

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

BEECH RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION  
REVISED AND ADOPTED OCTOBER 21, 2002

## INTRODUCTION

A constitution and bylaws document helps an association preserve democratic procedures. This instrument serves as the guide for the association for the association to follow in carrying out its work.

The basic advantages of a constitution and bylaws are:

1. Furnishes the association a written statement of its organization and fundamental guidelines.
2. Aids in preserving democracy and harmony since predetermined guidelines have already been established by the member churches.
3. Provides orderly procedures for guiding the transaction of business.
4. Serves as a basis for solving problems before problems arise.

## CONSTITUTION

### PREAMBLE

The Beech River Baptist Association is a self-governing fellowship of autonomous churches churches sharing a common faith and active on mission in their setting. The churches that comprise an association are free, self-governing, autonomous churches that decide to associate themselves to do certain things together.

### ARTICLE I. NAME

This body shall be known as the Beech River Baptist Association. Hereafter this document shall refer to the Beech River Baptist Association as the Association.

### ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Association shall be to promote missions and evangelism, as well as fellowship, harmony, and cooperation among the churches. It shall strive to promote missionary work at home and abroad in cooperation with the Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention, as well as to encourage Christian education and the spread of the gospel. It shall further strive to promote a Christian morality consistent with the teachings of the Word of God.

### ARTICLE III. INCORPORATION

The Association shall be incorporated according to the laws of the state of Tennessee governing religious bodies, and the handling of property shall be in accordance with such laws.

### ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

#### Section 1. Composition of Annual Meeting of the Association

The annual meeting of the Association shall be composed of messengers duly elected by the cooperating Baptist Churches affiliated with this body. Each church shall be entitled to three (3) messengers. In addition, each church is entitled to one (1) additional messenger for every fifty (50) members or fractional part thereof in excess of one hundred (100) members, subject to a maximum of ten (10) messengers from any one church.

## **Section 2. Church Affiliation**

Churches who desire to affiliate with the Association shall petition the Executive Board by letter no less than three (3) months prior to the annual meeting of the Association. The Executive Board shall refer said letter to the Credentials Committee, who shall bring whatever recommendation (s) they desire to the annual meeting. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of messengers present and voting shall be required for a church to be admitted. Each petitioning church shall endorse the articles of faith as set forth in *The Baptist Faith and Message* (as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention May 9, 1963 and revised June 1998) and be firmly committed to the principles, policies, and programs of the Association.

## **Section 3. Responsibilities of Cooperating Churches**

- (1) Each cooperating church is expected to be in cooperation with Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist convention.
- (2) Each cooperating church is expected to systematically contribute financially to the work of the Association.
- (3) Each cooperating church is expected to participate regularly in the ongoing work of the Association. This includes, but is not limited to, sending messengers to the Annual Meeting, sending representatives to the Executive Board meetings, submitting an Annual Church Profile, as well as involvement in the ministries of the Association.

## **Section 4. Failure to Cooperate**

In the event that a church fails to cooperate with the responsibilities and ministries of the Association as outlined in Article IV Sections 2 & 3, the church shall be sent a letter of concern by the Credentials Committee. If a church does not respond within the first associational year after the initial contact, the Credentials Committee will counsel the church. If at the end of the second associational year, the church has not responded appropriately, their action will be taken as an indication of their lack of cooperation with the purposes of the Association. Therefore the Credentials Committee shall bring a recommendation to the annual meeting that the church no longer wishes to be recognized as a cooperating church. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of messengers present and voting shall be required for a church to be dismissed. Once dismissed, the church will thereafter have to petition, as a new church, for readmission to the Association.

## **ARTICLE V. AUTHORITY**

This Association is sovereign in itself and maintains the autonomy of the local congregation. This Association has no authority or ecclesiastical jurisdiction over any church. It shall be the responsibility of the Association to be available for fraternal counsel when such counsel is requested. The Association may refuse to recognize messengers from any church which persists in practices contrary to the purpose and statements of the Association.

## **ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS**

### **Section 1. Officers of the Association**

The officers of the Association shall be Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer.

### **Section 2. Election**

The election of officers shall be at the annual meeting. The Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer shall be nominated from the floor. The Moderator shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. A simple majority is required for election.

### **Section 3. Duties of Officers**

The duties of the officers shall be such as are provided in the Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VII. EXECUTIVE BOARD**

### **Section 1. Membership**

The Executive Board shall consist of the Pastor of each cooperating church (provided that he is a member of the church) and one additional member from each church. Members of the Executive Board must be elected by the church. In the event that the general officers, elected leaders of each associational organization or the chairman of standing committees are not elected to the Executive Board, they shall be ex-officio members of the Executive Board.

### **Section 2. Organization**

The Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer of the Association shall be the officers of the Executive Board.

### **Section 3. Duties and Responsibilities**

The Executive Board shall have charge of all interest and work of the Association during the interim between the Annual Meeting of the Association, and shall have the power of the Association, except as limited by this constitution and bylaws and by specific action taken by the Annual Meeting of the Association.

## **ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS**

### **Section 1. Annual Meeting**

This Association shall meet for its annual meeting in October. The Time and Place Committee, appointed by the Moderator, will be responsible for determining the exact day and place of the meeting. Petitions for hosting the Annual Meeting will be submitted to the Time and Place Committee in writing.

### **Section 2. Executive Board Meetings**

The frequency and date of the meetings of the Executive Board shall be decided by the Board.

### **Section 3. Special Meetings**

(1) The Executive Board has the power to call a special meeting of the Association by notifying the clerk of each cooperating church in writing at least two weeks prior to the special meeting. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated, but other necessary items of business related to the stated purpose may be transacted.

(2) The Moderator has the power to call a special meeting of the Executive Board by notifying each member in writing at least one week prior to the special meeting. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated, but other necessary items of business related to the stated purpose may be transacted.

### **Section 4. Quorum**

A quorum in the above meetings shall consist of members representing no less than seven (7) churches.

## **ARTICLE IX. TRUSTEES**

Five (5) Trustees shall be elected at the Annual Meeting each year as recommended by the Nominating Committee and will hold in trust the associational property. They shall have no powers to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property whatsoever without a specific vote of the Association or the Executive Board authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents wherever the signatures of trustees are required. The trustees shall do everything needful for the Corporation's good government and support. They shall perform the legal duties of the Corporation, however, all actions taken by them are to be taken only at the direction of the Association or the Executive Board.

## **ARTICLE X. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

### **Section 1. Constitution**

The Constitution may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Association by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the messengers present and voting, the amendment having been proposed and approved at the previous annual or special meeting of the Association and printed in the minutes.

### **Section 2. Bylaws**

The Association may adopt such bylaws as it deems advisable, provided that such bylaws are not in conflict with the Constitution. The Bylaws of the Association may be changed at any regular or special meeting of the Association by a majority vote of the messengers present and voting.

# **BYLAWS**

## **ARTICLE 1. DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

### **Section 1. Moderator**

The Moderator shall preside at all regular or called meetings of the Association and the Executive Board. He shall serve as ex-officio member of all committees of the Association. He shall work closely with the Director of Missions in counsel and promoting every phase of the work of the Association. He shall appoint such committees as provided for in the Constitution and Bylaws.

### **Section 2. Vice-Moderator**

The Vice-Moderator shall be an assistant to the Moderator, and shall stand in for him in any activity or responsibility requested by the Moderator. He shall preside over meetings in the absence of the Moderator, or when requested to do so. He shall serve as ex-officio member of all committees of the Association. In the event of the removal of the Moderator from the Association, the Vice-Moderator shall automatically succeed to the office of Moderator.

### **Section 3. Clerk**

The Clerk shall be responsible for keeping accurate minutes of the Association and Executive Board. The Clerk shall notify persons who have been affected by actions taken by the Association or Executive Board. In cooperation with the Director of Missions, prepare the annual minutes of the Association and be responsible for keeping securely all documents and records of interest to the Association. The Clerk shall attest the signature of the Trustees who execute legal instruments on behalf of the Association. The Association may choose to delegate the duties of the Clerk to the Association Secretary.

### **Section 4. Treasurer**

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, preserve and pay out expenditures approved by the Association. The Treasurer shall keep at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements rendering to the Association a written report at each Executive Board meeting and at the Annual Meeting of the Association. The Treasurer shall keep the Executive Board and the Association informed of the financial condition of the Association and of matters that require special attention. Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and obtaining acceptance and approval by the Association, the records shall be delivered by the Treasurer to the Clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as part of the permanent records of the Association. The Treasurer shall work with the associational Budget and Stewardship Committee to develop sound financial policies for the Association.

## **ARTICLE II. ASSOCIATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

### **Section 1. Director of Missions**

#### **A. Selection**

A Director of Associational Missions shall be chosen and called by the Association whenever a vacancy occurs. A search committee shall be nominated from the floor at a regular Executive Board meeting or

one called for this purpose. The committee shall consist of five (5) members, all of whom must be members in good standing of churches who are in cooperation with the Association. After all nominations have been given, the Executive Board members may vote for any five (5) of the nominee's. A secret ballot will be taken and the five (5) members who receive the most votes, and who are willing to serve on the committee, shall be elected. The committee shall serve until a Director of Missions has been moved on the field. The duties of the committee are to seek out and recommend to the Association a suitable Director of Missions. This recommendation will serve as a nomination and must be made by unanimous vote of the committee. His election shall take place at a regular Annual Meeting of the Association or one called for this purpose. At least two weeks public notice shall be given prior to that meeting. In no case shall less than two weeks elapse from the time of the announcement until the time of the meeting. Election shall be by ballot, a two-third (2/3) vote of the messengers present and voting being necessary to extend a call. The Director of Missions, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated.

#### **B. Termination**

Should the Director of Missions wish to resign, he shall submit his resignation to the Executive Board. He shall give no less than two weeks notice prior to resignation. In the event that the Association should desire to terminate the Director of Missions services, it shall be brought to the attention of the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall consider a request for termination only if a majority of the Executive Board concurs in such action. A motion of termination must be voted on at the regular Annual Meeting of the Association or a special called meeting of the Association (as authorized in Article VIII, section 3 of this constitution). In order for the motion to carry, a two-third (2/3) majority of those present and voting must vote in favor of the motion. The vote must be by ballot. If such motion receives the two-third (2/3) majority and passes, the Director of Missions shall be given 30 days notice prior to termination. At the option of the Association the relationship may be officially terminated at any time prior to the end of the 30 day period providing sufficient severance pay is given to compensate for a total of 30 days of salary from the date of the notice of termination.

#### **C. Duties**

The Director of Missions is responsible for leading the associational ministry. He shall work with pastors and churches to strengthen the relationship among the churches. He shall work with organizational leaders and committees to carry out the objectives of the Association. He shall provide missionary leadership by leading the churches and the Association to maintain a missions perspective. He shall provide administrative leadership to all aspects of associational life, as well as being the supervisor of all paid staff. He shall serve as ex-officio member of all committee's and boards of the Association.

#### **Section 2. Associational Staff**

The Association shall call or employ such staff members as needed. New staff positions must be authorized by a two-third (2/3) majority vote of the Association in an Annual Meeting or in the Executive Board. An appropriate committee will be given responsibility of seeking our new staff members. They will present their recommendation to the Association for its approval at an Annual Meeting or Executive Board meeting. Election of a new staff member must be by ballot. A two-third (2/3) majority of those present and voting being necessary to extend a call. The Budget and Stewardship Committee will be responsible for presenting a salary and benefits plan for new staff members to the Association or Executive Board for its approval prior to a call being extended to a prospective new staff member. If no job description is provided for the position in these bylaws, one must be written and approved within 90 days of the call of a new staff person. The Personnel Committee shall write the job description. The procedure for termination of the relationship between the Association and a staff member or employee shall be the same as in Article II, Section 1B which relates to the Director of Missions.

### **ARTICLE III. ASSOCIATIONAL YEAR**

The Associational Year shall be from September 1 through August 31 of the following year.

## **ARTICLE IV. FINANCES**

### **Section 1. Fiscal Year**

The Associational Fiscal Year shall be January 1 through December 31.

### **Section 2. Budget and Stewardship Committee**

#### **A. Membership**

The Budget And Stewardship Committee shall consist of seven members. Six of these members shall be at large members. One member shall be the duly elected associational Treasurer. The chairman will be selected yearly by the Nominating Committee.

#### **B. Term of Office**

The six at large members shall serve three year terms. Each year the term of office of two of these members shall end and two more shall be elected. No member shall serve more than three years consecutively, excluding the treasurer.

#### **C. Responsibilities**

- (1) This committee is responsible to study the record of giving and potential giving to the Association.
- (2) To analyze the current budget strengths and weaknesses.
- (3) To annually prepare and submit to the Association for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all expenses.
- (4) The Budget and Stewardship Committee shall consider requests from associational committees and departments as well as from the Director of Missions in formulating the budget.
- (5) To see that the appropriate financial records are kept, including quarterly budget reports.
- (6) To review the approved budget quarterly and recommend to the Executive Board any needed adjustments in the budget.
- (7) They shall supervise the administration of the approved budget for the current associational year. They shall present a unified budget to the Association for the upcoming associational year at each Annual Meeting. It shall be discussed and amendments may be offered. It shall then be placed before the Association for final approval.
- (8) This committee shall develop and recommend financial policies and procedures, including provisions for auditing.
- (9) In the event of extenuating circumstances, the chairman of the appropriate committee may authorize non-budgeted expenditures. However, these expenditures must be reported to the Executive Board at it's next regular meeting and on the quarterly financial report.

## **ARTICLE V. QUALIFICATIONS**

All those elected to positions of leadership in the Association must be members in good standing of churches who are in cooperation with the Beech River Baptist Association.

## **ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES, COUNCILS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Section 1. General**

All associational Committee members, Council members and Organizational leaders shall be proposed by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Association at the Annual Meeting unless otherwise indicated in this document. The term of office for all positions in the Association is one year unless otherwise specified in this document. The Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Director of Missions, is free to nominate whomever it deems capable of filling the position, as they are led by the Holy Spirit. The Chairman of each committee shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee. All committees and organizations shall be under the control of the Association and shall submit a written annual report to the Association at the Annual Meeting of its activities during the previous year.

## Section 2. Organizational Leaders

Organizations shall include, but are not limited to the following:

- |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (a) Sunday School Director         | (e) Youth Director           |
| (b) Vacation Bible School Director | (f) Brotherhood Director     |
| (c) Discipleship Training Director | (g) WMU Director             |
| (d) Music Director                 | (h) Disaster Relief Director |

Each organizational leader is assigned the task of leading the Association in his/her respective area of ministry, as well as assisting the local churches as requested.

## Section 3. Councils

Each organization may have a council that works with the director in fulfilling the mission of that organization. Councils are not administrative in nature and do not need to rotate membership. Each council should be composed of people with an understanding of the work of that they are leading and a willingness to serve the churches of the association in developing the work under the leadership of the Lord

The Councils of the association include but are not limited to the following:

- (a)– The Sunday School Council which shall assist the Associational Sunday School Director.
- (b)– The Vacation Bible School Council which shall assist the Associational Vacation Bible School Director.
- (c)– The Youth Council which shall assist the Associational Youth Director. Its membership to be composed of youth leaders from the churches. Their duties include planning and coordinating all youth endeavors sponsored by the association, promoting the Annual Youth Evangelism Conference, and assisting our churches in developing youth programs in the local church.
- (d)– The Prayer Council which shall plan and coordinate all prayer ministries of the association. Its members to be the members of the Pastor's Conference.
- (e) Missions and Development Council which shall work with the Director of Missions in planning and promoting all phases of mission work. The members of this council shall be the Brotherhood Director, the WMU Director, the Disaster Relief Coordinator, and a minimum of three at large members.

## Section 4. Standing Committees

Committees (both standing and special) serve the association in administrative matters.

- 1- Members will serve on a rotating basis with a third rotating off each year.
- 2- Members rotating off a committee may not be elected to that committee for one year but may serve on another committee.
- 3- Members may not serve on more than two (2) standing committees per association year.
- 4- The committee year will begin at the conclusion of the annual meeting.
- 5- Committee size will be sufficient to handle its responsibility and unless specified elsewhere in the Constitution or By-Laws committee size will be recommended by the Nominating Committee through the nomination process.
- 6– The Nominating Committee will recommend the committee chairmen.

Standing Committees shall include, but are not limited to the following committees:

- (a) Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee shall have a minimum of six members who serve on rotating terms. Their responsibilities include nominating all volunteer positions within the organization of the Association, unless otherwise stated in the Constitution and Bylaws.
- (b) Budget and Stewardship Committee: The duties of the committee are given in Article III above.
- (c) Annual Program Committee: This committee shall consist of the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Association Music Director, Host Pastor of the church in which the Annual Meeting is to be held, and the Director of Missions. Their duties are to propose an agenda for the Annual Meeting of the Association enlist personnel for the Annual Meeting, arrange for the facilities for the Annual Meeting, and establish proper guidelines for messenger registration at the Annual Meeting.
- (d) Credentials Committee: The members of this committee are to carry out the duties outlined in

Article IV of this constitution and bylaws. They will also serve as the registration committee for the annual and called meetings of the association.

- (e) Building and Properties Committee: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three members. Their duties include inspecting all associational properties periodically and see that they are being properly maintained. They are also to advise the Association on preventive maintenance, to recommend repairs and improvements of all Association owned properties and assets. They are to recommend policies regarding the use of buildings, property, and equipment. They are to assist the Trustees in developing an adequate insurance program to cover all Associational assets.
- (f) Personnel Committee: The duties of this committee shall include assisting the Association in matters related to paid staff. Its work shall be to determine staff needs, employment, and benefits for employed personnel.

### **Section 5. Special Committees**

Special committees shall be elected as needed by the Association in Annual Meeting or the Executive Board, with the exception of The Time and Place Committee and the Resolutions Committee which shall be appointed by the Moderator no later than the beginning of each Annual Meeting and serve until the conclusion of the Annual Meeting.

Special committees include but not be limited to:

- The Constitution and By-Laws Committee
- Special Events Committees