

By-laws
Of
Holy Ark Chapter No. 304
Royal Arch Masons
Warrant May 15, 1996

Part 1
The Chapter-Its Title and Warrant, Meetings Etc.

Section 1. This Chapter shall be known and distinguished as Holy Ark Chapter No. 304, Royal Arch Masons, held by virtue of a warrant, granted by the Grand Chapter, State of New York, Royal Arch Masons.

Section 2A. The Stated Convocations of the Chapter shall be held on the third Wednesday of each month with the exception of July and August in the Western Star Masonic Hall, Lackawanna, NY.

Section 2B. At the discretion of the High Priest, and with due and timely notice to the members, a stated convocation can be omitted in favor of a Public Apron Presentation, Public Installation, Table Chapter, Educational Seminars, Ladies Night, Homecomings, or such other programs that are in harmony with the goals and objectives of Royal Arch Masonry.

Section 3. Special Convocations can be held at the discretion of the High Priest, with due notice given to all the members (10 days prior) for such purposes as may be specified in the notice.

Section 4. The Annual Convocation, Election and Installation of Officers of this Chapter shall be the third Wednesday in December.

Section 5. The hour for each Convocation of this Chapter shall be seven-thirty o'clock PM except that the High Priest, at his discretion, may announce that certain Stated Convocations shall be opened earlier.

Section 6. The Warrant of this Chapter must be displayed in view of the members at every Convocation.

Section 7. No Convocation can be called off the day or night in which it was opened; and the Chapter must be closed in due form or by proclamation.

Section 8. The ordinary business of the Chapter including balloting for degrees and membership, and appropriations to meet the Chapter's financial obligations can be acted upon at either Stated or Special Convocations.

When business items such as those listed above, need to be acted upon at a Special Convocation, the proposed actions shall comply with Section 3 of these By-laws outlying the specific degrees and membership, and the financial appropriations necessary for approval.

Section 9. The Order of business at every stated Convocation shall be as prescribed as listed in the Authorized Chapter Guide.

Part II
The Members- Their Duties

Section 1. The members of this Chapter are all who have been exalted to the Sublime Degree of Royal Arch Mason or elected to membership therein, and who have subscribed their names to the By-laws not having demitted, or been suspended for non-payment of dues, or suspended or expelled for unmasonic conduct.

Section 2. The duties inculcated in the several degrees of Freemasonry, both Symbolic and Capitular, are hereby declared obligatory upon every member of this Chapter.

Part III
The Officers- Their Election, Installation, Etc.

Section 1. The Officers of the Chapter, required by the Constitution of the Grand Chapter to be elected and appointed annually are:

- A. THE HIGH PRIEST, (whose title is Excellent)
- B. THE KING
- C. THE SCRIBE
- D. THE TREASURER
- E. THE SECRETARY
- F. THREE TRUSTEES (3 year terms, staggered)
- G. THE CAPTAIN OF THE HOST
- H. THE PRINCIPAL SOJOURNER
- I. THE ROYAL ARCH CAPTAIN
- J. THE THREE MASTERS OF THE VEILS
- K. THE SENTINEL

The six officers named (A-F) must be elected by ballot, and by a majority of the votes cast, at the Annual Election held in December. The High Priest is required to appoint the remaining Officers before the Installation.

Section 2. The Installation of Officers, both appointed and elected shall take place on the night of the election or within thirty days thereafter; and no officer can be installed by proxy.

Section 3. The High Priest may also appoint a Chaplain, Organist, Soloist or Assistant Secretary.

Section 4. In addition to those duties, which appertains to every Royal Arch Mason, and those which are purely traditional therefore unwritten, the Officers of the Chapter shall be governed in their duties, other than those particularly enumerated herein, by their installation charges and usages of the Fraternity.

Section 5. It shall be the duty of the High Priest to see that the By-laws of this Chapter are strictly enforced, and permit no infringement of the Constitution of the Grand Chapter, that all the subordinate Officers perform the duties of their respective stations faithfully and diligently; that correct records are kept by the Secretary; that the Treasurer render exact accounts when required; that returns be made annually, to the Grand Chapter, of the work, dues, etc., and that the amount due the Grand Chapter is paid regularly and punctually; the warrant of the Chapter of which he is the custodian, he must deliver to his successor in office. He is, ex officio, a representative of the Chapter in Grand Chapter, and is his duty to attend its Annual Convocations, unless by illness or business of paramount importance.

Section 6. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive all monies from the Secretary, keep a true account of the same, and pay all orders drawn upon him by the High Priest with the consent of the Chapter and to provide a financial report at the Annual Convocation. He shall promptly deliver to his successor in office all monies and property belonging to this Chapter in his possession.

Section 7A. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep a correct record of the transactions of the Chapter, collect all dues and fees, and pay them to the Treasurer. Immediately thereafter, to keep true accounts with the members of the Chapter and perform all other duties pertaining to his office. He shall promptly deliver to his successor in office all records, documents, minutes, seal, and property belonging to this Chapter in his possession.

Section 7B. In conformity with existing accepted Masonic practice and the Grand Lodge Constitution, Section 309.2, the Chapter Secretary may issue all dues notices, summons, newsletters, and correspondence to Companions personally, or by mail through the Post Office, or by electronic e-mail to his address last known to the Secretary. Further, if a Companion does not have a computer, or an electronic e-mail address, the dues notices, summons, newsletters, and correspondence must be sent by regular mail through the Post Office or served personally. In addition, subscriptions and charges for dues, dinners and events may be paid electronically as determined by the Chapter.

Section 8. It shall be the duty of the Trustees to take into custody all properties and accessories belonging to the Chapter. They shall be responsible for the condition, whereabouts, and availability of any and all items of wardrobe equipment and degree paraphernalia. They shall keep an accurate and permanent inventory and be responsible to the Chapter for its accuracy.

Part IV

Petition- For Degrees, Affiliation, Demit, Diploma and Charity Action on Petitions

Section 1. An application for the degrees conferred in this Chapter shall be made by written or printed petition, signed by the applicant.

Section 2. An application for affiliation from a Companion regularly demitted, from this or some other Chapter of Royal Arch Masons shall be made by written or printed petition, signed by the applicant.

Section 3. All petitions for degrees of affiliation must be recommended by a member of the Chapter, and delivered to the Secretary, with the prescribed fee accompanying it.

Section 4. Should the petition be rejected, the Secretary shall return the fee which accompanied it to the petitioner. Should the petition be accepted, the petitioner must present himself for promotion, or in the case of affiliation to sign the By-laws, within six months, unless the petitioner shall be granted further time.

Section 5. An applicant for demission from membership must be in writing, signed by the applicant, and presented to the High Priest, who shall, if the Companion's dues are fully paid, and he is not under charges for unmasonic conduct, order a certificate of demission to the applicant.

Section 6. Petitions for relief, from Companions in distress, may be made verbally or in writing.

Section 7. The vote upon petitions for degrees or affiliation must be taken by secret ballot, and one negative vote shall reject; the High Priest having the right to order the ballot taken until he is satisfied that no mistake has been made; but postponement to a future time cannot be permitted.

Part V

Fees, Dues, Etc.

Section 1. The fees for the several degrees of Mark, Past, Most Excellent Master, and Royal Arch Mason, or all of them, may be fixed from time to time by resolution, proposed at a regular Convocation of the Chapter, two thirds of the membership present voting; therefore, but the degrees shall not be conferred for a fee less than fifty dollars.

Section 2. The fee to accompany a petition of a Master Mason for the degree shall be fifty dollars. Twenty dollars shall accompany the petition.

Section 3. The fee for plural member shall be ten dollars, which shall accompany the petition.

Section 4. The annual dues of each member of the Chapter shall be forty dollars (\$40.00), plus the annual per capita of twenty-one dollars and fifty cents (\$21.50) for Grand Chapter, to be paid *in advance* on or before the day appointed for the annual election of officers.

Section 5. Any member of the Chapter, who shall neglect to pay his dues for more than one year plus the current years dues, unless satisfactory reasons are shown for their non-payment, shall be suspended from its membership by a vote of the Chapter, after four weeks notice; but such suspension shall cease upon the payment of all the arrearages to the time of suspension.

Section 6. No member shall be suspended, however, for non-payment of dues until a Chapter Council Officer has e-mailed him or called upon him personally or by first class letter sent to his last known mailing address.

Part VI
Miscellaneous

Section 1. There will be no life memberships of this Chapter.

Part VII
Amendments

Section 1. Any portion of the whole of these By-laws may be amended, or other substituted in their place, at the discretion of the Chapter, provided general principles of the fraternity and the constitutional rules and edicts of the Grand Chapter of the State of New York are carefully maintained.

Section 2. All amendments, substitutions, etc., shall be proposed in writing, read before the Chapter, and laid over until the next regular Convocation, when the vote of the Chapter shall be taken thereon; and the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present shall be essential to the adoption of said proposition.

Section 3. Any action or edict of the Grand Chapter altering these By-laws has the effect of an amendment without action of the Chapter.

Amendments/clarifications as follows:

- Angola Chapter 304 Warrant granted February 3, 1909
- Hamburg Chapter 313 Warrant granted February 1, 1921
- Holy Ark Chapter 304 Warrant granted May 15, 1996
- Adopted 12-18-96 New Bylaws for Holy Ark
- Amended 10-15-97 Wording Officers / Trustees
- Amended 12-20-00 Verbiage in By-laws etc.
- Amended 05-20-05 Change location to Lackawanna NY
- Amended 12-20-06 Raise Chapter dues to \$17.50

- Amended 05-18-11 Installation, Location, waive Convocation w/ program
- Amended 11-20-19 Four meeting set-up, business, specials etc.
- Amended 10-21-20 consolidated document of all previous changes /minor changes, reduction qty Trustees, electronic mail and notifications, dues increase to \$40.00 plus per capita, petition fee increase to \$50.00, Secretary to turn over possessions.
Approved by the Grand Chapter.
- Amended Sec 2A, 12-21-22, Deleted the four-meeting set-up which was adopted 11-20-19, and reinstated original 10 meeting set-up.