Policies and Procedures of the North Hills Genealogists (NHG)

I. Meetings

1. The membership meetings are normally held on the third Tuesday of each month, except for the December meeting, which is typically a social event planned by the Program Committee. Usually there is a separate charge for the December social. Dates may be changed due to scheduling conflicts or special NHG programming opportunities.

2. The membership meetings are held at a location approved by the Board of Directors.

3. The membership meetings are held from 6:45 PM to 9 PM. The usual timetable is: 6:45 – 7:00 Informal gathering; 7:00 – 7:15 Announcements; 7:15 – 8:15 Presentation; 8:15 – 8:40
   Q&A and Discussion; 8:40 – 9:00 Freebie Table, visiting, straighten room, and leave.

4. Genealogical and historical items may be sold during regular monthly meetings. These include material published by NHG plus items offered by members and speakers. Anything offered other than freebies and NHG products needs prior approval from the Board. A clear sign should also be displayed indicating who is selling the products.

II. Membership and Dues

1. Membership is for the program year that runs from August 1 through July 31.

2. The annual dues are $15 for up to two people at the same street address, payable to the North Hills Genealogists. All memberships include the monthly newsletter.

3. New members receive an auto-generated “Welcome” email which includes their personal information on file, their password for the Members Only section of the website, their membership expiration date, and instructions on how they can access back issues of the newsletter. If they join between publication dates, the Membership Chair asks the Newsletter Chair to send the new member a current newsletter as a courtesy and as additional acknowledgement of their new membership.

4. When members renew, they receive an auto-generated “Thanks for Renewing” email as soon as their payment information is entered on the website by the Membership Chair. This email also contains the information for accessing back issues of the newsletter.

5. The memberships of those who join between April 1 and July 31 are extended through the end of the following fiscal year as a courtesy. This action is not publicized and the Membership Chair informs the member of this courtesy.

6. Renewal notices are provided as follows:
    a. The June newsletter, which is sent to all members, will contain an article on membership renewals.
    b. The August newsletter, which is sent to all members, will also contain an article on membership renewals.
    c. In late September/early October, the Membership Chair sends an email to lapsed members indicating this is the final notice to renew.

7. An annual review is performed of both the membership flyer and the pre-formatted membership email notices. Both should be kept up to date during the program year to reflect changes.

8. The Members Only section of the Society website contains recent newsletters, special deals and other documents relevant to members.

9. At each in-person monthly program, the Membership Chair provides a sign-in sheet for attendees (both members and non-members) to sign. These sheets are used as a basis to report how many attendees are at each program. Additionally, the Program Chair uses these sheets to track member attendance and the programs they attend and frequency of attendance. Visitors/non-member attendance is also tracked.

10. The Membership Chair also provides an “Add Me to Your Email” sheet at each in-person program for visitors who, while under no obligation to join NHG and attend the programs, still wish to be notified by NHG about upcoming programs. This list is then sent via email to the Email Publicity Chair to add to the email distribution list that is used for the following month’s program information.

11. The Membership Chair maintains a supply box which contains instructions for running the sign-in table, name tag supplies, membership forms, conference brochures and an alphabetical file of members’ name tags, among other items.

12. The Membership Chair collects membership dues paid at meetings, updates the local Excel spreadsheet and website database, and forwards funds and payment information to the Treasurer.

13. The Treasurer collects membership dues paid via US Mail or online and forwards details to the Membership Chair.

14. Memberships of anyone not residing in the United States must be handled as follows. Residence is defined by the postal address supplied with the payment.

    a. The following information will not be collected or stored in the website database or the Membership Chair's other files: phone number, cell number, address, maiden name, birthdate, or (as a comment) the check number used to pay for the membership. No other information that would allow the identification of the specific individual will be stored by NHG.

b. Any membership payment notification received by NHG from outside sources, such as PayPal or EventBrite, that contains information listed above will not be retained once the member information is entered into the NHG membership system.

III. Programs and Events

1. The Program Committee has board approval to spend up to $150 per monthly meeting for speaker fees and has full discretion in selecting and scheduling the content for the eleven general meetings. Prior board approval is needed for larger or unusual expenses.

2. The Program Committee will make arrangements for a Winter Social, typically held on the first Saturday of December. This is usually a group tour of a local historical or genealogical place of interest followed by lunch at a nearby restaurant.

3. Field trips will be organized at the request of the Board by a volunteer willing to undertake the task. Results of an investigation into transportation and lodging options, costs, and repository hours will be reported to the Board for a final decision. The Board will also decide on a minimum number of attendees needed in order to proceed with the field trip. Status reports will be done for each monthly Board meeting leading up to the event and a recap report one month afterward.

IV. Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

1. The SIGs are small study groups focused on specific nationalities, geographical locations, and research methods.

2. The Board of Directors helps start a SIG by contacting a person knowledgeable of the specific subject and who is interested in leading a group.

3. It is the responsibility of the SIG Leader to organize the meetings and location. Each SIG runs independently of the NHG Board of Directors.

4. The SIGs are open to NHG members only. However, non-members are permitted to attend their first meeting without being a member, but must become a NHG member to attend future meetings.

5. The Board of Directors will offer each SIG $50 annually that can be used to pay for meeting space, educational materials, or any other item that will benefit the SIG and its members.

6. SIGs are publicized on the NHG public website and on the Meetup.com website. It is the responsibility of the SIG Leaders to notify the webmaster of any changes in meeting schedules so the NHG website can be updated. The SIGs can also store documents from their meetings on the NHG website under the specific SIG page.

7. The NHG Vice President is responsible for communications with the SIGs and will ask the SIG Leaders to provide periodic reports to the Board.

8. At the beginning of each year, the NHG Secretary will review the SIG Flyer and NHG Welcome Letter and make updates as necessary, based on SIG activity.

9. The Membership Chair will keep the membership brochure and automated website membership notices current with SIG information.

V. Newsletter

1. A newsletter is published monthly except July and December (10 issues). Each issue lists the officers, committee and subcommittee chairs, and contact information and is usually sent out on the Sunday preceding the general meeting.

2. Anyone may submit genealogical queries to the newsletter at no charge to Editor@NorthHillsGenealogists.org. Articles should be 300 – 600 words in length. The editors will confirm via email that a submission was received. A query received through social media will be acknowledged via that particular media and forwarded to the Newsletter Committee.

3. The deadline for submissions is designated by the editor, except for July and December, when no newsletter is published. The editor reserves the right to edit submitted work for grammar, punctuation, spelling, usage, length, and format. The author will retain a copyright to the article. Non-members who have an article published will receive a PDF copy of the issue in which the article is published.

4. The newsletter editor sends a draft of the newsletter to the Board. The Board of Directors has 24 hours to proofread the draft and return any corrections to the newsletter editor.

5. The Newsletter Committee distributes the newsletter via email.

6. Back issues of the newsletter will be posted by the webmaster on the Society's public website two years after publication. Issues less than two years old will be posted in the Members Only section of the Society’s public website by the newsletter editor.

VI. Public Relations

1. The public relations of the Society will be handled by a committee which will have various subcommittees.

2. Each subcommittee acts independently of the other, and there is no Chair of the Public Relations Committee who oversees the subcommittees. The current subcommittees are:

    a. Social Media – handles posting to the various social media platforms of the Society and provides a monthly analytics report to the Board.
    b. Public Events – handles vendor tables at public-facing events and also recruits volunteers to staff these tables. This subcommittee chair also coordinates with other Board members to obtain fliers and handouts necessary for such events.
    c. Webmaster – creates and maintains the official website of the Society and the Meetup.com site and serves as consultant to the Board for the purchase or operation of Society computer hardware, software, or any electronically-created databases. A monthly report is provided to the Board.
    d. Corresponding Secretary – handles responses to both incoming emails and postal mail.
    e. Email Publicity – handles regular monthly meeting email reminders, both to members and to non-members who have signed up to receive Society updates. This subcommittee chair also sends periodic updates on special events, such as the annual conference or the December Social, at the direction of the Board.

VII. Contact Information

1. The mailing address is: North Hills Genealogists, P.O. Box 169, Wexford, PA 15090. Two designated board members shall have the keys to the post office box and shall distribute incoming mail to the appropriate NHG contacts.

2. The NHG maintains a website at: www.NorthHillsGenealogists.org and a general email address at: Info@NorthHillsGenealogists.org. A designated board member distributes the incoming email to the appropriate NHG contacts.

3. Use of personal addresses for official business, both street and email, is discouraged. To the maximum extent possible, the NHG postal and email addresses will be used in all NHG documents. When a phone number is required, a personal one may be given with no name attached. Special NHG email addresses (XXX@NORTHHILLSGENEALOGISTS.ORG) will be created as necessary.

VIII. Election of Officers

1. To facilitate the election of officers, a specific schedule must be followed.

2. The schedule is:

    a. February – Board appoints Nominating Committee.

    b. February/March – Nominating Committee receives nominations.

    c. April – Nominating Committee reports the slate of nominees to the Board of Directors. Nominees can be invited to the Board meetings.

    d. May – Nominations are presented to the membership in the May newsletter and at the May general meeting. A paper ballot is published in the May newsletter with extra copies available at meetings. If returning a ballot by mail, members will be encouraged to mark the outside of the envelope with “BALLOT.” Ballots received by mail will be held by the Nominating Committee and will be counted with the other ballots.

    e. June – Ballots are collected by the Nominating Committee.

    f. July – All ballots must be received prior to the beginning of the July Board meeting. Nominating Committee counts the ballots and reports the results at the July Board meeting. The results are announced to membership at the July general meeting and are published in the August newsletter.

    g. August – Elected officers begin their term at the Board meeting.

IX. Board of Directors

1. To facilitate the operational needs of NHG, the Board of Directors may conduct motions requiring action through email. The motion will be approved when the majority of the Board responds to the emailed request with a “Yes” vote. All such actions must be reviewed and listed in the minutes at the following Board meeting.

2. The Board of Directors meets monthly, normally on the first Tuesday of the month, at a location designated by the Board. Meetings are also held via Zoom. Board meetings are open to all NHG members.

3. Every August, the President shall update and send the Board of Directors Contact spreadsheet to each Board member to review and revise as needed. The Webmaster shall then update the information on the website.

4. The President, or in his/her absence the Vice President, shall sign all contracts on behalf of North Hills Genealogists.

X. Special Committees

1. Special Committees of the Society shall be appointed at the request of the Board of Directors.

XI. General

1. The NHG does not maintain a library but donates genealogy related materials to the Northland Public Library.

2. The NHG does not conduct personal research for individuals and is not responsible for the quality or cost of research done by a member.

3. The NHG frees any member of any financial obligation to the North Hills Genealogists that could result from the loss, damage, or destruction of any NHG materials while in their possession.

2. These Policies and Procedures are for the general guidance of the daily operation of the NHG. They may be amended, without notice, by a majority vote of the Board of Directors at a Board meeting.

3. The Vice President will send the NHG Bylaws and Policies and Procedures documents to the incoming Board during July of each fiscal year.

4. These Policies and Procedures will be reviewed annually in February by the elected officials.

Revision History:
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