



GREATER PIEDMONT REALTORS

**Greater Piedmont REALTORS®, INC.**

**Policy Manual**

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The approved version of this manual supersedes all previous versions.

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## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® (GPR) Policy Manual is to supplement the GPR Bylaws, VAR and NAR policies in governing the administration and operation of the Association, and is applicable to all members of the Association. These policies comprise the operational framework in which the Association functions, and shall guide Officers, Directors, Committee and Task Force Chairpersons or Vice Chairpersons, and Staff in implementing the strategic objectives of the Association.

The Association shall be a non-profit corporation (501©(6) having the purpose to enhance the ability of its members to achieve career success in an ethical and professional manner and to promote and protect private property rights.

Where this document is silent, GPR CEO and leadership shall have authority to initiate actions, processes and programs in the interest of serving association members, within the confines of the Bylaws.

### 1.2 **Mission & Vision**

Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Mission is set forth in the Strategic Plan, which is reviewed and updated annually.

**Mission:** We provide outstanding services and leadership to position our members for success in real estate.

**Vision:** We are the trusted voice in Real Estate, providing professional services, advocating on behalf of our members and the public we serve.

## 2. POLICIES GOVERNING CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

### 2.1 **Officer, Director, Volunteer, Committee Member Representation**

Officers, Directors, Volunteers, and Committee Members shall represent the best interests of the Association.

When voting on matters or making governance or business recommendations or decisions in their capacity as a Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Officer, Director, Volunteer, or Committee Member, shall have a fiduciary obligation to represent the interests of the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® association.

### 2.2 **Adherence to NAR Policy**

Greater Piedmont REALTORS® adopts, supports, and enforces the membership policies of the National Association of REALTORS® (“NAR”).

### 2.3 **Antitrust Policy**

Greater Piedmont REALTORS® strongly supports competition and an open marketplace in which fees, commissions, and compensation are fully negotiable between the parties to each such agreement. As an Association, we consider adherence to the federal and state antitrust laws as one of the most important duties of members and we are vigilant in reminding our members of those tenets. A goal of the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® is to improve the level

of products and services offered by its members to the public and to encourage vigorous competition among its members in providing such products and services. In furtherance of this goal, Greater Piedmont REALTORS® has adopted a policy of strict compliance with antitrust laws.

**2.3. A. Competitor Firm Policies.** Members shall not discuss with any competitor individual firm policies relating to competitive policies, pricing, or related types of sensitive information, including (a) commission levels, fees, business expenses, or other business information, or policies that would allow or encourage price fixing or maintenance; (b) bidding strategies either in general or for specific properties or any other information that would allow or encourage bid rigging; (c) a firm's competitive business decisions, including its policies regarding dealing with those firms offering different business models; (d) policies regarding the duration or types of brokerage agreements the firm will enter into or the form of compensation the firm will accept or negotiate; (e) the compensation offered or paid to a firm's agents or employees; (f) plans concerning any proposed or existing customers, clients, or territories; or (g) any other actions that might be construed as concerted attempts to restrain competition, including joint attempts to control or affect prices, market conditions, marketing practices, customer choice, or the like.

**2.3.B. REALTOR® Association Management.** Membership in Greater Piedmont REALTORS® is open to any individual or entity meeting the membership qualifications set forth in the Bylaws of the Association, without regard to the type of business models employed by its company. No member shall urge on the leadership or membership of Greater Piedmont REALTORS® or of any local association or on any competitor that membership in any REALTOR® association be limited to companies practicing particular business models, or that membership be denied to companies or members practicing business models with which the member is in competition or with which the member is unfamiliar or uncomfortable. Members shall take no action to influence the business conduct of customers or other members toward such competitors.

**2.3.C. Availability of Information.** As a service to members and to the public, Greater Piedmont REALTORS® accumulates data and issues statistical reports relating to general market trends and comparisons of past transactions of general interest. Data collection will not be limited to the membership but will generally deal with the market as a whole. The development of guidelines and standards relating to the accumulation, dissemination, and use of such information will be open to wide participation by affected parties, and participation in any data collection will be strictly voluntary. In conducting any market research, Greater Piedmont REALTORS® will take care to avoid anticompetitive effects. General historical statistical data collected by Greater Piedmont REALTORS® is for use and analysis by individual members and companies and should not be discussed among competitors at organized functions or otherwise.

**2.3.D. Conduct of Meetings.** All Greater Piedmont REALTORS® meetings will be conducted in full compliance with antitrust laws. Discussion of any topic suggestive of an intent or agreement to restrict competition or fix prices shall be improper. Among such topics and discussions are: 1. Discussions of individual company policies and practices; 2. Criticism of another company's policies and practices or of any particular business model;

and 3. Suggestions that a local association or multiple listing services exclude from membership or participation those who practice any particular business model or engage in any unfamiliar or innovative activity or practice. Despite the fact that Greater Piedmont REALTORS® counsel and staff are well versed in antitrust matters, the presence of counsel or staff at a meeting should not invite discussion of matters that violate the letter or spirit of this policy or the antitrust laws. It is the responsibility of each member in the first instance to avoid raising improper subjects for discussion. However, if discussion of any inappropriate topics occur at any meeting, all members present should openly disassociate themselves from such discussions, and if the discussions do not end immediately, the meeting should be brought to a prompt adjournment by the person in charge of the conduct of the meeting. Committee chairs and others conducting meetings will find that adherence to prepared agendas for all Greater Piedmont REALTORS® meetings will reduce the likelihood of inappropriate discussions.

**2.3.E. Informal Settings.** Members should also be aware that informal or social settings are inappropriate for discussion of the topics described in this policy, and that casual comments – even those made in jest – might have serious antitrust implications.

**2.3.F. Purpose of Policy** - This policy statement has been prepared to assure that Greater Piedmont REALTORS® members, and especially Greater Piedmont REALTORS® volunteers and participants in Greater Piedmont REALTORS® and other REALTOR® association meetings, are aware of their obligations under antitrust law. Consequently, members conducting or participating in meetings of any REALTOR® association shall see to the strict enforcement of this policy. Volunteers and participants shall be required, as a condition of participation on Greater Piedmont REALTORS® committees, work groups, task forces, leadership groups, governing bodies, or other groups affiliated with Greater Piedmont REALTORS®, to execute a copy of this policy to affirm their acceptance of its principles and agreement to comply with its terms.

## **2.4 Conflict of Interest Policy**

A member of any of Greater Piedmont REALTORS®' decision-making bodies will be considered to have a conflict of interest whenever that member:

1. Is a principal, partner, or corporate officer of an Entity providing products or services to Greater Piedmont REALTORS® or in an Entity being considered as a provider of products or services;
2. Holds a seat on the Board of Directors of an Entity, unless the person's only relationship to the Entity is service on such Board of Directors as Greater Piedmont REALTORS®' representative;
3. Holds an ownership interest of the Entity. Ownership interest includes holdings of the member, the member's spouse/significant other, and any trust, corporation, or partnership in which any of the foregoing individuals is an officer, director, or owner;
4. Has a financial interest in, or serves in a decision-making capacity for, any Entity that the member knows is offering competing products and services as those offered by Greater Piedmont REALTORS®;
5. Engages in any outside business, profession, or other activities that would directly or indirectly materially adversely affect Greater Piedmont REALTORS®; or

6. Solicits or accept gifts, gratuities, free trips, honoraria, personal property, or any other item of value from any person or Entity as a direct or indirect inducement to provide special treatment to such donor with respect to matters pertaining to Greater Piedmont REALTORS® without fully disclosing such items to the decision-making body.

The term “Entity” is used to describe any organized entity including, but not limited to: any local association, state, or national associations; other trade associations; multiple listing services; non-profits; businesses; corporations; partnerships; sole proprietorships. Members with a conflict of interest must immediately disclose their interest at the outset of any discussions by a decision-making body pertaining to the Entity, activities or relationship in which they have an interest. Such members may not participate in the discussion relating to that Entity, activities, or relationship. Furthermore, no member with a conflict of interest may vote on any matter in which the member has a conflict of interest, including votes to block or alter the actions of the body in order to benefit the Entity or activities in which they have an interest. The member may be asked to leave the room at the request of the presiding member of any decision-making body during discussion on the Entity, activities, or relationship.

**2.4.A. Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy** – Failure by an interested party to disclose actual or possible Financial or Nonfinancial interests constitutes a possible violation of the Conflict of Interest policy. Alleged violations of the Conflict of Interest policy shall be investigated and enforced in accordance with disciplinary procedures established in the Bylaws and this Manual.

## **2.6 Philosophy on Board/Staff Roles and Responsibilities.**

It is the responsibility of the Greater Piedmont Board of Directors to implement and monitor progress toward the organization’s strategic objectives, and to promulgate policies necessary for serving its members.

It is the responsibility of the Greater Piedmont Leadership Team, through the Chief Executive Officer, to ensure that Board policy is properly executed.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer to manage the day-to-day operations of the Association, including creating a functional staffing structure; and hiring, training, evaluating, compensating, disciplining and terminating staff within the funding appropriated by the Board of Directors. All staff report to the CEO. The CEO shall be accountable for leading staff in achieving organizational outcomes, and shall direct staff in providing direct member services and programs necessary to accomplish Greater Piedmont’s strategic goals, with the advice and direction of member volunteers who serve on committees, and in accordance with Board policy directives and funding appropriations.

It is the responsibility of member volunteers who serve on committees to provide input to the Board and staff concerning member needs and expectations; to advise and provide direction to the staff in translating Association strategic plan goals into operational programs and services for the membership.

Implicit in this policy is the assumption that the essential and primary role of volunteer leadership

is determining direction and identifying desired ends/outcomes; the essential role of staff is in identifying means and implementing volunteer-advised and directed strategies for accomplishing those ends/outcomes.

All Greater Piedmont REALTORS® elected officers and directors are required annually to commit to a pledge of fiduciary responsibility to the Association, including but not limited to, duties of care, loyalty, obedience, accounting and confidentiality.

## **2.7 Member Professionalism Policy**

It is the Policy of Greater Piedmont REALTORS® to seek to enhance the professionalism of the real estate industry in Virginia. Individuals applying for volunteer positions (committee member, Director, Officer) and any members currently serving in appointed or elected volunteer positions, shall disclose any finding of violation against their license due to direct action of the individual by the Virginia Real Estate Board or similar state regulatory authority, any finding of violation by a professional standards hearing panel. Individuals convicted of felony crimes are not eligible to serve as instructors approved to teach Virginia REALTORS® courses. The Leadership Team has the authority to grant an exception

## **2.8 Leadership Development**

Greater Piedmont's future success rests on its ability to recruit and develop new leaders. It is the Association's policy to identify future leaders and enhance their leadership skills and knowledge through training and opportunities for leadership roles in the association.

## **2.9 Staff Development**

It is the policy of Greater Piedmont that staff or the Association shall seek ongoing professional development in subject areas applicable to their roles and responsibilities at the Association. The Greater Piedmont CEO shall ensure such development programs are available within the funding appropriated by the Board of Directors.

## **2.10 CEO Evaluation**

It is the Association's policy to conduct a performance evaluation of the CEO annually, conducted by the President with input from the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team shall also consider input on the CEO's performance from members of the Board of Directors. The annual review should be completed no later than March 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year, and the report shall be filed in the CEO's personnel file.

## **2.11 Code of Conduct and Harassment Policy**

The Volunteer/Staff Code of Conduct and Harassment Policy of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) is adopted as the policy of the Association. This policy shall, in the future, be deemed to be amended and changed whenever the Code of Conduct and Sexual Harassment is amended or changed by the National Association.

Greater Piedmont REALTORS® fully supports the rights and opportunities of all Members and Staff to work in an environment free from discrimination and harassment. Harassment includes sexual harassment and means any verbal or physical conduct including threatening or obscene language, unwelcome sexual advances, stalking, actions including strikes, shoves, kicks, or other similar physical contact, or threats to do the same, or any other conduct with the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating a hostile, intimidating or offensive work environment.

Harassment of any Member or Staff is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. All Members and Staff are expected to behave accordingly and take appropriate measures to ensure that such conduct does not occur.

Any volunteer who believes he or she has been the subject of sexual harassment should report the alleged act immediately to the Greater Piedmont President or CEO. If the complaint involves the Greater Piedmont President, the complaint should be brought to the attention of the Greater Piedmont President-elect. The President or President-elect shall advise the CEO and they shall jointly seek the advice of General Counsel regarding investigation of the alleged offense and reporting the preliminary findings of the investigation to the Board of Directors for recommended action.

Such actions may include dismissal of the matter or a finding of violation accompanied by any sanction authorized in the association's Code of Ethics and Arbitration process. Any member accused of violating this policy shall be provided an opportunity to speak before the Board of Directors prior to final Board action.

### **2.12 Member Whistleblower Policy**

The Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Fiduciary Pledge requires Association Officers and volunteers to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities for Greater Piedmont REALTORS®. As representatives of Greater Piedmont REALTORS®, members must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

### **2.13 Report Responsibility.**

It is the responsibility of all members to comply with Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Policies and to report violations or suspected violations

### **2.14 No Retaliation.**

No member who in good faith reports a violation of the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Policies shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or other adverse consequences. This policy is intended to encourage and enable members to raise serious concerns with Greater Piedmont REALTORS® prior to seeking resolution outside the organization.

### **2.15 Compliance Officer.**

Greater Piedmont REALTORS®' Chief Executive Officer ("CEO"), shall serve as Greater Piedmont REALTORS®' compliance officer. The compliance officer cannot handle any complaints they are the subject of. The compliance officer is responsible for investigating and seeking resolution to all reported complaints and allegations concerning violations of the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Policies and, at their discretion, shall advise the Leadership Team and/or Members of the Board of Directors. The compliance officer has direct access to the Directors and is required to report any compliance activity to the Board at least annually. In the event the CEO is the subject of the complaint, the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® General Counsel shall serve as the compliance officer and facilitate the complaint process.

### **2.16 Reporting Violations.**

Members are encouraged to share their concerns or complaints with the President, CEO, or other Leadership Team Member. Any communications to one of these individuals will be treated

as a filed complaint for the purposes of this policy, which then must be communicated to the compliance officer for further action.

### **2.17 Acting in Good Faith.**

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Policies must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Policies. Any allegations that prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as not acting in good faith which may lead to disciplinary action.

**2.18 Confidentiality.** Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

**2.19 Handling of Reported Violations.** The compliance officer will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five (5) business days. All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

## **3. OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

### **3.1 Business Philosophy**

Greater Piedmont REALTORS® shall be guided by its identified strategic objectives, mission, and vision. Decisions are made to ensure financial solvency of the Association and provide uninterrupted service to its mission and support of its membership.

### **3.2 Budget Process**

The Board of Directors shall annually determine the annual dues needed to accomplish the strategic objectives of the Association and shall approve an operational budget for the subsequent fiscal year. The dues amount for the subsequent year shall be determined no later than the August board meeting at which time they will be approved prior to invoices going out.

### **3.3 Parliamentary Procedures**

All Committee and Board of Director's meetings follow Robert's Rules of Order for parliamentary procedures for meetings. Robert's Rules ensure fair, efficient, and democratic decision making by establishing a structured process for motions, debates, voting, and ensuring all members have equal rights and privileges.

### **3.4 Committees**

It is the policy of the association to promote the broadest possible volunteer member involvement and opportunities for member input and engagement. Each committee will have a well-articulated mission and scope linked to the strategic plan. Committees should serve the interests of the broader association membership.

All Greater Piedmont REALTORS® elected are required annually to commit to a pledge of fiduciary responsibility to the Association, including but not limited to, duties of care, loyalty, obedience, accounting and confidentiality.

Annually, the Board of Directors will determine any requirements to serve, such as, but not limited to, Fairhaven and/or Harassment Prevention training if it is available.

**3.4.A. Committee Chair/Vice Chair Appointment Process.** The President-Elect shall designate the Chair, Vice Chair, and any Task Force Chair or Vice Chair for all Committees to function during his/her term as President. These positions and appointments will be approved by the Board of Directors no later than the November Board of Directors meeting for committees starting in January. The committee appointments will be made for one year unless otherwise specified.

**3.4.B. Committee Volunteer Process.** Committee applications are open to all REALTOR® members. Applications will open sometime in October; with a deadline to apply by mid-December. No applicants will be considered after the advertised deadline. Committee applicants will be approved by the Board of Directors in the January meeting.

**3.4.C. Committee Meeting Processes.** Minutes of all meetings shall be taken by the Association Staff Liaison (whenever possible). If staff is not available to record the minutes of the meeting, the Committee Chair is responsible for ensuring recording of the meeting takes place. The meeting minutes are shared with the committee prior to the next scheduled meeting. In the absence of the Committee Chair, the Vice Chair shall preside. The Association inclement weather policy will apply to all scheduled meetings and classes. All Committee/Task Force meetings will take place during GPR business hours (8:00am – 4:30pm). All recommendations, motions, or requests for additional funding must be submitted by the Committee Chair to the CEO to be added to the Board agenda at least one week prior to the scheduled board meeting for their consideration/approval.

**3.4.D. Committee Attendance Policy.** All REALTOR® Committees will meet in person at the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® office unless otherwise agreed upon.

- Public Policy Committee - A Committee member who is absent from three meetings in a calendar year shall be dismissed from the Committee
- Professional Development Committee, Annual Meeting, & Good Neighbors – A Committee member who is absent from two meetings in a calendar year shall be dismissed from the Committee
- Any Committee member dismissed due to attendance may appeal to the President and President-Elect and show good cause why they should not be dismissed.

### **3.5 Temporary Committees or Taskforce**

The President has the authority to create a temporary Committee, Subcommittee, Presidential Advisory Group, or Work Group for his/her term. The President can create these committees from time to time in response to current needs of the Association. These committees shall have a defined purpose, budget, and timeline.

### **3.6 Permanent Committees of the Association**

The following are the Standing Committees approved in the Greater Piedmont bylaws. The makeup and authorities of these committees shall be as approved in the bylaws.

#### **3.6.A. Public Policy & RPAC Committee**

Purpose: Monitor local proposed legislation and attend legislative functions, presenting

the Association's positions (if any) at the approval of the Board. Advocate on issues affecting homeownership and personal property rights. Educate Members about the goals, objectives, and benefits of RPAC. Strive to meet/exceed VAR RPAC Fair Share Goal for percentage of participation, fundraising monetary goals, and major investor goals.

### **3.6.B. Grievance/Professional Standards (as covered in NARs Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual)**

Purpose: For the Grievance Committee – Acts as the first step in the ethics complaint and arbitration process to determine if they meet the criteria for further review; screens for validity (filed timely, falls under the association's jurisdiction; relates to a potential violation of the NAR Code of Ethics); and forwards or dismisses cases.

Purpose: For Professional Standards – Responsible for upholding the NAR Code of Ethics and ensuring that REALTORS® conduct business with integrity, professionalism, and fairness. They review and decide cases of potential violations; resolve commission disputes; and recommends corrective measures or sanctions for violations.

NOTE: Greater Piedmont REALTORS® is a participant in Virginia REALTORS® Coop program who manages these cases on our behalf.

### **3.6.C. Professional Development Committee**

Purpose: Enhance the knowledge, skills, and professionalism of its members by developing, promoting, and overseeing educational programs.

This includes, but is not limited to, providing mandatory classes to retain their Virginia license; encourage members to pursue designations and certifications to stay competitive; provide and promote industry best practices on code of ethics, DEI initiatives and emerging trends; and encourage members to continually improve their skills to adapt to market changes so they can better serve clients.

### **3.6.D. Member Services (or Annual Meeting Committee)**

Purpose: Enhance the overall experience, and engagement for Greater Piedmont members. They plan membership meetings (Annual Meeting) of the Association, while encouraging participation by general membership at all Greater Piedmont events. Identify programs and recommend strategies, resources, and information that address membership issues.

### **3.6. E. Good Neighbors Committee**

Purpose: Organize and participate in functions to raise money for community projects and/or nonprofits. Sponsorships or donations from Greater Piedmont should evaluate which donations yield the highest return for our mission/strategic plan, and assess which of those charitable contributions yield the highest return for our investment. They should find ways to participate in events that benefit the community and show the REALTOR® value and presence within the communities of the association.

### **3.7 Other Standing Committees/Taskforce**

The following are existing Committees with Greater Piedmont REALTORS®

#### **3.7A. Nominating Committee**

Purpose: Follows the Association Bylaws to implement the process for the election of officers and directors. This Committee is comprised of three to five members who are appointed by the President-Elect, and include the President-Elect, and approved by the Board of Directors. Objective is to fill positions with qualified & diverse candidates. Any nominee for office will not be eligible to serve on the Nominating Committee.

#### **3.7.B. Election Committee**

Purpose: This Committee, of not less than 3 REALTOR® members, is appointed by the President-Elect with the purpose to validate the results and report of the election. Any nominee for office will not be eligible to serve on the Election Committee.

#### **3.7.C. Finance Committee**

Purpose: This Committee and Chair is appointed by the President-Elect (for the following year) with the purpose to oversee the financial health and sustainability of the association to support the association's programs, services, and overall success.

The Committee reviews Greater Piedmont's financials, including but not limited to, cash on hand, CDs, reserves, investments, and the development and ongoing annual reviews of the Finance Policy. They review investment and reserve funds to safeguard the association's assets and provide reports and recommendations to the Board of Directors as required.

#### **3.7.D. Affiliate Committee/Group**

Purpose: The Affiliate Committee Chair is appointed by the President who will serve as the Affiliate Chair and Affiliate Liaison to the Board of Directors, for a period of one year. This Committee is open to all active Affiliate members who meet periodically in person or via zoom. They serve several key purposes, primarily focused on fostering relationships between the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® and industry-related businesses.

Key components include networking and relationship building; providing educational opportunities and best practices; help secure sponsorships for events, etc.; help with volunteer efforts to strengthen Greater Piedmont's community presence; and providing opportunities for them to showcase their services for the REALTORS® and their clients.

### **3.8 Elected and Appointed Volunteer Policies**

All Greater Piedmont REALTORS® elected and appointed volunteers are required to commit a pledge of fiduciary responsibility and conflict of interest.

### **3.9 Office Location**

The office of the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® shall be 47 Garrett Street, Warrenton, Virginia 20186.

### **3.10 Office Hours**

The office hours of the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® shall be 8:00 am until 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, except for approved Holidays.

### **3.11 Inclement Weather (for GPR Office)**

If Fauquier County government offices are closed/delayed opening due to extreme weather conditions (such as heavy snow and ice), the Greater Piedmont office building will also be closed. The county government codes are: Red – Closed; Blue – Open/Employee Liberal Leave; Green – Open.

In the event the office is officially closed, all meetings and classes are cancelled as well. And we will make every effort to notify you as much in advance as possible.

When inclement weather is forecasted, staff will take their laptops home to work remotely those days. When there is no advance notice for inclement weather and the county government is closed, the day will be treated as a paid holiday for staff. In the event that the office has a delayed opening, you will be paid for hours not worked until your arrival. If the office is open, it is your responsibility to come to work. You may use your annual or sick leave if you feel you need to stay at home.

**3.11.A Inclement Weather (for GPR Meetings & Classes)** – If Fauquier County government offices are closed, all Greater Piedmont Classes and Meetings will be cancelled.

### **3.12. Office Equipment /Programs/Software**

Use of Greater Piedmont equipment/programs/software, not for Greater Piedmont purposes, requires approval of the Executive Officer.

### **3.13. Policy on Cell Phone Usage**

Use of a cellular telephone, personal digital assistant or any other electronic equipment to conduct Association business while driving is not within the scope of any employees' work or volunteers' duty or responsibility to the Association, and no employee or member volunteer is required to use a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle. All association employees and volunteers are expected to obey the laws of the state and jurisdiction in which they are traveling.

### **3.14. Building Security**

The Greater Piedmont building will be unlocked during normal business hours of Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 4:30pm. At all other times, the building needs to be locked. Greater Piedmont staff will be responsible for unlocking and locking during these days/hours. If the tenants have clients that need access outside normal business hours, they need to make arrangements with their clients to call them and allow access to the building.

### **3.15. Smoking Policy**

The Greater Piedmont building is a "Smoke Free" building. Please use designated smoking areas located on the side of the building for proper disposal of cigarette butts. Smoking is prohibited anywhere else.

### **3.16. Personnel Manual**

GPR's Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual shall govern other personnel matters of the Association.

### **3.17. Bereavement Policy**

GPR will notify all members of the passing of current or past member of the association, when the Staff is notified. The email will include the arrangements, and any information relative to donations, cards, etc. A donation will be made on behalf of GPR. For GPR employees and their families, the Executive Committee will determine the appropriate approach.

### **3.18. Information Distribution Policy**

Information distributed by Greater Piedmont would be NAR, VAR, and GPR related, or items sanctioned by them.

All correspondence or surveys sent on behalf of GPR to its members will be distributed by the Greater Piedmont staff. Exceptions include notes/agendas to committee members, etc.

### **3.19. Electronic Mail Privacy**

Greater Piedmont values, and commits to preserve the privacy of its members, and to protect them from unwanted solicitations and other invasions of privacy. To that end, Greater Piedmont REALTORS® and its employees will not, under any circumstances, sell, offer or otherwise distribute or make available the personal or company email address of any individual member or member firm to any individual or entity, including members of Greater Piedmont REALTORS®, charities, political associations or candidates, vendors, contractors or affinity partners, outside of the Greater Piedmont website directory.

### **3.20. Use of Videos, Recordings, and Photographs**

Greater Piedmont REALTORS® may conduct video recording and still photography of meetings, sessions, and events for use in connection with future educational, promotional and marketing activities of the association. Your participation in Association-sponsored and hosted meetings, sessions and events constitutes your consent to be photographed and video and audio recorded and to all uses of the images and recordings so created.

The Association reserves the right to restrict audio and video recording at Greater Piedmont meetings, sessions and events based on a speaker or performer's contractual agreement with Greater Piedmont and to protect the disclosure of sensitive, confidential, and/or proprietary information. Attendees agree to adhere to any restrictions relating to the recording of Greater Piedmont meetings, sessions and events. Failure to comply with such restrictions may result in an attendee's removal from the venue, without a right of readmission, reimbursement or other compensation.

### **3.21. Use of Greater Piedmont Letterhead**

Greater Piedmont letterhead may be used for official association business only. Letterhead may be provided to a printer or mailing service only with the prior written approval of the CEO. Letterhead is for staff use only, at the direction of the CEO, Leadership Team or Board of Directors.

### **3.22. Association Brand Protection Policy**

Greater Piedmont REALTORS® name, letterhead, logos, tag line, or other branding may only

be provided or used for official Association business with the prior written approval of the CEO. Members should not alter or edit such materials without the prior approval of the CEO.

### **3.23. Board of Directors General**

The Board of Directors will consist of the President, the President-Elect, the Treasurer, the Immediate Past President, the Directors set forth in the Bylaws, the Ex-Officio CEO, and the Ex-Officio Affiliate Director. Each candidate for Officer or Director must be a member in good standing with Greater Piedmont for one year prior to the start of term. Unpermitted absence from any three (3) regular meetings (consecutive or nonconsecutive), in a calendar year shall be treated as a resignation from the Board. Extenuating situations may be reviewed by the Board for consideration.

The process for notification of board absences include:

- Notices of absences must be provided in advance of the Board Meeting to the President & CEO advising of the absence and reason
- President will advise the Board Members of the notification, and reason, so they can vote to determine if the absence is “excused” or not
- President will provide feedback of the Board’s decision to the board member

### **3.24. Responsibilities of the Board of Directors members include, but are not limited to the following:**

**3.24. A.** General charge of the affairs of the Association, as commonly authorized in a Board of Directors, and delegate such authority and adopt such rules and regulations as may be deemed proper and not in conflict with the Bylaws of the Association.

**3.24. B.** Have a fiduciary duty to the association, including but not limited to, duties of loyalty, care, trust, obedience.

**3.24. C.** Have a fiduciary responsibility to promote the bests interests of the Association.

**3.24. D.** Approve the annual program/budget.

**3.24. E.** Recommend changes to the Association mission, vision and strategic plan

**3.24. F.** Employ and discharge the Chief Executive Officer.

**3.24. G.** Approve the Policy Manuals.

**3.24. H.** Consider requests and recommendations of the committees.

**3.24. I.** Prepare for and participate in the regularly scheduled Board of Directors meetings, plus any special meetings called by the President or 2/3 of the Board of Directors.

**3.24. J.** Attend Board of Directors leadership training when provided

**3.24. K.** Attend Greater Piedmont events such as Annual Meeting, Installation event, Day on Hill, etc.

**3.24. L.** Have responsibility of the administration, investment, and care of Greater Piedmont and its assets.

**3.24. M.** Fill vacancies that may occur on the Board.

**3.24. N.** Have a working knowledge of the Bylaws of the Association, Policy Manual, Code of Ethics and Arbitration manual, and Robert’s Rules of Order.

### **3.25. Responsibilities of the Executive Board Officers (Immediate Past President, President, President-Elect, and Treasurer) include, but are not limited to the following:**

**3.25. A.** Recommend changes and/or additions to the Policy Manual or Personnel Policy Manual for final approval by the Board.

**3.25. B.** When action requiring the approval of the Board is required between regularly

scheduled Board meetings, the Executive Committee may poll a majority of the Directors and take such action as the Executive Committee finds appropriate after such polling. Such action shall be reported at the next Board meeting.

**3.25. C.** Make decisions, including those affecting the budget, policy issues or interpretation between regular scheduled Board meetings as necessary. In those instances, the Executive Board will advise the full Board of Directors at the next Board meeting.

**3.25. D.** The President shall serve as the official spokesperson for the Association. In the absence or unavailability of the President, the President- Elect or President's designee shall serve as the spokesperson.

**3.25. E.** Shall complete the required training prior to the start of your term. This may include, but not limited to, NAR's Fairhaven or equivalent or Harassment Prevention training and some type of Leadership training.

### **3.26. Board of Officers/Directors Candidate Application Requirements**

**3.26. A.** Shall complete the application and submit prior to the deadline to be considered.

**3.26 B.** Shall be a member in good standing with the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® for at least 1 year prior to the start of the term.

**3.26. C.** Shall have been an active licensed REALTOR® or Real Estate Appraiser in Virginia for a minimum of 3 years, or, if previously, or currently served on a Greater Piedmont committee, they only need to have been an active licensed REALTOR® or Real Estate Appraiser in Virginia for a minimum of 2 years prior to the start of the term.

**3.26. D.** Shall be actively engaged in the business of Real Estate as a primary occupation.

**3.26. E.** Shall disclose any finding of violations against their license due to direct action of the candidate by the Virginia Real Estate Board (VREB) or similar state regulatory authority within the last three (3) years prior to the start of the term, as well as, any previous felony convictions. A felony conviction shall disqualify a candidate or current sitting member from service on the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Board of Directors.

**3.26 F.** Shall disclose any instances within the immediately preceding three (3) years prior to the start of the term, in which the candidate has been found by a professional standard hearing panel to have violated the REALTOR® Code of Ethics.

**3.26 G.** Shall complete the required training prior to the start of your term. This may include, but not limited to, NAR's Fairhaven or equivalent or Harassment Prevention training and some type of Leadership training.

**3.26. H.** Shall sign a commitment statement indicating that if elected, candidate will faithfully fulfill all duties including meeting attendance and participation and will serve and abide by Association policies and procedures.

**3.26. I.** For the Executive Committee positions, which include the Immediate Past President, President, President- Elect, and Treasurer, previous board experience is highly desired.

All Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Committee members (elected and appointed) volunteers are required to commit a pledge of fiduciary responsibility; anti-trust compliance; and conflict of interest.

Annually, the Board of Directors will determine any requirements to serve, such as, but not limited to, Fairhaven and/or Harassment Prevention training if it is available.

### **3.27. Board of Directors Meetings**

**3.27. A.** The Board of Directors shall hold regularly scheduled meetings a minimum of one every other month.

**3.27. B.** A special Board meeting may be called by the President or upon written request of at least 10% of the Members eligible to vote.

**3.27. C.** A quorum for the Board shall be one more than half the number of BOD members.

**3.27. D.** All requests from members for minutes of any Board meeting shall comply with Virginia Law (subsections B and C of 13.1-934 of the Code of Virginia).

**3.27. E.** All Committee and Board of Director's meetings follow Robert's Rules of Order for parliamentary procedures for meetings. Robert's Rules ensure fair, efficient, and democratic decision making by establishing a structured process for motions, debates, voting, and ensuring all members have equal rights and privileges.

### **3.28. Chief Executive Officer Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the CEO to manage the day-to-day operations of the Association, including creating a functional staffing structure; and hiring, training, evaluating, compensating, disciplining, and terminating staff within the funding appropriated by the Board of Directors. All staff report to the CEO. The CEO shall be accountable for leading staff in achieving organizational outcomes, and shall direct staff in providing direct member services and programs necessary to accomplish Greater Piedmont REALTORS®' strategic goals, with the advice and direction of member volunteers who serve on committees, in accordance with Board policy directives and funding appropriations.

The CEO shall ensure professional development programs and training are made available for staff.

The CEO is responsible for recommending professional service providers such as CPAs, legal counsel, association management system provider, etc. to the Board as needed.

The CEO and staff work with the Association's Committees, taskforces, to make recommendations for programs, services, and/or actions linked to the approved Strategic Plan.

Personnel matters are governed by the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Personnel Policy Manual.

### **3.29. Record Retention Guidelines**

It is the policy of the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® to retain records as required by law and to destroy them when appropriate. The records retention policy is as follows:

Documents (Bylaws, Minutes, EOY Financial statements)	Permanently
Articles of Incorporation	Permanently
Bank Deposit Slips	2 years
Bank Reconciliations	3 years
Audit/Review Reports	Permanently
Cancelled Checks	7 years
Insurance Policies (expired)	3 years
Deeds, Mortgages	Permanently
Tax Returns and Worksheets	Permanently

Payroll Records and Summaries	7 years
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes	Permanently
Contracts, in Force	Permanently
Contracts after Expiration	6 years
State and Federal Documents	Permanently

**4. FINANCIAL POLICIES**

**4.1. Financial and Investments Policies and Procedures**

There shall be a Greater Piedmont Financial Policy. This policy is distributed to Greater Piedmont investment partners and reviewed annually with them and the Finance Committee. Any Policy changes must be approved by the Greater Piedmont Board of Directors.

**4.2. Check Signers**

It is Greater Piedmont’s policy that checks in the amount of \$2,000 or less require only one signature, generally the Chief Executive Officer’s. Checks in an amount more than \$2,000 require two signatures, generally the Chief Executive Officer’s plus one other signature from the President, President- Elect, or Treasurer, or approval from the Executive Board to proceed with only one signature.

**4.3. Bank Accounts**

When conducted in accordance with approved budgetary guidelines or other special funding duly authorized by the Board, all banking accounts (money markets, savings, checking, Certificates of Deposit, Investments, etc.) that are established require a minimum of two signatures from the Chief Executive Officer, President, President- Elect, or Treasurer.

**4.4. Transfer of Funds**

No additional authorization is required for the Chief Executive Office to transfer of funds from the Association’s money market accounts to the Association’s checking account and visa versa.

**4.5. Audit or Review**

Adherence to NARs Core Standards, the Board shall authorize a compilation audit or review of the books and accounts of the Association by a Certified Public Accountant at the close of each fiscal year, or at the discretion of the Board.

**4.6. Capitalization**

It is the policy of the organization to expense assets in the period purchased if these assets cost \$1,000 or less individually. Assets costing in excess of \$1,000 individually will be capitalized and depreciated in accordance with FASB rules and the organization’s policies.

**4.7. Contract Signing Authority**

Contracts requiring the Association approval will need to be signed by the President, CEO, or appointed delegate, as approved by the Board.

**4.8. Credit Cards**

A credit card may be assigned to the Chief Executive Officer for the purpose of charging Association expenses. They will be required to maintain a log of credit card expenses & receipts and provide them to the Accountant monthly with the Credit Card statement for reconciliation.

#### **4.9 Refunds**

Generally, there is a no refund policy, unless published differently on the order form, education class, event, etc. Dues are not refundable. No refunds or returns for store items.

#### **5.0. TRAVEL POLICIES**

It shall be the policy of the Association to acknowledge the significant time and financial sacrifice made by volunteer members in the performance of their duties.

- 5.0. A.** The expense budget for travel will be established and detailed each year in the annual budget approved by the Board of Directors.
- 5.0. B.** The President or Board's designee and/or CEO will be reimbursed for attendance at VAR meetings when serving as a Greater Piedmont representative and approved in the budget.
- 5.0. C.** Travel to the annual VAR Convention will include the President, President-Elect, Treasurer, and CEO, when approved in the budget.
- 5.0. D.** Early bird registration will be covered for all Board of Directors for attendance at the VAR Convention, when approved in the budget.
- 5.0. E.** The CEO will be encouraged to attend the NAR AE Institute annually, when approved in the budget. As NAR Core Standards require a minimum of 6 hours of training annually for the CEO, some budget allocation for training should be approved.
- 5.0. F.** Travel to the NAR Legislative Conference (Mid-Year) will include the President and CEO, when approved by the budget.

#### **6.0. TRAVEL GUIDELINES AND REIMBURSEMENT**

- 6.0. A.** Only early bird registration/conference fees will be reimbursed
- 6.0. B.** Maximum of 3 nights lodging when needed (4 nights when the event is on the West Coast).
- 6.0. C.** Air travel via Coach Class airfare, with an upgrade to one level seating on all flights
- 6.0. D.** Food costs to be reimbursed for actual days of meeting and travel time (with receipts)
- 6.0. E.** Mileage reimbursement is at the IRS maximum allowable rate.
- 6.0. F.** Mileage will be calculated as the less of the miles driven or the mileage from home location to the event.
- 6.0. G.** Members on Committee where stipends or expense reimbursement is provided will be exempt from Greater Piedmont reimbursement unless otherwise approved by the Board.
- 6.0. H.** In order to receive reimbursement for travel expenses, you must complete the approved Greater Piedmont Travel Expense voucher form, with receipts, within 21 days of the expenditure.
- 6.0. I.** Reimbursement will only be paid after the expense is incurred, and proper attendance at the event (where applicable).
- 6.0. J.** If pre-payment for a member was made by Greater Piedmont in advance, and the member did not attend or fulfill the event requirements, they must reimburse Greater Piedmont for the full amount within 14 days of the event.

#### **7.0 DUES AND FEES**

### **7.1. Payments**

Dues payments must be made in full (no partial payments), as one form of payment, via credit card only and include Visa, MasterCard, AMEX, and Discover.

### **7.2. Bylaws Reference**

Bylaws Article X Dues and Assessments, Section 4, Nonpayment of Financial Obligations. If dues are not paid by January 1, membership and all services with Greater Piedmont REALTORS® will be terminated on the next business day. However, no action will be taken to suspend or expel a member for nonpayment of disputed amounts until the accuracy of the amount owed has been confirmed by the Board.

Nonpayment of any financial obligations may result in termination of membership and all related services with Greater Piedmont REALTORS®. This may occur after the member has been notified of the problem and given 10 days to resolve.

Assuming no disputes or payment after 10 days, the member (with a copy to the broker when applicable) will be notified via email that their membership will be terminated in 5 days, along with all related privileges and services due to nonpayment of financial obligations.

### **7.3. Rebate of Dues**

No rebate of dues shall be made by the Association to any member in the event of termination of membership or transfers to another association, for any cause.

### **7.4. Nonsufficient Funds (Check)**

Any returned checks will be returned to the issuer or re-deposited, with the notice that the amount of the check plus a returned check fee of \$50.00 must be provided to the Association within 10 days. Funds must be remitted by cashier's check, money order, certified check, or credit card.

### **7.5 Termination/Reinstatement**

A former Member who has had their membership terminated for nonpayment of dues, fees, fines, or other assessments duly levied in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws or other Rules and Regulations of the Association or any of its services may apply for reinstatement after making payment in full of all accounts due as of the date of termination. Application for reinstatement must also be accompanied by a new member application fee.

## **8.0 REALTOR® MEMBERSHIP PROCESSES AND FEES**

### **8.1. New REALTOR® Members**

New REALTOR® members shall complete the NAR mandated orientation program on the Code of Ethics of not less than two hours and thirty minutes of instructional time and Fair Housing of not less than two hours. These requirements do not apply to applicants who have completed comparable orientation in another association, provided that REALTOR® membership has been continuous, or than any break in membership is for one year or less.

Failure to satisfy the NAR Ethics and Fair Housing requirement within 90 days will result in

denial of membership application and/or termination of provisional membership. Reinstatement after compliance of these requirements may result in a re-activation fee, as established by the Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Board of Directors.

## **8.2. Transfers**

**8.2.A.** Members who transfer from one firm to another within Greater Piedmont REALTORS® must complete a Change of Status form and submit to the Association within 10 days.

**8.2.B.** Members transferring from one association to Greater Piedmont must fill out a New Member application, signed by the Broker. Staff will request a letter of good standing from the previous association and process the application and payments accordingly.

## **8.3. Fees**

**8.3.A.** New Members are required to pay a New Member Fee as established by the Board of Directors.

**8.3.B.** New Firms making application to join are required to pay a New Firm Fee as established by the Board of Directors.

**8.3.C.** Delinquent payment of dues may result in a late fee as established by the Board of Directors.

**8.3.D.** New subscriptions to SentiLock require an activation fee as established by the Board of Directors.

**8.3.E.** Reactivation fees to SentiLock may apply for membership that has been suspended, license expiration, etc. as established by the Board of Directors.

**8.3.F.** REALTORS® who request Greater Piedmont staff to transfer lockboxes to another owner require a lockbox transfer fee. Note – they can perform this function in their SentiLock account and avoid these fees.

**8.3.G.** Licensed nonmembers may apply for SentiLock subscription, or the purchase of a SentiGuard lockbox for an additional nonmember fee.

**8.3.H.** Non compliance on NAR Membership requirements (Code of Ethics/Fair Housing) that result in suspension of membership will require proof of completion by an approved vendor, and a \$100 reinstatement fee.

## **8.4. Expired Licenses**

REALTOR® Members with expired licenses with the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) will have their membership and membership related privileges suspended until their license renewal requirements are fulfilled. At such time, a reactivation fee may be required as established by the Board of Directors.

## **8.5. Membership Records**

Members are required to notify Greater Piedmont staff of any changes to their contact information (business and personal) by editing their contact information directly in the member portal on the website, or contacting a Greater Piedmont staff member. It is imperative the Association has updated email addresses, cell number, brokerage, etc. The Association is not responsible for any consequences arising from outdated or incorrect member information.

## **8.6. Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Life Membership**

Applications for Greater Piedmont Life Membership must be completed and submitted by July 31st for the following calendar year. The requirements to qualify for Life Membership must be

fulfilled by December 31st of the year they submit an application.

### **8.7. SentiLock Access and Subscriptions**

REALTOR® Members may apply for a subscription to SentiLock by filling out the SentiLock Application/User Agreement form. Members shall comply with all such rules and regulations and will be subject to the appropriate sanctions and penalties for failure to comply with the Rules and Regulations. An activation fee may be applied in addition to the pro-rated fee.

## **9.0 AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP PROCESSES AND FEES**

### **9.1 Affiliate Members**

Affiliate members may be real estate owners and other individuals or firms who, while not engaged in the real estate profession: have interest requiring information concerning real estate and are in sympathy with the objectives of the Association.

Examples of typical affiliate members at the local level: title companies, banks, mortgage companies, home inspectors, builders, insurance companies, photographers, contractors, etc. These affiliates often support the REALTORS® association's goals (networking, sponsorship, involvement) but have limited rights.

### **9.2 New Affiliate Members**

New Affiliate Members are required to pay a new member process fee and dues as established by the Board of Directors. Affiliate Membership is held at the individual level, not at the company level. If the membership is paid by the company, they can replace or backfill with a new member representative, at no charge. If the membership is paid by the individual, they can change companies at no charge. No rebate of dues shall be made by the Association to any Affiliate member.

### **9.3 Affiliate Meetings**

Generally, only Greater Piedmont Affiliate members may attend the periodic meetings. However, if a new affiliate is considering membership with Greater Piedmont, they may be permitted to attend one Affiliate Meeting after approval from the CEO in advance. (Note, this is not applicable to other Greater Piedmont REALTORS® Committees.)

### **9.4 Affiliate Trade Shows**

Greater Piedmont Affiliate Members may participate and attend the trade show at the member price (determined annually based on location, day vs. evening, venue fees, etc.). Non Greater Piedmont members can register to have a booth and participate in the trade show. This will be computed annually at a price that is equivalent to or higher than the Greater Piedmont affiliate dues, new member fee, and trade show price.

### **9.5 Guests at Affiliate Trade Shows**

If staff receives a request to bring a guest by a REALTOR® member, the following questions and explanation will be provided

- a. Staff will respectfully request to know what line of work or occupation their guest has? Rationale – to reduce conflicting issues with our guests who have a competitive business with other Greater Piedmont Affiliates that are sponsoring or participating in the event.
- b. If there is no business conflict, they can attend the event at the nonmember price.

- c. If there is a business conflict, staff will advise the following – in order to be respectful of our Greater Piedmont Sponsors, we have to ask you to ensure your guest does not solicit for any business; no sharing of business cards; no wearing of branded clothing (hats, jackets, shirts, name badges, etc.). Basically, you will be responsible for their actions. If there are issues with adherence to these guidelines you and your guest may be asked to leave.

## **10. AFFILIATE SPONSORSHIPS/BENEFITS**

Benefits and agreements for sponsorships are updated annually. Sponsorship agreements are required to be signed on an annual basis and outline the various benefits, by level.

### **10.1 Affiliate Sponsored Social**

Only those Greater Piedmont Affiliates who have sponsored the event may attend. However, if staff receives a request from a REALTOR® or Sponsored Affiliate to bring a guest, the following questions and explanation will be provided

- a. Staff will respectfully request to know what line of work or occupation their guest has? Rationale – to reduce conflicting issues with our guests who have a competitive business with other GPR affiliates that are sponsoring or participating in the event.
- b. If there is no business conflict, they can attend the event at the nonmember price.
- c. If there is a business conflict, staff will advise the following – in order to be respectful of our GPR Sponsors, we have to ask you to ensure your guest does not solicit for any business; no sharing of business cards; no wearing of branded clothing (hats, jackets, shirts, name badges, etc.). Basically, you will be responsible for their actions. If there are issues with adherence to these guidelines you and your guest may be asked to leave.