

Bylaws of the Black Creek Baptist Association

In order to carry out the mission of the Association, the following Bylaws are hereinafter set forth as approved and adopted by the Association:

Provision I – Membership

Section A – Obtaining Membership

Any church of like faith or belief may seek to attain fellowship with the Association by making application to the Association at any time. The church seeking membership will undergo a reasonable vetting process, conducted by the Association staff and the Leadership Team. The vetting may include both an interview component and written submissions by the applicant church. Upon completion of the vetting process, the staff and Leadership Team will determine whether to offer the applicant church conditional member status. Any churches offered conditional member status may be voted upon by the Association at any Annual Meeting or such other meeting properly called for this purpose. All churches receiving a two-thirds (2/3) majority or greater vote, will become members in good standing.

Section B – Privileges and Responsibilities of Membership

Once a church is granted conditional member status, it is entitled to all benefits and offerings of the Association except that its messengers may not vote on Association matters nor hold positions of leadership. Both voting rights and eligibility for members to be elected to a position of leadership are bestowed upon member churches only after the Association votes to accept the church into membership during the Annual Meeting.

Member churches are expected to partner in the missional works of the Association. Such participation should come in the form of both participation in missional events, and non-designated financial contributions to the Association. The expectation of each member church is that they will contribute a meaningful amount to the Association. While such amount will vary among member churches, meaningful contributions are a percentage of the churches' non-designated receipts of at least \$250 per year. The Association will issue a report each year-published to all member churches-detailing the amounts given by each member church to support the missional works of the Association. Each member church is also to cooperate by sending messengers to the last associational annual meeting.

Section C – Termination of Membership

As set forth in the Association's Constitution, all churches associated with the Association shall adhere to, maintain and propagate the doctrines, faith and practices of Southern Baptist churches which cooperate with the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. Many of such beliefs and tenants are set forth in the doctrinal statement known as the Baptist Faith and Message most recently drafted and adopted by Southern Baptists in the year 2000. Likewise, Associational churches are expected to fulfill the contribution requirement set forth in Section B above.

Should the Association become aware that any member church has:

1. Ceased adhering to one or more of the doctrine, faiths or practices set forth in the Baptist Faith and Message;

2. Has engaged in a practice—or pattern of practices—that inconsistent with the doctrine, tenets of traditional Southern Baptist beliefs; or
3. Refuse to fulfill the financial contribution requirement for two (2) consecutive years;

The Association (through its Leadership Team) will contact the church, and inquire into the matter. Should the Leadership Team confirm any one or more of the three criteria set forth above, the team will seek to restoratively counsel such member church concerning the departure from Associational membership requirements.

Should the church be unwilling or unable to bring its practices and/or beliefs back in line with the requirements for membership in the Association, the Leadership Team will bring the situation to the Association at the next business meeting. Such church's membership in the Association would then be subject to termination upon a majority vote of the messengers at a properly-called meeting.

Provision II – Notice to Member Churches

Where feasible (i.e., where it does not compromise the integrity of its work), the Association will seek to utilize the most efficient and cost-effective methods in all of its operations. To that end, notices to member churches of upcoming events and any Special Meeting will be delivered electronically. Such electronic delivery may be by email or fax to the email address and/or fax number provided by the member church. While hard-copy notices may be delivered for certain events, members understand and agree that electronic notice of any meeting is sufficient.

Provision III – Meetings

Section A – Procedural Rules

The regular meeting of the Association shall be conducted in accordance with the current (i.e., the most recent) edition of “Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised.” To the extent any conflict arises between these Bylaws and Robert’s Rules, the provisions of these Bylaws shall prevail.

Section B – Parliamentary

While it is not required to do so, the Association may choose to retain a parliamentarian to assist the meeting-moderator in any meeting of the membership. If a Parliamentarian is retained, the person chosen for the role must be sufficiently familiar with and/or certified in Robert’s Rules of Order. The role of any such parliamentarian shall be advisory only. Any and all decisions of the meeting-moderator regarding procedure shall be final.

Provision IV – Quorum and Voting

Section A – Annual Meeting

Except as is set forth below, properly called meetings (no less than fourteen [14] days prior) shall not be postponed or discontinued for lack of a certain number of attendees. A properly called meeting will proceed as noticed regardless of the number of attendees. A quorum for the Annual Meeting shall be reached when a minimum of 50 representatives from at least 12 churches are present.

Section B – Voting

The default manner of voting shall be by voice vote or a show of hands. Secret and/or written ballot voting shall not be used unless three-quarters of those in attendance and eligible to vote request to employ such ballots. Regardless of the method or manner of voting, the Moderator and Vice-Moderator shall conduct the vote and tabulate the results.

Provision V – Responsibilities of Association Leadership

Ultimate control over the work of the Association is vested in the associated churches. Day-to-day control over the work of the Association is vested in the Association staff and the Leadership Team. A Nominating Committee will facilitate the selection of potential candidates to serve as the Officers and Leaders of the Association. The following sets forth the division of duties and responsibilities for each of these bodies:

Section A – Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of six (6) members, none of which may be members of the Leadership Team. Two (2) members shall rotate off at the conclusion of each three-year term. Replacements for those who rotate off (or any other vacancy on the committee), shall be presented by the remaining members of the committee for election at the Annual Meeting.

The duty of this committee shall be to make nominations for all vacancies in the Officer corps, Leadership Team, Credentials Committee, Properties Committee, Finance Committee, or the Nominating Committee as necessary for ensuing year(s).

All nominations shall be voted upon at the Annual Meeting (or any Special Meeting called for that purpose).

Section B – The Association Staff

The Association staff shall consist of traditional employees, contract workers and independent consultant. Regardless of their specific designation, all persons compensated by the Association shall abide by these Bylaws, as well as any and all provisions of the Association's employment handbook or personnel policy manual that is, or may be, in effect at any time during their period of compensation.

The make-up of the staff (i.e., what staff positions are necessary and prudent) shall be subject to the discretion and oversight of the Director of Missions (Interim or Consultant) and the Leadership Team. Specific duties and responsibilities for each worker compensated by the Association are to be set forth in an employment handbook and/or policy and procedure manual (including individualized job descriptions). Such descriptions are to be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

Among other individual duties, the Association staff will collectively:

1. Be responsible for calendaring the Annual Meeting and any called Special Meetings (as well as making proper and adequate notice of no less than fourteen [14] days prior to such meetings being sent to member churches);
2. Study the needs of the churches in the Association, and then design and implement programs to meet those needs;
3. Collaborate with the Finance Committee to develop a recommended budget for the Association; and
4. Coordinate with the Florida Baptist Convention and North American Mission Board (NAMB) to ensure effective use of Associational resources and a minimal amount of overlap/redundancy.

The staff structure of the Association is subject to change at any time pursuant to the direction and oversight of the Director of Missions (Interim or Consultant) and the Leadership Team.

Section C – The Director of Missions (Interim or Consultant)

The Association staff is to be directly supervised by the Director of Missions (Interim or Consultant). As with other Association staff, the specific duties and responsibilities of the Director of Missions are set forth in a personnel policies manual and manual of procedures. Nevertheless, the role of the Director of Missions (Interim or Consultant) shall be to act as, essentially, Chief Operating Officer of the Association. While the Director of Missions (Interim or Consultant) has the authority to make personnel decisions up to and including termination of Associational staff, he will consult with the Leadership Team on any personnel actions.

The Director of Missions (Interim or Consultant) is ultimately responsible to the Association member churches. Direct oversight of the Director of Missions (Interim or Consultant) is performed by the Leadership Team. Should any material decision (e.g., formal accolade, salary increase/decrease) regarding the Director of Missions (Interim or Consultant) employment needs to be made the Leadership Team will make appropriate recommendations to the Pastor's Executive Committee, which in turn will present recommendations to the Association at the annual meeting. If the Leadership Team has any material decisions (e.g., discipline, hiring or dismissing) regarding the Director of Missions (Interim or Consultant) employment they will make appropriate recommendations immediately to the Pastor's Executive Committee, which in turn will present recommendations and actions to the Association.

Section D – The Leadership Team

The Leadership Team shall consist of the Officers of the Association and chair persons from each associational committee (Credential, Nominating, Property, and Finance). Additionally, the Leadership Team will include three (3) at-large members, as requested by the Director of Missions (Interim or Consultant). The duties of the Leadership Team are varied and broad. However, among other responsibilities, the Leadership Team shall,

1. Act for and on behalf of the Association membership between its meetings;
2. Assist the Director of Missions (Interim or Consultant) in the oversight of the Association staff and its operations.
3. Review and discuss associational budget for any needed adjustments and recommendations.

4. Make nominations for any ad-hoc committees that may be created from time to time.
5. Annually review the constitution, bylaws, policy and procedures manual, employee handbook, and personnel policies (recommending revisions as necessary);
6. In an emergency, the Leadership Team may make decisions normally requiring action by Association membership as a whole (such emergency action being subject to ratification or recession by the Association membership at the next meeting);
7. Participate in the process of credentialing churches who have applied for membership with the Association; and
8. Appoint replacements for any position on the Leadership Team that may become vacant during the year.
9. Work with the staff to implement and carry out the directives aimed at accomplishing the mission of the Association.

Decisions of the Leadership Team will be subject to a vote of the team. All issues will be subject to a simple majority vote, provided that all issues must be approved by at least four (4) Leadership Team members.

Section E – Pastor Executive Committee

The pastor executive committee shall consist of the senior pastors from each member church in good standing with the association.

Among the responsibilities, the pastor executive committee shall:

1. Act for and on behalf of the individual participating member churches;
2. Assist the Director of Missions (Interim or Consultant) at all scheduled meetings, discussions, and decisions about future processes and procedures;
3. Shall meet on a regular basis for fellowship, information, and general discussion of associational topics;
4. Maintain confidentiality with regard to appropriate Pastor Executive Committee Business.

Provision VI – Alteration or Amendment of these Bylaws

These Bylaws may be altered or amended by consent of a majority vote of the messengers present at any meeting called for that purpose. Prior notice of the proposed changes to these Bylaws (such notice to include the specific verbiage to be voted upon) shall be given to all associated churches no less than sixty (60) days prior to any vote on such alteration or amendment.