

# Maine Critter Gitters

## Bylaws

April 2025

*Constitution*

### Article I

#### Name and Objectives

**Section 1.** The name of the club shall be Maine Critter Gitters, hereinafter referred to as “the club.”

**Section 2.** The club is a trial-giving, non-profit organization affiliated with Barn Hunt Association LLC. The club is committed to the promotion and development of the sport of Barn Hunt without regard to breed, pedigree, or kennel club registration by:

1. Conducting Barn Hunt trials;
2. Stressing safety of dogs, rats, and humans, and good sportsmanship;
3. Hosting training sessions, seminars, public demonstrations, and other such events to promote the sport.
4. Support existing clubs when reasonably able to do so, and encourage the development of new clubs in areas that are desolate of clubs.

**Section 3.** The club shall not be conducted or operated for profit, and no part of any profits, residue from dues or residue from donations to the club shall insure to the benefit of any member or individual.

# Bylaws

## Membership

### Section 1. Eligibility.

Membership shall be open to any person who subscribes to the objectives of the club. No person will be excluded from membership on the basis of the breed, pedigree, or registration eligibility of any dog they own or handle.

### Section 2. Types of Membership.

There shall be four types of membership:

1. **Junior Handler.** This membership is for individuals who are under the age of 18. Junior handlers shall pay no dues. Junior members are not entitled to voting privileges.
2. **Individual.** This membership is for individuals. The member shall be given all rights and privileges as stated in the Bylaws, and shall be entitled to one vote. The dues per individual shall be determined by the rules of Section 3. Dues.
3. **Family.** This membership is for families. Family members shall be given all rights and privileges as stated in the Bylaws, and shall be entitled to two votes per membership. The dues per Family shall be determined by the rules of Section 3. Dues.
4. **Honorary.** The Board of Directors may confer honorary memberships upon individuals for extraordinary service to the club or to the sport of Barn Hunt. These are lifetime in term, carry all rights and privileges accorded to individual members, and may only be terminated by resignation or expulsion (section 5.1 and 5.3 of this article). The Honorary member shall be given all rights and privileges as stated in the Bylaws, and shall be entitled to one vote. Honorary members pay no dues.

### **Section 3. Dues.**

Dues for each type of membership shall be recommended by the Board of Directors and approved by the membership at any scheduled Membership meeting. Continuing membership dues must be paid in full on or before January 31st of the calendar year.

### **Section 4. Election to Membership.**

Each applicant for individual or family membership shall apply via a form as approved by the Board of Directors, which shall indicate that the applicant agrees to abide by the Bylaws and rules of the club. The general membership shall vote on prospective members at the next scheduled Membership or Board meeting, provided that a complete application is submitted at least one week prior to that meeting, and a notice including the names of prospective members is sent to the club mailing list at least one week prior to that meeting. To vote on membership, a quorum of members must be present at the meeting. A majority of those present and voting in the affirmative shall constitute the acceptance of the application(s) for membership. Member prospects may attend the meeting, but may not be present during that part of the meeting devoted to discussing and voting on their or any other prospective member's acceptance for membership. The appropriate sum for dues for the remainder of the calendar year is due 2 weeks from the notification by the Club that their membership application has been approved.

- a. Junior members shall apply for membership via the Junior Membership Adobe application. Junior members must have parental or guardian consent, which may be signed via Adobe sign. If the parent, guardian, or other family member is not in the club, or they do not wish to be the Junior member's mentor, a mentor will be assigned.
  - All non-related mentors must have taken a course on abuse through the Show-Safe.org program before being assigned to a non-relative Junior member.
- b. If a person(s) have been convicted of neglect of an animal lawfully, or has been banned from AKC or BHA events, these persons may be immediately denied membership.

## **Section 5. Termination of Membership**

Memberships may be terminated, with no dues, donations, or contributions refunded (unless otherwise stated), in the following ways:

- 1. By Resignation.** Any member in good standing may resign from the club. Any debts owed by the resigning member to the club must be paid before the resignation will be accepted.
- 2. By Lapsing.** A membership will be considered as lapsed and automatically terminated if a member's debts or dues remain unpaid after January 31st of the calendar year. Members whose memberships have been so terminated must reapply for membership if they wish to rejoin the club.
- 3. By Expulsion.** A membership may be terminated by expulsion as provided in Article VI of these Bylaws.

## **Section 6. Volunteerism**

Members, if reasonably able, should partake in general volunteerism. This would include, but is not limited to, marketing events, setting up, cleaning up, and or helping run trials, setting up trial photo opportunities, making community connections. Volunteers may be awarded per Article IV, section 5.

# **Article II**

## **Meetings**

### **Section 1. Membership Meetings.**

Meetings of the general membership of the club shall be held periodically as designated by the President. Notice to members of a club meeting may be done by email, by notice in the club newsletter, on the club website, or by any other recognized method that will reach all members. The membership is to be notified of the meeting at least two weeks before the meeting date. Members desiring to place items on the meeting agenda shall submit such items to the Secretary no fewer than seven days prior to the meeting. The quorum for such meetings shall be fifteen percent of the members in good standing, counting individual memberships singly and family memberships doubly.

### **Section 2. Board Meetings.**

Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held periodically at times and places to be determined by the Board. The quorum for such meetings shall be fifty percent of the Board of Directors. Voting on club business at meetings of the Board of Directors shall be limited to members of the Board; however, any member in good standing may attend and participate in discussions. In extraordinary circumstances, the Board may invoke executive sessions at either a regularly-scheduled or an ad hoc Board meeting.

### **Section 3. Annual Meeting.**

An Annual Meeting of the club will be held during the third calendar quarter of the year, for the purpose of taking nominations for the Board of Directors, Officers, and Committee Chairs, as well as for any other normal club business.

## **Article III**

### **Directors, Officers, and Committee Chairs**

#### **Section 1. Board of Directors.**

The Board of Directors shall be composed of the following: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and at least 3 but no more than 5 at-large positions, all of whom will serve for a period of one year. The positions of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by the same person. No two members of the same family shall serve simultaneously on the Board of Directors. The immediate past President is entitled to one of the at-large positions; if he or she declines this office or is elected to some other Board position, both of the at-large positions shall be nominated from the club membership. The general management of the club's affairs is entrusted to the Board of Directors. Board members and Officers in good standing shall be eligible for benefits as outlined in the Board and Officer manual.

#### **Section 2. Officers.**

The club's Officers shall consist of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The maximum amount of time a member may hold an office shall be two consecutive terms, except in the case of a Vice President serving as Acting President for the remainder of the term of a resigning President, in which case

the maximum time shall be that remainder plus two additional consecutive terms. The descriptions of these positions shall include, but are not necessarily

limited to, the following:

1. **President.** The President shall preside at all meetings of the club and shall have the duties, responsibilities, and powers normally assigned to the office of President. The President shall have the right to call meetings, appoint special committees, and coordinate officers, committees, and the Board.
2. **Vice President.** The Vice President shall have the duties and exercise the powers of the President in the event of the incapacity or resignation of the President. This person shall assist the President in any manner which the President deems necessary.
3. **Secretary.** The Secretary shall keep a written record of all meetings of the club and handle all correspondence involving the club. The Secretary shall maintain a master file of necessary business and legal forms needed by the club. The Secretary shall also maintain a current master membership roster. The Secretary shall serve as liaison between the general assembly of members and the board, recording input and receiving complaints to be added to the agenda addressed at a meeting of Officers and the Board of Directors.
4. **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall collect and receive all monies due to the club and shall report to the club, at every meeting, the condition of the club's financial status, including a monthly income/expense summary. The Treasurer will monitor expenses and report discrepancies to the Board. The club's financial record shall be open to all members.

### **Section 3. Board Members**

The Board of Directors shall participate in board meetings, provide input and guidance on key decisions. May take up tasks assigned by the President which aligns with said Board Member's skill sets. Assists in developing, reviewing, distribution and promotion of the organization's mission, policies, and bylaws.

### **Section 4. Other Committees.**

1. **Public Relations.** The Public Relations Chair shall be responsible for any print materials required by the club, including (but not limited to) flyers,

banners, signs, posters, or advertising material. The Public Relations Chair will also manage an inventory of apparel and other such items for the club, should the Board of Directors choose to offer such for sale to members or as a member benefit. The Public Relations Chair will manage any contact between the club and media or other organizations.

2. **Training and Demonstration Chair.** The Vice President is responsible for ensuring that Training, Demonstrations, and Workshops are scheduled and align with the purpose of the club. If the Vice President needs assistance, this position will be responsible for scheduling and managing any training offered and demonstrations performed by the club, whether for special-interest groups or the general public.
3. **Newsletter Editor, Archivist/Historian.** The Newsletter Editor will periodically publish a club newsletter, should the Board of Directors choose to have one.
4. **Equipment Manager.** The Equipment Manager will coordinate the construction or acquisition, as well as the maintenance and storage, of rat tubes, ramps, fencing, straw bales, and any other such materials required by the club. The Equipment Manager shall ensure that inventory was made before and after a trial, that equipment is in safe and working order, that worn or broken equipment is reported and replaced, that equipment that would be helpful to the mission is identified and purchased within the limits of the equipment budget.

Committee Chairs will solicit assistance from the membership to serve on these committees as necessary. Committee Chairs may serve on multiple committees, as well as on the Board of Directors. At the annual meeting, nominations for the Chairs of any currently active committees will be taken from the membership, and those nominees will be voted upon in the same manner as those for the Board of Directors.

#### **Section 4. Vacancies.**

Any vacancy in the Board of Directors shall be filled by nomination by the membership at a scheduled meeting and election by the general membership via secret ballot. Vacancies of Committee Chairs shall be filled by appointment by the Board of Directors. In any case, a vacancy replacement shall serve only the remainder of the year during which appointed or voted.

# Article IV

## Club Year, Nominations, Elections, & Awards

### **Section 1. Club Year.**

The club's year shall begin on the first day of January and end on the last day of December. The newly-elected Directors, Officers, and Chair shall take office on January 1.

### **Section 2. Annual Election.**

The election of the Board of Directors, Officers, and Committee Chairs shall be conducted by written or electronic ballot in accordance with the provisions of this Article.

### **Section 3. Voting.**

1. Voting on club business shall be limited to those members in good standing who are present at meetings, except where a written or electronic ballot shall be deemed necessary, such as the election of Board of Directors, Officers, and Committee Chairs and changes and amendments to the Bylaws. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted, except in the case of family memberships; i.e. when only one member of a family membership is present at a meeting; he or she may exercise both of their votes.

2. All ballots, whether written or electronic, must identify the positions for which elections are being held, all candidates for each such position and, in the event that a candidate has elected to run for multiple positions, must explain the provisions of these Bylaws regarding multiple positions. No votes for write-in candidates will be tallied. The secretary must receive hand-delivered ballots no later than fourteen days from the date of the original postmark, in the case of mailed ballots. Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked no later than fourteen days from original postmark. In

the event that the slate of an election for Board of Directors, Officers, and Committee Chairs is composed entirely of unopposed races, no election need be held. The Board of Directors may decide to submit other specific questions for decision of the members by written or electronic ballot.

3. Electronic voting, via email or other internet-based means, may be used for any election or other vote, provided that the method for such is secure as to both the possibility of fraud and the protection of the identities of the voters. The Board of Directors will approve any such methodology, subject to objection from the general membership, said objection to be affirmed by

majority vote at a scheduled meeting.

#### **Section 4. Nominations.**

1. Nominations will be accepted from the general membership of the club at the Annual Meeting. Candidacy is open to all active members in good standing who accept their nominations. No member who has not been so nominated may be a candidate for any office. In the event that a nominee is not present at the Annual Meeting at the time of nomination; their acceptance may be taken by proxy or by telephone or other such communication before the meeting is adjourned. Members may nominate themselves.
2. In the event that there are no nominees for any particular position, the Board of Directors shall solicit candidates from the general membership. Such solicitations shall be made before the Annual meeting is adjourned but may, if necessary, continue to be sought after the Annual meeting is adjourned and before ballots are mailed or electronic voting is initiated. If, at the time ballots are mailed or electronic voting is initiated, a particular position remains without a nomination, that position will remain vacant until the next Membership meeting, at which time nominations will once again be solicited. Nominations for open positions will continue to be so solicited at Membership meetings until one or more is made.

#### **Section 5. Year End Awards**

Year end awards may be offered in recognition of exceptional volunteerism and trial participation.

## **Section 6. Benefits**

Benefits will be determined by the board annually and shall be finalized before the annual club meeting each year. There may be as few or as many benefits as fiscally reasonable. An outline of approved benefits will be provided via email, social media, the club's website, and at the annual club meeting.

# **Article V**

## **Special Committees and Appointments**

### **Section 1. Special Committees and Appointments.**

The Board of Directors and/or President may appoint special committees or positions to advance the work and interests of the club. These special committees may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Barn Hunt Representative. The Barn Hunt representative shall establish and maintain communication between the club and Barn Hunt LLC. This position shall keep members informed of all Barn Hunt LLC activities and rule changes.
2. Trial Committee. Trial committees are delegated responsibility for the coordination and conducting of individual trials and other such events.

# **ARTICLE VI**

## **Discipline**

### **Section 1. Barn Hunt Suspension.**

Any member who is suspended from the privileges of Barn Hunt LLC shall automatically come under review by the Board of Directors for their actions. The Board of Directors shall then decide whether to pursue any further disciplinary action.

### **Section 2. Charges.**

Any member may prefer charges against another member for conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the club or the sport of Barn Hunt. Written charges with specifications must be filed with the Secretary in a timely manner following the incident, who shall notify the Board. If the member charged is the Secretary, the charges and specifications may be filed with any other Board member. The Board shall meet and fix a hearing date of not less than three weeks nor more than six weeks thereafter. The Secretary (or, per the above, other Board member) shall promptly send one copy of the charges to the accused member by certified mail, together with the notice of the hearing and an assurance that the defendant may personally appear in his or her defense and bring witnesses or present evidence if so desired.

### **Section 3. Board Hearing.**

1. Both sides shall be treated uniformly in Board hearings. If the charges are sustained, after hearing all of the evidence and testimony presented by the complainant and the defendant, the Board may, by a majority vote of those present, suspend the defendant from all privileges of the club for a period of time not to exceed one year, based on the nature of the charge. The Board may also recommend to the Membership other disciplinary action or expulsion. In this case, the defendant has the right to appear before his or her fellow members at the next club meeting which considers the Board's recommendation.
2. Immediately after the Board's decision, its finding shall be put in written form and filed with the Secretary (or, per the above, other Board member), who shall, in turn, notify each part of the Board's decision and penalty, if any.

### **Section 4. Expulsion or Other Non-Suspension Penalty.**

Expulsion, or penalty other than suspension not to exceed a year, of a member from the club may only be accomplished at a meeting of a quorum of the membership following a Board hearing and upon the Board's recommendation as provided in Section 3 of this Article. Such proceedings may occur at a regular or special meeting of the club to be held within sixty days but not earlier than thirty days after the Board's recommendation of expulsion or other disciplinary action. The defendant shall have the privilege of appearing on his or her own behalf, though no evidence will be taken at this meeting. The President shall read the charges and the Board's findings and recommendations, and shall

invite the defendant, if present, to speak on his or her own behalf if he or she wishes. The Membership shall then vote, by secret written ballot, on the proposed expulsion or other disciplinary action. A quorum vote of those present

at the meeting shall be necessary for the action to carry. If the action is not so voted, the Board's suspension shall stand.

- a. Any person(s) identified as violating or being banned from AKC or BHA rules may be permanently expelled from the club. The same is true for person(s) who have been convicted of animal neglect/abuse lawfully. Persons who have been in the before stated shall also be in review by the club to be banned from future events held by the club.

## **Section 5. Denial of Participation Clause**

The Club reserves the right to deny participation in any Club event and/or Club membership to any individual or dog at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors. Such decisions may be based on, but are not limited to, information or reports received by the Board regarding behavior, conduct, or other concerns that may impact the safety, integrity, or well-being of the event, its participants, or the Club as a whole. All decisions made by the Board under this provision shall be final.

# **ARTICLE VII**

## **Amendments**

### **Section 1. Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws.**

Amendments may be proposed by the Board of Directors or by written petition addressed to the Secretary, signed by a quorum of the Membership in good standing. Amendments proposed by such a petition shall be promptly considered by the Board of Directors and must be submitted to the members with the recommendations of the Board by the Secretary for a vote within three months of the date when the petition was received by the secretary.

### **Section 2. Vote Amending Constitution and / or Bylaws.**

Except as provided in Section 3 of this Article, the Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular or special meeting called for this purpose, provided the proposed amendments have been included in the notice of the meeting and communicated to each member at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

### **Section 3. Amendments Relating to Kennel Club Registration.**

The Constitution or Bylaws shall not be amended to restrict membership in the

club to persons owning or handling dogs registered with any breed registry or kennel club except by a ninety-nine hundredths vote of the members present and voting at any regular or special meeting called for such purpose, provided that any such proposed amendments have been included in the notice of the meeting and communicated to each member at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Dissolution**

#### **Section 1. Dissolution.**

The club may be dissolved at any time by the written consent of not less than a two thirds vote of the entirety of the general membership. In the event of the dissolution of the club, whether voluntary or involuntary or by law, none of the property of the club nor any proceeds thereof nor any assets of the club shall be distributed to any members of the club, but after payment of all debts of the club, its property shall be sold to the highest bidder and assets shall be given to a charitable organization designated by the Board of Directors.

<https://www.Mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/13-B/title13-Bsec104.html>

Finalization by Board Members of the Maine Critter Gitter Club

President:

Secretary:

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Abby O'Brien - Date

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Toni Ferger - Date

Vice President:

Treasurer:

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Amber Zawrotny - Date

Krystin Cote - Date