



Merry Mariners Boat Club of Cape Coral, Inc

Purpose and Bylaws

The Merry Mariners Boat Club of Cape Coral, Inc. is a Florida 509(a)(2) Tax Exempt Corporation established in 2024

Purpose:

The purpose of the Merry Mariners Boat Club (MMBC) is Boating Safety, Fun, Friendship, and Knowledge.

Fun: Sharing good times involved with boating, water activities and socializing.

Friendship: Providing an opportunity to meet and make new friends with people of like interests.

Boating Safety and Knowledge: All members share a common interest in safety on the water, and in learning, growing, and practicing good seamanship.

Bylaws of the Merry Mariners Boat Club of Cape Coral, Inc.

The MMBC will be governed by the following elected positions:

Commodore, Vice Commodore, Rear Commodore/Destination Chair, Treasurer and Secretary who are designated as the Executive Committee.

Voting members of the Board are appointed by the Commodore, approved by the Executive Committee and consist of chairpersons of the standing committees:

Membership, Potluck Coordinator, Galley, Land Activities, Fundraising, Boat Safety and Education, Clothing, Compassionate Care, Webmaster, and any other chairpersons of any standing committee appointed by the Commodore and approved by a vote of the Board.

The immediate past Commodore may participate in Board meetings as an ex-officio, non-voting member.

Ad Hoc committees for specific purposes, like a by-law, nominating or cardboard boat committee, may be established from time to time with the consensus of the Board. Ad Hoc Chairs may attend Board meetings for purposes of reporting but are not voting members of the Board.

The duties and responsibilities of the Executive Committee and Board shall be appended to these Bylaws and can be found on page 9.

It is mandated that SAFETY FIRST is the Club's TOP PRIORITY.

Changes or amendments to Bylaws governing the MMBC will be accomplished by a majority vote of the Board and a subsequent vote of the members at a General Meeting. The proposed bylaws will be sent to the membership by E-mail at least 30 days prior to a General Meeting and will contain a ballot. Acceptance or denial will require a quorum of at least 25% of the current membership voting and will be approved or denied by a majority of those who voted. Voting may be in person or by ballot returned to the Secretary by mail or e-mail prior to the General Meeting where the vote will take place. In-person voting may be by voice or ballot, if necessary, with the Secretary reporting on the votes of members who mailed in their ballot. E-mail or mailed in ballot must be received by the Secretary a minimum of 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Membership

Members in good standing (current year dues paid) of the MMBC may sponsor individuals or couples as potential new members of the MMBC. Each prospective new member must have two sponsors.

All persons applying to become members of the MMBC, including Boat Owners, spouses, singles, and non boat-owners who crew **MUST** take an approved Safe Boating course through the Coast Guard, Power Squadron, online or in person from any state. A course taken earlier from a state other than Florida will be acceptable by presenting their card to the Rear Commodore/Destination Chair.

A new member without a boat will have 3 months from their acceptance into the Club to complete a Coast Guard approved course and present a copy of the Safe Boating Certificate to the Rear Commodore/Destination Chair. Members who have not completed the course will not be allowed on any boats as members but may attend as guests of their sponsors and may participate in Club activities.

Boat owners must present a Safe Boating Certificate and Certificate of Insurance to the Rear Commodore/Destination Chair **prior to** acting as Skipper on any MMBC boating activity

The Rear Commodore/Destination Chair or their designee will have the final word on whether or not a boat may participate in a boating trip.

In recognition of the Club's fundamental sharing principle, all boat owners shall agree to accept crew members assigned to their boat by the Rear Commodore/Destination Chair or their designee for boating activities.

Dues

Dues will be determined by a vote of the Board of the MMBC and established at the October General Meeting for the subsequent year. Full and part-time members pay dues equally. Dues are fully deductible.

For new members, the first year dues will be the cost of the dues for all members PLUS the cost of a badge. Members who are accepted after September 30th, will have the option of paying the current years dues, plus the cost of the badge and have all the privileges of membership, or, may attend functions as a 'guest' for the remainder of the year and apply their payment to the following year.

Guests attending the Holiday party will pay full price for the dinner (if applicable).

For renewing members, notice of the dues will be sent to each member and are due and payable to the Treasurer prior to December 31st of the current year. The Treasurer will communicate with the Membership Chair within 10 days before the end of the year of any members who have not paid their dues. The Membership Chair will contact those members to determine their desire to stay or leave the Club. Non-payment of dues may result in the removal from the Club roster.

Meetings

The Board will determine the location for the General Meetings and will inform the membership.

General Meetings will normally be held on the first Tuesday, every other month, beginning in February, then April, June, August, October and December. This may be temporarily changed for any reason by a vote of the Board.

Members will be contacted by a member of the potluck committee approximately ten days to two weeks prior to the General Meeting and will be told what their contribution to the meeting will be (Main dish, side/salad, or dessert). Members MUST respond to their designated person whether they will or will not attend the General Meeting.

Members who attend the General Meetings MUST assist with the clean-up when the meeting is finished by clearing their tables, helping take out trash, arranging chairs, etc. and any other tasks assigned by the Commodore.

Board Meetings will be held at the discretion of the Commodore during the month prior to each General Meeting.

The General Meetings are designed to keep the members informed about boating trips and land activities, discuss safety, conduct the business of the club and foster friendship. In the spirit of fostering friendship, members and guests who attend the potlucks, and the pizza party will be assigned a table. Members MUST check in and sit at their designated table **once dinner is served or the meeting starts**. Prospective members may sit with their sponsors and guests sit with their hosts. For the December Holiday party, members must respond whether or not they are coming. It will be flexible seating and may reserve with whom they want to sit.

Boating Activities

Boating activities will generally be held twice a month at the discretion of the Rear Commodore/Destination Chair and the Executive Committee.

Rear Commodore/Destination Chair will present recommendations for trips to the Board for final approval, publication and distribution to the membership.

Boat owners/skippers will be assigned crew members by a random process to ensure that the “mix and meet” purpose of the Club is upheld.

Crew members may take guests as long as the skipper agrees and the guests may be safely accommodated on board. Members always have priority over guests.

The member wanting to bring a guest must give prior notice to the Rear Commodore/Destination Chair, who has the final determination if a guest may attend the trip. All rules apply equally to guests as applies to members.

On occasion, a skipper may want/need to use a non-member boat. Use of a non-member boat may be permitted with the Rear Commodore/Destination Chairs approval. Such boats must meet the established Merry Mariner safety and insurance requirements.

The Club’s trips are designed for Boating Flotillas with all boats meeting at a certain channel marker at the designated time. This ‘safety in numbers’ flotilla aids in the event that any boat is disabled – or other assistance is needed. It is a requirement that boats stay within the Flotilla and must continue with the group to the destination and also must return with the group unless the skipper has prior approval of the Destination Chairperson at the time.

All skippers are required to have a marine radio in good working order. As required by the FCC, all skippers should monitor Marine VHF Channel 16. On all Club cruises the working VHF channel will be CH 71.

All boats used in Merry Mariners boating activities must have a current Coast Guard *Vessel Safety Check* sticker. To remain current, the *Vessel Safety Check* sticker is required within 90 days of each New Year, or upon joining the Club.

All Skippers must carry a minimum of \$300,000 watercraft liability insurance policy on their boat. A current copy of the renewal page, or definitions page showing the coverage must be submitted yearly to the Rear Commodore/Destination Chair. Although not required by the Club, skippers should also consider uninsured boaters’ insurance for their protection.

Liquor or Beer will not be consumed, and open liquor bottles are not allowed on any boat during any Merry Mariners outing. Skippers may not consume any alcohol during lunch or dinner.

A skipper always has the right to refuse boarding any member or guest for any reason deemed necessary for safety concerns or to take an inebriated crew member on board his/her boat. Crew should have the knowledge and ability to assist the skipper at his/her discretion, if requested.

Election of Officers

The Board will appoint a Nominating Committee of at least three members, with at least one being a member of the Board. The committee will be announced at the August General Meeting. The Nominating committee is charged with presenting a Slate of Officers, one or more persons per office. For the five elected positions (Commodore, Vice Commodore, Treasurer, Secretary, Rear Commodore/Destination Chair) to the membership.

Terms of all the elected positions will be for one year. Current Office holders are allowed to run as incumbents and must inform the Nominating Committee Chair of their desire to run. The Commodore, by tradition serves no more than two consecutive terms, however in extraordinary circumstances – like the death or inability to serve by the Vice Commodore, the Commodore may serve an additional year)

Members who might be interested in running for any of the positions should contact the Nomination Committee Chair as soon as possible after the August meeting but no later than September 1st. The Nominating Committee will recruit members for any position where an incumbent does not wish to run or for any vacant position. Nominations from the floor will not be accepted.

Members of the nominating committee may not run or be nominated for any of the elected positions.

On or before September 15th of each year the Nominating Committee Chair will circulate the Slate and a ballot to the membership via e-mail.

Whenever possible members should attend the October General Meeting, but Absentee Ballots will be accepted as long as they are received by the Nominating Committee Chair at least 48 Hours before the October General Meeting.

Members wishing to submit absentee must download and print the ballot. The marked ballot must be placed in a plain envelope and the envelope sealed. That envelope is then put into another envelope for mailing to the Nominating Committee Chair. It is the responsibility of the member to ensure the ballot is received prior to the deadline. The mailing envelope will not be opened until the election is held in case the member decides to attend the meeting. Families with two members must cast their ballots in separately mailed envelopes.

The Candidates for elected office must be full-time residents.

The Candidate for Commodore must have been a member of the Club for at least a year prior to August 1st.

The Slate will be presented to the Club at the October General Meeting for election.

A quorum of at least 25% of the current membership is required for the vote to be valid. The quorum will be determined by the number of members who attend the meeting plus any absentee ballots received by the deadline.

Election of Officers, Continued

Voting shall be by secret ballot for any office where there are two or more candidates. Voting for offices unopposed shall be by a show of hands.

For contested offices, the Nominating Committee Chair will select at least two volunteers to count the ballots. The vote counters will open any absentee ballots received and present the completed tally to the Nominating Committee Chair who will announce the winner to the membership. The tally will not be made public without the permission of all the candidates.

Any election rules not covered here will be governed by Roberts Rules of Order.

Use of Website and Social Media

Members may not use the Club website, Facebook page or roster for any purpose except Club business. No advertising or solicitation of any kind is allowed.

Catastrophic Event

In the event of a catastrophic occurrence, the Executive Committee made up of the 5 Elected positions, will act in the best interest of the club and its members for safety and financial purposes. This may result in suspending or delaying some or all club activities and club obligations. A catastrophic occurrence is defined as, but not limited to, local, state, or federal laws or recommendations, civil unrest, war, epidemic, pandemic or weather events.

Dissolution of the Club

In the event that the majority of the Club votes to dissolve, the effective date of such dissolution will be December 31st of that year. Dues will not be collected for the following year, and the Board will disburse any money left in the Checking account, after paying any obligations, for the good of its members.

Roberts Rules

Any items that arise and are not covered will be determined by a reading and interpretation of the most current version of Robert's Rules of Order.

Officers and Chairpersons Duties and Responsibilities

Elected Positions:

Commodore:

Presides over meetings, coordinates activities, appoints committee chairs and acts as Club Spokesperson. Becomes familiar with the duties and responsibilities of all officers and chairpersons and ensures the activities of all offices and chairs are consistent with the Club's needs. Coordinates the production of a newsletter.

Vice Commodore:

Assumes all duties and responsibilities of the Commodore if the Commodore is unavailable for any reason. Will assist with activities assigned by the Commodore.

Rear Commodore/Destination Chairperson:

Responsible for all boating activities and destinations. Will assume duties assigned by the Commodore and will officiate in the event both the Commodore and Vice Commodore are unavailable. Records Safe Boating Certificates, maintains a list of skippers including their copies of liability insurance and Coast Guard Vessel Safety Checks. May designate another member to act in his/her stead.

Treasurer:

Collects all dues and fees. Disburses all funds under the direction of the Commodore and Board. Keeps an account of all money received and disbursed. Prepares reports for Board and General meetings. Notifies the Membership chair of unpaid dues 10 days prior to the end of the year. After the end of each year the Treasurer will hold a meeting for the purpose of auditing the books. The Treasurer will select two or more Club members to audit the Treasurer's work.

Secretary:

Takes minutes and reports of all Club meetings. Emails copies of Board minutes to Board members in a timely manner. Disseminates copies of General Meeting Minutes at the next General Meeting. Keeps copies of all minutes.

Appointed Positions:

Compassionate Care Chairperson

Sends cards to members who are ill, hospitalized or experience the loss of a loved one.

Clothing Chairperson

Coordinates merchandise/logo items for the Club.

Fundraising Chairperson

Conducts the 50/50 raffle at boating activities and General Meetings.

Coordinates other fundraising activities like the auction.

Galley Chair

Coordinates all kitchen activities for the General Meetings; supervises volunteers, maintains and purchases supplies, coordinates meals and kitchen cleanup.

Land Activities Chairperson

Coordinates and schedules non-boating activities.

Membership Chairperson

Maintains an updated membership and waiting list.

Introduces new and prospective members to the Club. Orders name badges.

Assures that new members know about the requirements for the Boat Safety Course, how to access the website, and that they receive a copy of the by-laws and that they acknowledge receipt and acceptance of the by-laws.

Calls or meets with prospective members. Assures that all the information on the application form is correct. Sends information from the application to the Webmaster and Rear Commodore/Destination Chair.

Calls members who have not paid their dues after notification from the Treasurer.

Past Commodore

The immediate past Commodore may attend, advise, and participate in Board meetings as an ex-officio, non-voting member. The past Commodore may be appointed as a committee chair or may hold another elected position in which case they would become a full voting member of the board.

Potluck Coordinator

Contacts members about food contributions needed for General Meetings. Coordinates with the Galley Chairperson.

Coordinates table assignments at General Meetings.

Safety Education Chairperson

Develops a safety training program for each General Meeting, addressing safety issues of interest to Club members. If appropriate, provides a written synopsis for inclusion in the Newsletter.

Webmaster

Responsible for the design and maintenance of the Club website. Updates the Roster as necessary. Takes pictures of new members.