

Gainesville Multiple Listing, Inc.

# BYLAWS



(Revised 2/09)

## **Article 1 Name**

The name of this organization shall be the Gainesville Multiple Listing Service, Inc., of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS<sup>®</sup>, Inc. hereinafter referred to as the service, all the shares of stock of which are solely and wholly-owned by the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS<sup>®</sup>, Inc. hereinafter referred to as the association.

## **Article 2 Purposes**

A multiple listing service is a means by which authorized participants make blanket unilateral offers of compensation to other participants (acting as subagents, buyer agents, or in other agency or non-agency capacities defined by law); by which cooperation among participants is enhanced, by which information is accumulated and disseminated to enable authorized participants to prepare appraisals, analyses, and other valuations of real property for bona fide clients and customers; by which participants engaging in real estate appraisal contribute to common databases; and is a facility for the orderly correlation and dissemination of listing information so participants may better serve their customers, clients and the public. Entitlement to compensation is determined by the cooperating broker's performance as procuring cause of the sale (or lease). *(Amended 11/04)*

## **Article 3 Service Area**

The area within which the service shall function shall at all times be coextensive with or within the territorial jurisdiction of the association.

## **Article 4 Participation Defined**

Any REALTOR<sup>®</sup> of this or any other association who is a principal, partner, corporate officer, or branch office manager acting on behalf of a principal, without further qualification, except as otherwise stipulated in these bylaws, shall be eligible to participate in multiple listing upon agreeing in writing to conform to the rules and regulations thereof and to pay the costs incidental thereto.\* However, under no circumstances is any individual or firm, regardless of membership status, entitled to multiple listing service membership or participation unless they hold a current, valid, real estate broker's license and offer or accept compensation to and from other participants or are licensed or certified by an appropriate state regulatory agency to engage in the appraisal of real property. Use of information developed by or published by an association multiple listing service is strictly limited to the activities authorized under a participant's licensure(s) or certification and unauthorized uses are prohibited. Further, none of the foregoing is intended to convey participation or membership or any right of access to information developed by or published by an association multiple listing service where access to such information is prohibited by law. The REALTOR<sup>®</sup> principal of any firm, partnership, corporation, or the branch office manager designated by said firm, partnership, or corporation as the participant shall have all rights, benefits, and privileges of the service, and shall accept all obligations to the service for the participant's firm, partnership, or corporation, and for compliance with the bylaws and rules and regulations of the service by all persons affiliated with the participant who utilize the service. *(Amended 4/98, 2/09)*

Mere possession of a broker's license is not sufficient to qualify for MLS participation. Rather, the requirement that an individual or firm offers or accepts cooperation and compensation means that the participant actively endeavors during the operation of its real estate business to list real property of the type listed on the MLS and/or to accept offers of cooperation and compensation made by listing brokers or agents in the MLS. "Actively" means on a continual and ongoing basis during the operation of the participant's real estate business. The "actively" requirement is not intended to preclude MLS participation by a participant or potential participant that operates a real estate business on a part-time, seasonal, or similarly time-limited basis or that has its business interrupted by periods of relative inactivity occasioned by market conditions. Similarly, the requirement is not intended to deny MLS participation to a participant or potential participant who has not achieved a minimum number of transactions despite good faith efforts. Nor is it intended to permit an MLS to deny participation based on the level of service provided by the participant or potential participant as long as the level of service satisfies state law. *(Adopted 2/09)*

\*Any applicant for MLS participation and any licensee (including licensed or certified appraisers) affiliated with an MLS participant who has access to and use of MLS-generated information shall complete an orientation program of no more than eight (8) classroom hours devoted to the MLS rules and regulations and computer training related to MLS information entry and retrieval within thirty (30) days after access has been provided. *(Amended 11/96)*

The key is that the participant or potential participant actively endeavors to make or accept offers of cooperation and compensation with respect to properties of the type that are listed on the MLS in which participation is sought. This requirement does not permit an MLS to deny participation to a participant or potential participant that operates a “Virtual Office Website” (VOW) (including a VOW that the participant uses to refer customers to other participants) if the participant or potential participant actively endeavors to make or accept offers of cooperation and compensation. An MLS may evaluate whether a participant or potential participant actively endeavors during the operation of its real estate business to offer or accept cooperation and compensation only if the MLS has a reasonable basis to believe that the participant or potential participant is in fact not doing so. The membership requirement shall be applied in a nondiscriminatory manner to all participants and potential participants. *(Adopted 2/09)*

Participation in the service is also available to nonmember principals who meet the qualifications established in the association’s bylaws and MLS rules and regulations. However, under no circumstances is any individual or firm, regardless of membership status, entitled to multiple listing service participation or membership unless they hold a current, valid, real estate broker’s license and offer or accept compensation to and from other participants, or are licensed or certified by an appropriate state regulatory agency to engage in the appraisal of real property. Use of information developed by or published by an association multiple listing service is strictly limited to the activities authorized under a participant’s licensure(s) or certification and unauthorized uses are prohibited. Further, none of the foregoing is intended to convey participation or membership or any right of access to information developed by or published by an association multiple listing service where access to such information is prohibited by law. The nonmember principal of any firm, partnership, corporation, or the branch office manager designated by said firm, partnership, or corporation as the participant shall have only those rights, benefits, and privileges as specified by the service, and shall accept all obligations to the service for the participant’s firm, partnership, or corporation, and for compliance with the bylaws and rules and regulations of the service by all persons affiliated with the participant who utilizes the service. *(Amended 4/98, 2/09)*

#### **Article 4.1 Application for Participation**

Application for participation shall be made in such manner and form as may be prescribed by the board of directors of the service and made available to any REALTOR<sup>®</sup> principal or non-member broker (as defined in Article 4) requesting it. The application form shall contain a signed statement agreeing to abide by the bylaws and any other applicable rules and regulations of the service as from time to time amended or adopted. *(Amended 2/94)*

#### **Article 4.2 Discontinuance of Service**

Participants of the service may discontinue the service by giving the service thirty (30) days written notice and may reapply to the service within twelve (12) months without paying the application fee, but would be required to pay an administrative fee as determined by the board of directors provided all past dues and fees are fully paid. After twelve (12) months, a formal application must be submitted in the manner prescribed for new applicants for participation provided all past dues and fees are fully paid.

#### **Article 4.3 Subscribers**

Subscribers (or users) of the MLS include non-principal brokers, sales associates, and licensed and certified appraisers affiliated with participants. Subscribers also include affiliated unlicensed administrative and clerical staff, personal assistants, and individuals seeking licensure or certification as real estate appraisers who are under the direct supervision of a participant or the participant’s licensed designee.) *(Adopted 4/92)*

#### **Article 5 Service Charges**

The charges made for participation in the service shall be as determined, and as amended from time to time by the board of directors of the service, and specified in the rules and regulations of the service.

#### **Article 6 Government of the Service**

The government of the service shall be vested in a board of directors comprised of the elected officers and directors nominated and elected as described in this article.

##### **Article 6.1 Officers of the Service**

The officers of the service, who shall also be directors, shall be a president, a president-elect, a vice president, and a secretary-treasurer, and shall have such duties as described in this article.

## **Article 6.2 Board of Directors**

There shall be a total of seven (7) elected directors, including the president, president-elect, vice president, and secretary-treasurer of the service, to be elected from among the participants of the service. In addition to the elected directors, the current president of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS® or a person appointed by the president, and the immediate past president of the service shall serve as directors, ex-officio, with full voting privileges.

## **Article 6.3 Nomination and Election of Officers and Directors**

The officers and directors of the service shall be nominated by a vote of the participants in the service accordance with the provisions of Article 7, Annual Meeting, of these bylaws and as set forth below.

- 1. Nominating Committee:** The president of the service shall appoint a nominating committee each year, which committee shall be comprised of five (5) participants of the service. The appointment of the nominating committee shall be made by such a date as to enable the committee to meet and select a proposed slate of officers and directors of the service at least ninety (90) days prior to the date of the meeting of the participants of the service at which nominees shall be selected by vote of the participants. The proposed slate of officers and directors shall be reported to the president and secretary-treasurer of the service.
- 2. Notice of Proposed Nominees:** The president shall cause a list of the proposed nominees selected by the nominating committee to be forwarded to the participants of the service, setting forth the date, time, place, and other pertinent conditions of the meeting of the participants to select the final list of nominees by vote of the participants of the service. The notice to the participants of the service concerning the meeting to select nominees for officers and directors shall be mailed on a date at least sixty (60) days prior to the proposed meeting.
- 3. Rights of Participants to Select Additional Nominees:** The names of additional proposed nominees may be added to the list selected by the nominating committee by a petition submitted to the secretary-treasurer of the service, signed by five (5)% of the participants of the service, with said petition received not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the date of meeting of the participants to select the nominees for officers and directors. The names contained in such petition, if duly received and certified, shall be added to the names of the nominees from the nominating committee and shall be presented in writing to the participants at the meeting. In addition, nominations may be made from the floor at the duly noticed meeting of the participants to select nominees' for officers and directors and, if seconded, shall be added to the list of proposed nominees.
- 4. Voting by Written Secret Ballot:** Voting for selection of the nominees, for officers and directors of the service which will be forwarded to the board of directors for the association for election, if other than on a motion to cast a unanimous vote for the original proposed slate shall be by secret ballot, and said ballot shall contain the names nominated by petition and blank spaces for writing in additional names nominated from the floor at the meeting to select nominees. Absentee ballots may be requested, signed and returned by 5:00 pm two (2) days prior to the meeting.
- 5. Vote to Select Nominees:** Voting shall be in accordance with provisions of Article seven (7) of these bylaws.
- 6. Nominees Submitted to Shareholder for Election:** When nominees for officers and directors of the service for the forthcoming fiscal year have been selected by vote of the participants of the service, such nominees shall be submitted to the board of directors of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS® (shareholder) for election. Upon election by the board of directors of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS® (shareholder), the individuals so elected shall be considered officers-elect and directors-elect and shall assume their respective offices on January 1.

The term of office for officers and directors of the service shall be on a calendar year basis. In the event one (1) or more nominee(s) is/are not elected by the board of directors of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS® (shareholder), or vacancy otherwise occurs on the board of directors or in any of the elected offices, the president of the service shall select a proposed participant or participants, of the service, as required, subject to confirmation by the board of directors, of the service, for submission as nominee(s) to the board of directors of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS® (shareholder) to be considered for election to fill the vacancy or vacancies existing. The board of directors of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS® shall then vote on the nominee(s) forwarded to it to fill the vacancy(s) on the board of directors of the service or in the offices of the service.

In the event that nominees are not duly and timely provided by the service to the board of directors of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS<sup>®</sup>, as provided in these bylaws, then the board of directors of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS<sup>®</sup> shall exercise rights as sole and exclusive shareholder to elect a participant or participants of the service to fill any existing vacancy or vacancies as officers or directors of the service.

#### **Article 6.4 Terms of Office**

The officers shall serve for a one-year term. The elected directors shall serve for staggered three-year terms with one-third of the terms expiring each year. Officers and directors shall take office upon the effective date of their offices and shall continue until their successors are elected and installed. No officer or director shall be nominated and elected to the same office for more than two consecutive terms. The installation of officers and directors shall take place at the annual installation banquet.

#### **Article 6.5 Duties of Officers and Directors**

The duties of the officers and directors are as follows:

1. The president shall be the chief executive officer of the service and shall preside at its meetings and those of the board of directors, and shall perform all the duties of the president subject to declared policies and, as required, subject to confirmation of the board of directors.
2. The president-elect shall, in the absence of the president, perform all of the duties of the president. The president-elect shall assume the duties of president at the end of the president's term.
3. The vice president shall assist the president and president-elect in carrying out the functions of those offices and perform specific duties delegated by the president and president-elect. The vice president shall assume the duties of the president-elect at the end of the president-elect's term, and in the absence of the president and president-elect shall perform all duties of the president.
4. The secretary-treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds of the service and shall keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements. The secretary-treasurer shall provide to all members of the board of directors a quarterly statement of all accounts and financial affairs for the service, and shall have charge of the corporate seal and affix the name to all documents properly requiring such seal.
5. The board of directors of the service shall be the governing body of the service and shall have control of all the affairs of the service and shall authorize all expenditures of funds. The board of directors shall, prior to the end of each fiscal year, prepare a budget reflecting projected costs and expenses of the service for the next fiscal year, indicating projected income from all sources. The board of directors shall have no power to obligate the service for an amount in excess of \$2,500 for any item not provided for in the approved budget, without the recommendation of the finance committee. However, the board of directors may override the finance committee's recommendation with a 2/3 vote. The board of directors shall employ such executive, legal, and office personnel it deems necessary to care for and maintain the properties of the service and otherwise conduct the administrative business of the service. The board of directors shall have the right to make an audit of all books and accounts at any time without notice. The board of directors shall have the power from time-to-time to adopt such rules and regulations that they may deem appropriate. Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws and rules and regulations, the action of the board of directors shall be final.

#### **Article 6.6 Removal of Officers and Directors**

In the event that an officer or director of the multiple listing service is deemed to be incapable of fulfilling the duties for which elected, but will not resign from office voluntarily, the officer or director may be removed from office under the following procedure: (*Adopted 11/96*)

1. A petition requiring the removal of an officer or director and signed by not less than one-third of the participants or a majority of all directors of the service shall be filed with the president of the service, or if the president is the subject of the petition, with the president-elect of the service, and shall specifically set forth the reasons the individual is deemed to be disqualified from further service. (*Adopted 11/96*)
2. Upon receipt of the petition, and not less than twenty (20) days or more than forty-five (45) days thereafter, a special meeting of the participants of the service shall be held, and the sole business of the meeting shall be to consider the charge against the officer or director, and to render a decision on such petition. (*Adopted 11/96*)

3. The special meeting shall be noticed to all participants at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting, and shall be conducted by the president of the service unless the president's continued service in office is being considered at the meeting. In such case, the president-elect of the service will conduct the meeting or the hearing by the participants. Provided a quorum is present, a three-fourths vote of participants present and voting shall be required for removal from office. *(Adopted 11/96)*
4. Any vote taken by the participants to remove an officer or director must ultimately be confirmed by a majority vote of the directors of the association. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the association may remove an officer or director by a majority vote of the directors of the association. *(Adopted 11/96)*

## **Article 7 Annual Meeting**

The annual meeting of participants of the service shall be held during the month of September at the time and place specified by the board of directors.

### **Article 7.1 Special Meetings of the Service**

Special meetings of participants of the service may be called from time to time by the president, the board of directors, or by written request of ten (10)% of the participants of the service. Written notice stating the day, place, and hour of the meeting and the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called, shall be delivered to all REALTORS<sup>®</sup> who are participants in the service, not less than five (5) days prior to said meeting.

### **Article 7.2 Quorum and Voting at Meetings of the Service**

For the transaction of business, fifteen (15)% of the participants of the service shall be considered a quorum. A majority vote by such participants present and voting at a meeting attended by a quorum shall be required for passage of motions.

### **Article 7.3 Meetings of the Board of Directors**

The board of directors may meet at any time it deems advisable on the call of the president or any three (3) members of the board of directors. Seven (7) directors shall constitute a quorum. A majority vote by the directors present and voting at a meeting attended by a quorum shall be required for passage of motions.

### **Article 7.4 Presiding Officer**

At all meetings of the participants of the service, or of the board of directors, the president or, in the absence of the president, the president-elect shall serve as presiding officer. In the absence of the president and president-elect, the vice president shall serve as presiding officer.

## **Article 8 Committees**

The president, with the approval of the board of directors, shall create such standing or ad hoc committees as the president deems desirable and shall appoint their members. Each committee shall consist of not less than five (5) participants in the service, but may also include REALTORS<sup>®</sup> or REALTOR-ASSOCIATE<sup>®</sup>s, employed by or affiliated as independent contractors with a REALTOR<sup>®</sup> participant serving as representatives of said REALTOR<sup>®</sup> participants and with their consent, and who may serve either as a chairperson or member of a committee.

## **Article 9 Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the service shall commence on January 1 and shall end on December 31.

## **Article 10 Amendments to Bylaws**

Amendments to these bylaws shall be by the participants of the service, and shall be determined at an annual meeting or special meeting of the service in accordance with the provisions of Article 7, concerning meetings of the service. Amendments to the bylaws of the service approved by the participants shall further be subject to approval of the board of directors of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS<sup>®</sup> (shareholder).

When amendments to the bylaws of the service have been approved by the board of directors the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS<sup>®</sup> (shareholder), said amendments shall be effective immediately or as stated in the amending resolution.

If the proposed amendments to the bylaws of the multiple listing service fail approval of the board of directors of the shareholder, the board of directors of the multiple listing service shall be informed, and advised that the proposed amendment or amendments to the bylaws be further considered and resubmitted to the shareholder as approved by the participants of the multiple listing service.

#### **Article 10.1 Amendments to Rules and Regulations**

Amendments to the rules and regulations of the service shall be by consideration and approval of the board of directors of the multiple listing service in accordance with the provisions of Article 7.3, concerning meetings of the board of directors, subject to final approval by the board of directors of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS® (shareholder).

When approved by the board of directors of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS® (shareholder) as described, the amendments to the rules and regulations of the multiple listing service shall be effective immediately or as stated in the amending resolution.

If the proposed amendments of the multiple listing service rules and regulations fail approval by the board of directors of the shareholder, the board of directors of the service shall be informed, and advised that the proposed amendment or amendments must be further considered and resubmitted as approved by the board of directors of the service to the board of directors of Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS® (shareholder).

#### **Article 11 Dissolution**

In the event this service shall at any time terminate its activities, the board of directors of the service shall consider and adopt a plan of liquidation and dissolution with the approval of the participants thereof and of the board of directors of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS® (shareholder). Said plan shall provide for the collection of all assets, the payment of all liabilities, and that the remaining portions thereof be assigned to the parent corporation, namely, Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS®.