

# CONSTITUTION

OF THE

*Washington Fire Society.*

INSTITUTED AT

CHARLESTOWN,

FEB. 22, 1800.

.....  
PROESIDIUM DISCRIMINE.  
.....

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG.

1811.

W 3 1 c  
**CONSTITUTION**  
18 11

**OF THE**

***WASHINGTON FIRE SOCIETY.***



**S**ENSIBLE of the dreadful calamities, to which individuals, Inhabitants of populous towns, are frequently exposed, by the distressing ravages of Fire, and confident of the importance and utility of well regulated Fire Societies, for the purpose of contributing their services to alleviate the distress of our unfortunate Fellow-citizens, who may become its victims—We, the Subscribers, have associated, and do agree to form a Society, to be called, **WASHINGTON:** Hereby pledging ourselves, each one to the other, for reciprocal assistance and benefit: And sensible that such Societies are useless, and even injurious, without order and regularity, we do also agree, strictly to conform and be subject to the following **RULES and REGULATIONS:**

## ARTICLE I.

This Society shall consist of a number not exceeding thirty, all of which shall belong to no other Fire Society: Our meetings shall be four times in each year, one of which shall annually be on the 22d of February, except it happen to be on Sabbath; in that case, on the next evening following. The three other meetings shall be on the second Thursday of May, August and November: And it shall be the first business of the Society, at our annual meeting in February, to choose a President, Treasurer and Secretary, who shall be the presiding officers for one year, and not be eligible to the same office again for four years.

## ARTICLE II.

The President shall be chosen by ballot, and shall have the vote of two-thirds the members present; and it shall be his duty to preserve order, state all questions of the Society, for determination by vote, and to determine the right (in turn) of each member to speak on any subject in debate: Any member having any thing to offer, concerning the business of the Society, shall rise and address himself to the President. If any two or more members are talking, while the business of the Society is in debate, they shall

at the President's order be immediately silent, or forfeit and pay fifty cents for disobedience. No member shall leave the meeting without permission of the President, nor then unless he has settled with the Secretary, under penalty of two Dollars. The President shall not vote, in any case except there be a tie, and then he shall give a casting vote.

### ARTICLE III.

The Treasurer shall be chosen in the same manner as the President; and it shall be his duty to receive all the monies belonging to the Society, and pay them out by their order; to keep a fair and just account of the same, and make report quarterly of the state of the funds; for the neglect of each particular duty, he shall forfeit and pay one Dollar. He shall not at any time convert to his own use any money belonging to the Society, under penalty of double the sum so converted; and it shall be his duty to preside in the absence of the President.

### ARTICLE IV.

The Secretary shall be chosen in the same manner as the President and Treasurer, shall be exempt from all assessments while in office, and in addition, as a compensation for his services, at each quarterly meeting shall

be allowed the sum of two Dollars, and at every special meeting the sum of one Dollar. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep a record of all our proceedings in the Society's book; demand and receive all fines, forfeitures and assessments; and pay all money he shall receive on account of the Society to the Treasurer, within ten days of receiving it, taking his receipt for the same. He shall also notify every member, at his dwelling, two days previous to any meeting, by leaving or causing to be left a written or printed notification, and insert therein the name of every person proposed as a member, with the advice of the President, when and where to meet, under penalty of seventy-five cents, for each deficiency and neglect. He shall also, in case of the absence of the President and Treasurer, call on the members present, immediately after the time appointed for their meeting, for the choice of President (*pro tem.*) for the evening; and at the close of the year give up to his successor all the books and papers of the Society. He shall be subject to the same fines as other members if absent, and in which case there shall be appointed by the President a Secretary (*pro tem.*) who shall serve, or pay as a fine twenty-five cents, and another shall be appointed, until one accepts.

**ARTICLE V.**

Every member of this Society, who shall receive a notification from the Secretary, two days previous to any meeting, and shall be absent at the calling of the roll, shall forfeit and pay twenty-five cents; if absent the whole evening, he shall pay fifty cents. And any member who shall absent himself from the regular meetings, for the term of one year, without permission of the President or Society, and neglect to settle his account with the Secretary, shall be expelled; and any member disposed to leave the Society is at liberty to withdraw his name, provided he pay all arrearages that may be due from him to the Society, but shall not be entitled to any of the funds. Any member neglecting to observe the articles, or refusing to pay the Secretary on demand the fines he may have incurred, or any member by any open or secret manner, shall attempt to deprive any person unjustly of his property or good name, such member shall be considered as unworthy the confidence of the Society, and liable to expulsion; at the same time forfeit all right and interest in the funds.

**ARTICLE VI.**

Each member shall provide and keep in good repair, (in some conspicuous part of his dwell-

ing-house, shop or store) two leather buckets and two bags, painted and made in the manner which shall be agreed on; and he shall also keep in the said buckets, together with the bags, an iron bed key, under penalty of one Dollar for each neglect.

#### ARTICLE VII.

The Secretary shall within ten days of each quarterly meeting, notify three members in their turns to attend him to visit and examine the buckets, bags, &c. of each member; and they shall at the next quarterly meeting make report of all deficiencies. Any member refusing to attend the Secretary on such examination, shall pay a fine of seventy-five cents.

#### ARTICLE VIII.

At the request of six members; the Secretary, with the advice of the President, shall call a meeting at such time and place as he shall think requisite, and any member then absent shall be liable to forfeit and pay the same as at a quarterly meeting.

#### ARTICLE IX.

The Society shall have a watch word, which always shall be kept a secret among the members, and every member when challenged by the Secretary shall whisper the same, under

penalty of twenty-five cents: And if any member directly or indirectly reveal the same to any one not of this Society, he shall forfeit and pay three Dollars. No person shall be admitted at any meeting except a member.

#### ARTICLE X.

At the alarm of Fire, every member shall immediately repair with his buckets, bags and key, to the place where it appears; and if the house, shop or store of any member or members be in danger, they shall assemble there, and exert their utmost endeavors, under the direction of the person or persons in danger, to assist him or them in removing and securing his or their effects; and every member who shall not appear on such occasions, without sufficient excuse to the Committee, shall forfeit and pay two Dollars.

#### ARTICLE XI.

All losses of buckets, bags and keys, in time of Fire, shall be paid by the Society, provided the owner of the same, after diligent search, advertise his loss three weeks successively, in one of the Boston newspapers, at his own expense.

#### ARTICLE XII.

When any member shall remove to any other dwelling-house, shop or store, he shall in-



form the Secretary of his removal within seven days after, and the Secretary shall insert the same in the printed ticket, to which each member shall conform his articles of regulation, and exhibit them complete at the following meeting, under penalty of fifty cents for each neglect.

#### ARTICLE XIII.

In case any member dies, leaving a widow, she shall, during her remaining his widow, be entitled to the same protection and assistance of the Society as though her husband was living; she conforming herself to the regulations of the Society, by keeping her buckets, &c. in proper order, and giving information of her removals to any member, who is hereby directed and enjoined to inform the Secretary thereof.

#### ARTICLE XIV.

No person shall be balloted for under the age of twenty-one years, nor then unless he has been proposed at a previous meeting; and no person shall be admitted a member of this Society, without the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present: When admitted he shall pay three Dollars, and shall furnish himself with buckets, bags and key, painted and made in the manner established by the Society.

**ARTICLE XV.**

Every member shall keep a printed copy of all the articles of regulation, with the names of all the members, and the places of their dwelling-house, shop or store, for which each member shall pay to the Secretary fifty cents for the use of the Society; or when lost or worn out, to be supplied by the Secretary, by paying the additional sum of fifty cents. Any member who shall attend any meeting without his printed copy of regulation shall pay twenty-five cents.

**ARTICLE XVI.**

The President, Treasurer and Secretary shall be a Committee, for the time being, to determine the validity of excuses offered for avoiding the payment of fines, and their judgment shall be final; and all monies raised by fines, &c. shall be under their direction, and at the control of the Society.

**ARTICLE XVII.**

This Society shall never be dissolved, unless by a unanimous vote of the members it shall be judged necessary and expedient to dissolve the same; in that case the property of the Society shall be equally distributed among the members, including the widow of any member deceased, who shall be entitled to an equal

share, provided she remain his widow at the time such distribution is made.

**ARTICLE XVIII.**

No money shall be taken from the funds to defray any of the expenses: The reckoning shall be called at or before ten o'clock, and all expenses incurred by the Society at any legal meeting of the Society shall be apportioned equally among the members present, except the Secretary, whose club shall be paid by the members present for his services; and each absent member shall, in addition to his fine for absence, pay into the treasury a sum equal to what a member present pays for his proportion of the expenses of the meeting.

**ARTICLE XIX.**

All articles which may be thought necessary to add hereafter, and all bye-laws which the Society shall at any time enact, shall be considered equally as binding as any of the foregoing Regulations.