

## **Rationale for Changes to BHCDCC Bylaws**

### **Doug McReynolds 8 May 2026**

The last version of the bylaws was done in 2023 and contained several inconsistencies, both internal ones and others which the Iowa Democratic Party's (IDP) legal counsel noted. In the early fall of 2025, the Strategic Planning (SPT) and Communications teams began looking carefully at the document with an eye toward clarifying the bylaws as well as bringing both them and CC practices into compliance with both *Robert's Rules of Order* and the provisions of the IDP Constitution. Both smaller and larger groups met over a period of months; individuals researched the IDP Constitution; draft revisions and suggestions were passed around, and a document evolved. Early this year consensus was that the revisions were ready to be vetted by IDP, and SPT held a Zoom meeting with IDP's Parliamentarian and legal counsel, Bill Brauch, whose suggestions were incorporated. In late February the revisions were passed on to retired County Auditor Grant Veeder, who made his own additions and clarifications. The entire process was conducted openly and with the cooperation of the entire Executive Board and the Strategic Planning Team. The aim of the proposed revisions was to straighten out some confusing parts and make the document more clear, readable and functional for 2026.

Individuals who contributed materially to the process and to the writing include the following:

- Bill Brauch, IDP Legal Counsel
- Vikki Brown, BHCD Chair
- Eric Donat
- Jim Ehmen
- Jerry Hageman, BHCD Treasurer
- Jean McDonald
- Doug McReynolds
- Casey Schlotter
- Drew Stensland
- Mani Subramani
- Leandra Sunseri, BHCD Secretary and Strategic Planning Team Leader
- Jean Vaux, Communications Team Leader
- Grant Veeder, Retired Black Hawk County Auditor
- Frantz Whitfield, BHCD Vice-Chair

A few things you will notice:

1. We abbreviated names: Iowa Democratic Party (IDP), Black Hawk County Democrats (BHCD), CentralCommittee (CC), and Precinct Committee Member (PCM)
2. We included duties and procedures wherever they were vague.

3. **We added a Preamble to differentiate between the BHCD and the CC and made the membership and bylaws reflect The Central Committee, as differentiated from the BHCD**
4. **Certain procedures have been spelled out to ensure congruence with IDP directives.**

**Title.** The current bylaws purport to be the bylaws of the Black Hawk County Democratic (BHCD) Party. The Iowa Democratic Party (IDP) Parliamentarian/attorney says that makes no sense; bylaws cannot be applicable to the Party as a whole, but only to the governing body—which in our case is the Central Committee (CC). Hence the name and content change.

**Preamble.** A preamble has been added. It is important to clarify up front that while both BHCD and CC embrace all who share our purpose and commitment, the Central Committee itself can by IDP regulations include just two ELECTED members from each voting precinct in the county, and a precinct caucus is open only to registered Democrats residing in that precinct. We believe the wording should be inclusive overall, especially considering that independent voters now outnumber registered Democrats in the state: *we embrace anyone who shares our values, period.* THAT is the message CC wants to get across. The *Purpose* of BHCD (paragraph 2) is taken from our web page and was approved last spring.

**Article I Name and Affiliation.** This has been revised to reflect that the Bylaws are those of the Central Committee, not of the Black Hawk County Democrats.

**Article II Purpose and Duty.** In the existing bylaws, the “purpose” was identified as the purpose of BHCD; however, that is not exactly the same thing as the purpose of the Central Committee itself, and these are the bylaws of the Central Committee. We believe that this Article sums up the Central Committee’s purpose. We deliberately chose inclusive language (*i.e.* elect “people who embrace these principles,” not just “elect Democrats”). To add to the duties, we referred to the Iowa Constitution.

**Article III Membership, Section 1.1 Voting Members.** This is taken from the IDP Constitution. The statement is there for clarity. Alternates, like committee persons, are elected at the caucuses; they are not walk-ins at a meeting of the CC.

**Article III Membership, Section 1.2 Ex-Officio Non-Voting Members.** We thought it wasn’t fair to deprive someone of a vote simply because they had been elected to an office within the Central Committee, if they are indeed a Precinct Committee Member also.

**Article III Membership, Section 2 Vacancies.** The procedure for filling vacancies on the CC is taken from the provisions of the IDP.

**Article IV Membership Meetings, Section 1 Precinct Caucuses.** The current bylaws make no mention of odd-year caucuses. IDP specifies both the timing and the different

characteristics of odd- and even-year caucuses, and mandates both. In Sections 1 and 2 of this article, we have simply summarized what the IDP mandates. Note that the DEI chair—a position mandated by the IDP—is not chosen at the same time as the other officers.

**Article IV Membership Meetings, Section 2 County Convention.** The times, processes, and responsibilities touching both odd- and even-year conventions are taken from the IDP guidelines.

**Article IV Membership Meetings, Section 3 Special Conventions.** As with Article IV, Section 2, the procedures here are taken from IDP.

**Article IV Membership Meetings, Sections 4 & 5 Central Committee Meetings & Quorum.** No change from the 2023 bylaws.

**Article V, Section 1 Officers.** We want to make certain that what the officers DO and what they are CHARGED with doing are in alignment. There were unresolved questions as to whom should be included among the officers. For example: IDP mandates a DEI Chair; should this person be on the Executive Board? IDP does not specify that the DEI Chair is an officer of the CC and entitled to a seat on the Executive Board. *All four elected officers at the time of this revision proposal (chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer) vetted and approved their official duties as described in these articles.*

**Article V, Section 2 Election and Term of Office.** According to the IDP.

**Article V, Sections 3.1-3.4 Duties of Officers.** These are the duties of the chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer as described by the officers themselves. They are in line with IDP expectations.

**Article V, Section 3.5 Executive Board.** Current bylaws make no mention of an executive board; we believe it should, and we believe such a board should be responsible for the items listed in this Article. It should prepare the agenda for meetings of the CC. (Please note that according to **Robert's Rules**, an agenda is never SET until it has been approved by the assembly. No officer or board has the authority or the responsibility to *set* an agenda—only to *present* one which the assembly may alter as it sees fit.) The board should CONSIDER timely proposals received from individual members of the BHCD generally, but it is not required to place them on the agenda if it concludes that they are frivolous, disruptive, or irrelevant, etc. And while the Board may disapprove of proposals forwarded by duly authorized committees or teams, and it may recommend against them, it must place them on the agenda for the assembly to decide. And it advises the Chair. We are recommending that the DEI chair be included on the executive board.

**Article VI Committees.** Note MAY establish; not SHALL establish. Committees are required to choose officers or have them appointed (the County Chair appoints committee chairs; the committees themselves choose any other officers), to meet

regularly, keep minutes and report them to the CC. All very official and regular, but not necessarily efficient or capable of rapid response.

**Article VI, Section 2 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee.** A county DEI Committee is mandated by the IDP. Its makeup (chair plus at least two members, all elected by the CC) is also defined by IDP. Likewise, the duties of the DEI Committee are set by IDP, not CC. It is therefore not considered a standing committee of the CC. Under the current bylaws, the DEI chair is not an automatic member of the Executive Board, although consensus of our Executive Board and Strategic Planning Team agreed that its chair should be made a member of the Executive Board with this revised version of the bylaws. The IDP allows for county choice in that matter.

**Article VII Ad Hoc Teams.** We find that at this time, the idea of Teams is more attractive than one of Committees. A team can respond more rapidly and with greater focus to an issue of immediate concern, and it much less rigid in its structure. Teams were authorized by consensus at the 2025 odd-year caucus, and they have already proved their worth; they should be codified in the bylaws. The point is to allow the possibility of both Ad Hoc Teams and Standing Committees. We deliberately reference Team “leaders,” NOT “officers.” Team structure is considerably looser than Committee structure.

**Article VIII Amendments to Bylaws.** This is the recommendation of IDP’s legal counsel. The reasoning is that our current system is cumbersome and too drawn out; in fact, it could make it practically impossible ever to amend the bylaws. Of course, THESE revisions would have to be approved under the old (current) system.

**Article IX Parliamentary Authority.** Wording was suggested by IDP counsel and edited by retired County Auditor Grant Veeder.