calendar
- Membership (2024)
- Nominating (2024)
- Public Relations
- Scholarship

B. The District Master may establish other Standing Committees. (2024)

C. All Standing Committees provide a written report that includes committee membership, charge, activities and recommendations to the District Lodge in session. (2024)

**Section 2. Nominating Committee** is elected by the Executive Board no later than the last meeting of the year. The VDM shall chair the committee. PDMs can be helpful as members of the committee.

**Section 3. Convention Committees.** The following committees shall be appointed and the chairman named by the District Master at least ten days prior to the District Lodge Convention. Only one member from a Local Lodge may serve on each Convention committee. (2024)

A. Credential Committee shall consist of at least three members with duties to

1. Keep a record of active members present for voting.
2. Report to the District Master the legal vote count during the Convention session.
3. Report members, listing their name and Local Lodge affiliation, who are entitled to active membership at the District Lodge Convention. (2024)
4. Report new District delegates entitled to initiation into the District Lodge.
5. Report attendance of the Past District Masters and Honorary Life Members present at the District Lodge Convention. (2024)
6. Report alternate replacing delegates.

B. Tally Committee shall consist of at least three members with duties to

1. Count all ballots cast.
2. Report tally to the District Master.
3. Record the number of total ballots, legal ballots, and illegal ballots.
4. Retain each set of ballots until the District Lodge Convention is adjourned. (2024)

- C. Acknowledgement Committee shall consist of at least three members with duties to
  - 1. Keep an accurate and complete list of gifts, donations and services.
  - 2. Present a report to the District Master at the close of the District Lodge Convention. (2024)
- D. Constitution Committee shall consist of at least at least three members with duties to
  - 1. Review Convention resolutions and motions.
  - 2. Judge the constitutionality of resolutions and motions.
  - 3. Prepare report to be presented to the District Master at the District Lodge Convention. (2024)

### **ARTICLE IX – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

**General Fund.** The General Fund shall be maintained from an assessment as prescribed by the District Lodge and from other taxes or assessments as may be imposed by the Grand Lodge of the Vasa Order of America.

- A. Assessment.
  - 1. The assessment shall be remitted annually by each Local Lodge Secretary to the District Secretary no later than January 15<sup>th</sup> or the annual installation of Local Lodge officers.
  - 2. The assessment paid by each Local Lodge to the District Lodge shall be determined by the number of members in each Local Lodge as of December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- B. General Fund. (2024)
  - 1. All undesignated monies obtained through donations, and profit from all activities, shall be deposited in the General Fund.
  - 2. The assets of the General Fund shall be used to pay all expenses incurred by the District Lodge.
- C. Bonding. (2024)

The District Secretary shall be bonded for \$5,000 and the District Treasurer for \$15,000.00. The District Lodge shall pay the premium for these bonds.

### **ARTICLE X – INITIATION FEES**

An initiation fee may be established for new Local Lodge members. However, members of children’s and junior clubs wishing to join the Vasa Order of America shall be exempt from any initiation fee(s). The initiation fee is retained at the Local Lodge level.

### **ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENTS OF DISTRICT BYLAWS**

**Section 1.** These District Bylaws may be amended

- A. Provided the proposals have been submitted to the District Secretary in writing and received 90 days before the opening of a District Lodge Convention. The date received by the District

Secretary shall be recorded on the proposal. (2024)

- B. Provided that the District Secretary notifies all Local Lodge Secretaries no later than 60 days before the District Lodge Convention. (2024)
- C. Only at a District Lodge Convention by a two-thirds vote of the members present. The revised District Bylaws shall then be forwarded to the Grand Lodge Executive Board. (2024)

**Section 2.** Bylaws amendments shall become effective when approved by the District Lodge in Session.

**Section 3.** In case of conflict with these District Bylaws, the Grand Lodge Constitution for District Lodges prevails.

**Section 4.** These Bylaws of District Lodge Pacific Southwest No. 15, Vasa Order of America, supersede all previous Bylaws.

Newly revised Bylaws approved at the District Lodge Convention  
February 24-25, 2024  
Woodland Hills, California

(Signed/Date) \_\_\_\_\_

(Signed) September 15, 2024 Jon Vikander *(Signature on original)*  
District Master 2024

(Signed) September 16, 2024 Linda Kosvic *(Signature on original)*  
District Secretary 2024

(Signed) September 15, 2024 Elliott Coddling PDM *(Signature on original)*  
District Trustee 2024

Note:

Changes made in 2024 are marked - (2024)

Revisions from the current Grand Lodge Constitution are marked (GL 2022)

Bylaw Committee

2023-2024 Chair: Dr. Ulf Brynjestad, PDM, PGM  
Members: Ingemar Hulthage VDM; Birgitta Roodsari GLD, PDM; Ashley Vikander DD;  
Jon Vikander DM

Convention Constitution Committee

2023-2024 Chair: Dr. Ulf Brynjestad PDM, PGM  
Members: Cheryl Johnson EBM, Maggie Connelly PDM, Bertil Winther PDM

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