

## **PDX Peace Coalition Structure Document (Revised 01/07/08)**

### **Mission:**

**PDX Peace is a coalition of organizations and individuals in the greater Portland, Oregon area, building a movement for peace and justice. Our immediate and vital goal is ending the war in Iraq and bringing US troops home. We are committed to US policies based on democratic principles, human rights, and nonviolent resolution of conflict.**

### **Membership:**

The coalition is open to any individual or organization in the Portland area that supports our mission statement and agrees to work in good faith with other coalition members to carry out the coalition's mission. Members are strongly encouraged to participate in action groups and other coalition activities.

No political campaign for office can be a member group of the coalition. However, political parties that agree to our mission statement and abide by our structure are welcome to join as member groups. The PDX peace Coalition does not endorse any candidate or party.

### **Values:**

We undertake our work together in a nonviolent manner. We seek to enhance the work of member organizations and to reach out to other organizations and individuals. We value a diverse movement that includes people of different races, ethnicities, gender identities, ages, abilities, income levels and life experiences. We recognize that this is an experiment and we expect to learn new ideas and ways of organizing along the way. We strive to treat each other with respect and good humor.

### **Structure:**

#### **Action Groups:**

Action groups are the core of our peace and justice work and are where most of the day-to-day planning and work of the coalition is carried out. The action groups are directed by a broad theme: initial action groups include supporting military resistance and recovery and defunding the war / educating about the cost of war. Action groups have the ability to choose their own procedures that are in keeping with the coalition mission and values. Each action group will elect two co-chairs to ensure the functioning of the group for their appointed term of six months, one of whom will sit on the coordinating committee as explained below. The action groups are accountable to the coalition and as such will communicate plans and needs to the larger coalition for approval...

#### **Full Member Group**

Together, all members of the coalition compose a general member group that meets

once every two months and is the highest authoritative body. In general member group meetings, overall direction is set for the next two months. In these meetings, action group and coordinating committee plans including budget proposals are heard and decisions are made along with other issues that need to be addressed by the larger group. Issues outside of action group plans should be brought to the coordinating committee for review and possible referral to action groups, task forces or the general membership meeting. Decisions are made by modified consensus (see below).

### **Decision-Making for the Full Member Group**

Decision-making will use the following modified consensus process:

- 1. Dealing with one proposal at a time, we will engage a deliberate process to address:**
  - a. Clarifying questions
  - b. Concerns
  - c. Reservations – nagging concerns that are not resolved
  - d. Friendly amendments can be incorporated at any point
  - e. Unfriendly amendments are considered as separate proposals and must be decided first
- 2. Restate amended proposal, clearly and exactly.**
- 3. Check for consensus.**
  - a. Stand Aside.** This indicates that your concerns have been heard by the group and even though they may not have been resolved, you are willing to let the group move forward with the decision.
  - b. Block.** This indicates that you believe the decision is fundamentally detrimental to the mission and values of the PDX peace coalition. You have already aired your concerns or reservations about this decision and they have not been resolved. This will block the consensus process and trigger a majority vote process.
  - c. Consensus.** A hand vote will demonstrate your support of the proposal.

If the group is not in consensus after following the above process, then the decision will be made by a majority vote. At this point two votes will occur. First organizations will be given a brief opportunity to caucus (if necessary). Then each organization that is a member of the coalition and has representatives present will cast one vote. If the votes reach a majority then the vote passes. At this point a second vote will be called with all individuals, regardless of organizational affiliations, receiving one vote. If the vote reaches a majority then the vote passes. In order for a decision to move forward it must receive a majority of votes *both* in the organizational and individual vote.

### **Decision Making for March 15, 2008 Mobilization**

For the purposes of planning the March 15 2008 Mobilization: if consensus fails, each organization that is a member of the coalition and or a cosponsor or endorser of the mobilization and has representatives present will cast one vote. If the votes reach a majority then the vote passes. At this point a second vote will be called with all individuals, regardless of organizational affiliations, receiving one vote. If the vote

reaches a majority then the vote passes. In order for a decision to move forward it must receive a majority of votes both in the organizational and individual vote.

### **Why We Make Decisions This Way**

This decision making process attempts to fulfill two primary purposes. First, it aims to provide a structure that guarantees that organizations and individuals can voice their concerns. Part of this is providing a structure that attempts to address and incorporate solutions to concerns as opposed to just hearing them and moving on. This is accomplished through the modified consensus process, through which we strive to hear and respond to the diverse interests of our coalition such that we may act in solidarity.

The second primary purpose that this process fulfills is balancing individual and organizational interests. This is a coalition of both individuals and organizations. The dual voting structure aims to balance the interests and contributions of these two, inherently overlapping, groups. It aims to maintain a strong voice for organizations given the fundamental role they have in our coalition and also the constraints they face in complying with their own missions and charges. It also aims to incorporate the voice of individuals, so as to empower any contributing to this coalition with decision-making abilities. The individual vote will also ensure that any decision made by the coalition is supported by a majority of its acting participants.

### **Coordinating Committee**

Every twelve months a coordinating committee is elected by the general membership. The coordinating committee meets as needed to ensure the functioning of the coalition in the direction approved by the general member group meetings. Coordinating committee meetings are open to all coalition members but final decisions are made by the elected committee members. The coordinating committee will elect 2 co-chairs to ensure the functioning of the committee for their appointed term... The coordinating committee is charged with: planning general membership meetings, managing staff, coordinating media, finances, fundraising, communication and outreach. The coordinating committee is a working group composed of members who allocate time to carry out these functions. The coordinating committee may develop task forces to help it carry out its work. It should represent the diversity of our coalition, organizations and individual members and our communities. The coordinating committee will consist of one of the co-chairs from each action group, the funding and finance task group, and three at-large members elected from the general membership.

### **Member Group Relationship**

The coalition seeks to support and enhance the work of its member groups. It does this in three ways:

1. Network--connect organizations and individuals working on peace and justice issues in the greater Portland area.
2. Facilitate--enhance the work of member organizations by facilitating their connections

to others and increasing publicity and attention for their work.

3. Originate--coordinate campaigns and events that are identified by the members as priorities for joint work. This work will be carried out by action groups and is the primary way that coalition funds and resources will be allocated.

## Notes on Procedures Document vs Structure Doc

The Structure document is meant to be the core of the structure for the coalition. It is intended that members will be able to participate in the vast majority of the Coalition's activity without having read the Procedures document. The Procedures document mainly covers the details of finances, Coordinating Committee elections and duties and web related issues. Several other miscellaneous issues are covered.

### **PDX Peace Coalition Procedures**

#### 1. Finances

- a. Requests for funds will originate with an Action Group or the Coordinating Committee. A brief proposal and estimate of funds needed will be presented to the Coordinating Committee and put on the agenda of the General Membership Meeting.
- b. The Coordinating Committee may authorize up to \$250 in emergent funding for Action Groups and mobilizations that are consistent with the mission and action plans of the Coalition.
- c. Proposals for financial support will include a statement of the goals of the action and estimates of expenses. Supplies and vendors will be selected with preference for local suppliers who meet fair labor standards and support the mission of the Coalition.
- d. Request for payment must be accompanied by invoice and scope of work to be accomplished. Prospective payments require two weeks written notice with invoice to the designated finance chairperson.
- e. Reimbursement for individual member expenses will be made when accompanied by a receipt for payments made for approved action projects.
- f. The Coordinating Committee will form a funding and finance task group. The chair of the funding and finance task group will be recommended by the Coordinating Committee and confirmed by the General Member Group.
- g. The finance chairperson may form a task group for the purpose of reviewing financial records, sharing responsibility for reimbursements and disbursements, and responding to grant proposals and reports.
- h. Detailed reports of income, expenditures and final balance will be provided at each General Member Meeting to ensure transparency.

#### 2. Endorsements

- a. Endorsements of events and activities outside the work of action groups may be made by the Coordinating Committee. Any endorsements made must be in accordance with the mission and values of the Coalition. The Coordinating Committee will bring to the general membership any endorsement that is perceived to be controversial.
- b. As a rule the Coalition does not provide financial assistance as part of endorsements.
- c. An endorsement could include posting of the event on the pdxpeace.org website, use of the PDX Peace logo in any event related publications, assistance in outreach for the event or others, which would be discussed with the Coordinating Committee.

- d. Events may be posted on the PDX Peace events calendar without formal endorsement by the coalition as long as they are in keeping with the Coalition's mission.
3. Coordinating Committee: Nominations, Elections and Recall
- a. The Coordinating Committee will be elected by the General Member Group every twelve months.
  - b. Nominations
    - i. Nominations will be submitted via the PDX Peace listserv at least two weeks prior to general group meeting at which there will be elections.
    - ii. Individuals may self nominate or may be nominated by others.
    - iii. The chair or one of the co-chairs of each Action Group is required to serve on the coordinating committee. As such each Action Group will be responsible for nominating either the chair or one of the co-chairs of their group.
  - c. Elections
    - i. The elections of the coordinating committee will be the first item on the agenda for the General Member Meeting in which elections occur.
    - ii. The facilitator will check that each Action Group has nominated their representative to the Coordinating Committee.
      - 1. If this has not occurred time will be taken to rectify this situation, included a short caucus by the Action Group if necessary.
    - iii. Prior to the vote the facilitator will go through the following procedure for each nominee.
      - 1. Check that they are present and willing to serve.
        - a. If a candidate is unable to be present but willing to serve they need to notify the group ahead of time.
      - 2. Open the floor to any comments by the nominee or any Coalition member.
    - iv. After the completion of the previous procedure a vote will be taken on the nominees.
      - 1. Each individual will submit a signed list of their chosen candidates.
      - 2. These ballots will be counted and announced at the end of the meeting, after which the new Coordinating Committee will briefly meet to choose a time for their first meeting.
  - d. Recall
    - i. At any time an individual or organization member may request that a recall be considered for a Coordinating Committee member.
      - 1. Before this occurs the individual or organization should try and reconcile their disagreement with the relevant Coordinating Committee member. This is a serious and time consuming matter to bring before the group and should only be done so after substantial effort has been

expended to resolve it outside of the General Member Meeting.

- ii. This will be added as the first item in the agenda for the next General Member Meeting in line with section 5-d.
- iii. The procedure for the recall will be as follows:
  - 1. At the General Member Meeting the facilitator will invite the individual or organization that requested the recall to voice their reasons for doing so.
  - 2. After this the floor will be opened for discussion on the issue.
  - 3. The facilitator will close discussion when appropriate and call for a vote on whether to recall the member of the Coordinating Committee under discussion.
  - 4. The normal voting procedure will be used.
  - 5. If the vote is in the majority then nomination will be taken and an election will proceed in line with 3-c. If the Coordinating Committee member recalled is the chair of an Action Group then the decision to replace him/her will be deferred to the Action Group during their next regularly scheduled meeting.

#### 4. Coordinating Committee: Practices

- a. The Coordinating Committee shall select co-chairs from among its members.
  - i. These co-chairs shall ensure that meetings take place, that there is a location and agenda for the meetings and that decisions are posted to the PDX Peace listserv.
  - ii. They will submit contact information for posting on the website such that they may be contacted. This is primarily for the purpose of attending Coordinating Committee meetings, as they are open to Coalition members.
- b. During meetings a member shall be selected to complete the decisions made worksheet (see Appendix A). This will keep the Coalition members informed of the work and decision of the committee.
- c. Task forces may be appointed as appropriate to the needs and activities of the Coordinating Committee.
  - i. If additional help is needed these task forces should be made known to the Coalition members such that they may participate.

#### 5. Structure for the General Meeting

- a. General meetings will be held every other month. The Coalition expects that most of the peace and justice work will take place in the Action Groups.
- b. The Coalition expects that the General Member Meetings will be held in an atmosphere of respect, good will, and good humor.
- c. The Coordinating Committee is responsible for setting the general meeting location, time, and agenda, and for assigning a facilitator.
- d. Topics can be added to the agenda by bringing them to the Coordinating

Committee, either in person or through e-mail.

- e. The facilitator has the responsibility to run the general meeting and ensure the orderly and equitable flow of discussion. The role of facilitator will be rotated among Coalition members. The facilitator will ask for help with meeting minutes and timekeeping as needed.
- f. If possible, the time of the next general meeting will be set at each general meeting. The Coordinating Committee is responsible for publishing to the PDX Peace list and the PDX Peace website the location and time of the General Member Meeting at least two weeks before the meeting.
- g. The Coordinating Committee will publish the agenda for the General Member Meeting at least one week before the meeting time.
- h. When possible, the time for the General Member Meeting will not exceed two hours.
- i. General Member Meeting agendas will include, but not be limited to, the following topics:
  - i. Agenda review – changes or additions as needed
  - ii. Election of coordinating committee (once a year)
    - i. Organizational task force reports (for example: finance, membership, web site)
    - ii. Action Group reports
    - iii. General coalition actions (for example: working on a large rally)
    - iii. Other business such as endorsements
    - iv. Announcements
- j. Minutes will be published within a week after the General Member Meeting and sent to the PDX peace listserv.

## 6. Structure of the Action Group

- a. The structure of the Action Groups shall be determined by the members of those groups. The only requirement is that they are in keeping with the values and mission of the Coalition.
- b. The Action Groups are encouraged to select chairs or co-chairs to ensure the smooth functioning of the group and to secure locations for meetings. At the least it will be necessary that they nominate an individual that will serve as their representative on the Coordinating Committee.

## 7. Decision Making

- a. Decisions are made with a modified consensus process that takes into account both individual and organizational member interests (this is also covered in the structure document).
- b. We deal with one proposal at a time.
- c. Friendly amendments can be incorporated at any point.
  - i. The individual that introduced the proposal serves to decide whether an amendment is friendly or unfriendly.
- d. Unfriendly amendments are considered as separate proposals and must be decided first.
- e. The following steps constitute the process:
  - i. Clarifying questions
  - ii. Concerns

- iii. Reservations – nagging concerns that are not resolved
- iv. Any friendly or unfriendly amendments
  - v. The proposal is restated, clearly and exactly
- vi. Check for consensus
  - 1. Ask for any wishing to stand aside
    - a. This signifies that your concerns have been heard by the group even though they may not have been resolved. You are willing to let the group move forward with the decision, but you are making it clear that the group can not count on your support for implementation.
    - b. Individuals should indicate why they are standing aside.
  - 2. Ask for any wishing to block the vote
    - a. This will block the consensus process and move the decision to a majority vote.
    - b. Individuals should indicate why they are standing aside.
  - 3. If there are no blocking votes then ask that all in consensus to indicate this by raising their hand.
    - a. This ensures that any abstentions are known.
  - 4. If consensus is reached then the proposal passes.
- vii. If the consensus process is blocked then the following procedure occurs:
  - 1. Return to discussion that revisits the concerns and objections that caused individuals to stand aside or block.
  - 2. Dual vote process
    - a. Organizational Vote
      - i. Each organization caucuses briefly as necessary
      - ii. Each organization receives one vote
      - iii. The facilitator calls for a hand vote
      - iv. If the vote passes a majority than the process moves to the individual vote
    - b. Individual Vote
      - i. Each individual, regardless of organizational affiliation receives one vote
      - ii. The facilitator calls for a hand vote
    - c. If the proposal receives a majority in **both** the individual and organizational vote then the proposal carries.

## 8. Web Dissemination

- a. There are three different ways that the Coalition communicates about the peace and justice work being done by member groups and allies in the community; the events calendar, webpage highlights and action alerts.
  - i. Events calendar

1. All member groups are encouraged to post their events on the pdxpeace.org events calendar.
  - a. This can be done by joining the Coalition online, which will give the user the ability to post events..
- ii. Webpage highlights
  1. The Coordinating Committee will appoint either a member or task force to highlight peace and justice events on the front page of the pdxpeace.org webpage.
    - a. Preference will be given to those events that are actively a part of the PDX Peace Coalitions activities but will not be limited to them. It will also include events by member groups and allies.
    - b. The Coordinating Committee will decide on which events to prioritize and members, groups or allies interested in being considered should contact the committee.
- iii. Action Alerts
  1. The Coordinating Committee will appoint a Web Coordinator to distribute bi-weekly action alerts highlighting the peace and justice events occurring in the greater Portland area.
  2. These action alerts will draw attention to the events of the PDX Peace Coalition as well as its coalition members.
    - a. Members wishing to have an event included can contact the Web Coordinator. This information will be available on the website.
    - b. The Coordinating Committee will decide which events to include in the bi-weekly action alerts.
  3. Action alerts will also be sent out as needed to respond in a timely fashion to current events relevant to our peace and justice work.
- b. Web Coordinator Duties
  - i. An individual (and/or task force) will be appointed by the Coordinating Committee to coordinate the web-related components of our organization and whose duties will include the following:
    1. Post the contact information for the co-chairs of the Coordinating Committee.
      - a. These individuals can be contacted by anyone wishing to attend a Coordinating Committee meeting.
    2. Post the contact information for the Web Coordinator for the purposes of webpage highlights, action alerts and any questions about the website.
    3. Email the decision making worksheet to the PDX Peace listserv.

## 9. Process to Adjust the Structure Document

- a. This is a living document and is subject to change at any time.

- b. Individuals or groups interested in altering the document should bring their suggestions to the Coordinating Committee.
- c. After discussing the issue the Coordinating Committee should develop a proposed alteration if it is decided that the suggested change is important and necessary or that it merits further discussion by the General Member Group.
- d. This suggested alteration should then be posted to the PDX Peace listserv at least two weeks prior to the next General Member Meeting at which it will be discussed and decided upon.
  - i. The proposed alteration is only a start and all members are encouraged to participate in the alteration discussion via the listserv.

APPENDIX A

ISSUE	DECISION MADE	WHO DECIDED