

ARTICLE I: NAME

The organization shall be known as the St. Joseph County, MI 4-H Horse Council. It shall be known herein as the "Horse Council." It is developed as a Youth Organization under the direction of the St. Joseph County Michigan State University Extension (known as "MSU Extension") and the St. Joseph County, MI 4-H Youth Council (known as the "Youth Council").

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The Horse Council exists as a Developmental Committee for educational purposes. It is to plan, advise, organize, and conduct educational programs and activities that meet the needs and interests of the youth and adult volunteers in the St. Joseph County 4-H, MI Equine Program. It is to work under the direction and guidance of the MSU Extension and the Youth Council without regards to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, or veteran status.

ARTICLE III: FUNDS**A. Holding of funds**

Funds are to be held in a checking account with hard copy statements sent to MSU Extension. Funds are to be reported on at all Horse Council meetings. The Treasurer will submit a formal report for review at said meetings and to be put on file at the MSU Extension Office. A mid-year and end-of-year financial review will be performed with all financial paperwork being reviewed (May and October).

B. Bills to be paid

1. All bills to be paid must be submitted to the Horse Council and approved by a majority vote unless previously included in the budget.
2. Receipts that are presented must be signed by the President upon approval by the Horse Council. Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, and President are authorized to sign checks.
3. Reimbursement requests require original receipt to be turned into the Treasurer.

C. Fundraising

As a Developmental Committee, the Horse Council raises funds to support its activities through secured donations and other County wide fundraising activities with the approval of the MSU Extension and the current Rules & Guidelines.

D. Assets

All Horse Council Assets (real property and monetary) are the property of MSU Extension.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP**A. Members shall be defined as the following:****1. ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS:**

Leaders that have been through the MSU Extension Volunteer Selection Process and are responsible at a County Level. These leaders are responsible for organizing one of St. Joseph County's (MI) 4-H Equine Clubs. These leaders also act as the club's contact person with the MSU Extension Office and Staff.

2. SPECIALTY LEADERS:

Leaders that have been through the MSU Extension Volunteer Selection Process and are responsible at the County Level. These leaders are responsible for organizing one of St. Joseph County's approved Equine Specialty Areas:

- Cloverbud Committee
- Competitive Trail
- Dressage
- Driving
- Gymkhana (2025-2026 Specialty Board Rep)
- Horse Judging & Hippology (2025-2026 Specialty Board Rep)
- Jumping (2026-2027 Specialty Board Rep)
- Mini In-Hand (2026-2027 Specialty Board Rep)

To retain the status of "Specialty" Leader, these leaders are required to conduct County Wide Meetings/Workouts and be available to assist all clubs with teaching their "specialty." A Specialty leader will remain as such until he or she steps down, or are unable to perform his or her duties as reviewed by MSU Extension.

3. PROJECT/RESOURCE LEADERS:

Leaders that have been through the MSU Extension Volunteer Selection Process and are responsible at the Club level. These leaders assist the Organizational Leaders or, by request, an approved specialty leader at Club

and County Wide events.

4. 4-H HORSE CLUB YOUTH MEMBER:

4-H Horse Club Youth Member is any youth (12-19 years of age) that is in attendance at the 4-H Horse Council Monthly Meeting.

B. Requirements for retaining Leadership Status:

Adult Equine Leaders will be expected to meet the following requirements:

1. Horse Council Meetings

- a. Fiscal Year is September 1 through August 31.
- b. All Adult 4-H Horse organizational leaders, specialty leaders **MUST** attend a minimum of three (3) Horse Council Meetings from September 1 through August 31.
- c. Project resource leaders must attend one (1) Horse Council Meeting and a minimum of two (2) club meetings, specialty workouts, or club workouts.
- d. Meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of each month with the exception of September, which will be the Last Tuesday of August, unless otherwise voted on by Horse Council to change the date. Attendance will be noted in the minutes of each meeting.

2. Assigned Tasks or Responsibilities

All Equine adult leaders will be expected to fulfill their duties by completing the tasks assigned to them. Assigned tasks include duties for Horse Council sponsored events and the St. Joseph County, MI Grange Fair.

3. Code of Conduct

All Leaders will sign and follow the Code of Conduct provided by MSU Extension. Failure to do so MAY result in loss of leadership as determined by the MSU Extension 4-H Program Coordinator.

C. Failure to comply with requirements.

If a Leader fails to comply with the above-mentioned requirements, that individual will be asked by the MSU Extension 4-H Program Coordinator, the Youth Council Executive Board, or the Horse Council President to reevaluate his/her commitment to serve as a Leader in the Equine Project area. If a Leader cannot fulfill his/her attendance requirements and / or assigned tasks, the Leader MAY lose his/her Horse leadership status.

D. Club / Leader Status Change

ANY change in Club or Leader status must be submitted to the MSU Extension Office within 30 days of said change AND Club/Leader will need to follow the established MSU Extension protocol accordingly.

ARTICLE V: VOTING PRIVILEGES

A. Voting will be done per majority at each meeting.

B. Club Votes

Larger Clubs will be allotted TWO (2) votes. Smaller Club will be allotted ONE (1) vote. Definition and determination of Club size is as follows:

1. Larger Clubs have FIFTEEN (15) or more members, and Smaller Club have fewer than FIFTEEN (15) members.
2. Club size will be determined based upon the number of members that showed/participated in a class at the fair the previous year, including Cloverbuds. This number will be verified and on file with the president.

C. Specialty Votes

Specialty Areas vote will be determined using the same method as club votes and will be based upon participation size from the previous fair year. Larger Specialty Areas will be allotted TWO (2) votes. Smaller Specialty Areas will be allotted ONE (1) vote. Definition and determination of Specialty Area size is as follows:

1. Larger Specialty Areas have FIFTEEN (15) or more members, and Smaller Specialty Areas have fewer than FIFTEEN (15) members.
2. Specialty Area size will be determined based upon the number of members that showed/participated in a class at the fair the previous year, including Cloverbuds.
 - a. Must be a County Wide Program with regularly scheduled meetings and/or workout dates.
 - b. Must be an active group by February 1st in order to receive a vote. "Active" means a Specialty leader has committed to holding meetings and/or workouts at the county level.
 - c. The voting Member for each specialty area will be the Specialty Leader or a leader appointed by the same.

D. Youth Representative Voting

Each Club is allotted ONE Youth vote up to the first 15 club members and one vote for every 15 members after. This is based on confirmed prior year fair participation.

- E. Board Member voting
Executive board members can vote for their Club or Specialty area, with the exception of the President. The President is not eligible to vote, unless there is a tie.
- F. Voting By Proxy
Voting by Proxy is not allowed.
- G. Dual Leaders
If an Equine Leader is both a Specialty Leader and a Club Project/Organizational Leader, they are eligible to cast only 1 vote (as either the Specialty or the Club).
- H. Voting by Ballots
If a vote is needed by ballot, the Horse Council Vice-President will count the ballots. The MSU Extension 4-H Program Coordinator will recount the votes to confirm. The Secretary will record the results.
- I. Voting will be allowed if unable to be present at the meeting for leaders and Youth.
 - 1. Vote must be handed in to 4-H Program Coordinator via email or sealed ballot by 12:00pm the day of the vote.
 - 2. Email or ballot MUST indicate club affiliation.
 - 3. Late entries will not be accepted.

ARTICLE VI: EXECUTIVE BOARD

- A. Positions
 - 1. President
 - a. Will be elected by a majority vote at the October Horse Council Meeting and will begin his/her duties in November.
 - b. Will preside over Horse Council Meetings.
 - c. Will appoint all committees.
 - d. Will assign tasks to all clubs and resource leaders that will be carried out through the year.
 - e. Will assist with all Horse Council Sponsored Events.
 - f. Will assist with Horse Sign Up review.
 - g. Will assist with Fair Class Entry Review.
 - h. Will be the 4-H Horse Superintendent at the St. Joseph County, MI Grange Fair.
 - i. Will prepare the agenda for each regular or special Horse Council Meeting in conjunction with the MSU Extension 4-H Program Coordinator.
 - j. Will be empowered to sign checks as needed.
 - 2. Vice-President
 - a. Will be elected by a majority vote at the October Horse Council Meeting and will begin his/her duties in November.
 - b. Will preside over meetings in the absence of the President.
 - c. Will assist with all Horse Council Sponsored Events.
 - d. Will assist with Horse Sign Up Review.
 - e. Will assist with Fair Class Entry Review.
 - f. Will be the 4-H Horse Assistant Superintendent at the St. Joseph County, MI Grange Fair.
 - g. Will assume the duties of Secretary in his or her absence.
 - h. Will maintain a yearly list of current Horse Council equipment and their locations.
 - i. Will maintain and inventory all the ribbons for all Horse Council sponsored shows and their location.
 - j. Will oversee the bylaws are upheld.
 - 3. Secretary
 - a. Will be elected by a majority vote at the October Horse Council Meeting and will begin his/her duties in November.
 - b. Will take the minutes and attendance at all regular and special meetings.
 - c. Will handle all incoming and outgoing correspondence for the Horse Council.
 - d. Will keep and maintain a current listing of the Committees and members.
 - e. Will assist at all Horse Council Sponsored Events.
 - f. Will assist with Horse Sign Up Review.
 - g. Will assist with Fair Class Entry Review.
 - h. Will obtain and keep on file a copy of the Michigan Open Meeting Act.
 - i. Will inventory and maintain all 4-H "fair signs" which will be stored by MSU Extension.

4. Treasurer
 - a. Will be elected by a majority vote at the October Horse Council Meeting and will begin his/her duties in November.
 - b. Will assist with all Horse Council Sponsored events.
 - c. Will provide a monthly report to the Horse Council for review and approval.
 - d. Will maintain check register thru bank that will send hard copy statements to MSU Extension
 - e. Will be empowered to sign checks for bill payment.
 - f. Will prepare a Mid-Year and Year End Budget Report with actual income and expenses along with a proposed budget for use by the Budget Committee, which is to be presented to the Horse Council.
 - g. Will oversee accounting of income and expenses as stated in the Horse Council Budget, report changes and request action to ensure the Budget is amended as needed.
 - h. Will work with and coordinate with the MSU Extension Office on behalf of Horse Council Board to oversee the Horse Council Mid-Year and Year End Financial Reviews.
 - i. Will coordinate / oversee the work of the Deputy Treasurer.
5. Deputy Treasurer
 - a. Will be elected by a majority vote at the October Horse Council Meeting and will begin his/her duties in November.
 - b. Will assist with all Horse Council Sponsored events.
 - c. Will be designated as a signatory to sign checks for bill payment.
 - d. Will assist the Treasurer with preparing and mailing invoices related to pledged donations as needed.
 - e. Will serve as Interim Treasurer if Treasurer is unable to perform the duties.
 - f. Will provide Treasurer with any other assistance as needed.
6. Leader Representatives

Two Specialty leaders will be appointed in alphabetical order on a yearly rotation, to assist the Horse Council Executive Board with all decisions and duties. See Article IV Membership, Section 2. All club will have a minimum of one representative in executive board communication.
- B. Executive Board Terms
 1. President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer positions will be elected as one (1) year terms. An officer can hold the same office for more than two (2) consecutive years but a motion and majority vote of approval are required.
 2. Elections to be held at the October meeting and the duties will start at the November meeting.
 3. If an elected person rescinds their position (with the exception of Treasurer, who will be filled by Deputy Treasurer), Horse Council will hold a special election to fill that position with no less than 24 hours advance notice.

ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES

- A. Special Committees - Special Committees shall be appointed by the Horse Council President as needed to handle tasks or events that cannot reasonably be completed by the entire membership at regular meetings. The Chairperson will be selected by the committee to document the meetings and report back to the Horse Council.
- B. Standing Committees - Standing committees are the committees that exist to help maintain the regular matters of the Horse Council. These committees are to be formed and meetings scheduled at the October Horse Council Meeting. The committee will elect their chairperson. The Chairperson is responsible for documenting the meetings and reporting back to the Horse Council
 1. Bylaws and Rules Committee
 - a. Exists to review the Horse Council Bylaws, Rules, Fairbook, Showbills, and Show Schedule
 - Fairbook & Showbills will be reviewed annually
 - Bylaws & Rulebook will be reviewed on even years
 - b. The Committee consists of at least 1 member of the Executive Board and suggests a minimum of three (3) Horse council members to be involved.
 2. Judge Hiring Committee
 - a. Exists to secure judges for Horse Council Sponsored Events and The St. Joseph County, MI Grange Fair.
 - b. The Committee consists of a Chairperson from the Executive Board and suggests a minimum of three (3) Horse Council members be involved.
 - c. It is recommended that all judges will be hired by March 1st of the calendar year.

- d. All agreements must have the approval of the MSU Extension Program and will be signed by either the Judge Hiring Chairperson and/or Horse Council President or Vice-President and will be prepared & copies retained by the MSU Extension Office.
3. Awards Committee
Exists to plan the purchasing of ribbons and awards as needed for Horse Council sponsored events.
4. Points Committee: Exists to tabulate points for awards.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

Operating procedures of the Horse Council may be amended or changed by a 2/3 majority vote of the voting members present at the Horse Council Meeting. Prior notice must be sent out in writing to all eligible voting members regarding the proposed amendment or change. All changes are to be discussed at one meeting and voted on at the following meeting.

Rev 2/3/26, 3/4/25, 2/6/24, 3/1/22, 1/8/19, 4/4/17, 3/30/15, 10/24/12, 3/09