

**Corporate Governance Guidelines**  
**of**  
**American Equity Investment Life Holding Company**  
**As Adopted on April 5, 2004**

The following Corporate Governance Guidelines have been adopted by the Board of Directors (the “Board”) of American Equity Investment Life Holding Company (the “Company”) to assist the Board in the exercise of its responsibilities. These Corporate Governance Guidelines are not intended to change or interpret any Federal or state law or regulation, including the Iowa Business Corporation Act, or the Articles of Incorporation or Amended and Restated Bylaws of the Company. These Corporate Governance Guidelines are subject to modification from time to time by the Board.

**THE BOARD**

**Role of Directors**

A director is expected to spend the time and effort necessary to properly discharge such director's responsibilities. Accordingly, a director is expected to regularly attend meetings of the Board and committees on which such director sits, and to review prior to meetings material distributed in advance for such meetings. A director who is unable to attend a meeting is expected to notify the Chairman of the Board or the Chairman of the appropriate committee in advance of such meeting.

**Selection of the Chairman of the Board**

The Board does not require the separation of the offices of the Chairman of the Board and the Chief Executive Officer. The Board shall be free to choose its Chairman of the Board in any way that it deems best for the Company at any given point in time.

**Selection of New Directors**

The Board shall be responsible for nominating members for election to the Board and for filling vacancies on the Board that may occur between annual meetings of stockholders. The Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee is responsible for assisting in identifying and screening and recommending candidates to the Board for Board membership. When formulating its Board membership recommendations, the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee shall also consider advice and recommendations from others as it deems appropriate.

The Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee will consider candidates recommended by shareholders. In considering candidates submitted by shareholders, the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee will take into consideration the needs of the Board and the qualifications of the candidate. The Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee may also take into consideration the number of shares held by the recommending shareholder and the length of time that such shares have been held.

To have a candidate considered by the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee, a shareholder must submit the recommendation in writing and in accordance with the requirements of the Company's Amended and Restated Bylaws.

### **Board Membership Criteria**

The Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee shall be responsible for assessing the appropriate balance of criteria required of Board members.

The Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee may apply several criteria in identifying nominees. At a minimum, the Committee shall consider (a) whether each such nominee has demonstrated, by significant accomplishment in his or her field, an ability to make a meaningful contribution to the Board's oversight of the business and affairs of the Company and (b) the nominee's reputation for honesty and ethical conduct in his or her personal and professional activities. Additional factors which the Committee may consider include a candidate's specific experiences and skills, relevant industry background and knowledge, time availability in light of other commitments, age, potential conflicts of interest, material relationships with the Company and independence from management and the Company. The Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee also may seek to have the Board represent a diversity of backgrounds and experience.

### **Other Public Company Directorships**

The Company does not have a policy limiting the number of other public company boards of directors upon which a director may sit, in general. However, the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee shall consider the number of other public company boards and other boards (or comparable governing bodies) on which a prospective nominee is a member.

Although the Company does not impose a limit on outside directorships, it does recognize the substantial time commitments attendant to Board membership and expects that the members of its Board be fully committed to devoting all such time as is necessary to fulfill their Board responsibilities, both in terms of preparation for, and attendance and participation at meetings.

### **Independence of the Board**

The Board shall be comprised of a majority of directors who qualify as independent directors ("Independent Directors") under the listing standards of the New York Stock Exchange (the "NYSE").

The Board shall review annually the relationships that each director has with the Company (either directly or as a partner, shareholder or officer of an organization that has a relationship with the Company). Following such annual review, only those directors who the Board affirmatively determines have no material relationship with the Company (either directly or as a partner, shareholder or officer of an organization that has a relationship with the Company) will be considered Independent Directors, subject

to additional qualifications prescribed under the listing standards of the NYSE or under applicable law. The Board may adopt and disclose categorical standards to assist it in determining director independence. In the event that a director becomes aware of any change in circumstances that may result in such director no longer being considered independent under the listing standards of the NYSE or under applicable law, the directors shall promptly inform the Chairman of the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee.

### **Board Compensation**

A director who is also an officer of the Company shall not receive additional compensation for such service as a director.

The Company believes that compensation for non-employee directors should be competitive and should encourage increased ownership of the Company's stock through the payment of a portion of director compensation in Company stock, options to purchase Company stock or similar compensation. The Board will periodically review the level and form of the Company's director compensation, including how such compensation relates to director compensation of companies of comparable size, industry and complexity. Such review will also include a review of both direct and indirect forms of compensation to the Company's directors, including any charitable contributions by the Company to organizations in which a director is affiliated and consulting or other similar arrangements between the Company and a director.

Director's fees (including any additional amounts paid to chairs of committees and to members of committees of the Board) are the only compensation a member of the Audit Committee may receive from the Company; provided, however, that a member of the Audit Committee may also receive fixed amounts of compensation under a retirement plan (including deferred compensation) from the Company for prior service with the Company so long as such compensation is not contingent in any way on continued service.

### **Separate Sessions of Non-Management Directors**

The non-management directors of the Company shall meet in executive session without management on a regularly scheduled basis. A non-management director designated by the non-management directors on the Board (the "Lead Non-Management Director") shall preside at such executive sessions, or in such director's absence, another non-management director designated by the Lead Non-Management Director shall preside at such executive sessions.

In the event that the non-management directors include directors who are not independent under the NYSE listing standards, the Company should, at least once a year, schedule an executive session including only independent directors.

## **Communication with Directors**

Any interested parties desiring to communicate with a member (or all members) of the Board of Directors regarding the Company may directly contact such directors by mail or electronically. To communicate with the Board of Directors, any individual directors or any group or committee of directors, correspondence should be addressed to the Board of Directors or any such individual directors or group or committee of directors by either name or title. All such correspondence should be sent “c/o Corporate Secretary” at 5000 Westown Parkway, Suite 440, West Des Moines, Iowa 50266.

## **Self-Evaluation by the Board**

The Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee will sponsor an annual self-assessment of the Board's performance as well as the performance of each committee of the Board, the results of which will be discussed with the full Board and each committee.

## **Board Access to Management**

Board members shall have access to the Company's management and, as appropriate, to the Company's outside advisors. Board members shall coordinate such access through the Chairman of the Board and Board members will use judgment to assure that this access is not distracting to the business operation of the Company.

## **Board Materials Distributed in Advance**

Information and materials that are important to the Board's understanding of the agenda items and other topics to be considered at a Board meeting should, to the extent practicable, be distributed sufficiently in advance of the meeting to permit prior review by the directors. In the event of a pressing need for the Board to meet on short notice or if such materials would otherwise contain highly confidential or sensitive information, it is recognized that written materials may not be available in advance of the meeting.

## **Board Interaction with Institutional Investors, Analysts, Press and Customers**

The Board believes that management should speak for the Company. Each director shall refer all inquiries from institutional investors, analysts, the press or customers to the Chief Executive Officer or his or her designee.

## **Board Orientation and Continuing Education**

The Company shall provide new directors with a director orientation program to familiarize such directors with, among other things, the Company's business, strategic plans, significant financial, accounting and risk management issues, compliance programs, conflicts policies, code of business conduct and ethics, corporate governance guidelines, principal officers, internal auditors and independent auditors. Each director is expected to participate in continuing educational programs related to the Company's business in order to maintain the necessary level of expertise to perform his or her responsibilities as a director.

## **Director Attendance at Annual Meetings of Shareholders**

Directors are invited and encouraged to attend the Company's annual meeting of shareholders.

## **BOARD MEETINGS**

### **Frequency of Meetings**

There shall be regularly scheduled meetings of the Board each year. At least one regularly scheduled meeting of the Board shall be held quarterly.

## **COMMITTEE MATTERS**

### **Number and Names of Board Committees**

The Company shall have five standing committees: Audit, Nominating and Corporate Governance, Compensation, Executive and Investment. The purpose and responsibilities for the Audit, Nominating and Corporate Governance and Compensation committees shall be outlined in committee charters adopted by the Board. The Board may want, from time to time, to form a new committee or disband a current committee depending on circumstances. In addition, the Board may determine to form ad hoc committees from time to time, and determine the composition and areas of competence of such committees.

### **Independence of Board Committees**

Each of the Audit Committee, the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee and the Compensation Committee shall be composed entirely of Independent Directors satisfying applicable legal, regulatory and stock exchange requirements necessary for an assignment to any such committee.

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

### **Selection of the Chief Executive Officer in the Event of Succession**

The Board shall be responsible for identifying potential candidates for, and selecting, the Company's Chief Executive Officer in the event of succession. In such event, in identifying potential candidates for, and selecting, the Company's Chief Executive Officer, the Board shall consider, among other things, a candidate's experience, understanding of the Company's business environment, leadership qualities, knowledge, skills, expertise, integrity, and reputation in the business community.

### **Management Development**

The Board shall determine that a satisfactory system is in effect for education, development, and orderly succession of senior and mid-level managers throughout the Company.