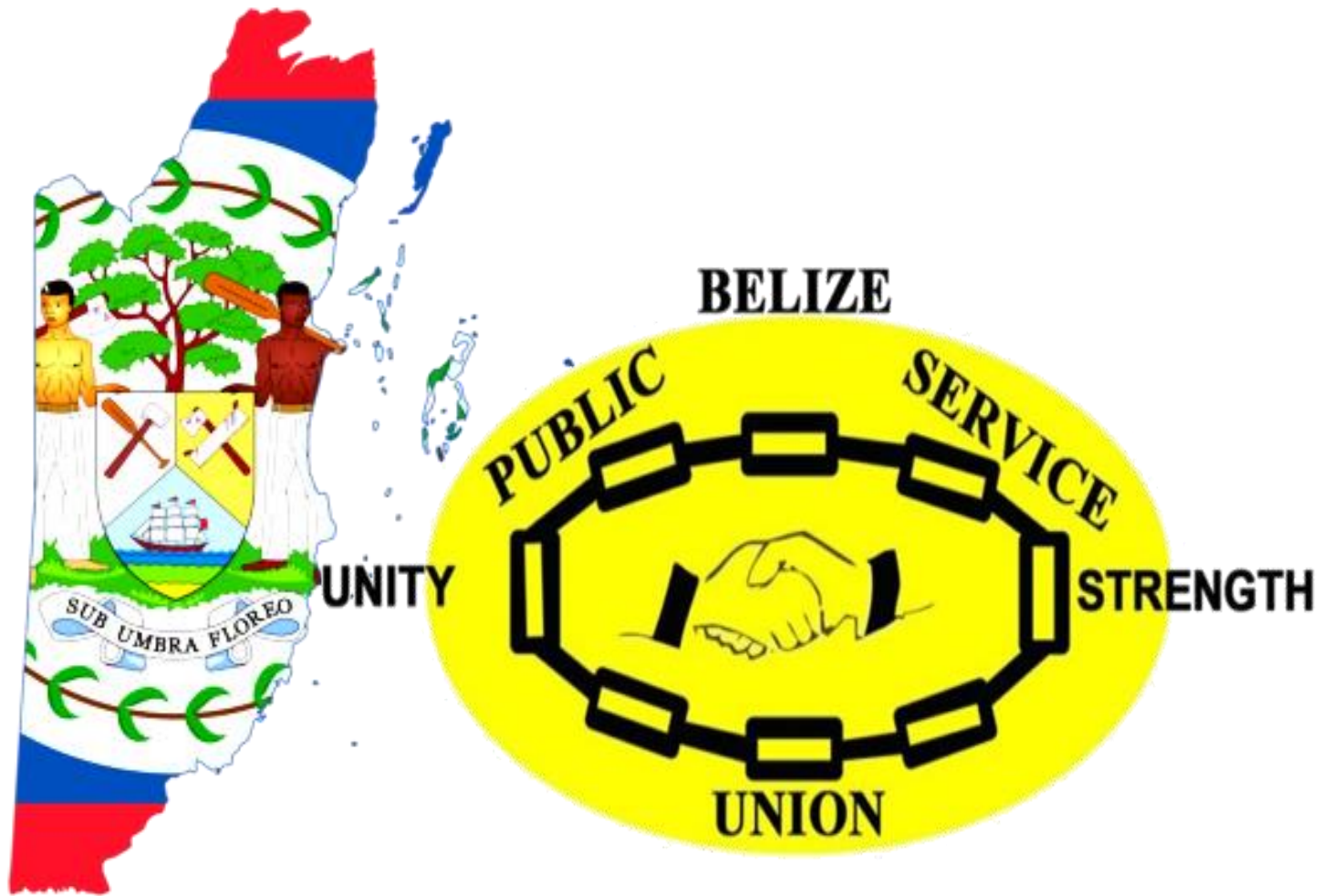


THE CONSTITUTION



Revised Edition 2023

Forward

Warmest Greetings brothers and sisters of the Public Services Union of Belize.

Welcome to the Union Constitution, a document that embodies the values, principles, and aspirations of our organization. Unionism, a time-honoured concept, has been the cornerstone of workers' rights and collective bargaining for centuries. This Constitution serves as the bedrock upon which our union is built, providing a framework for the fair and effective governance of our collective efforts. The dynamic nature of our society demands a revised approach to unions and their constitutions; therefore, it is imperative that we adopt and evolve along with the changing times.

This revised union constitution serves as a guiding light, reflecting the voices, aspirations, and concerns of the modern public service workforce. It acknowledges the ever-growing diversity of occupations and working arrangements that have emerged in recent years. It recognizes the importance of inclusivity, ensuring that the benefits of unionism extend to all workers, regardless of their gender, race, or background. Throughout history, unions have played a crucial role in advocating for the rights and welfare of workers. They have fought for better wages, safer working conditions, and equitable treatment for all. This Constitution upholds the legacy of those who have come before us, ensuring that our union operates with integrity, transparency, and inclusivity.

Within these pages, you will find a comprehensive guide to the rights and responsibilities of our union members, the structure of our organization, and the mechanisms by which decisions are made. It outlines the procedures for elections, the establishment of committees, and the resolution of disputes.

It also highlights the principles of democratic participation, ensuring that every member has a voice and a vote in shaping our collective destiny.

In the 21st century, the landscape of work is being reshaped by technology, globalization, and changing societal expectations. This revised constitution emphasizes the need for union to stay ahead of the curve, embracing technological advancements and adapting to the digital age. It encourages innovation, envisioning new ways to organize, communicate, and advocate for the rights and interests of workers. It emphasizes the importance of long-term thinking, sustainability, and fairness for all.

I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the provisions of this Constitution, as it serves as a compass guiding our actions and decisions. Let us strive to uphold the principles contained herein and work together to achieve the goals and aspirations of our union. By adhering to its principles, we can create a harmonious and inclusive environment where every member is valued and empowered. As we embark on this journey together, let us remember that we are stronger when united. Let us therefore embrace this new era of unionism, united in our shared commitment to shaping a better Belize for generations to come.

In solidarity

Dean Winston Flowers

President

2023 - 2025

THE PUBLIC SERVICE UNION OF BELIZE

Brief History

The Public Service Union has its roots way back in 1922, when a group of alert, efficient and progressive civil servants inaugurated the Civil Service Association.

The Union is proud of those alert people who were able to look around them and realize that in unity there is strength and that for them to meet the colonial masters on any subject in respect to their conditions of service, they had to unite. Today, the Union can boast of being the second oldest in the Caribbean.

Not much was accomplished during those early years, but a change was made in 1963 when the Civil Service Association, encouraged by its Caribbean counterparts, took on the cloak of a full-fledged trade union. The Union became the Public Officers Union. The scope of industrial relations was broadened but business was carried out on almost the same level as before. In 1968, the Public Service Joint Staff Relations Council was formally set up. To date, this council continues to be the negotiating forum between the Government and its employees.

In 1980, the Public Offices Union introduced changes in its representational structure and offered itself as a body capable of representing all workers who gave public service and not only civil servants. Thus, the name of the union was changed to the Public Service Union of Belize. The Union has strengthened its affiliations to regional and extra-regional bodies. In August of 1991, the Union assumed the presidency of the Caribbean Public Services Association for a period of one year.

PUBLIC SERVICE UNION OF BELIZE
CONSTITUTION
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1.0 Worker Representation

Today, besides making representation to Heads of Departments and Chief Executive Officers and also the Public Services Commission concerning workers' grievances, the Public Service Union (PSU) sits and participates on several committees to ensure that the worker's voice is heard on all matters concerning his/her employment.

The following is a brief description of these committees: -

(a) Joint Staff Relations Council

The functions of this Council is to meet regularly and discuss such matters as conditions of service, increase of wages and generally to consider matters which would improve the efficiency and productivity of the public service. The Council also makes policy recommendations to improve the public services to the Minister with responsibility for the Public Services.

The Council is composed of ten (10) members. Five (5) members of the official side are appointed by the Government, two (2) members of the Association of Public Service Senior Managers and the other three (3) persons are nominated by the PSU as staff-side. The Chairman is a member of the official side while a representative of the staff side (usually the Union president) is the Vice-Chairman.

(b) Accounts and Administrative Post Panel

This body makes recommendations to the Public Services Commission on transfers and promotions of officers in the administrative and accounting grades.

(c) Human Resources Development Committee

Formerly called the Personnel Development Committee, this body has the all-embracing task of formulating training policy and strategy for the entire public service and the coordination, monitoring and implementation of those policies.

(d) Grievance Committee

This body discusses and where possible makes decisions to eliminate public officers' grievances.

The committee is composed of seven (7) members. Three (3) members of the official side are appointed by the Government, three (3) members are nominated by the PSU as staff-side and one (1) from the Association of Public Service Senior Managers (APSSM).

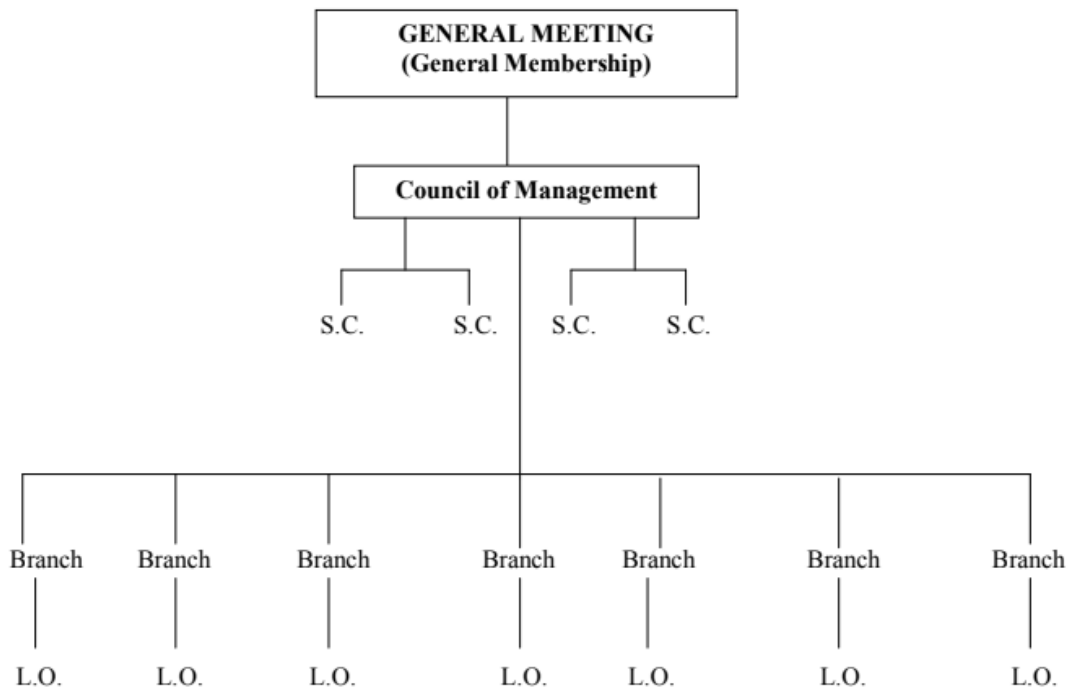
2.0 Affiliations

The PSU is affiliated locally, regionally, and internationally to other unions/organizations.

The following are brief descriptions of PSU affiliates:

- (a) National Trade Union Congress of Belize (NTUCB) - the PSU was instrumental in forming the congress in 1966. The NTUCB is the umbrella organization of all major trade unions in Belize representing eighteen major trade unions in the country. The NTUCB has the power to advise the governor-general to appoint one of the National Senate's 13 members.
- (b) Caribbean Public Services Association (CPSA) - is a regional Public Sector Trade Union confederation. To date, the CPSA comprises thirteen (13) public service unions across the Caribbean.
- (c) Public Services International (PSI) - the PSI is a global trade union federation representing 20 million working women and men who deliver vital public services in 163 countries. PSI champions human rights, advocates for social justice and promotes universal access to quality public services. PSI works with the United Nations system and in partnership with labour, civil society and other organisations.

3.0 Organizational Structure of the Public Service Union of Belize



GENERAL MEMEBRSHIP

Note: S.C. means Standing or Special Committee (see clause 28)

L.O. means Liaison Officer

CITATION

1. These Regulations may be cited as the
“PUBLIC SERVICE UNION OF BELIZE CONSTITUTION, 2024”.

DEFINITIONS

2. In this Constitution the following words shall have the respective meanings assigned to them
 - I. ‘Full member’ means a financial member of the PSU.
 - II. ‘Honorary member’ means a non-financial member of PSU.
 - III. ‘Officer’ means a member of the Council of Management of the PSU.
 - IV. ‘Branch’ means a recognized branch of the PSU.

TITLE

3. The name of the Union shall be the “**THE PUBLIC SERVICE UNION OF BELIZE**” hereinafter referred to as the “**UNION**”

4. The registered office of the Union shall be:
 - i. such place as may be decided on by the Council of Management from time to time. The members shall be informed of any such decision within thirty (30) days by bulletin or circular.
 - ii. the place of meeting of the Union for the transaction of its business shall be determined by the Council of Management from time to time.

OBJECTS

5. The objects of the Union shall be:

- i. to ensure the complete organization in the Union of all persons employed by the Government of Belize or any of its Statutory Bodies in a Civil capacity and such other persons as are described in Article (5) of this Constitution.
- ii. to promote and protect the interest and welfare of its members including the obtaining and maintaining of just and proper rates of remuneration, hours of work and other conditions of employment.
- iii. to promote goodwill and harmony throughout the Public Service.
- iv. to maintain and improve the standards and efficiency of the Public Service of Belize, and contentment among members of the Union.
- v. to regulate an effective bargaining body to negotiate on behalf of its members.
- vi. to regulate by amicable means wherever possible, the relations between and Government/Management or between members and members.
- vii. to promote mutual respect and goodwill amongst the various branches and districts in the Public Service of Belize, and to encourage loyalty and cooperation in the best interest of the Public Servants and the Public.
- viii. to provide Trade Union Benefits for members.
- ix. to promote the general improvement of Public Service.
- x. to collaborate with NTUCB and Civil Society to advocate for legislative changes in the interest of its members.
- xi. to further (financially or otherwise) the work or purpose of any Association or body having for its object the promotion of the interest of Government employees or Trade Unionism.
- xii. to establish, carry-on, or participate (financially or otherwise), in the business of publishing any journal, book, pamphlet or publication or any undertakings (Industrial Business or otherwise) in the interest of and with the main purpose of furthering the interest of the Union.
- xiii. to establish, participate in, or hold shares in cooperative ventures or companies in the interest of and with the main purpose of furthering the interest of its members.

MEMBERSHIP

6. 1) Membership of the Union shall be categorised by the following:

a) Full Membership of the Union shall be open to:

- i. any current employee of the Public Service and;
- ii. any person who has been a member of and has retired by way of mandatory retirement age of 55 from the public service.
- iii. employees of Municipal Bodies;
- iv. employees of Statutory Bodies;
- v. employees of any firm or company which has taken a public service formerly performed by Government.

b) Honorary Membership of the Union shall be open to any person who has been a member of the public service and have left by any of the following modes:

- i. on premature retirement under the Pensions Act (age of >50);
- ii. on retirement on medical grounds;
- iii. on compulsory retirement;
- iv. on the abolition of office;
- v. on retirement in the public interest;
- vi. on resignation; and
- vii. on release in accordance with regulation 222 of the BPSR, 2014;

shall be allowed to:

aa. participate in PSU AGMs and branch meetings with having voting rights; and

bb. participate in PSU benefit programs subject to the terms and conditions of the PSU.

And shall not be eligible for:

cc. election at the PSU Branch and Council of Management levels

dd. appointment to PSU committees on a permanent basis.

2) A candidate for admission shall be recognized as member only after acceptance by the Membership Committee.

3) Every candidate for admission shall pay an entrance fee to be determined from time to time by the Council of Management and shall pay the monthly subscription thereafter.

- 4) Persons upon being admitted shall be deemed to agree to abide by the Constitution of the Union in every respect. If in the opinion of the Council of Management, a member fails to abide by the Constitution at any time, that person shall be liable to disciplinary action.
 - a) The process for disciplinary action is set out in Annex 1 of this Constitution.
- 5) Non-Dues-Paying Members
 - 1) Members who are suspended without pay or terminated by their employer, but are challenging such a decision, shall have their membership extended for a maximum of twelve (12) months subsequent to dismissal or at the conclusion of the suspension or termination appeal, whichever is first.
 - 2) Non-dues-paying members who do not have alternative paid employment and who are temporarily away on leave without pay for reasons such as sick leave, parental leave, adoption leave, leave for care of family members or leave for family responsibilities greater than twelve (12) months, study leave, may have their membership extended for twelve (12) months.
 - 3) Non-dues-paying members who do not have alternative paid employment and who are on leave without pay because of disability or injury at work.
- 6) Members on leave without pay who do not have alternative paid employment as defined in Section 5, Sub-Section (2) shall not be required to pay dues while on leave.
- 7) Non-dues paying members must make an application (every 3 months) to the National President for the attention of the Membership Committee in order to maintain their membership in good standing.

SUBSCRIPTION

7. 1) Subscription shall be such as is determined from time to time by approval of a general meeting.
- 2) Subscription and other contributions due to the Union may be paid to the Union by deduction from salary paysheet or in such other manner as the Union may from time to time decide.
- 3) A member whose subscription is three months in arrears or who has not paid a levy within two months of its declaration shall cease to be a member of the Union and his or her name shall be removed from the roll of members.
- 4) A person who ceases to be a member of the Union by reason of arrears of subscription or of levy may be re-admitted to membership once their arrears are made current.
- 5) Application for re-admission shall be made in writing to the Secretary General, attention of the Membership Committee.
- 6) Benefits accrue after 6 months subscription paid.

MANAGEMENT OF UNION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

8. 1) The Management of the Union shall, subject to orders and directions of the general membership, be vested in the Council of Management, hereinafter referred to as the “Council” which shall comprise all elected members, save and except the Auditors and Trustees.
- 2) The Council of Management shall be comprised of the following officers:
 - i. President
 - ii. First Vice President
 - iii. Second Vice President
 - iv. Secretary General
 - v. Assistant Secretary General
 - vi. National Treasurer
 - vii. Assistant National Treasurer
 - viii. Councillors (3)
 - a) Councillor A - Councillor with responsibility of the Young Workers’ Committee
 - b) Councillor B - Councillor with responsibility of the Women’s Committee
 - c) Councillor C - Councillor with responsibility to support the functions of the Public Relations Committee
 - ix. Chairperson of [All] Branches.
- 3) The election of officers of the Union shall be in accordance with the rota system set out in Article 41 of this Constitution.
- 4) The Elections Officer shall prepare a list of all nominees and shall circulate same to all Branches and the general membership by way of circulars and public notices in one or all of the local newspapers, at least four (4) weeks before the date of the AGM.
 - a) To be eligible for nomination against the post of President or 1st Vice President, a member must have at least two (2) years serving on the national or executive at the branch level.
- 4) The COM shall meet on the first Saturday of every month; in no event, shall two (2) consecutive months pass without a meeting. A COM meeting may be called earlier by the National President if necessary, or upon written request of a majority of the COM members.
- 5) Any member of the COM who absents himself/herself without reason for more than 50 percent of meetings within a calendar year, shall render his/her post vacant.

PRESIDENT

9. 1) The President shall
 - a) be elected by membership vote once every two years.
 - b) be eligible for re-election, provided that no member shall hold the office of President for more than three consecutive terms.
 - c) preside at all General Meetings, Special General Meetings and Meeting sign the minutes of each meeting.
 - d) superintend the general administration of the affairs of the Union in conjunction with the 1st Vice President, Secretary General and National Treasurer.
- 2) Upon demission of office, the president shall continue in the role of immediate past president on the Council of Management as per section 16 of the Constitution,
- 3) The President shall be governed by the rules and regulations of the Public Service Union for the period of secondment. And in matters where Union's rules and regulations are silent, the Public Service Regulations may be used as a guideline where applicable.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

10. The First Vice President shall
 - a) be elected by membership vote once every two years. The First Vice President shall be eligible for re-election.
 - b) be the chairperson of the Public Relations Committee of the Union and shall assist the President in his or her duties.
 - c) in the absence of the President, act in the Office and at such times will be vested with all the powers conferred on the President by this Constitution and subject to the same limitation.
 - e) superintend the general administration of the affairs of the Union in conjunction with the President, Secretary General and National Treasurer.

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

11. The Second Vice President shall
 - a) be elected by membership vote every two years. The Second Vice President shall be eligible for re-election.

- b) be chairperson of the Membership Committee of the Union and shall perform such other duties assigned by the President with the consent of the Council.
- c) in the absence of the President and First Vice President or in the absence of First Vice President, the Second Vice President shall perform the duties of President or First Vice President and at such times shall be vested with all the powers conferred on the President or First Vice President as the case may be and be subjected to the same limitations.

SECRETARY GENERAL

12. The Secretary General shall

- a) be elected once every two years by membership vote. The Secretary General shall be eligible for re-election.
- b) conduct the business of the Union in accordance with this Constitution and shall carry out the instructions of the Council of Management.
- c) attend every meeting of the Council of Management and National Executive, keep a record of the minutes and shall have the right to speak and to vote. The Secretary General shall keep up-to-date Register of the members of the Union and up to date register of Delegates.
- d) prepare the Report for the Annual General Meeting.
- e) be responsible for the Elections Committee of the Union. And where the Secretary General's term is up for election, the Assistant Secretary General shall hold such responsibility at the AGM.
- f) superintend the general administration of the affairs of the Union in conjunction with the President, 1st Vice President and National Treasurer.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

13. The Assistant Secretary General shall

- a) be elected once every two years by the membership vote and shall be eligible for re-election.
- b) assist the Secretary General in conducting the business of the Union and shall be assigned such responsibilities as the Secretary General may decide with the consent of the Council.

- c) in the absence of the Secretary General the Assistant Secretary General shall act in the said Office and at such times shall be vested with all the powers conferred on the Secretary General by the Constitution and subject to the same limitation.
- d) attend every meeting of the Council of Management and National Executive, shall assist in keeping a record of the minutes and shall have the right to speak and to vote. The Assistant Secretary General shall assist to keep up-to-date Register of the members of the Union and up to date register of Delegates.
- e) be responsible for the Research, Education and Training Committee of the Union.

NATIONAL TREASURER

14. 1) The National Treasurer shall

- a) be elected once every two years. The National Treasurer shall be eligible for re-election.
- b) attend the meetings of the COM and National Executives and shall:
- c) receive all monies paid to the Union and shall within 48 hours lodge such monies with the Bankers of the Union in the name of the Union.
- d) keep the account of the Union and present a financial statement of the receipts and expenditure for the preceding month at the next meeting of the Council.
- e) have a right to speak and vote at all Council of Management meetings and National Executive meetings.
- f) at least six weeks before the date fixed for Annual General Meeting of the Union present to the Council a report for the preceding financial year, an income and expenditure account and a balance sheet as at the end of such year.
- g) prepare and submit a draft budget to the Council in time for consideration before the Annual General Meeting of the Union.
- h) submit for audit when required the accounts, books, and vouchers of the Union and present the audited accounts to the following Annual General Meeting.
- i) make all disbursement on behalf of the Union including withdrawals from the Union's bank account on the joint signatures of himself or herself and the President, or a Vice President or any other person so designated by the Council.
- j) be responsible for the Investments Portfolio of the Union.
- k) superintend the general administration of the affairs of the Union in conjunction with the President, 1st Vice President and Secretary General.

- 1) be responsible to monitor and audit the accounts of all Branches on a quarterly basis.
- 2) The financial statement must include:
 - i. the financial commitment of the Union;
 - ii. the amount of money due and owing to the Union;
 - iii. the amount of money paid towards those commitments in the preceding month.
 - iv. the amount of money standing to the credit of each fund.
 - v. the amount of liquid cash available for spending.

ASSISTANT NATIONAL TREASURER

15. The Assistant National Treasurer shall

- a) be elected once every two years by the membership vote and shall be eligible for re-election.
- b) assist the National Treasurer in conducting the business of the Union and shall be assigned such responsibilities as the National Treasurer may decide with the consent of the Council.
- c) in the absence of the National Treasurer, the Assistant National Treasurer shall act for him or her and at such times shall be vested with all the powers conferred on the National Treasurer by the Constitution and subject to the same limitation.
- d) attend every meeting of the Council of Management and National Executive, especially in the absence of the National Treasurer and shall assist to keep up-to-date financial records.
- e) have the right to speak and vote at all meetings of the Council.
- f) be responsible for the Loans Committee of the Union.
- g) provide continuous financial training to all branch executives.

COUNCILORS

- 2) 1) Three (3) Councillors shall be elected from among the members every two years at the Annual General Meeting and shall serve for a period of two years; two (2) of which one must be a woman and one must be a young worker between the age of 18 – 35 inclusive.

- 3) Councillors shall support the COM and may be assigned specific roles as Chairperson's in the Union's Standing Committees.
 - i. Councillor A – responsible to chair the Young Workers Committee
 - ii. Councillor B – responsible to chair the Women's Committee
 - iii. Councillor C – responsible to support the functions of the Public Relations Committee

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

16. Executive members shall

- a) be all elected members of the COM, save and except for Chairperson of Branches who are elected at the branch level.
- b) assist with the general administration of the office of the Union.

CHAIRPERSON OF BRANCHES

17. 1) The Chairperson of a Branch shall be a member of the COM for the period in which he holds the office of chairperson.
- 2) If a Chairperson is unable to attend a meeting of the COM, after consultation with the Branch Executive, an alternate shall be appointed to attend the said meeting, having all meeting privileges as that of the Chairperson.
- 3) At no time shall a Branch not have representation at a meeting of the COM.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

18. 1) The Immediate Past President (IPP) may:-

- a) support the work of the COM during the first six months of the new Presidency.
- b) serve as a resource person to the officers and members of the PSU.
- c) provide advice, leadership, counselling, and as requested provide any other assistance to the COM for the good governance of the Union.
- d) support and provide continuity to the PSU's work of fulfilling the mission and vision, objectives, strategic plan and policies of the Union.
- e) participate in identifying, recruiting and cultivating future leaders in order to ensure succession planning.

- 2) The IPP shall not have voting rights at the COM meetings.

AUDITORS

19. 1) A financial audit of the union's accounts shall be conducted at the end of each financial year, and at such other times as the Council of Management (COM) may deem required.
- 2) Auditors shall be appointed through the Union's standard procurement processes.
- 3) Auditors shall not be members of the COM and shall be Certified Public Accountants (CPA).
- 4) The auditors shall render a report to the Council through the National Treasurer within two weeks of the completion of the audit.
- 5) All financial documents required by the Auditors to complete the audit shall be submitted by the National Treasurer to such auditors within one month of the close of the financial year.
- 6) Results and Management letter from the audit shall be presented to the general membership of the union at the annual general meeting.
- 7) A copy of the Auditor's Report shall be laid before the Council and shall be exhibited in a conspicuous place in the Registered Office of the Union.

TRUSTEES

20. 1) The Trustees shall be members of the Council of Management of the Union and shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting for a term of two years and shall hold office at the pleasure of the Union.
- 2) The Trustees for the time being shall have vested in them all the immovable property of the Union and shall deal with such property as the Council may direct.
- 3) A Trustee may be removed from office, if after investigation, evidence has been found of misconduct.
- 4) In the event of the post of a Trustee falling vacant within six months of the annual general meeting, the office shall be filled temporarily by the Council until the next Annual General Meeting except as provided under article 20 (3) of this Constitution.

POWERS OF COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT

21. 1) The Council of Management may fine any member or officer of the Union who has been found to have been guilty of conduct prejudicial to the interest of the Union, a sum not exceeding one year's subscription or may suspend or expel such member or officer from the Union.
 - a. A vote by not less than two-thirds of the members of the Council of Management in a meeting assembled shall be sufficient to fine, suspend or expel any member or officer of the Union.
- 2) The Council shall have the power at any time to fine, suspend or expel any member of the Council, if in its opinion any such member has refused to comply with any ruling of the Council or has been guilty of conduct calculated to bring the Union into disrepute.
 - i. The procedure for disciplinary action is set out in Annex 1 of the Constitution.
- 3) If any member of the Council absents himself from two consecutive meetings of the Council without satisfactory reasons or arrangements made in accordance with article 18 (2) of this Constitution, his post shall be deemed vacant, and the vacancy shall be filled by the Council until the Annual General Meeting.
- 4) In the event of a post on the Council otherwise falling vacant as defined in article 26 (2) of this Constitution, it shall be filled by the Council until the Annual General Meeting.
- 5) The Council shall have power to call a Special General Meeting at any time.
- 6) The Council shall have power to recognize or to refuse recognition of a branch if its application for recognition is not in accordance with this Constitution or in its opinion, the constitution of such a branch would not be in the interest of the Union as a whole.
- 7) The Council shall have power by a vote of not less than two thirds of its members present at a council meeting to dissolve a branch previously recognized by it or to suspend any branch for an indefinite period.
- 8) The Council shall have power to hire, terminate the services of, or accept the resignation of administrative staff of the Union to fix such salary and conditions of service as it deems fit for the proper execution of the work of the Union.
- 9) The Council shall have power to make, to repeal, alter or suspend bylaws or arrangements for the good management of the Union.

COUNCIL TO INTERPRET CONSTITUTION

22. The Council shall be the sole authority for the interpretation of this Constitution and may give ruling on any matter or matters on which the Constitution is silent.

APPEAL AGAINST COUNCIL

24. Any member, officer or branch aggrieved by the actions or decisions of the Council of Management in the exercise of its powers contained under Article 23 of this Constitution may appeal to the Annual General Meeting of the Union.

COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT MEETINGS

25. 1) The Council of Management shall meet at least once in every month.
- 2) A special meeting of the Council shall be held:
- a) at the direction of the President or, in the event of the absence of the President at the direction of a Vice President or
 - b) on the requisition in writing of a majority of members of Council.
- 3) A Special Meeting of the Council shall deal only with those matters of which the special meeting is being called.
- 4) Notice in writing of a meeting of the Council (not being a special meeting) together with a copy of the agenda for such a meeting, shall be forwarded by the Secretary General to each member of the Council not later than three (3) days before the date fixed for such meeting.
- 5) The Chair at a meeting of the Council shall be taken by the President or in the absence of the President by the First Vice President or Second Vice President.
- 6) Ten (10) members shall form a quorum at all meetings of the Council of Management. If after thirty minutes from the time appointed for the meeting at least ten members are not present the meeting may commence with the members present as an adjourned meeting.
- 7) Decisions of an adjourned meeting shall be implemented either:
- a) upon ratification of a subsequent meeting of the council or
 - b) upon ratification of a subsequent adjourned meeting provided that the combination of members present at both the initial adjourned meeting and the subsequent adjourned meeting constitute a quorum.
- 8) Voting shall be by show of hands, but if a poll is demanded by majority or council members present then by ballot.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

26. 1) The Annual General Meeting of the Union shall be held not later than the 31st day of May in every year. At such meetings the Council shall submit a general report on the working of the Union during the past year. Such report shall include the audited report of the Union's account as referred to in clause 21 (1) of this Constitution.
- 2) Chairperson of branches shall be elected every two years at a Branch Annual Meeting, election of other officers of the union shall be held at the Annual General Meeting of the union to fill posts falling vacant at the date of the Annual General Meeting or to fill posts otherwise falling vacant.
- 3) In this Constitution the terms "post falling vacant at the date of the Annual General Meeting" refers to those posts declared vacant by the Council on the basis of the rota system as set out in article 41 of this Constitution. The terms "post otherwise falling vacant" refers to those posts deemed to be vacant as a result of the death or resignation or illness of an officer or as a result of disciplinary action taken against an officer by a General Membership Meeting or the Council in exercise of its powers contained under Article 23 of this Constitution. In the case of election to a post otherwise falling vacant the duration of office of any officer elected shall be held no later than 31st day of August of that year.
- 4) If for any reason the Annual General Meeting of the union is not held on or before the 31st day of May, it shall be held no later than the 31st day of August of that year.
- 5) If the Annual General Meeting is still not held by 31st day of August in any year, then ten (10) members of each of the Branches may convene the Annual General Meeting.
- 6) Until the Annual General Meeting is held, the Council of Management shall continue to function and exercise its functions.
- 7) A General Meeting shall be called at least twice each year i.e. at least one General Meeting in addition to the Annual General Meeting.
- 8) Notwithstanding the provisions of article 21 (5) of this Constitution, five (5) financial members from each Branch of the Union may request the Council to summon a special meeting of the Union to discuss any matter needing attention and such special general meeting shall be held within fourteen (14) days of the receipt of such request.
 - i. The special general meeting may be held virtually.
- 9) No question shall be discussed at any special general meeting except that for which the meeting was specially convened.
- 10) At all General Meetings, thirty-five (35) members shall form a quorum. If after thirty minutes from the time appointed for such meeting, at least thirty-five (35) members are not present, the meeting shall be adjourned until a later date when the members present shall constitute a quorum.

- 11) At least seven (7) days' notice shall be given of the date of any General Meeting.
- 12) All nominees for elected office shall be members in good standing of the PSU.

VOTING AT GENERAL MEETINGS

27. 1) Voting shall be by show of hands but if a poll is demanded by at least ten members, then by ballot.
 - a. Only members in good standing shall be allowed to vote.

STANDING COMMITTEES

28. 1) The Council at its first meeting after election shall appoint the following standing committees:

- a) Grievance Committee
- b) Public Relations Committee
- c) Membership Committee
- d) Research, Education and Training Committee
- e) Social, Cultural, Health and Wellness Committee
- f) Women's Committee
- g) Young Workers Committee

FUNCTION OF STANDING COMMITTEES

29. 1) *Grievance Committee*

- a) The Grievance Committee shall process all grievances submitted to the Secretariat by the membership.
- b) They shall report at every meeting of Council on their activity and shall have the right to seek such advice as they may consider necessary in the execution of their functions, provided always that approval of the Council is first obtained in all matters involving the expenditure of funds of the Union.

2) *Public Relations Committee*

The Public relations Committee of the Union shall be responsible for maintaining a favourable image of the Union.

3) *Membership Committee*

- a) The Membership Committee shall be responsible for the organization of members into the Union and in conjunction with the Social and Cultural Committee shall be responsible for maintaining the highest possible morale amongst the membership of the Union.
- b) They shall meet at least once every quarter and shall render monthly reports to the Council.

4) *Research, Education and Training Committee*

- a) The Research, Education and Training Committee shall be responsible for research and the draft and execution of the Education Programme of the Union to be approved by the Council.
- b) They shall execute the programme by the way of meetings, classes, and other educational means as they may consider fit.
- c) They shall in conjunction with the Public Relations Committee disseminate such educational material as they may consider necessary.

5) *Social, Cultural, Health and Wellness Committee*

The Social and Cultural Committee of the Union shall be responsible for the social and cultural advancement of the members of the Union, and in so doing shall organize such efforts that will utilize the existing facilities of the Union to bring the membership closer together in the spirit of comradeship.

6) *National Women's Committee*

The Women's Committee shall be responsible for ascertaining the views of female members and advising the General Council on matters pertaining to their welfare and conditions of employment.

- a) Researching, developing and planning processes, strategies and programmes for female public servants.
- b) Liaising, through the COM, with Governmental and non- governmental agencies responsible for women.
- c) Representing the Public Service Union at local, National and International Conference and events

They shall report at every meeting of the COM.

7) *National Young Workers Committee*

- d) The Chair of the Young Workers Committee is as provide for under Article 16
- e) The Young Workers Committee shall be responsible for advising the COM on all matters affecting young persons in Belize and primarily younger members of the Public Service.
- f) Researching, developing and planning processes, strategies and programmes for young public servants.
- g) Liaising, through the COM, with Governmental and non- governmental agencies responsible for youth and development.

- h) Representing the Public Service Union at local, National and International Conference and events.

CONVENOR OF COMMITTEES

30. The President shall be the Convenor of the Grievance Committee and the convenor of the other Committees shall be as specified in this Constitution save and except those of the Social and Cultural committees which shall be elected from among members of the Council.

WORKING COMMITTEES

31. The President shall also institute the following working committees whose primary focus is to contribute to the efficient operations of the Union. Working Committees main goal is to communicate information and assist the COM in the decision-making processes by providing the necessary information specific to their assigned portfolio.
 1. Legal Committee - the primary focus of the Legal Committee is to serve as a key resource arm to provide advice to the COM on all matters of a legal nature.
 2. Investment Committee - the primary focus of the Investment Committee is to serve as a key resource arm to provide advice to the COM on all matters of investments and potential investments. This Committee is chair by the National Treasurer.
 3. Joint Unions Negotiation Committee – this Committee is a PSU subcommittee whose primary focus is to work closely with the President/delegate who represents the Union on the Joint Union Team (JUT) to negotiate better working conditions for all public service workers.
 - a. The JUT is comprised of the National Trade Union Congress of Belize (NTUCB), the Belize National Teachers Union (BNTU), the Association of Public Sector Senior Managers (APSSM) and the PSU.
 2. AGM & Elections Committee - the primary focus of the AGM & Elections Committee is to serve as the execution arm of the Union whenever an election is called.
 3. Loans Committee - the primary focus of the Loans Committee is to vet and approve membership loan applications. This Committee is chair by the Assistant National Treasurer.
 4. Staff Committee – this Committee is established for promoting good employee relations, for facilitating effective communication between PSU and staff members and for advancing the health, safety and wellbeing of staff. The COM is the final approving body for all human resource policies.
 5. Constitution Committee - the primary focus of the Constitution Committee is to review and make recommendations where necessary for revision of the Constitution.

REMUNERATION OF OFFICERS

32. 1) Honoraria to officers of the Union shall be provided annually from the funds of the Union and the quantum of the honoraria shall be fixed by the Council of Management or the General Meeting.
- a. Nowhere in these rules should it be interpreted that the Council is precluded from remunerating officers of the Council who are called upon to assume full-time service with the Union.

APPLICATION OF FUNDS

33. All monies received on account of entrance fees, subscription, contributions, levies, sale of Constitution Books, interest on investments or otherwise shall be applied in carrying out the objects of the Union and in paying the expenses of management in accordance with this Constitution.

INVESTMENT OF FUNDS

34. 1) The funds of the Union which are not required for current expenses shall, on the direction of Council, be invested by and in the name of the Union for the time being in such Public Stock, Government Bonds, or other securities or in any Bank operating in the Country, or in the purchase of Lands or the erection or alteration of offices or other building therein, or in any investment which the Trustees are by law authorized to make.
- a. The Investment Committee which is chaired by the National Treasurer shall be tasked to identify and provide information on investment opportunities.

FINANCIAL YEAR

35. The financial year shall be from 1st April to 31st March of the following year.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

36. Benefits begin to accrue and are accessible after 6 months of being a paying member.

1) Every member in good standing as defined in Section 6, is entitled:

- a) to be represented by the Union;
- b) to be free from any act or omission on the part of the union, or other members, that would discriminate against the member on the basis of age, sex, colour, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, marital status, family status, criminal record, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, language, political belief, social and economic class or employer; and
- c) to be free from harassment by another member, both within the union and in the workplace, on the basis of any of the grounds mentioned in paragraph (b).

2) *Legal Assistance*

- a) The Council of Management shall have the power to provide legal advice for any member.
- b) Legal advice referred to in this Constitution shall be confined to any matter which relates to the members employment provided the Council is satisfied that the case is one on which it is advisable that legal advice shall be taken.

3) *Death Benefits*

- a) The Council or the Union shall have the power to provide a death benefit payable to the dependent of any member of the Union or to any member of Union in respect of the immediate family member, given the member has been a financial member for a period of not less than 360 days.
- b) The amount payable to the dependent of any member of the Union for such benefit shall not exceed six hundred dollars (\$600.00) provided that the member did not make any death benefit claim in respect of an immediate family in accordance with section (c) below.
- c) The amount payable to any member of Union in respect of the immediate family member for such benefit shall be:
 - i. members paying \$15.00 monthly – amount not exceeding seventy-five dollars (\$75.00); for a maximum of three claims throughout membership.
 - ii. members paying \$20.00 monthly – amount not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100.00); for a maximum of three claims throughout membership.

4) *Scholarship*

- a) A scholarship programme for children of financial members shall be instituted by Union to be known as the Public Service Union Scholarship Fund.

- b) The administration of the Public Service Union Scholarship Fund shall be guided by the Union's Education Policy.

Note: The Union's Management of Grievance to Non-Union Members Policy shall be used to guide the Union on all matters relating to non-union members who requests advice and representation.

STRIKE AND LOCK-OUTS

- 37. a) In the event of a dispute arising, the members concerned shall make the same known to the Branch Chair or the General Secretary, who shall report it to the Executive Council. In no case shall a cessation of work take place without the sanction of the COM, after exhausting all procedures for resolution of disputes.
- b) When a strike is authorised by the COM, or in the event of members being locked out by their employers, members authorised to be on strike and members recognised as being locked out, shall be paid such strike benefit as the COM may decide.
- c) Members three months or more in arrears of contributions at the commencement of the strike or lock-out shall not be entitled to any benefit except at the discretion of the COM.

BRANCHES

- 38. 1) Subject to the approval of Council, members of the Union who reside in each of the district of Corozal, Orange Walk, Stann Creek, Toledo, Cayo, Belize City and the City of Belmopan may constitute themselves into branches of the Union, provided that no branch shall be set up with a membership of less than twenty (20).
- 2) Immediately after a branch is set up, it shall apply to the Secretary General of the union for recognition as such and the Secretary General shall cause its application to be laid before the next meeting of the Council for consideration.
- 3) Each application for recognition shall be made on the prescribed form set in the Schedule of the Constitution and shall be accompanied by a list of members of the branch.
- 4) The name of each branch shall show clearly that it is a branch of the Union e.g. the Toledo Branch of the Public Service Union of Belize.
- 5) A member of a branch is ipso facto a member of the Union. A member of a branch dissolved or suspended in accordance with article 21 (7) of this Constitution shall unless he specifically

states his intention to withdraw, continue as a member of the Union and shall be entitled to the personal benefits of membership.

- 6) A branch shall not correspond or negotiate directly with Government/Management on any matter but shall always act through the Council of Management.
- 7) The Annual Meeting of the Branch shall be as arranged by the branch but shall not conflict with the Annual General Meeting of the Union and shall be held before the 1st day of March in each year.
- 8) The election of officers of a Branch shall be on a two (2) years basis at the annual meeting. At such meeting, the Branch Executive shall report on the activities of the branch for the preceding year.
- 9) The result of the elections of branch officers shall be forwarded to the Secretary General of the Union within seven (7) days of such elections.
- 10) The Branch shall be managed by a branch committee which shall consist of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, three (3) Councillors, a Young Workers' Representative and a Women's Representative.
- 11) Four members shall form a quorum at all meetings of the Committee, which shall be held at least once a quarter during the year.
- 12) The Branches shall be so organized that at the workplace or in each department or section, liaison officers are to be appointed or elected by the branch committee. The liaison officer's primary role shall be to represent the union at the workplace, and shall be responsible for handling and reporting member grievances to the branch committee or the branch chairperson. Liaison officers shall hold office at the pleasure of the union.
- 13) The Chairperson, or in his/her absence, the Vice Chairperson shall have power to call a special meeting of the branch at any time.
- 14) Fifteen (15) financial members of a branch may request a special meeting of the branch to discuss any matter needing attention and such special meeting shall be held within ten (10) days of the receipt of such request.
- 15) Fifteen (15) financial members of a district branch shall form a quorum at any meeting of the branch.
- 16) The chairperson of the branch shall:-
 - i. preside over all meetings and sign all minutes;
 - ii. have the right to inspect all books and papers of the branch;
 - iii. supervise the workings of the branch and its officers;
 - iv. submit a quarterly report of the activities of the branch to the Council of Management.

- 17) The Vice Chairperson of the branch shall in the absence of the Chairperson have the same power and perform the same functions of the Chairperson.
- 18) The Secretary of a branch shall:
- i. keep a roll of the members of the branch;
 - ii. take the minutes of the proceedings of all meetings and enter the same in the book kept for that purpose;
 - iii. summon all meetings, on the direction of the Chairperson;
 - iv. conduct the correspondence of the branch;
- 19) The Branch Treasurer shall:-
- i. collect fees for the members of his branch in such a manner as the Council may direct;
 - ii. prepare monthly financial reports to be submitted to the headquarters.
- 20) Failure to submit monthly financial reports to the Union shall result in the suspension of branch rebates until such report is submitted.
- 21) All fees collected by a Branch shall be paid into the account of the Union. However, the Council shall refund to branch one third of the fees collected.
- 22) A detailed account of all cash receipts and payments shall be kept by the Branch Treasurer and shall be scrutinized from time to time by the Chairperson.
- 23) Should an office to which election is made by the branch fall vacant, the branch committee may, at its discretion, appoint a temporary holder of the office until the Annual Meeting.
- 24) 1) A person who ceases to be a member of the Union shall not continue as a member of any branch.
- 2) A person who ceases to be a member however may be conferred honorary membership in accordance with Article 6 (1)(b) of the Constitution.
- 25) A branch shall have power to draft its constitution and by-laws for its proper working. Provided that the constitution shall be in harmony with this Constitution of the Union and shall within a month of adoption, be submitted to the Council for approval.
- 26) Should there be any unresolved dispute as to the interpretation of any section of this Constitution among the members of a branch; the dispute shall be submitted to the Council of Management for ruling. The ruling of the Council shall in all cases be final.
- 27) A branch shall be dissolved with the consent of two thirds of its members obtained by a ballot vote.

ALTERATION OF CONSTITUTION

39. This Constitution may be added to, amended or revoked by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership present at a special general meeting.

DISSOLUTION

40. 1) The Union shall not be dissolved except with the consent of five-sixth of the members of the Union by ballot vote.
- 2) In the event of the Union being dissolved as provided above all debts and liabilities legally incurred on behalf of the Union shall be fully discharged, and the remaining funds of the Union disposed of as decided at a General Meeting.

ELECTION ROTA SYSTEM

41.

POST	AGM ELECTION DATE
President	1993 and every 2 years after
First Vice President	1994 and every 2 years after
Second Vice President	1993 and every 2 years after
Secretary General	1993 and every 2 years after
Assistant Secretary General	1994 and every 2 years after
National Treasurer	one elected in 1993 and every 2 years after
Assistant National Treasurer	one elected in 2022 and every 2 years after
3 Councillors	two (2) elected in 2022 and every 2 years after
Chairperson, Branch Treasurer and two (2) Councillors of Branches	Elected in 2023 and every 2 years after
Vice Chairperson, Women's Representative, Secretary and one (1) Councillor of Branches	Elected in 2024 and every 2 years after

AGM LEAFLETS

42. 1) The Council of Management shall prepare and disseminate the AGM Books at least three (3) weeks before the opening ceremony.
- 2) All members shall be entitled to AGM souvenirs. Branch Chairs are responsible to receive and deliver such AGM memorabilia to their respective branch members who were not in attendance.

DATE OF AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION

43. The amendments to this Constitution were made at a Special General Meeting of the Union held on the 28th day of June 2023.

ANNEX 1

PROCEDURE FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

A disciplinary procedure is a formal way for the COM to address unacceptable behaviours by any other member of the Union.

The procedure for disciplinary action is as follows:

1. A written complaint must be submitted to the COM by the member who is aggrieved.
2. The COM within seven (7) working days should inform the member who it is alleged to have committed a misconduct, contrary to the expected rules of the Union.
 - a. The member shall also receive a copy of the complaint made against him/her.
3. The member shall be given seven (7) working days to respond to the complaint.
4. At the expiration of the seventh working day after the member has been notified of the complaint made against him/her, the COM shall hold a hearing within fourteen (14) days whether or not a response from the member who it is alleged to have committed a misconduct, contrary to the expected rules of the Union is received.
 - a. Both parties may be present at the said hearing.
 - b. The Union should keep a record of the said hearing.
5. The COM shall exercise its power in accordance with Articles 23 (1) and (2) of this Constitution.
6. Whereas a complaint is made against a member of the COM, the member against whom a complaint is made shall not have any influence over the decision to be made.