Contents

Definitions 2

Purpose of the North American RGB 2

Membership 3

- Composition of the RGB 3
- Rules for Election 3
  - The Five Zonal Secretaries, commonly referred to as GBC Members 3
  - The Five Zonal Supervisors 3
  - The Five Temple Presidents 4
  - Other *ex officio* Members 4
- Member discipline and removal 5
- General Rights and Responsibilities of the RGB and its Members 5
  - Rights 5
  - Responsibilities 6
- RGB Executive Committee 6
  - Rules for Election of Executive Committee Officers 6
  - Duties of Executive Committee Officers 7

How RGB Meetings are Convened and Conducted 7

- Frequency 7
- Quorum 7
- Attendance of GBC Members 8
- Agenda Items 8
- Discussion of Items 8
- Voting 8

Finance 9

Relationship with Temple Presidents and other leaders in ISKCON 9

Procedures for Reporting to the GBC Body on RGB Membership and Proceedings 10

Procedures for Maintaining a Record of the Official Proceedings of the RGB 10

Procedures for Changing these Rules and Regulations 10

Appendix A – Definitions 11

- 'Temple' and 'Temple President' 11
- GBC Zonal Secretary (GBC member) 12
- Zonal Supervisor 12

Definitions

See Appendix A

Purpose of the North American RGB

The leaders of ISKCON North America (Canada and the United States) have recognized the need to establish a Regional Governing Body (RGB) for the purposes of:

1. Increasing coordination of the overall preaching strategy in North America.
2. Increasing the coordination of the implementation of the ISKCON Governing Body Commission (GBC) policies, guidelines and resolutions applicable for North America.
3. Being the prime contact with the GBC and the GBC Executive Committee (EC).
4. Operationalizing North America as the five contiguous zones previously defined by GBC resolution, ensuring proper leadership with GBC Zonal Secretaries (commonly called GBC members) [1], Zonal Supervisors[2], and Temple Presidents functioning in those zones.
5. Making recommendations to the GBC Body, where appropriate, for GBC legislation.
6. Making recommendations to any GBC Zonal Secretary (GBC member) or other ISKCON official functioning within North America on matters concerning the affairs of ISKCON North America.
7. Affirming North American Ministers.
8. Convening Committees, etc., as it deems necessary for the conduct of the North American RGB's responsibilities.
9. Establishing and supervising NA offices and allocating funding for their effective functioning. This includes assuring reports of these offices are regularly shared with the RGB and with North American temples.
10. Resolving any conflicts within North America that are beyond the scope of a single North American Zone. This includes handling of complaints on regional matters referred to it by the GBC Body, Zonal Councils, any ISKCON official or body, or from individuals.
11. Where necessary and appropriate, undertaking disciplinary action against ISKCON officials and/or other devotees serving in North America, as allowed under ISKCON law for such a body.

To this end, we propose to establish a North American RGB with the following Rules and Regulations.

[1] See Appendix A for the definition of a GBC Zonal Secretary
[2] See Appendix A for the definition of a Zonal Supervisor

Membership

Composition of the RGB

The RGB shall be composed of:

Five (5) **Zonal Secretaries (commonly referred to as GBC members or simply 'GBCs'. The term 'GBC member(s)' will be used for the remainder of this document)** corresponding to the 5 Zones in North America, *ex officio* positions
Five (5) **Zonal Supervisors**, each nominated by a GBC member, then voted on by the 5 GBC members
Five (5) **Temple Presidents** elected by the North American Temple Presidents
The *ex officio* **North American Minister of Communications**
The *ex officio* **North American Vaisnavi Minister**
The *ex officio* **North American Youth Minister**

Administrative staff are not Regular Voting members of the RGB. The Administrative Director may participate in Straw Voting but not in Regular Voting nor in Special Voting.

Rules for Election

The Five Zonal Secretaries, commonly referred to as GBC Members

These are *ex officio* positions: each of the 5 GBC members are on the RGB by virtue of being the GBC member caring for one of the 5 specific North American Zones. Thus their term on the RGB corresponds exactly with their service as a GBC Zonal Secretary (GBC member) as appointed annually at the AGM of the ISKCON GOVERNING BODY COMMISSION SOCIETY of West Bengal.

The Five Zonal Supervisors

The five (5) **Zonal Supervisors**[3] are nominated by GBC members. Each GBC member can nominate one Zonal Supervisor. Nomination is followed by an approval process. Each candidate must receive four (4) of the five (5) GBC votes to be chosen to serve on the RGB.

In the rare case that there is no Zonal Supervisor or that the available Zonal Supervisor is not accepted by at least 4 GBC members, the RGB members may select another senior leader to fill the role, using the same process as above, i.e., that each candidate must receive four (4) of the five (5) GBC votes to be chosen to serve on the RGB.

The terms of the Zonal Supervisors on the RGB[4] are two years, with the possibility of up to three consecutive terms. Future terms are also possible after a gap of one term (two years). Terms will start and end with the calendar year. Terms will be staggered.

When a Zonal Supervisor's term on the RGB ends, the GBC member for that Zone can nominate one Zonal Supervisor. The previously serving Zonal Supervisor is eligible for nomination for up to two more

[3] As defined by the 2016 Resolution creating this position: see also Appendix A
[4] This document deals only with the Zonal Supervisors' terms as members of the RGB. This document is not dealing with the appointment of Zonal Supervisors to the service of being Zonal Supervisors, which could be considerably longer.

consecutive terms. After re-nomination, the approval process is the same as for a candidate being nominated for the first time, which is that each candidate must receive four (4) of the five (5) GBC votes.

If a Zonal Supervisor member of the RGB retires or otherwise leaves office before his or her term is complete, the GBC member for that Zone will nominate another Zonal Supervisor to finish the term of the retiring member. The candidate will be voted on by the 5 GBC members. The candidate must receive four (4) of the five (5) GBC votes.

The first term of that new member shall end when the term of the Zonal Supervisor they are replacing ends. They may then be chosen to continue to serve as an RGB member, by the standard process. They shall serve no more than 3 consecutive terms including the initial partial term.

The Five Temple Presidents

The five (5) **Temple Presidents** are elected by the North American Temple Presidents.

Each Zone elects one Temple President to represent the Temple Presidents in that Zone. See Appendix A for criterion regarding the definition of a 'Temple' and the experience level required to stand for election as a Temple President representative on the RGB.

Other than the following three requirements, the Temple Presidents as a body may manage these elections as they choose:

i. one Temple President per Zone
ii. Temples and Temple Presidents elected meet the criteria spelled out in Appendix A, and
iii. elections complete before the end of November

The terms of the Temple Presidents are two years, with the possibility of a second consecutive term. Future terms are also possible after a gap of one term (two years). Terms will start and end with the calendar year. Terms will be staggered.

If a Temple President member of the RGB retires or otherwise leaves office before his or her term is complete, the the Temple Presidents will elect a new Temple President to finish the term of the retiring member.

The first term of that new member shall end when the term of the Temple President they are replacing ends. They may then be chosen to continue to serve as an RGB member, by the standard process. They shall serve no more than 2 consecutive terms including the initial partial term.

Other *ex officio* Members

Additionally, the three (3) **North American Ministers of the Communications Ministry, the Vaisnavi Ministry, and the Youth Ministry** are *ex officio* members of the RGB.

The above eighteen (18) members are the Regular Voting Members of the RGB.

North American Ministers of other Ministries are always welcome at RGB meetings. They participate in Straw Voting but not in Regular Voting nor in Special Voting.

North American Ministers, who must reside in North America, shall be nominated by their respective Global Ministers and affirmed annually by a majority vote of the existing RGB voting members. If there is a disagreement in selection between the Global Minister and the RGB, the matter will be referred to the GBC Executive Committee for its final decision.

All North American Ministers may present proposals, and they are specifically requested to bring the perspective of their Ministry on the topics discussed and to use their influence to assist the RGB to see topics from all angles of vision. They may at times be formally requested to attend to provide insight on a particular agenda item.

Member discipline and removal

A member of the RGB can be placed on leave or removed for

- Repeated failure to perform their assigned duties, including attendance at RGB meetings (see Responsibilities)
- Serious violations of ISKCON's moral principles
- Actions that bring ISKCON into disrepute
- Criminal activity

For matters of discipline, the Executive Committee may, at their discretion, or upon the recommendation of another RGB member, deliver a warning to an allegedly erring member. If the problem is not corrected, the Executive Committee will deliver a second warning. After warning the same member a second time, if the problem continues, the Executive Committee will convene a committee of 3 RGB members, or other senior devotees chosen by the Executive Committee, to hear all sides and make a recommendation.

During the deliberations of the committee, the allegedly erring member will lose their voting privileges.

The Regular Voting Members, except the allegedly erring member, will vote on the recommendations of the committee. A vote to remove a member requires a 2/3 majority to pass. This vote is also subject to the GBC veto discussed in the section on voting.

If the RGB votes to discipline or remove a GBC member, the issue will be referred to the GBC body for their further action. If the RGB votes to discipline or remove a North American Minister, the issue will be referred to the applicable Ministry, for that body's further review and further corrective action.

General Rights and Responsibilities of the RGB and its Members

Rights

- To be advised of the issues which pertain to the whole region (North America)
- To receive two weeks notice of the date and agenda for the Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- To vote according to their conscience
- To express any concerns and opinions in a reasonable and respectful manner on the issues put before the RGB as an equal participant and member of the RGB, regardless of seniority, position within the institution, asrama, gender, age or any other factor
- Notwithstanding the above, 3/5 of North American GBC members must support any RGB decision for it to stand

Responsibilities

- To ensure that the mission of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada as described in the Seven Purposes of ISKCON is promoted and achieved in North America in conjunction with, and with the support of, the individual GBC members, Zonal Supervisors, individual ISKCON corporations and these corporations' officers across North America
- To promote cooperation and shared planning within ISKCON in North America to achieve the above
- To ensure that the laws and policies of the ISKCON Governing Body Commission (GBC) are upheld and implemented in North America
- To set policies, as appropriate for the North American ISKCON Temples and communities, in line with global ISKCON GBC Laws and the teachings of His Divine Grace A C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
- To ensure that the RGB is supported by adequate staff, including an Administrative Director chosen by the RGB by majority vote. Their terms and duties will be determined by the RGB
- To ensure that there is a legally incorporated entity which can support the administrative functions of the RGB, and that it functions according to all local, state/provincial and national laws
- To create and administer an annual budget, and provide annual financial reports to all North American temples
- To connect ISKCON centres in North America with available support in relation to child protection and in relation to conduct of leaders.
- To ensure that the necessary offices are reviewed and, if approved, reaffirmed, along with their directors annually
- To support efforts and structures to enhance the effectiveness of Temple Presidents, Zonal Supervisors, Regional Secretaries, North American Ministers, North American Offices, and Duty Officers, per the policies established by the global GBC body.
- To work toward developing regional offices and representatives for Ministries as deemed necessary by the RGB.
- To organize at least one annual meeting of all NA RGB members, all Temple Presidents, and other NA leaders in good standing to discuss and coordinate strategic plans and other issues of importance for ISKCON North America
- To report annually to the global GBC body
- To serve on committees that may be established from time to time by the RGB
- To promote support of and cooperation with the RGB within their area of responsibility
- To keep confidentiality on topics so deemed
- To attend a minimum number or percentage of meetings as specified by current policy

RGB Executive Committee

The RGB will have an Executive Committee composed of a Chair, a First Vice-Chair and a Second Vice-Chair recruited, voted into office, and rotating in the same way as the Executive Committee of the global GBC body.

Rules for Election of Executive Committee Officers

Appointments of the members of the RGB Executive Committee shall be made as follows:

1. A new Executive Committee member shall be elected each year to serve as the Second Vice-Chair.
2. The sitting Second Vice-Chair shall become the First Vice-Chair for the upcoming year.
3. The sitting First Vice-Chair shall become Chair for the upcoming year.
4. If a member resigns or is not reconfirmed, the other Executive Committee members shall move up and a new member shall be elected by the RGB to fill the Second Vice Chair position.

Executive Committee officers shall be confirmed annually by majority vote of the Regular Voting members of the RGB.

Duties of Executive Committee Officers

The RGB Executive Committee shall:

- call for, at a minimum, monthly RGB meetings
- call for an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and preside over the voting and appointments of new RGB members
- liaise with the global GBC Executive Committee (EC) for all necessary purposes
- recruit and hire suitable staff to support the work of the RGB with the annual budget established by a majority vote of the RGB

The RGB Executive Committee Chair shall:

- call for meeting agenda items from all RGB members
- prepare and distribute agendas for meetings
- chair the meetings
- handle issues of member discipline and removal as per the Member Discipline and Removal section of these Rules and Regulations

When the Chair is not available, the duties of the Chair will be performed by the Vice-Chair.

How RGB Meetings are Convened and Conducted

Meetings may be held in person, or via an online format such as Zoom.

Frequency

Meetings shall be held monthly. The Executive Committee may call for additional meetings at its discretion.

Quorum

The presence of 2/3 of the Regular Voting Members of the RGB constitutes a **quorum** at any RGB meeting, but only if **at least 3 GBC members or their substitutes are present.**

If for any reason, a quorum is not present for two consecutive meetings, or in an emergency or time-sensitive situation, any 4 GBC members will constitute a quorum for any and all business that needs to be conducted.

Attendance of GBC Members

Participation by all 5 GBC members in charge of Zones in North American is critical to the effective functioning of the RGB. However, it is possible that a GBC member might not be able to attend some meetings.

A GBC member may be excused from attendance under the following conditions:

a. At the beginning of the year, the GBC member provides the name of a substitute to attend in place of the GBC member.
b. The substitute cannot be already a member of the RGB.
c. The other 4 GBC members unanimously vote to accept the named substitute for the coming year.

This substitute counts toward reaching a quorum the same as the GBC member would have counted, and is empowered to vote in place of the GBC member.

Agenda Items

Proposed agenda items for regular monthly meetings shall be sent in beforehand and compiled by the Chair after seeking input from all RGB members.

Additional agenda items, if not approved by the Chair in advance, will be considered if requested by a minimum of 3 members, or by 2 GBC members.

Discussion of Items

The Chair invites all members to participate in discussions.

Voting

Voting shall be done on the basis of one person, one vote.

Straw Voting takes place at meetings to get a sense of the RGB's current opinion on a specific proposal or topic of discussion.

Abstentions for lack of preparedness to vote are discouraged. Abstentions are allowed with rationale.

Regular voting: Regular proposals are decided by simple majority.

Special voting: Any proposals related to changing any aspect of these Rules and Regulations must be decided by a 2/3 majority.

A 2/3 majority of Regular Voting Members are required to increase the number of Regular Voting Members of any category.

The RGB recognizes that the global GBC body may also from time to time promulgate additional standards for what is to be included in the Rules and Regulations, and these additional standards would take effect without requiring a vote of the RGB.

Voting may take place with electronic support such as a Google Survey or other method at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

Proposed resolutions are presented with sufficient Whereas clauses that the context and rationale are clear.

Veto: If three GBC members disagree with a decision of the RGB, it may be referred to a discussion and vote of only the 5 GBC members. Such a review and vote should be held within three weeks, so as not to impede the effective functioning of the RGB. If a 3/5 majority of GBC members reject the result of an NA RGB vote, that vote will become null and void and returned to the RGB for further discussion.

If, after a second round of discussion, a 3/5 majority of GBC members does not support a proposal that has the approval of a 2/3 majority of the RGB, it may be referred to ISKCON Resolve for mediation. In all cases, 3/5 of NA GBC members must support any RGB decision for it to stand.

Administrative staff are not members of the RGB and thus do not vote in Regular Voting or Special Voting.

Finance

The RGB is authorized to develop an annual budget and assign annual contributions for each temple to support the shared efforts of ISKCON in North America, including the Child Protection Office (CPO), Temple Support Office (TSO), Communications and other Ministries and offices as required.

The RGB is authorized to accept gifts of funds from sources other than the annual contributions from temples.

Annual accounts of revenue and expenses shall be made available to each GBC member, North American Ministry representative, Zonal Supervisor, and Temple President in North America.

Relationship with Temple Presidents and other leaders in ISKCON

The GBC Zonal Secretaries (GBC members), Zonal Supervisors, Ministers and Temple Presidents serving on the RGB shall themselves formally pledge to uphold the decisions agreed upon by the RGB in their own areas, and work with all the ISKCON leaders in their zones to implement these decisions.

As the RGB is a deputed body of the Governing Body Commission, the collective agency of the 5 North American GBC members, and a representative body of the North American Zonal Supervisors and North American Temple Presidents, it is a duty of ISKCON organizations and their leaders in North America to comply with RGB decisions. Failure to do so may be subject to ISKCON disciplinary actions per ISKCON Law. Any appeal will be as provided for within ISKCON Law.

Understanding the need for strategic planning and support on a continental level, the RGB will organize or assist in organizing the following meetings

1. RGB AGM
2. Temple Presidents' Annual meetings
3. ISKCON Leaders' meeting

Procedures for Reporting to the GBC Body on RGB Membership and Proceedings

Any resolutions passed by the RGB shall be sent to the Corresponding Secretary of the GBC body not later than one month after being adopted (in accordance with the GBC Resolution passed in 2010: Update on 3.4.1.5.1 Reporting Duties).

An annual report, including all resolutions and decisions adopted in the previous year, shall be sent to the GBC body along with the names of current members and the minutes of the RGB AGM.

The annual report will also be distributed to all RGB members, all North American Ministry representatives, all Zonal Supervisors, and all Temple Presidents.

Procedures for Maintaining a Record of the Official Proceedings of the RGB

Minutes of each meeting shall be recorded by an administrative staff member or by a member designated by the Chair. The minutes shall include:

- date
- members present and absent and regrets
- agenda items
- conclusions and/or resolutions made
- results of votes
- action items
- person(s) responsible for the action items' completion

The minutes shall be kept as the official records of the RGB in both hard and electronic copy by the appointed person above. Electronic copies shall be available to any North American RGB member and Temple President upon request.

All decisions of the RGB will be sent to the North American Ministry representatives, North American Temple Presidents, and Zonal Supervisors within 14 days of their passage.

Procedures for Changing these Rules and Regulations

See the paragraph on Special Voting in the section on Voting, which states:

> **Special voting:** Any proposals related to changing any aspect of these Rules and Regulations must be decided by a 2/3 majority.
>
> The RGB recognizes that the global GBC body may also from time to time promulgate additional standards for what is to be included in the Rules and Regulations, and these additional standards would take effect without requiring a vote of the RGB. [This paragraph is intentionally repeated from the section on Voting]

Appendix A – Definitions

'Temple' and 'Temple President'

For the purpose of electing 5 Temple Presidents to represent the North American Temple Presidents on the RGB, it is necessary to determine two things:

1. What is a '**Temple'**? Leaders of 'Temples' fitting this description can vote on who will represent the centres in their Zone.
2. What is a '**Temple President'**? Individuals fitting this description are considered to have sufficient temple experience to stand for election to represent the leaders in their zone.

Temple

For the purposes of voting for representation on the RGB, a '**Temple'** must meet **all 7** of the following criteria:

- It is incorporated as an ISKCON non-profit organization
- Its bylaws are on file with NATSO/RGB office
- Its officers have signed the Oath of Allegiance within the past 12 months
- Temple Services dues are paid up to date
- It has an active Board of Directors as per standard ISKCON bylaws
- It is compliant with CPO guidelines and requirements
- It owns or rents property in ISKCON's name

All centres which meet the above criteria have the right to vote to determine who will represent them on the RGB.

Temple Presidents whose role on the RGB is to represent all Temple Presidents in their zone should have sufficient experience of standard temple activities. This will be determined as follows:

Temple President

For the purposes of standing for election as a representative of the leaders in their zone, a '**Temple President'** must lead a '**Temple'** which, in addition to the above criteria, meets **at least 4** of the following criteria:

- It has installed deities recognized by the ISKCON Deity Ministry
- It is physically open to the public for Mangala Arati 365 days of year
- It has both congregational and resident devotees
- It has held the ISKCON Disciples Course onsite in person within the past 12 months
- It has a weekly children's program at least 8 months per year
- It has at least one outreach activity per month
- It reports book scores as directed by the Book Distribution Ministry
- It has a congregation of at least 50 members who regularly attend community functions
- It is a recognized Bhakti Sastri exam centre

GBC Zonal Secretary (GBC member)

A Zonal Secretary is a member of the GBC Body appointed by the GBC Body to oversee ISKCON Temples and other ISKCON projects in a specific geographical area designated as a “zone”. The Zonal Secretary is overall responsible for the management and administration of a zone and is ultimately fully accountable to the GBC Body.

Zonal Supervisor

The Zonal Supervisor’s primary duty and responsibility is to assist the GBC Zonal Secretary in the administration according to the service description delineated in the GBC Resolution creating the position of Zonal Supervisor, published in the minutes of the 2016 GBC AGM , which states:

> Before formal appointment the candidate Zonal Supervisors shall undergo a standard process of assessment, induction, training and development administered under the supervision of the GBC Succession Committee.

RGB Requirements for a North American Zonal Supervisor to be elected to the RGB:

1. Must have graduated from the Zonal Supervisor Training offered by the GBC College for Leadership Development
2. Must have been appointed as a Zonal Supervisor by the GBC body
3. Must work collegially with the TPs in the zone and be actively involved in zonal projects
4. Must work in cooperation with the RGB, Administrative Director and other Zonal Supervisors, especially in compliance and missionary programs