

## **THE AMERICAN GERBIL SOCIETY INC.**

18893 Lawrence 2100  
Mt Vernon, Mo 65712

### **BY-LAWS**

#### **ARTICLE I:**

**NAME:** The name of the organization shall be **The American Gerbil Society, Inc.**, an Internal Revenue Code Section 501 (c)(3) non profit/tax exempt organization, hereinafter referred to as the **AGS**.

#### **ARTICLE II:**

##### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The **AGS** shall support and educate breeders, caregivers, exhibitors and other gerbil enthusiasts and promote the humane treatment of gerbils and other rodents.

The **AGS** mission statement shall be achieved through the accomplishment of the following goals. The **AGS** shall:

- Provide information on the humane keeping, breeding, and exhibiting of gerbils.
- Educate breeders and judges to adopt the highest standards of excellence.
- Work with other organizations to create, adopt, and maintain the standards by which gerbils will be judged.
- Compile and maintain a breeder listing, member/kennel records, gerbil registration records, and show records.
- Create and maintain an Internet resource to facilitate membership, gerbil registration, and owner education.
- Work with state and federal officials and related organizations, including, but not limited to, the SPCA and Humane Society, to assist in small animal rescue and placement and increase their awareness of the need for laws to govern the humane treatment of gerbils and other rodents.
- Work with other national and international organizations and societies towards creating and promoting humane guidelines and laws governing the treatment of gerbils and other rodents, including high standards of care for laboratory animals.

#### **ARTICLE III:**

##### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of the **AGS** shall be to promote the responsible keeping, breeding, and exhibiting of Mongolian gerbils (*Meriones unguiculatus*) and other species of gerbils and jirds as they become available to North American breeders and owners; to publish the definition of the true and healthy types as the recognized and unvarying standards; and to adopt these standards for varieties as they present themselves. The **AGS** will support the exhibition and exhibition competition for the purpose of advancing and promoting the interest in gerbils. The **AGS** will also work

to urge the adoption and maintenance of standards of excellence and responsibility in keeping, breeding, showing and selling of gerbils. Additionally, the **AGS** will promote education on the proper care and breeding of gerbils and the understanding of gerbils generally.

The **AGS** will encourage responsible husbandry of gerbils and jirds, including, but not limited to: acceptable breeding standards with regard to record keeping, proper registration of breeding pairs, careful and conscientious attention to selling/giving of surplus animals to reputable and honest homes whenever possible, attention to local laws with regard to gerbil keeping, appropriate standards of breeding to protect lines from genetic defect, and providing gerbils with the complete nutrition, housing, stimulus devices, and companionship they require.

## **ARTICLE IV:**

### **Membership**

#### **Section 1. (a) Classes of Members:**

The **AGS** shall have three classes of members. These are **Full, Family** and **Junior** as outlined hereinafter. All members must be members in good standing as described within these **BY-LAWS** and must abide by all **AGS** rules and regulations also included in these **BY-LAWS**. The term "member" when used hereinafter shall mean member in good standing unless otherwise indicated.

#### **Section 1. (b) Full Members:**

Full members shall bear the responsibility for the direction and operations of the **AGS** by their right to vote for Officers and Committee members, as well as motions brought before them by the Executive Board

#### **Section 1. (c) Family Membership:**

A family membership consists of one full member and at least one other family member (living in the same household). Each family membership can consist of no more than two (2) voting members, over the age of thirteen, and any number of non voting family members residing in the same household. Family members may consist of the following: spouses, significant others, unmarried children, or the parents of the full member. At any time, a family member may choose to become a full member and pay full dues.

A family membership shall cost one and one half (1 ½) times the full membership dues in effect at the time of their application. Family members will have access to the entire **AGS** web site and member services.

### **Section 1. (d) Junior Members:**

Junior membership shall be available to pre-teen aged individuals, that is, individuals under the age of thirteen (13). Junior membership shall require the written consent of at least one parent or guardian of the applying pre-teen. Such parental/guardian consent shall be obtained solely by use of the “**AGS Parental Permission for Junior Membership Form**.” Said form shall be amended by the **Executive Board** from time to time as may be required by the then prevailing circumstances. Completed forms shall be mail, as instructed on the form using Postal Services.

Junior members shall pay one half (½) of the full membership dues in effect at the time of their application. Junior members will have access to the entire **AGS** web site and member services. Junior members shall not have voting privileges until attaining the age of thirteen. After the members thirteenth (13th) birthday, and upon his or her annual due date, he/she will become a full member, and shall pay the full membership dues in effect at that time.

### **Section 2. Privileges of Members:**

All members are entitled to use the Gerbil Registration Services, the **AGS** Pedigree and receive a copy of the **AGS** newsletter and to participate in and to attend all **AGS** sponsored events and functions. Full members and full members only will have voting privileges.

### **Section 3. Suspension and Expulsion:**

- Any member of the **AGS** found to be in violation of the standards or rules of the **AGS** is subject to expulsion by the **Executive Board**. Members believed to be in violation of the **AGS** standards shall be subject to suspension until the **Executive Board** can review the facts and circumstances.
- In any case in which the conduct of the member shall, in the opinion of the **Executive Board**, be determined to be contrary to the objectives of the **AGS**, the **Executive Board** will have the authority to suspend that member's privileges until a **review** can be made. A review shall be conducted as soon as administratively feasible.
- A hearing will be held to review the facts in the case. Upon completion the status of the member will be determined by a majority vote of the **Board**. If the grounds are unfounded the member may be returned to full membership. If the member is found in violation of the **AGS** standards the **Board** may vote to suspend or expel the members from the **AGS**, based on the severity of the charges.
- Members shall be permitted a summary of the review of the actions which precipitated the action and the presentation of the evidence to those actions.
- Members may file a written appeal of the **Board's** decision by notifying the Secretary/Treasurer by e-mail or Postal Service mail

within ten (10) business days of the **Board's** decision. Such appeal shall include a complete explanation of the reasons for believing that the decision of the **Board** is unreasonable and insufficiently substantiated.

- The President (or Vice President in the event of absence of the President) shall have the authority to convene an **Executive Board** meeting for the purpose of hearing or reviewing an appeal, or denying the application for appeal. An application for appeal shall not unreasonably be denied.
- Members on suspension may not vote or participate in any meeting, show exhibition or competition, or Gerbil Registration Service.
- Members on expulsion status shall be denied all **AGS** privileges. If an **AGS** registered breeder, the kennel name and number, as well as the then existing gerbil registrations for such expelled member, shall be revoked.

#### **ARTICLE V:**

##### **DUES:**

Each member's dues shall be payable to the **AGS** on the anniversary of his or her membership. Any member (s) whose dues are outstanding **thirty (30)** days after their due date, shall be notified by e-mail or by postal mail service that he/she shall be removed from the membership rolls and forfeit all membership privileges unless dues are paid within **thirty (30)** days of notification. Dues shall not be prorated for a membership/calendar year.

Any necessary change in dues schedule for any class of membership shall be determined by a majority vote of the Board.

#### **ARTICLE VI:**

##### **VOTING:**

Voting privileges shall be reserved for full members only. Ratification of any proposal, unless otherwise specified, shall be made by a majority vote of the voting membership at the time ratification is being considered, provided a quorum of **eight (8)** full members are present. Voting shall be made by e-mail or Postal Service mail or any other medium approved by the **Executive Board** prior to the motion for a vote.

## **ARTICLE VII:**

### **Amendments to the BY-LAWS:**

Amendments to these **BY-LAWS** shall be made in accordance with the following procedures: any proposed amendment must be dated and submitted to the **AGS Executive Board** after being endorsed by at least ten (10) full members. The proposal must be **submitted in writing** to the President for a substantive review, as well as clarification, grammatical, and syntax review. After the substantive review, if accepted by the **Executive Board**, and at the sole discretion of the **Executive Board**, the proposed amendment shall be submitted to the membership for review and discussion no less than **thirty (30)** days before it is to be voted upon. It may be presented to the membership at a special Internet chat meeting, through e-mail, or by Postal Service mail. Ratification of the amendment shall be made by the affirmative majority vote of the voting membership present at the Internet chat, or respondents.

If the **Executive Board** determines that the proposed amendment is not substantive in nature or not in the best interest of the **AGS**, the proposed amendment shall not be presented to the membership and shall be returned to the parties who submitted such proposed amendment with a written explanation outlining the reasons for declination.

## **ARTICLE VIII:**

### **Section 1. (a) Governing Officers:**

Governing officers of the **AGS** shall form the body of the **Board**. Such governing officers shall include:

- **President**
- **Vice President**
- **Secretary/Treasurer**
- **Up to Three Board Members**

The **Board** shall hold meetings as deemed necessary by the President or by motion made by any **Board** member and approved by the President. Meetings shall be conducted by Internet chat, teleconferencing or any other medium approved by a majority of the **Board**.

The President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer shall form the **Executive Board**.

### **Section 1. (b) Trustees:**

There shall be as many as five (5) **AGS** trustees. As Founders of the American Gerbil Society, Inc., Janet Morrow and Donna Anastasi, form the first **Board of Trustees**. A **Trustees** terms shall be for the earlier of A) resignation or B) life.

### **Section 1. (c) Eligibility:**

Eligibility for the **Board of Trustees** shall be to any member of the **Executive Board** who has served for not less than five (5) years, at which time their names will be added to a list of possible **Trustees**. The current **Trustees** shall vote from time to time, as needed, for new **Trustees**. A unanimous vote is required to add a new **Trustee**.

### **Section 1. (d) Role of the Trustees:**

**Trustees** shall exercise supervisory control over the then existing **Board**. If the **Trustees** agree, through a majority vote, that the **AGS** has become compromised the **Trustees** shall have the authority to step in, dissolve the board and assume the leadership.

Suggested amendments to these **BY-LAWS** must first be reviewed and authorized by the **Trustees** before presented to the membership body for a vote.

The **Trustees** will select a **Spokesperson** for the **Trustees**. The **Trustees** shall deliberate on matters put before them by the **AGS Board** in a manner decided upon by the **Trustees**. The **Trustees** shall always act in a prudent manner given the facts and circumstances at the time that is always in the best interest of the **AGS** and consistent with the spirit of these **BY-LAWS**.

### **Section 1. (e) Removal & Impeachment of a Trustee:**

All **Trustees** shall be **AGS** members in good standing. If a **Trustee's** **AGS** membership lapses, or he/she is inaccessible to the **Board of Trustees** for one month without taking a Sabbatical; that **Trustee** shall be considered to have resigned his/her position. In such a case, nothing shall prevent the reinstatement of a former **Trustee** by a majority vote of the **Board of Trustees**.

Any **Trustee** may be brought up on charges by any two full members in writing and presented to the **Trustee Spokesperson** for review and presentation and voted upon in such a manner as are amendment proposals described herein. Should the **Spokesperson** be charged as prescribed, the charges should be given to any other **Trustee** or an **AGS Executive Board** member.

If deemed necessary he/she may then be removed with a **majority** vote of the **Trustees** and **Executive Board**.

### **Section 2. Voting:**

Any decisions made by the **Board** shall require a **majority** vote of the **Board** members. The vote may be taken by any means, which is acceptable to the members of the **Board** including proxy vote.

### **Section 3. Duties of the Board:**

#### **Section 3. (a) President:**

The President shall preside over the meetings of the general membership and those of the **Board**; call for general membership and **Board** votes; approve projects/activities; make team assignments, oversee activities of the Vice President and the Secretary/Treasurer; inform the general membership via e-group of changes, progress and committee projects, and **Board** projects.

#### **Section 3. (b) Vice President:**

The Vice President shall preside over **Board** meetings in the absence of the President; and call for **Board** votes in his/her absence. The Vice President will oversee the Ethics Committee, the Alternate and Intern Programs, and other committee projects as assigned by the President. If the President resigns, takes a Sabbatical, or is unable to serve out his/her term the Vice President will assume the role of **Acting President**.

#### **Section 3. (c) Secretary/Treasurer:**

The Secretary/Treasurer shall preside over **Board** meetings in the absence of the President and Vice President; call for **Board** votes in their absence; maintain minutes and records of meetings and approved motions; maintain current list and contact information of **Board** members and Alternates; prepare annual reports for the **AGS** general membership; prepare any necessary annual government filings which may be required. In preparing such government filings, the Secretary/Treasurer at his/her sole discretion may utilize the services of a reputable CPA or accountant on a fee for services basis. Additionally, the Secretary/Treasurer shall collect dues and deposit said dues, contributions, and any other remuneration payable to the **AGS**; keep records of all **AGS** finances, transactions, and accruals of all tangible assets of the **AGS**. The Secretary/Treasurer shall report these transactions and records to the members and the **Board** on a regular basis. The Secretary/Treasurer shall perform any other duties customary with this office.

#### **Section 3. (d) Three AGS Board Members:**

The **Board** members shall be responsible, with the **Executive Board**, for the day to day running of the **AGS**. They shall serve on committees and projects as assigned by the **Executive Board**. Members of the **Board** shall maintain all official **AGS** registrations and updates including, but not limited to: kennels, breeders, members, gerbils, and show points; expand and maintain the **AGS** website and ensure the "What's New" section is current through regular updates.

## ARTICLE IX:

### ALTERNATE PROGRAM

The **Alternate Program** is designed to give new and inexperienced adult members, over **eighteen (18)** years of age, a chance to participate in the **Board**, while developing an in-depth understanding of the inner workings of the **AGS**. Alternates will work with the **Board**, assisting with projects and research, have a voice on the **Board** discussions, but no vote.

## ARTICLE X:

### INTERN PROGRAM

The **Intern Program** is designed to provide young members with an opportunity to participate on the **Board**. Interns will: work with the **Board**, assist with projects and research; be assigned a **Board** member as a mentor; have a voice in **Board** discussions, but no vote. Interns must be a Junior or Family member between the ages of thirteen (13) and eighteen (18) and secure parental or guardian permission to serve as interns. Interns shall adhere to all the rules and regulations governing the **Board**.

## ARTICLE XI:

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND TERMS OF OFFICE:

The term of office for each of the **Board** officers shall be for **three (3)** years. The officers may succeed themselves if so elected. Elections shall be held in November for the next term of office. The new officers assume office on January 1 of the year for which they were elected.

#### **Section 1. Eligibility:**

Eligibility for the **Board** shall be opened to full members that are/have serving as **Alternates**. Eligibility for the **Executive Board** shall be open to full members that are/have served as **Board** members. **Board** members appointed to fill vacancies on the **Board** may be accepted from these eligibility requirements.

#### **Section 2. Nominations:**

All nominations shall be opened in September and shall close in October. Voting for officers will be held in November.

#### **Section 3. Voting:**

The voting shall be conducted as outlined in Article VI.

## ARTICLE XII:

### SABBATICAL/LEAVE OF ABSENCE:

Absences of three or less days by **Board** members do not require **Board** notification. A notice to the **Board** is required for an absence of more than three days. Sabbatical, for duration of **one to two (1-2) months**, can be



requested by a **Board** member needing to be temporarily relieved of his/her responsibilities. A **Board** member may take no more than **four (4)** months of sabbatical per calendar year. If a **Board** member requires more than **four (4)** months sabbatical without sufficient cause and explanation having been presented to the other **Board** members, said **Board** member shall be considered as having resigned his/her position. In such a case, nothing shall prevent the reinstatement of a former **Board** member by a majority vote of the **Board**.

### ARTICLE XIII: VACANCIES

If vacancies exist on the **Executive Board**, such vacancies may be filled by the remaining **Board** members by a majority vote. Any member so elected to the **Executive Board** shall serve out the remaining term of the **Board** member he/she replaced.

The **Board** may, when necessary appoint any full members to fill any **Board** Vacancies by a majority vote. Any member appointed to the **Board** shall serve out the remaining term of the **Board** member he/she replaced.

### ARTICLE XIV: IMPEACHMENT:

Any **Board** member may be brought up on charges by any two full members in writing and presented to the Secretary/Treasurer for review and presentation and voted upon in such a manner as are amendment proposals described herein. Should the Secretary/Treasurer be charged as prescribed, the charges should be given to any other officer as agreed to by the **Board**.

### ARTICLE XV: GENERAL MEETINGS:

A general meeting of all members in good standing will be held at least once annually at a time and date determined by a majority vote of the **Board**. Members will be notified of meeting dates, times and agendas by e-mail or any other method practical at least **thirty (30)** days before the meeting. Such meetings shall be held by Internet chat or any other medium proposed by the **Board** and approved by a majority vote of the voting membership body. **Eight (8)** members may form a quorum.

Motions by members must be made in advance of any membership meeting by notifying the Secretary/Treasurer in writing of the motion at the **AGS** business address noted earlier in these **BY-LAWS**. Notification must be received at least **twenty (20)** days before the membership meeting.

**ARTICLE XVI:**  
**DISSOLUTION**

In the event of dissolution, all the remaining assets and property of the **AGS** shall after necessary expenses thereof be distributed to another organization exempt under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, or corresponding provisions of any subsequent Federal tax laws, or to the Federal government, or state or local government for a public purpose upon approval of a Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Missouri.