

# THE CHARTER OF THE SHIRE OF ALTENBERG

## Section I - Preface

This document is intended to be a record of the customs by which the Shire of Altenberg (herein referred to as “the Shire”) operates, and is superseded by the laws of the Middle Kingdom, the Corpora of the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), the laws of the city of Mt. Clemens, Macomb County, the State of Michigan, and the Constitution of the United States. These customs are common practice and are subject to change by vote of the members of the Shire of Altenberg. These customs are enumerated to assist in solving practical problems, and are not intended to establish immutable laws.

### 1. Membership

To be a member in good standing of the Shire, one must be an SCA member over the age of 15 who regularly participates in Shire meetings and activities, regardless of geographical location, and allows their name to be included in the membership roles.

### 2. Newsletter and other Communications

The official Shire newsletter is the Gale Winds. The Shire web site is located at <http://www.sca-altenberg.org>. The public Shire mailing list is the [Shire of Altenberg Google Group](http://groups.google.com/group/shire-of-altenberg?hl=en) (<http://groups.google.com/group/shire-of-altenberg?hl=en>) and can be subscribed to either through the web site or via Google groups.

## Section II - Officers

Officers are either Greater or Lesser officers, and may be held by any member in good standing of the Shire. Any appointed or elected officers not mentioned here should be considered to be Lesser officers.

Greater Shire Officers are those listed as required for recognized groups by Kingdom Law, Article XIV, Paragraph 200. At present, the Greater Officers of the Shire are as follows:

- Seneschal
- Exchequer
- Minister of Arts and Sciences
- Herald / Pursuivant
- Marshal

The Lesser Officers of the Shire are as follows:

- Chronicler
- Chatelaine
- Web Minister
- Chirurgeon
- Archery Marshal

## 1. Resignations

When a Shire Officer resigns, he shall give notice in writing to the Crown, to his superior officer, and to the Seneschal of the Shire.

## 2. Removal

- A. If an officer misses three consecutive Shire meetings without cause or notice, or is otherwise negligent in his official capacities, the Shire officers may give that officer thirty (30) days written notice, and then request the Crown and the Kingdom officers to declare that office vacant and cancel the officer's warrant. This notice and request may be repealed by a vote at the next official Shire meeting.
- B. Any member of the Shire may call for a vote of "No Confidence" on any officer at any regular business meeting. If a vote of those present agrees that such a vote is warranted, a notice shall be caused to appear in the next issue of the Gale Winds.
  - a. At the following regular business meeting, a vote shall be required to remove the officer. This vote shall be by secret ballot.
  - b. If such a vote is passed, a request must then be made to the Crown and Kingdom officer to declare that office vacant and to cancel the officer's warrant.

## 3. Filling Offices

When a Shire office becomes vacant, the Shire shall recommend to the Crown a successor as follows:

**Note:** *Upon normal completion of a term, the position must be opened and voted upon.*

- A. If the retiring officer wishes to recommend a deputy who is willing and qualified to fill the office, the Shire shall support that recommendation as provided in II.3.D below.
- B. If the retiring officer has no recommendation, the Seneschal shall have published in the Gale Winds a Notice of Vacancy, a job description, and a request for written applications for at least one month, or one issue, whichever is greater.
- C. All applications shall be interviewed by the Seneschal, the retiring officer, and members of the Shire.
  - a. An appropriate officer appointed by the Seneschal shall attend if the retiring officer is not available.
  - b. Applications for Seneschal shall be interviewed by ALL officers and those Shire members who wish to participate.
- D. All applicants are then voted upon by the Shire, before being put before the Crown. If necessary, the Seneschal may appoint a pro-tem officer to carry out the vital services of an office until a permanent successor can be chosen.
- E. Any individual remains free at any time to recommend to the Crown his own choice for officers, apart from any Shire recommendation, but such a suggestion shall not in any way represent the Shire as a whole.

## 4. Seneschal Decisions

Any decisions of the Seneschal may also be called to a vote, and the Seneschal shall abide by the results of that vote. Failure by the Seneschal to sustain a decision of the populace shall initiate a vote of No Confidence. (See II.2.B)

## Section III – Shire Meetings

### 1. Meeting Location

- A. Official Shire meetings are open to the public.
  - a. Wherever possible, these meetings will be held at public locations.
  - b. When held at private homes, if the homeowner wishes to deny entrance to anyone, notice must be given publicly at a preceding business meeting.
- B. The date, time and location of official Shire meetings must be published in advance in the Gale Winds and on the Shire web site.
  - a. Changes or additional official meetings must be announced at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting.
    - i. The announcement may be in the Shire newsletter, in the mailing list, or by individual personal contact (email, phone calls, etc) but must be made to all Shire members.
    - ii. In the case of an emergency change of a meeting, the Seneschal and / or Pursuivant must make a reasonable effort to inform the Shire members in a timely manner.
- C. Unofficial meetings :
  - a. Do not need to be open to the public
  - b. Do not need to be held at a public location
  - c. When held at a private home, the homeowner may deny entrance to whomsoever they wish.

### 2. Officer Requirements

- A. At least three (3) Greater Officers must be present for a Shire business meeting to be considered “official”.

### 3. Meeting Content

- A. Meetings include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Officer Reports
  - b. Review of “Old Business” from previous meetings
  - c. New Business
  - d. Fighter Practice Information
  - e. Workshops / Arts & Sciences Information
  - f. Social
- B. Shire policy decisions, officer elections and large fund disbursements may only be conducted at official Shire meetings (See the relevant sections for further definitions of these terms) and should be handled with the appropriate voting procedures. (See section VI – VOTING).
- C. Any decision of the Seneschal may also be called to a vote, and the Seneschal shall abide by the results of that vote (see II.4).

## Section IV – Voting

### 1. Eligible Voters

Votes may be cast by any SCA member who resides in the zip-codes allotted to the Shire as well as any member in good standing of the Shire who are present when a vote is called. Each voter may only cast one vote.

- A. SCA members who are not members of the Shire must provide proof of residency and SCA membership before they can cast their vote.
- B. Proxy votes may be used if an eligible voter cannot attend a meeting during which a scheduled vote will be held. In this case, the member must communicate his vote to the Seneschal of the Shire.
  - a. This communication must be in writing (email is acceptable as well, but must be sent to the officer in a timely manner so that it can be retrieved prior to the meeting).
  - b. Proxy votes cast by eligible SCA members who are not members of the Shire must provide proof of residency and SCA membership with their proxy vote.

### 2. Vote Casting

- A. Any decision, whether made by the Seneschal or other officer or other members of the Shire, which shall affect the Shire populace or material goods, shall require a vote at an official business meeting.
  - a. Any member may set forth a topic as a proposal.
  - b. Any other member may second the proposal. To be voted upon, a proposal must be seconded.
  - c. Votes will occur in accordance with the appropriate rules set forth in this document.
    - i. If there is no appropriate rule, it will be decided by an immediate simple majority.
- B. All votes must be conducted at official Shire meetings.
- C. Votes may be done by secret ballot, open ballot, “roll call”, show of hands, or by voice “Aye / Nay”).
- D. All single issue votes will be a Super Majority vote – in which the winner is determined by 2/3s of the votes.
- E. All multi- issue votes will be a majority vote – in which the winner is the one with the highest number of votes. The seneschals vote is to be excluded from the initial tally of the multi-issue vote.

Example: For votes where you are choosing between 2 different things (such as choosing an officer where 2 people are running for the same office), the candidate with the highest number of votes would win.

  - a. In the event of a tie, the Seneschal’s vote will be the tie breaking vote.

### 3. Tally of Votes

- A. One or more Shire members must be designated to count the votes. (This should be the Shire Chronicler or a designated substitute.)

- B. Vote results may be read into the meeting minutes, and may be presented in the next issue of the Gale Winds.

## **Section V – Disbursement of Funds**

### **1. Authority to Disburse Funds**

- A. The only officers who may approve expenses and write checks are the Seneschal, the Exchequer and one other officer designated by the Seneschal and Exchequer.
  - a. Minor expenses fewer than fifteen (15) dollars in an emergency may be approved by either the Seneschal or the Exchequer and reported at the next Shire meeting.
  - b. Expenses over fifteen (15) dollars but less than one-hundred (100) dollars must be approved by both the Seneschal and Exchequer and reported at the next Shire meeting.
  - c. Major expenses over one-hundred (100) dollars must be approved by a vote of the citizenry present at the Shire meeting, prior to the incurrence.
    - i. Any citizen of the Shire may seek in writing the use of Shire monies, but only for SCA purposes. All unspent monies or proceeds of sale of goods purchased with Shire monies, or sold in the name of or to benefit the Shire must be returned to the Shire. Requests of this nature must be presented to the citizenry at a Shire meeting.
    - ii. Any persons utilizing Shire monies must return cash and / or original or copies of receipts and/ or proofs of purchase for goods or services purchased, for the full amount tendered to the Shire.

### **2. Pre-Authorized Funds**

Up to one-hundred (100) dollars may be made available to an Event Steward, prior to the date of an event, to cover unexpected expenses. This amount may be altered by a vote at an official business meeting.

### **3. Reporting of Funds**

- A. All officers must submit an annual financial report to the Exchequer.
  - i. This report is due no later than one month prior to the due date of that calendar year's domesday report.
- B. Households and Guilds within the Shire who wish to use the SCA tax number and tax exempt status, may raise, hold and disburse monies as they see fit, as long as such is in accordance with the rules of the SCA, Middle Kingdom and local laws, but must submit an annual financial statement to the Shire Exchequer.
- C. The Event Steward of an official Shire event or activity associated with the name of the Shire must submit a financial report to the Exchequer at the next business meeting following the event or activity.

## **Section VI – Shire Awards**

Awards may be proposed by any Shire member at any official business meeting. Such a proposal shall be voted on at the next business meeting.

\*\* We do not currently recognize any shire-level awards, although both Corpora and Kingdom law say that we could. This section would define any/all Shire awards, how someone can qualify, what the award signifies, etc., including a description of any medallion. Shire awards can be submitted to and recognized by the College of Heraldry, but it's not necessary.

EXAMPLE:

- The Wyvern Service Award (Shire of Dragon's Lair)
  - The Wyvern Service Award is awarded to citizens of Dragon's Lair for exceptional service to the Shire. The award is given at the discretion of collected holders of the award. The frequency and number of awards are determined by the holders. Recipients of this award will retain the honor for life, and it cannot be removed or revoked by any process within the Shire. Holders of the award are allowed to wear a medallion signifying the award: "A Wyvern argent couchant, wings adorsed"

## **Section VII – Amendments to this Charter**

This Charter may be amended by a vote at an official meeting. All proposed amendments must be published in the Gale Winds for at least one issue before being put to a vote. Any part of this Charter found to be in conflict with any higher laws will be immediately and automatically void.