

Current Constitution*	Changes	Rationale
*adopted 4/9/2011; amended 3/2/2012 and 4/26/2016		
[intro]	The document was named “Bylaws and Constitution” instead of “Constitution”	Bylaws is a more recognizable term. When we registered with the NM Attorney General’s Office, we were asked to submit our “Bylaws” not a “Constitution.” We decided to keep “Constitution” as part of the title to keep the character of a founding document and to keep a connection to past Constitutions.
[format]	Roman numerals were retained for Articles. Sections were designated with letters. Numbered Subsections were introduced.	Some Sections of the Constitution needed further subdivision and to eliminate numbered lists in numbered Sections.
Article I and Article II	These Articles were combined. Article I became Section A of Article I. Article II, Section 1 became Section B, and so on. “Description, Purposes, and Principles” was replaced with “Mission.”	Two closely-related Articles were combined. “Description” was thought to be part of “Name” and “Mission” was thought more succinct than “Purposes, and Principles”
Article II, Section 1	Deleted: “and any other organizations chosen by the members whose purposes are in agreement with those of the NFSPS.”	We have only one affiliation: NFSPS. We can work with other organizations without formally affiliating with them.
Article II, Section 2	Deleted: “throughout the State and elsewhere” and following. Added: The rest of the text of this Section was taken from the Mission statement found in the NMSPS Policies and Procedures document.	The Mission statement in NMSPS’s Policies and Procedures was deemed a better statement. Also, disposition of assets upon dissolution was covered in Article XI (Article VIII of proposed Bylaws and Constitution.)
Article II, Section 3	This Section was divided into Article I, Sections D and E. A statement of the fiscal year dates was added. Information relating to establishing a NM State Poet Laureate was deleted.	Tax-exempt status and fiscal year are both tax matters. Non-political status is another matter. An NM State Poet Laureate position has been established. Verbiage relating to providing information was broadened.
Article III	Section 1 became Article II, Section A: “full- or part-time” was inserted before “residents of New Mexico.” The rest of Article III was completely re-written. Membership categories were reduced to three (from six). Membership renewal was changed from “everybody-on-November 1” to “a-year-from-when-you-joined.” Free membership for Youth up to age 22 (and NMSPS pays NFSPS dues for 18-21 year olds). Life membership rules were simplified.	There were too many categories of membership. “Sustaining” is redundant with “Adult,” since being a poet was not a requirement for Adult membership. Many members join the Society through our web site, making pro-rating of dues difficult. “Sponsoring” was deleted to dispense with non-voting membership. The verbiage about Sponsoring members became the foundation for a bylaw about substantial donations (Article VII, Subsection 2). Life membership and Student rules were too complicated and required too much record keeping.

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Article IV	<p>This article was pretty much completely re-written, becoming Article III “Organization and Governance of the Society” and Sections A and D of Article IV, “Elections and Vacancies on the Board of Directors.”</p> <p>A new Section, Section C, was added to stipulate that Chapter Chairpersons are now to be elected in even-numbered years at a chapter meeting in January, February, or March (proposed Bylaws Article IV, Section C).</p>	<p>The current Constitution does not stipulate when or how often Chapter Chairpersons are elected. We all appreciate long-serving Chapter Chairpersons, but Chapter Chairpersons need to know what they are signing up for and the minimum length of the commitment. Chapter elections need not take up a whole Chapter meeting (Article V, Section C), but we do need a mechanism for asking if the current Chapter Chairperson wishes to “re-up” and/or electing someone new.</p>
Article IV (cont’d)	<p>Elected Officers of the organization are to be President, VP, Sec’y, and Treasurer. Chapter Chairpersons are also elected. The other six Directors on the Board are to be appointed annually by the President. This is a big change from the current Constitution, which stipulates that the Chancellor is an elected position and that all Project Leaders become voting members of the Board. We redefined “Chancellor” to explicitly include anyone who had been an Officer of NMSPS (not just past Presidents) and to make it an annual, appointed position (reducing the time commitment). We also removed “Honorary Chancellors” from the Board.</p>	<p>We aggregated NMSPS Projects into six broad areas, with a Director for each, so that the size of the Board will not change every time we add/subtract a Project and so that leading a Project or doing a job will not obligate a person to be on the Board. The work in each Director’s area can be done by the Director or by a team, but the Director, oversees the work and only the Director is on the Board. This, and removing “Honorary Chancellors,” limits the size of the Board and ensures that all members of the Board will have one or more jobs to do. Any Projects which the Society undertakes that do not come under a particular Director’s jurisdiction, or come under many Directors’ jurisdictions, will be supervised by one or more members of the Board. The Leader of any Project may or may not be a member of the Board, but new Projects will no longer result in additional Board members.</p>
Article IV (cont’d)	<p>Vacancies on the Board of Directors are filled by Presidential appointment with the approval of the Board (Article IV, Section D, subsection 1 of the new Bylaws). The only difference between the new Bylaws and the current Constitution on this subject (Article IV, Section 1, subsection A) is the addition of the following verbiage:</p> <p>“The duties of the vacant position may be assumed by a sitting Board member until a replacement can be found. The sitting Board member shall not have an additional vote.”</p>	<p>The new verbiage was inserted to ensure that each Board member has only one vote.</p>

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Article IV (cont'd)	A new subsection was added (Article IV, Section D, Subsection 2).	The new Subsection defines how and why a Board member may be voted off the Board.
Article V	Article V became Article IV, Section B. The procedure and timeline was changed so that elections will be entirely by electronic means (with an option for those unable to vote electronically to submit paper ballots via U. S. mail). The quorum required for elections to be valid (Article V, Section 3 and Article VI, Section 1) was reworded in terms of ballots received, rather than members present at a meeting. A new Bylaw, Article IV, Section C was added to this Article.	The election process needed to be made electronic as far as possible. The new Bylaw was added to define when and how Chapters should elect their Chairpersons.
Article VI	Article VI became Section G of Article V	Quorums are part of running a business meeting, not important enough for an Article of their own.
Article VII	This Article became Article V, "Business Meetings." Section 1 became Section A. "Meetings" in this Section was changed to "Business meetings." Sections B, C, F, H, and I were all added.	The name of this article was changed, and the word "business" inserted in Section A to focus on business meetings, as opposed to any other meetings of the Society, such as Chapter meetings, which are poetry-centered. Sections B, C, F, H, and I were added to comply with Roberts Rules of Order in Brief.
Article VII, Sections 2 and 4	These Sections were combined and became Article V, Section D. The annual meeting date was changed from May to April and the stipulation to rotate the meeting place was deleted.	Both Sections had to do with general membership meetings. Meeting date was changed because we haven't been meeting in May (last two State Conventions, 2017 & 2018, were both in April). Since the last two State Conventions were very successful, we thought we should stick with April as the State Convention month. Meeting place rotation was deleted in favor of making it a Policies and Procedures matter.

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Article VII, Section 3	<p>This Section became Article V, Section E. Deleted: “The Executive Board shall meet at least twice a year, but preferably more often. At the writing of this Constitution in 2011, the Executive Board met quarterly.” Replaced with: “The Board of Directors shall meet quarterly: October, January, April, and August. The Officers of the Society may meet more often.”</p> <p>The last sentence of this section was changed to read, “Emergency meetings of the Board may be called by the President or at least three (3) members of the Board at any time, provided a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Board is given sufficient time to assemble.</p>	<p>Experience has taught us that quarterly board meetings are required to accomplish the business of the Society. The months listed correspond with months that we have specific business to do and/or the months that we think we are most likely to be able to assemble a quorum of the Board.</p> <p>Since emergency meetings would be called under dire circumstances (such as voting someone off the board), we need to ensure that at least 2/3 of the Board can be there.</p>
Article VII, Section 5	This Section became part of Article III, Section A, Subsection 3	Since Article V only refers to Business Meetings, this Bylaw now more properly belongs with the Bylaws on Chapter formation and activities
Article VIII, Sections 1-3	This Article was reworked and became Article III, Section A	Chapter Bylaws were combined with Bylaws about the Board of Directors to become an Article called “Organization and Governance of the Society,” so that the entire organization of the Society would be in one Article.
Article VIII, Section 4	This Section became Article III, Section A, Subsection 4. The frequency of required reports was increased from once a year to four times a year.	Since Chapters can now request funding from the Board to support their programming, and since the Board wants to encourage Chapters and individual members to let us know what they are doing and to make use of Society funds and other support to spread poetry in New Mexico and beyond, more frequent reporting is required.
Article IX	This Article was replaced by Article VII, “Finances,” which was then thoroughly reworked and expanded. Sections 1 and 2, concerning when members pay dues and how much they pay, was reworked and made part of Article III. Payments for paper copies of the newsletter was deleted.	Budgeting and financial reporting is an important part of the functioning of the Society and needs to be part of our Bylaws. Moving and reworking Section 1 was done for the reasons explained under Rationale for Article III above. Payments for paper copies of the newsletter was deleted in favor of making this a Policies and Procedures matter.

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Article X	This Article became Article VI. Section 1 became Section A and “dues-paying members” was replaced with “members in good standing.” The second paragraph of Section 1 was deleted and replaced with “Section B: The Society may sponsor one or more annual NFSPS contests. The parameters of any sponsored contests are open to change each year by vote of the Board.” Section 2 was deleted. and a new Bylaw, Section C, was added. The first sentence of Section 3 became Section D and the rest was deleted.	This Article was reworked to remove historical precedents in favor of more “how-to” bylaws. “Members in good standing” replaced “dues-paying members,” because some NMSPS members are not required to pay dues. This change made Section 2 redundant. Section C was added as a “how-to” for running an NMSPS contest.
Article XI	This Article became Article VIII and was reworked.	Wording was redone to be less specific, as the methodology for dissolution in New Mexico may have changed or may change in the future.
Article XII	This Article became Article IX and was reworked. Section B was added.	Reworded to comply with Roberts Rules of Order in Brief. Section B was added to ensure that neither future amendments nor old versions of the Constitution/Bylaws would ever be lost. (Separate documents are easily lost.)
—	Article X was added.	Including this Article affords NMSPS some legal protection that is not in the current Constitution.