

**RETIRED WOMEN TEACHERS OF ONTARIO**

**RWTO/OERO**



**HAMILTON-WENTWORTH BRANCH**

**CONSTITUTION**

**Revised November 2021**

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## **RWTO/OERO - Provincial Principles**

**RWTO/OERO** is a Provincial organization for retired women teachers.

### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

We believe that RWTO/OERO is an organization which meets the interests and needs of retired women teachers.

**MOTTO:** Caring and Sharing

### **WE BELIEVE:**

1. RWTO/OERO continually works to be a fully accessible organization to meet the unique needs of retired women teachers.
2. RWTO/OERO fosters and promotes interaction among retired women teachers to help members maintain and establish friendships with former colleagues.
3. RWTO/OERO provides interesting, stimulating and supportive programs for all members.
4. RWTO/OERO provides a wide range of opportunities for members to use their leadership, communication, and creative skills.
5. RWTO/OERO is socially conscious and works to establish a visible, outward-looking presence among teachers in particular and the public in general to improve the lives of all women and children.

### **GOALS:**

1. To provide a strong communication network and opportunities for social interaction among retired teachers at both the local and Provincial levels.
2. To provide interesting and challenging programs for intellectual stimulation, information about issues of particular interest to retired women teachers, and opportunities for cultural enrichment.
3. To provide support for colleagues especially in times of illness, loneliness, stress and sorrow.
4. To provide a unique form of hospital and home care insurance exclusively for members and their spouses at a reasonable cost.
5. To formulate an organized plan to increase membership in RWTO/OERO.
6. To ensure that RWTO/OERO is a financially well-managed organization both provincially and locally.

# **Fundamental Laws and Principles of the Hamilton-Wentworth Branch**

## **Definition of Constitution**

A Constitution consists of the fundamental laws and principles of a government, association or corporation.

## **ARTICLE I: Name**

- 1.1** The organization shall be called the Retired Women Teachers of Ontario/Organisation des Enseignantes Retraitees de l'Ontario – Hamilton-Wentworth Branch, hereafter referred to as RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth.

## **ARTICLE II: Vision Statement, Goals, Motto and Code of Ethics**

### **Section 1: Vision Statement**

**2.1.1** RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth strives:

- (a) to continually work to be a fully accessible organization to meet the unique needs of retired women teachers;
- (b) to foster and promote interaction among retired women teachers to help members maintain and establish friendships with retired colleagues;
- (c) to provide interesting, stimulating and supportive programs for all members;
- (d) to provide a wide range of opportunities for members to use their leadership, communication, and creative skills; and,
- (e) to be a socially conscious organization that works to improve the lives of others in the community.

### **Section 2: Goals**

**2.2.1** RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth strives:

- (a) to provide a variety of events and activities which address various interests and needs of retired women teachers;
- (b) to promote connection with retired colleagues and friends;
- (c) to provide opportunities to develop new friendships and interests;
- (d) to share individual talents with Branch members; and,
- (e) to engage in community outreach initiatives.

## **Section 3: Motto**

**2.3.1** RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth defines its motto as “Caring and Sharing”.

## **Section 4: Code of Ethics**

This Code of Ethics expresses the principles of RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth and serves as a guide for the conduct of its members.

### **2.4.1 Accountability**

RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth members:

- demonstrate integrity when acting on behalf of RWTO/OERO
- model the principles of equity, trust, fairness, and respect;
- respect the time, energy, and effort of the many volunteers who work on behalf of the organization.

### **2.4.2 Governance**

RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth members:

- support the Provincial organizational structure, Constitution and Policies and Procedures;
- follow the RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth Branch Constitution and Policies and Procedures Manual;
- manage time, expectations, expenditures and resources responsibly when acting on behalf of RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth.

### **2.4.3 Communication**

RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth members:

- demonstrate open and honest communication with all members;
- share information regarding RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth matters in a timely manner;
- maintain a professional approach when discussing RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth matters with fellow members;
- refer concerns, suggestions, and comments related to Branch matters to the appropriate members of the Executive.

## **ARTICLE III: Membership & Fees**

### **Section 1. Regular Members**

Any qualified woman teacher who is retired is eligible to be a member of RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth whether or not she is receiving a teacher's pension.

### **Section 2. Life Members**

- (a) A Life Member is one who is unable to manage details of her personal affairs; OR who is no longer attending meetings due to chronic ill health, physical impairment, poor mobility or age. She shall pay no membership fees.
- (b) A member who reaches the age of 100 shall become a Life Member and shall no longer be required to pay membership fees as of the September following her one hundredth birthday.
- (c) Nominees for this status must first be approved by the Branch Executive, and their names forwarded to the Provincial Office.

### **Section 3. Interim Members**

- (a) An Interim Member shall be a woman teacher who is currently on Long Term Disability (LTD) from her school board.
- (b) An Interim Member shall be nominated for this status by a member in good standing, shall be approved by the Branch Executive, shall provide verification of LTD from her school board, and shall pay the regular yearly membership fee.
- (c) An Interim Member shall not hold a Provincial or Branch Executive position, be a delegate at the Annual General Meeting (hereafter referred to as the AGM), or be eligible for the Insurance plans of RWTO/OERO.
- (d) If an Interim Member returns to teaching, her membership ceases to be valid.

#### Section 4. Associate Members

- (a) An Associate Member is a regular member at another Branch, who chooses to join Hamilton-Wentworth also.
- (b) The Associate Member pays the full fee at their Primary Branch, and the Branch portion only of the Hamilton-Wentworth fee. (In 2019, this was set at \$20.)
- (c) Associate Members are not included by Provincial in the Master Membership List for Hamilton-Wentworth. Their contact information must be added manually by the Hamilton-Wentworth Membership Convenor, before sharing updated lists with designated Executive members (for email and Canada Post communication.)

#### Section 5. Fees

- (a) The membership year shall be from September 1 of a given year to August 31 of the following year.
- (b) There shall be an annual flat fee for membership of \$60.00. This is comprised of a \$40.00 Provincial membership fee which is set by Provincial, and a \$20.00 Branch fee, which may be changed by Branch membership vote.
- (c) For members who retired on or before August 31, 1980 the Provincial fee shall be frozen in perpetuity at a flat fee of \$15.00. An additional \$20.00 Branch fee is added, which may be changed by Branch membership vote.
- (d) Life Members do not pay membership fees.
- (e) Interim members pay the same fees as regular members.
- (f) Associate Members pay the full fee at their Primary Branch, and the Branch portion only of the Hamilton-Wentworth fee. (In 2019, this was set at \$20.)
- (g) Membership fees are to be paid to the Membership Convenor, who will notify the Branch Treasurer.
- (h) Annual renewal membership fees are due September 1 each year. They should be forwarded by the Branch Treasurer to the Provincial Office by October 15.
- (i) New members' names and fees will be submitted to Provincial when received.
- (j) New members who join after April 1 do not pay a renewal membership fee until one year from the following August 31.
- (k) Only members who have paid their annual fees, prior to or on November 30, will be counted in determining the number of delegates sent to the Provincial AGM for that year.

## **ARTICLE IV: Branch Organization**

### **Section 1: Annual Structure**

- 4.1.1 The membership year is September 1- August 31.
- 4.1.2 The fiscal year is April 1- March 31.
- 4.1.3 The Executive year is the May Branch Annual General Meeting (AGM) to the next Branch AGM.

### **Section 2: Executive**

- 4.2.1 The Executive is comprised of the Table Officers, Convenors, and Members-at-large. All members of the Executive must be members in good standing of RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth. Table Officers are elected by the membership. Convenors and Members-at-large are appointed by the Executive. Each Table Officer, Convenor and Member-at-large shall have one vote at Executive meetings.
- 4.2.2 Members of the Executive shall:
  - (a) attend meetings as called by the President;
  - (b) approve a budget for each fiscal year;
  - (c) establish the annual program;
  - (d) produce an annual program brochure which describes the events/activities for the year and provides contact information;
  - (e) carry out the business as expected by the membership;
  - (f) approve Convenors, Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees as required;
  - (g) approve expenses and honoraria for programs;
  - (h) approve miscellaneous incidental expenses of members;
  - (i) act as the hosting committee for events/activities;
  - (j) propose Provincial and Branch resolutions.



#### 4.2.3 Standing Committees include:

- (a) Archives
- (b) Awards
- (c) Be Our Guest Event
- (d) Budget
- (e) Communications
- (f) Constitution & Policies & Procedures
- (g) Entertainment
- (h) Events
- (i) Event Payments
- (j) Goodwill
- (k) Insurance
- (l) Interest Groups
- (m) Membership
- (n) Nominations (for Table Officers)
- (o) Outreach
- (p) Program
- (q) Public Relations
- (r) Recruitment
- (s) Special Outreach Project

4.2.4 Standing Committees shall be overseen by a chairperson who is a Convenor on the Executive. She may complete the duties on her own, share the Chair duties with a Co-Convenor, seek the help of other Executive Convenors, or create a committee of Executive members and/or Branch members, at their discretion.

4.2.5 Ad Hoc Committees can be formed to address one-time issues, events and needs. These Committees are chaired by a Convenor or Co-Convenors on the Executive and may include Executive and Branch members, at their discretion.

### **Section 3: Table Officers**

4.3.1 Table Officers, with the exception of the Past-President, are elected by the membership. The Table Officers are: President, Past-President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Two people may share the role of a Table Officer.

4.3.2 Table Officers shall:

- (a) have representation on each Standing and Ad Hoc Committee
- (b) set the direction for the Executive
- (c) carry out any other necessary business
- (d) discuss items for Executive meeting agendas.

### **Section 4: Convenors and Members-at-large**

4.4.1 Convenors are appointed by the Executive. The term for a Convenor is three years with the possibility of renewal annually. The Convenor may chair a committee as required and may invite the broader membership to join the committee according to needs and interests. Each Convenor should be cognizant of the relevant sections of the RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth Policy and Procedures manual. Two people may share the role of a Convenor.

4.4.2 Members-at-large are appointed by the Executive. These positions were created to encourage members to serve on the Executive and to become familiar with Branch Policies and Procedures, as a possible stepping-stone to taking on a Convenor position. The length of the term of office for a Member-at-large is one year, with the option of renewal annually. Each Member-at-large has one vote on the Executive, and may assist on various Committees as needed, and with event duties of their choosing. New Members-at-large are welcome to join the Executive at any point during the year, and there is no limit as to their number.

## **Section 5: Terms of Office & Resignations**

### **4.5.1. (a) The length of the terms of office for Table Officers:**

- a. President – one year
- b. Past-President – one year
- c. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President – one year
- d. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President – one year
- e. Secretary – three years with the option of renewal annually
- f. Treasurer – three years with the option of renewal annually

(b) The length of the term of office for a Convenor is three years, with the option of renewal annually.

(c) The length of the term of office for a Member-at-large is one year, with the option of renewal annually.

4.5.2 Upon the expiry of the President's term, the President will assume the role of Past-President, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President will assume the position of President. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President will assume the position of 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President. An election will be held for 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President.

### **4.5.3 Resignations**

- (a) An Executive member may resign at any time, should they decide they are unable to continue their duties. They must notify the Convenor of the Nominations Committee in writing using the form in the Branch Policies & Procedures document. Their resignation is effective the date they indicate on the form.
- (b) Should the President resign, the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President will become Interim President for the remainder of the term, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President will become assume the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President's role. A by-election will be held at the next Branch General Meeting (i.e. Harvest Luncheon, Celebration at the Station, Friendship Luncheon or the Annual General Meeting) for the position of 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President. At the end of the Executive year, the Interim President will be given the option to become the Past President or continue as President for an additional one-year term. If the President chooses to continue in that position, the Past-President would be asked to remain as Past-President for that time period. If the Past-President decides not to continue, the position of Past-President will be filled by a former Past-President to be approved by the Executive.

- (c) Should the Past-President resign during her term of office, the position of Past-President will be filled by a former Past-President. The Executive will approve the appointment of a Past-President.
- (d) Should the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President resign, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President will fill that position and a by-election will be held for 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President.
- (e) If the Treasurer or Secretary resigns, a by-election will be held at the next Branch General Meeting (i.e. Harvest Luncheon, Celebration at the Station, Friendship Luncheon or the Annual General Meeting) to fill the position.
- (f) Should a Convenor resign from an Executive position it will be filled by Executive approval, with a Member-at-large, or a Branch member.
- (g) When a Member-at-large resigns, the position may remain vacant, and others may assume any duties they had taken on. Members shall be invited to fill the role.

## **Section 6: Nominations**

- 4.6.1 A Nominations Committee is established at the beginning of each membership year. It is chaired by the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President. Nominations are sought from the membership to fill Table Officer positions as needed.
- 4.6.2 An active member in good standing may be nominated to stand for an elected office
- 4.6.3 Nominations should be received in writing, using the nomination form in the Appendix of the Branch Policy and Procedures, six weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting in May.
- 4.6.4 Available positions are advertised in the Branch newsletters. Members should be encouraged to apply themselves or to nominate another person upon that person's agreement.
- 4.6.5 Nominations should be submitted to the chair of the Nominations Committee (Vice-President). Time permitting, a list of those nominated will be published in the newsletter.

## **Section 7: Elections**

- 4.7.1 The Chair of the Nominations Committee shall submit the names of nominees for Table Officer positions to the membership at the Branch AGM.
- 4.7.2 Nominations from the floor at the AGM require one nominator, one seconder, and the consent of the nominee. The Chair of the Nominations Committee will have nomination forms and ballots available for completion at the AGM.
- 4.7.3 Each candidate shall have the opportunity to address the members at the AGM for a maximum of three minutes. The order of speaking shall be by lot.
- 4.7.4 The vote for an elected office shall be by secret ballot. The President at the AGM shall select, from members present, a minimum of three persons to:
  - (a) determine the number of eligible voters present;
  - (b) distribute, collect, and count the ballots;
  - (c) return the results of the secret ballot to the President.
- 4.7.5 Candidates are invited to appoint a personal scrutineer to be present when the votes are counted.
- 4.7.6 Election shall require a majority of the votes cast. Should a tie occur, the candidates will be invited to readdress the membership for a maximum of one minute. Order of speaking is by lot, and another ballot shall follow. Balloting must continue until a candidate receives a majority. It is not proper to drop a candidate receiving the lowest vote totals from a ballot unless the person withdraws voluntarily. (See Bourinot's Rules of Order)
- 4.7.6 Should there be only one nominee for a given position, that person shall be acclaimed.

## **ARTICLE V: Provincial AGM Delegates**

### **Section 1: Allocation of Delegates**

Branches are entitled to send delegates to the Provincial Annual General Meeting (Convention) according to the following formula:

Members	Delegates
50 or less	One Provincial Delegate and one alternate delegate
51-100	One Provincial Delegate and one Branch delegate
101-150	One Provincial Delegate and two Branch delegates
151-200	One Provincial Delegate and three Branch delegates
201-250	One Provincial Delegate and four Branch delegates
251-300	One Provincial Delegate and five Branch delegates
300 +	One Provincial Delegate and six Branch delegates

### **Section 2: Determination of Delegates**

5.2.1 The Provincial Delegate is the Branch President at the time of Provincial Convention registration, i.e. April 30.

5.2.2 The Branch Delegates are determined in the following sequence of priority depending on the number of delegates designated by the Provincial formula. Executive members may choose if they wish to participate:

- (1) The 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President.
- (2) Secretary or Treasurer alternating annually.
- (3) The Membership Convenor in the first year of their duties, and every second year thereafter.
- (4) The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President or an Executive Convenor who has not attended a Provincial AGM in the past and who will be continuing on the Executive the following year.
- (5) Executive Members-at-large who will be stepping into a Convenor position the following year.
- (6) Executive Convenors who have attended a Provincial AGM in the past, and who will be continuing on the Executive the following year.
- (7) Executive Members-at-large who are remaining as Members-at-large.
- (8) Delegates from the general membership.

- 5.2.3 Provincial guidelines outline the coverage of convention expenses for the Provincial Delegate and first Branch Delegate. Other expenses and those for additional Branch Delegates are the responsibility of the Branch.
- 5.2.4 Any member may go to the Provincial Annual General Meeting (Convention) as a visitor, provided that she is willing to pay her own Convention Registration fee and expenses for accommodation, meals, travel etc. Visitors are not eligible to vote.

## **ARTICLE VI: Resolutions for the Provincial Constitution**

- 6.1 Resolutions for the Provincial Constitution can be submitted for consideration at the Provincial Convention. Dialogue about possible resolutions should begin at the first meeting of the new Branch Executive in June.
- 6.2 Resolutions should be formally submitted with the rationale in written form, to the Branch President and presented to the Executive at the September meeting. If the Executive approves the resolutions, they are presented to the general membership at Harvest Luncheon. Supported resolutions must be submitted by the Branch President to the Provincial Office by November 15.
- 6.3 The Provincial resolutions published in the Provincial Connections Magazine will be presented to the membership at the Branch AGM. Members will vote on each resolution by a show of hands. This will provide guidance for the Branch Delegates at the Provincial Convention.

## **ARTICLE VII: Amendments to the Branch Constitution**

- 7.1 Proposed amendments to the Branch Constitution must be submitted to the Branch President one week prior to the April Executive Meeting.
- 7.2 The Executive shall send by email, all proposed amendments to the membership 15 days prior to the Branch AGM. (Note: In 2021, this was 85% of the membership.)
- 7.3 Amendments to the Constitution must be approved at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Approval requires 66% majority vote by the members present at the AGM.
- 7.4 A committee appointed by the Executive shall review the Constitution every three years.

## **ARTICLE VIII: Branch General Meetings**

10.1 The term General Meeting refers to the official business meetings of the organization. Any of the large luncheons may be used to conduct business as needed, (Harvest Luncheon, Celebration at the Station, and Friendship Luncheon), with special annual tasks assigned to the Annual General Meeting in May (Courtyard Cuisine Event).

10.2 The Annual General Meeting shall:

- (a) present the annual Cora Bailey Awards (up to 3 per Branch)
- (b) conduct a memorial service in memory of those who have passed away during the previous year, and present a donation to a charity in their memory (currently the GERAS Foundation)
- (c) approve the Audited Financial Statement for the previous year
- (d) approve changes to the Branch Constitution, as needed
- (e) receive the President's Annual Branch Report
- (f) review resolutions for the Provincial Constitution
- (g) elect Table Officers as required
- (h) install the new Executive.

10.3 The Fall General Meeting (Harvest Luncheon) shall:

- (a) approve the Annual Budget for the upcoming program year

## **ARTICLE IX: Rules of Order**

The rules found in Bourinot's Rules of Order by Geoffrey Stanford shall govern RWTO/OERO Hamilton-Wentworth Branch.