



**ELECTRONIC SERVICES SYSTEM**  
8711 Windsor Parkway, Suite 2  
Johnston, Iowa 50131

February 11, 2022

To: Jerry Lewallen, President  
Members of the PRIA Board of Directors

From: Phil Dunshee, ILR Project Manager

Re: PRIA Operating Rules  
Public Land Registry

On behalf of the Electronic Services System and Iowa Land Records, I wish to express our thanks and appreciation to the leadership and working group members who have toiled over the update to the operating rules for many, many months. Their work has been thoughtful, thorough, and generally open to some new ideas. The work is nearly complete and soon will be before you for approval.

There are some specific elements that merit attention and praise.

- Modifications to the Transparency Policy which make it clear that PRIA is committed to informing the membership of its policies and actions.
  - PRIA staff and leadership should be proactive in providing advance notice to the members of pending policies and actions.
- The Advocacy Policy provides that the officers and board will apprise the membership of advocacy actions.
  - Any pending actions should be proactively communicated to the membership, and when actions must be taken due to time-sensitivity, PRIA staff and leadership should timely notify the membership and provide justification for any urgent action.
- The Communications Policy affirms PRIA's commitment to providing a culture for inclusiveness, transparency, and participation.
  - The creation of the online forums and the posting of monthly board packets have been a welcome contribution to this goal as are other tools that help facilitate communication among the members.
- The Work Products Policy which may affirm PRIA's commitment to publish draft versions of Work Products 30 days in advance of formal adoption by the Board.
  - Any pending Work Product should be subject to review by the membership prior to final action.
- The operating policies relating to committees and committee meetings which affirm the position that these groups are expected to conduct their work in an open and transparent manner and to include and engage all members.
  - Meeting notices, meeting summaries, and periodic working group or committee updates should be easily accessible to the membership

We look forward to the future with PRIA, and we will work to further the principles outlined in the updated mission statement.

"PRIA promotes (1) respect and open-mindedness amongst its members; (2) attentiveness to members and industry needs; (3) understanding of emerging business innovation; (4) aligning the interests of government and business; (5) collaboration by providing a culture for inclusiveness, transparency and participation; and, (6) commitment to creating and publishing consensus-based results."

As we have stated throughout the process of reviewing and updating the operating rules, we believe that PRIA should proactively engage with the membership, and we also believe that the membership must engage with PRIA. We will continue to advocate for the interests of recorders and registrars and for the industry as a whole.

### **POLICY REQUEST**

With this spirit we request that the PRIA Board of Directors consider the adoption of a clear policy statement regarding the public land registry. For several years we have been informed of various efforts to use technology such as blockchain or private registry systems to gain efficiencies in the property industry. Advocates for the use of distributed ledger technology have made no secret of the potential for using blockchain as a platform for immutably establishing the rights associated with property ownership in place of the public land registry. There have been policy discussions about establishing a national land registry system to replace the community and county systems for recording land record information. There are active efforts to override state laws governing remote notarization with federal legislation.

It should be apparent that these advocacy efforts will continue unless the property industry, public and private, strongly asserts that the public land registry should continue, and should not be undermined with these private or federalized efforts. The members of PRIA should in turn recognize that further improvements to the public land registry systems must also continue to be made. Is this not what PRIA is all about?

As a long-standing group of PRIA members from the state of Iowa, members who have fully embraced a commitment to standards and best practices, we respectfully request the PRIA Board of Directors and the entire membership of PRIA to develop and adopt a clear and firm policy statement to preserve and improve the public land registry, and to oppose efforts to privatize or nationalize these important functions.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

[Approved by the Electronic Services Coordinating Committee, d.b.a. Iowa Land Records – February 10, 2022]

Endorsed By:

Nancy Booten – ESS Chair and Lee County Recorder; PRIA Member

Julie Haggerty – ESS Vice Chair, ESS Committee member and Polk County Recorder

Melissa Bahnsen – ESS Sec./Treas., ESS Committee member and Cedar County Recorder; PRIA Member

Sheri Jones – President – Iowa County Recorders Association and Jones County Recorder; PRIA Member

Denise Baker – ESS Committee member and Wright County Recorder; PRIA Member

Jolynn Goodchild – ESS Committee member and Plymouth County Recorder; PRIA Member

Natalie Steffener – ESS Committee member and Des Moines County Recorder

Kim Painter – Johnson County Recorder; PRIA Member