

# CNY Solidarity Coalition Policies and Procedures

Revised 2019.12.30

## Contents

Full Coalition Information (1-7)
Decision Making and Purview (2 - 3)
Nonviolent Action (4)
Political Party Non-Affiliation Statement (5)
Financial Procedures (5-6)
Organizational Affiliation (7)
Coordinating Committee Information (7-10)
Election Procedure (8)
CC Meeting Facilitator's Guide (9)
Checklist for Full Coalition Meeting (10)

## CNY Solidarity Coalition Information

### Who We Are

CNY Solidarity Coalition is a grassroots coalition of organizations and individuals committed to protecting all Central New Yorkers from the dangers of the Trump-Pence administration's policies, appointees, and rhetoric.

We are dedicated to truth, justice, and democracy. We aim to protect and fight alongside People of Color, Immigrants, Refugees, LGBTQ+ people, the Muslim Community, the Jewish Community, Women, People with Disabilities, People with Mental Illness, the Deaf Community, Teachers, Scientists, Environmentalists, and all other marginalized and oppressed groups and entities that are likely to be targeted in these uncertain times.

The Coalition's anchor organizations include:

- Syracuse Peace Council
- Workers' Center of Central New York
- CNY Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO
- Syracuse Urban Jobs Task Force
- Syracuse Cultural Workers

### Our Pledge

**We the people** of Syracuse and Central New York are proud inheritors of the local struggle for abolition and suffrage and survivors of decades of economic deprivation.

We hereby pledge:

- To tear down the walls that divide and impoverish us;
- To oppose any effort to register, detain, deport, or attack our neighbors;
- To provide refuge for those in danger or need;
- To protect our water, air, and land as our kin.

## **Membership**

- Membership shall be open to all persons who attend two or more Coalition meetings during a calendar year. After the first year, membership is retained by attending at least one Coalition meeting during the calendar year.

## **Decision-Making Process** Approved 3/12/17

**We seek consensus\*, but if it cannot be reached, fall back to a 3/4 majority vote.**

We understand that some decisions are more significant than others, and that which decisions are made at what level (i.e., by ongoing committees, the coordinating committee, the full Coalition) is still being clarified.

With that in mind, for “less significant” decisions and decisions that must be made immediately, the Coalition still seeks consensus, but moves more quickly to a vote if consensus cannot be attained.

For core policy decisions and/or decisions that would have a longer impact on the Coalition, the process may take more than one meeting (although not the entire time of each meeting). Whenever possible, such issues should be referred to the Coordinating Committee in advance so that they can notify the full Coalition previous to the meeting. In the first meeting the issue will be articulated and discussed openly, followed by a decision at the next meeting.

\*Consensus is a decision-making process that seeks to value everyone’s input equally. A decision is made when everyone can “live with” the decision and no one believes that it violates the group’s basic values. It does not involve voting and does not mean that everyone fully supports the decision.

The following values underlie our process:

- People feel heard and are heard
- Participatory
- Efficient
- Flexible
- The will of the few doesn’t subvert the will of the many

## **Consensus Decision Making at Coalition Meetings**

- Principles:
  - Consensus seeking, with fallback of a seventy-five per cent vote
  - All members may vote
  - Proposal e-mailed before meeting when possible
- Steps at the meeting:
  - Presentation of a proposal

- Clarifying Questions
- Discussion
- At some point, temperature could be taken to see where group is at. (not a vote)
  - Ask those opposed why they are opposed. Be sure they have a chance to speak.
- Proposal could be tabled for further work here. This has usually been seen as more productive than a divisive vote.
  - If no consensus, a vote can be taken.
  - If seventy-five per cent of those voting say yes, it passes

## **Purview**

Guiding principle: Committees do not need to wait for Full Coalition approval to formulate positions and take actions, as long as these positions and actions do not contradict Coalition positions or developing positions.

### 1. Committees

- a. Actions - Protests, events, training, etc. are decided on by working committees, working in alignment with the CNY Solidarity Pledge and other positions or statements approved by the Coalition.

Some actions may need full Coalition approval. It is the committees' responsibility to ensure that:

- the type of action aligns with Coalition guidelines for action
- the focus of action aligns with Coalition priorities and values.

If the committee notices a possible concern, committee will ask for the full Coalition's approval:

- For urgent action: Email to cross-committee representation listserv for approval by a 3/4 majority of those responding. (committees must maintain sufficient representation in this list)
- For anything else: Ask full Coalition approval at the next meeting.

Committees will report back to the Coalition on actions, positions taken, etc.

### 2. Coordinating Committee

- a. Administrative Work - Coordinating Committee plans and organizes Solidarity Coalition meetings and oversees the work of functional committees (Finance, Communication, etc.)

It is NOT responsible for the content of Committee meetings.

It is NOT responsible for making policy decisions for the Coalition.

### b. Internal Logistical Communications / Synchronizing Actions & Work -

Committees will inform the Coordinating Committee and other concerned committees of upcoming actions, including dates and times. The Coordinating Committee will help avoid time conflicts and multiple committees taking on the same or opposite actions. It will monitor and respond as needed to developing issues and priorities.

### 3. Full Coalition

- a. Organizational Structure - Full Coalition must decide on anything that concerns Coalition structure, such as:
  - Legal Status
  - Financial Policies
  - Coordinating Committee elections and structure
- b. Prioritizing Issues - Full Coalition will engage in clarifying which issues will be the Coalition's focus, and which issues have higher priority for the Coalition.
- c. Coalition Positions - Full Coalition may develop and approve positions on particular issues. Committees may draft proposed positions and bring to full Coalition for approval.
- d. Guidelines for Appropriate Action - The full Coalition will approve guidelines for appropriate action.

As Coalition members, in order to move public opinion:

- We want to engage in nonviolent activism and protests, keeping in mind the principles of nonviolent leaders such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King.
  - We want to be able to confront power in ways that effectively attract positive recognition.
- e. Guidelines for Action Alignment - Committees will contact the Coordinating Committee with their planned actions, and coordinate with other committees whose interests overlap. The Coordinating committee will help avoid time conflicts and two committees taking on same or opposite actions.

Each Committee is empowered to plan and implement actions within its issue area.

## **Nonviolent Action Guidelines – Approved 2/25/18**

### **1. Principles**

- The Coalition is committed to nonviolent action.
- Direct action is an important tool of the coalition.
- Actions must be consistent with the values of the Coalition as expressed in the Pledge/Mission statement and decisions of the Coalition.
- We will not cause physical harm to persons nor validate harm caused by unaffiliated individuals or groups
- We will not condone harm to property.
- We will treat all people we encounter with respect.

### **2. Guidelines**

Before an action is taken we will work to ensure that:

- there is agreement on the purpose and scope of the action.
- there is agreement that the action conforms to the principles stated above.
- the level of planning is consistent with the scope and nature of the action.
- the level of training is consistent with the scope and nature of the action.
- there is agreement on the messaging of the action – what we are communicating.
- there is an understanding of risks involved and each participant determines the level of risk they will assume.
- potential beneficial and detrimental outcomes of the action are considered.

During an action, we will:

- abide by the decision-making process of the group.
- agree to leave speaking and media relations to the decision-making process of the group.
- express our feelings of anger, frustration and pain without verbally abusing any individual.
- not engage in physical violence even in the face of hostility.
- protect each other physically and emotionally.

After the action, we will:

- evaluate the effectiveness of the action and extract lessons learned.
- identify any follow-up action needed.

### **Political Parties Non-Affiliation**

We are not a partisan coalition, but we *are* deeply political. Our politics is grassroots, inclusive, and healing. We are willing to work with anyone who aligns with our values and works to advance our shared goals and we will hold accountable those who do not, regardless of party. CNY Solidarity does not affiliate with any political party – our allegiances are to the people and shared values alone.

### **Electoral Campaign Policy:**

- a) That we start from the principle that one of our founding organizational objectives was to defeat Katko now and Trump in 2020 (if he is still in office & running again).
- b) That the policy for sharing information allows members to post electoral information on the Indivisible NY24 list and/or the State Legislative list; announce timely information at general meetings; address electoral information in committees that is related to the committee's purview; and include timely campaign-related information on the Coalition-wide announcements list or the discussion list as appropriate.
- c) That any member may raise an objection to the content of such information by bringing that objection to the Coordinating Committee which shall include the issues raised on the next general meeting agenda, with the purpose of achieving consensus (or a 75% majority vote if needed) through civil discussion about the objections.

The intent of this policy is to allow the sharing of information regarding candidates whose platforms are broadly consistent with the Coalition's mission. This means we will sometimes share information regarding multiple candidates for a single race.

This policy does not allow electoral information to become the central and dominant portion of any general meeting. In fact, NYS rules will not permit CNYSC to set up specific campaign subcommittees, which means that there shall be no "Elect So-And-So" subcommittee and there shall be no breakout meetings that are run solely to work on a specific campaign.

## **Financial Procedures**

### **Section 1: Income and Assets**

1.1 The Treasurer shall be responsible for receiving and accounting for all income. Income can be in the form of (a) cash; (b) checks; (c) payments to the Coalition's PayPal account; or (d) direct transfers to the Coalition's Syracuse Cooperative Federal Credit Union (SCFCU) account (such transfers can come only from other SCFCU account holders).

1.2 An account spreadsheet will show all funds collected and expended. All cash collected shall be counted immediately by the Treasurer and another member of the Finance Committee. The total shall be entered in the account spreadsheet. Both people's names will be entered.

1.3 Money disbursed for approved expenses will be recorded in the spreadsheet with the date, committee name, payee, and expenditure details.

1.4 The Treasurer shall maintain a current balance in the spreadsheet.

### **Section 2: Coalition Expenditures**

2.1 The Coordinating Committee may authorize expenditures up to \$250

2.2 Expenditures above \$250 require approval by the membership at a Coalition meeting

### **Section 3: Committee Expenditures**

3.1 Working committees may raise money from within their own membership to fund committee activities.

3.2 Any expenses for which committees will seek advance payment or reimbursement from the larger Coalition must be pre-approved. Request for approval should be made to the Coordinating Committee via email at least ten days in advance.

3.2.1 Expenditures up to \$100 by committees can be approved by the Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee will respond within five days.\*

3.2.2 If the need arises for an emergency expenditure, request for approval should be made to the Coordinating Committee via email immediately with a clear statement of the timeframe for the expenditure. The Coordinating Committee will make every effort to respond within that time frame. The Coordinating Committee will only consider emergency expenditures up to \$250.

3.2.3 Expenditures greater than \$250 need to be put to the full Coalition for approval at a Coalition meeting.

#### **Section 4: General financial procedures**

4.1 Expenditures will normally be paid by check, using the Coalition’s SCFCU account and online banking function.

4.2 The Treasurer will be responsible for holding and maintaining the security of the Coalition’s cash balance. There is no explicit “petty cash” fund; however, the Treasurer will strive to hold between \$100 and \$200 in the form of cash. When the cash balance goes above \$200 the Treasurer will make a deposit to the SCFCU account.

4.3 Other duties of the Treasurer

4.3.1 The Treasurer will establish and maintain web access to the Coalition’s SCFCU account as well as to other websites needed for financial and tax-related matters (i.e., Internal Revenue Service, NY State Department of State, and so on). An assistant treasurer will be named, and will agree to hold a list of account numbers, urls, user ids and passwords needed to conduct any financial and tax-related transactions.

4.3.2 The Treasurer will prepare and distribute a monthly financial report to the Coordinating Committee and the full coalition. The monthly report will include the current balances in cash, checking, and PayPal accounts, and will detail income and expense transactions that have occurred since the previous report.

4.3.3 The Treasurer will make any necessary filings of information regarding income, assets, or other matters relevant to the Coalition’s status as a nonprofit corporation, to the IRS or New York State agencies.

#### **Organizational Affiliation** Approved 4/23/17

An organization may become affiliated with the CNY Solidarity Coalition by:

1. Agreeing to uphold the CNY Solidarity Pledge;
2. Recognizing our responsibility to further our collective causes;
3. According to its own abilities, supporting the work of CNY Solidarity Coalition through contributions and sharing of resources.
4. Being approved as an affiliated organization at a full coalition meeting.

#### **Coordinating Committee (Board of Directors) Information**

The Coordinating Committee’s primary role is to manage the operations of the organization in accordance with the goals and priorities determined by the full Coalition. Its principal functions include:

- Planning and scheduling Coalition meetings
- Providing support and coordination for committee activities
- Overseeing and supporting functions such as Finance and Communications

- Monitoring and responding as needed to developing issues and priorities
- Approving Coalition expenditures under \$250, as provided in the Finance Procedures.

Responsibilities of Coordinating Committee members currently include attending bi-weekly Coordinating Committee meetings, participating in email deliberation and decision-making as needed, and assisting with facilitation of full-coalition meetings.

## **Coordinating Committee Election Procedures**

- I. Members of the CNY Solidarity Coalition Coordinating Committee shall be elected annually. Elections shall be held at full-coalition meetings on or about December 1 of each year, with terms starting January 1.
- II. The Coordinating Committee shall consist of a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 13 members elected by the full Coalition, plus any additional members selected via the procedures below. The number of members on the Coordinating Committee shall be determined by the Coordinating Committee. Only Coalition members are eligible to serve on the Coordinating Committee..
- III. Coordinating Committee members shall be selected as follows:
  - A. Election at full-coalition meeting:
    1. A date shall be set for a full coalition business meeting at which elections are to be held, at least three weeks in advance. At this time, a Nominating Committee of at least three Coalition members, selected by the Coordinating Committee, shall solicit nominations.
    2. Any eligible Coalition member may self-nominate or be nominated by another member.
    3. Current Coordinating Committee members may be nominated for another term.
    4. Prospective nominees will submit to the Nominating Committee a written statement of their background, qualifications, and reasons for wishing to serve.
    5. The Nominating Committee will review applications, determine if each candidate is eligible, and distribute the statements to the Coalition email list at least one week before the election meeting.
    6. The current Coordinating Committee shall supervise this election. The names of all eligible candidates shall be read at the meeting. All eligible candidates in attendance shall be introduced. Those not in attendance may request that a brief statement be read on their behalf. All eligible candidates will be listed on the ballot. If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of open positions on the Coordinating Committee, then the entire slate of candidates will be presented to the Coalition for an up or down vote using existing Coalition decision-making procedures. If the number of candidates exceeds the number of open positions on the Coordinating Committee, then the election shall be by paper ballot with the candidates receiving the most votes elected. If 2 or more candidates finish tied for final place, all of the tied candidates shall be elected.
  - B. Appointment by affiliated organizations: Each affiliated organization of the CNY Solidarity Coalition may appoint one eligible representative as a member of the Coordinating Committee. These appointed members shall be fully participating members of the Coordinating Committee. These appointments may be made at any time. The terms of office shall conclude on the same day as those of elected members of the Coordinating Committee, regardless of the date of appointment.
  - C. Appointment by Coordinating Committee (up to 3 additional seats): If at any time the Coordinating Committee concludes that its existing membership selected via procedures

A and B does not, in the Committee's own judgment include adequate diversity on race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other relevant grounds, or that any key committees or constituent groups within the Coalition are inadequately represented, the Committee may appoint up to 3 additional members, selected from the Coalition's eligible members, as defined above. Each such appointment must have support from at least 75% of the existing Coordinating Committee, at the time of appointment. These appointed members shall be fully participating members of the Coordinating Committee. Their terms shall conclude on the same day as those of elected members of the Coordinating Committee, regardless of the date of their appointment.

No Coordinating Committee member, regardless of mechanism of selection, may serve more than four consecutive terms unless the Nominating Committee is unable to otherwise fill the required number of seats. For purposes of this provision, a partial term shall count as a full term.

### **CC Meeting Facilitator's Guide**

1. Agenda Planning
  - a. Review previous minutes; Send out draft agenda or request for agenda items several days in advance
  - b. Regular Items to consider for CC Meetings:
    - i. Scheduling and planning for upcoming Coalition Meetings and Coordinating Committee Meetings
    - ii. Tracking organizational development issues and when they're ready for next steps
    - iii. looking at gaps or overlapping areas of work of committees/working groups
    - iv. Overall evaluation of our work and direction
    - v. Considering how to most effectively maintain and build the coalition
  - c. Develop and Send out Final Agenda, and bring paper copies for all to the meeting
2. Conducting the Meeting
  - a. Appoint a notetaker, who will facilitate the next CC meeting
  - b. Review agenda with group to see if there are important additions
  - c. Guide the Conversation
    - i. Maintain a neutral stance on issues
    - ii. Ensure that everyone is heard and has a chance to speak.
    - iii. Be sure that decisions are clear - check with notetaker to confirm
3. Concluding the Meeting: Go around the group, each person shares: Brief impression of the meeting: How did it go? What I have agreed to do and when?

## Checklist: Roles & Responsibilities for Full Coalition Meetings

### Meeting Organizers

Before the Meeting:

- Recommended: Find a Partner: One Experienced & One Novice Organizer (email Discussion List for volunteers)
- Confirm Location Availability
  - Check on AV Equipment (anything extra needed) ex. Batteries
  - Wireless Access/Password
- Develop Agenda based on CC decisions
  - Onondaga Acknowledgement
  - Song
- Contact Facilitators, Presenters, Singers, etc
- Arrange for Notetaker if needed for Full Coalition Meeting
- Assign Rooms/Spaces for Breakouts
- Send out Agenda to Announcements Email List
  - Include Street Address of Location, Any call for donations, etc
- Create a Facebook Event
- Contact People for Welcome Table, Setup and Cleanup
- Make copies of the Agenda and other documents needed
- Get keys if needed

Meeting Day:

- Set up, mark rooms for Breakouts
- Coordinate with Facilitators on Opening, Closing, etc
- Help with Announcements, Questions, Etc
- Cleanup and Lock up

Follow Up:

- Return Keys
- If Treasurer is not there, count money collected with a witness, contact Treasurer
- Sign in Sheets to be added to Mailing List

Roles: Meeting Organizers, Facilitators and Presenters:

The Meeting Organizer is responsible for the tasks described above. The Meeting Organizer may or may not act as Facilitator for part or all of the meeting.

A Facilitator manages group conversations or group activities. The facilitator's role is to remain neutral to the content being discussed and ensure that all voices are heard.

A Presenter may be teaching (presenting information), or presenting a proposal or topic for discussion. This enables the presenter to take a position on the issue while the facilitator remains neutral.