

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

For Western Oklahoma Baptist Association

Revised at the Associational Annual Meeting on November 6, 2022 at FBC Cordell.

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CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1. IDENTITY

SECTION 1. The name of this body shall be known as the Western Oklahoma Baptist Association, a corporation with tax-exempt status.

SECTION 2. The Association shall cooperate with the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and the Southern Baptist Convention in fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

SECTION 3. Upon dissolution of the Association, the assets of the Association shall be distributed under the regulations of the State of Oklahoma and provisions of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE 2. PURPOSE

Western Oklahoma Baptist Association exists to start and strengthen churches, partnering together to carry out the Great Commission to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE 3. AUTHORITY

SECTION 1. The Association affirms the Bible as the sole authority for all faith and practice and subscribes to *The Baptist Faith and Message, 2000*, which serves as our Statement of Faith.

SECTION 2. The Association shall exercise no authority over any church, respecting local church autonomy, independence, and discipline.

SECTION 3. The authority of the Association rests in the decision of the voting body, which is the Executive Board or the Annual Meeting.

SECTION 4. The Association has jurisdiction over the seating of messengers and may refuse to seat messengers from any church that it deems to be unsound in faith, practice, or conduct based upon a recommendation from the Support Team.

ARTICLE 4. MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. The membership of the Association shall be composed of cooperating Southern Baptist Churches who subscribe to the essential tenets of Baptist life, as described in *The Baptist Faith and Message*.

SECTION 2. Reporting and Supporting

- A. All churches will report their ministry to the Association by furnishing an Annual Church Profile, which may be summarized and published by the Association. Churches will make every effort to update the *SBC Workspace* database.
- B. Churches shall financially support the ministry of the Association.
- C. Any church failing to report to the Association or to give financially to the general budget of the Association for two consecutive years is not in good standing and is therefore placed on probationary status. That church forfeits its voting privileges and any leadership roles within the Association.

SECTION 3. Receiving New Churches

- A. New churches shall petition for membership at least ninety days prior to the Annual Meeting. A petitionary church shall provide written evidence of sound doctrine in agreement with our Statement of Faith, a description of church practice, and a signed declaration of its intentions of cooperation with, participation in, and support of the Association.
- B. The petitionary church will be placed on non-voting, watch care status for a period of not less than one year prior to the Annual Meeting to observe their faith and practice.
- C. The Support Team shall interview the church's leadership and make a recommendation about the petition at the Annual Meeting of the Association. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the messengers is required for admission, at which time the President shall declare the church received and her messengers seated.

SECTION 4. Withdrawal of Membership

- A. The Association reserves the right to withdraw membership from churches found to be unbiblical in doctrine or practice.
 - 1. A Special Committee, appointed by the President, shall research the matter, and if needed, work redemptively to correct and to restore the church, and report findings to the Executive Board.
 - 2. The Executive Board may vote to recommend withdrawal at the next Annual Meeting or at a specially called meeting for such a purpose. In such case, all Associational churches must be notified in writing as to the purpose, the time, and the location, ninety days prior to such a meeting. A two-thirds majority of those voting is required for withdrawal.
- B. The Association may withdraw membership from churches who fail to report or financially support the Association. After two consecutive years of failure to report or support, the church is placed on probationary status and the Executive Board may appoint a special committee to confer with the church. After a third year of inactivity the church may be removed from Associational membership by Executive Board action.

- C. Any member church may voluntarily withdraw their membership from the Association by notifying the Support Team.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE 1. LEADERSHIP

SECTION 1. The Association shall maintain job descriptions for Teams and Staff. Job descriptions, and subsequent changes to them, shall be recommended by the Support Team to the Executive Board for approval.

SECTION 2. Officers

- A. The Officers, President, Vice-President, and Clerk, shall serve three-year terms, rotating through one-year terms in each office. The Vice-President succeeds the President after his term, and the Clerk becomes the Vice-President. Should an office become vacant mid-term, the Officer(s) shall rotate, and the Support Team shall recommend a replacement to the Executive Board for election.
- B. Each year, a candidate for Clerk shall be recommended by the Support Team or nominated from the floor and elected at the Annual Meeting.
- C. The Officers assume their offices at the close of the Annual Meeting.
- D. The President shall lead the Executive Board and Annual Meetings and shall serve as the Leader of the Support Team. The Vice-President assumes the duties of the President in his absence. The Clerk shall take minutes at the Annual Meeting and other special meetings of the Association and make them available for distribution. The Clerk shall keep a file of printed minutes and deliver them to his or her successor in office.
- E. The Officers shall serve as the Trustees of the Association. When directed by action of the Annual Meeting or the Executive Board, a Trustee shall affix his signature to legal documents involving the sale, purchase, rental of property or equipment, and to contracts requiring corporate signatures.

SECTION 3. The Executive Board

- A. The Executive Board consists of a senior pastor from each church plus two additional members elected by the church.
- B. The Executive Board shall have the authority to transact the business of the Association between annual meetings, consistent with these *Constitution and Bylaws* and the expressed will of the Association.

SECTION 4. The Director of Missions

- A. Director of Missions is responsible for leading the work of the Association and shall report to the Annual Meeting of the Association and to the Executive Board, serving as “ex-officio member” of the Executive Board.
- B. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Director of Missions, the Executive Board is responsible for electing a Search Committee from the Executive Board members to

recommend a suitable replacement. The Executive Board shall call a new Director of Missions and set all salary and housing benefits, secure moving expenses, and provide a job description. A four-fifths vote of the Executive Board is required to call a Director of Missions at a meeting designated for that purpose.

- C. The Executive Board shall have the authority to dismiss a Director of Missions, which requires a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting called for that purpose.

SECTION 5. Team Leadership

- A. Teams are organized and dissolved by the Association to accomplish important tasks and to maximize effectiveness. Team members are asked to serve for a minimum of one year but may serve longer if they agree. After three years a Team Member must rotate off for a minimum of one year. Individuals may only serve on one team at a time. Teams are asked to report at Executive Board meetings and the Annual meeting of the Association.
- B. The Support Team
 - 1. The Support Team consists of the President, the Vice-President, Clerk, Director of Missions, and three at-large members elected from the Executive Board who rotate through a three-year rotation.
 - 2. The Support Team will address ministry support issues on behalf of the Association in the areas of credentialing, stewardship, nominating, and personnel, enabling the Engage Teams to do their work.
- C. Engage Teams
 - 1. Engage Teams serve the Association by carrying out specific assignments, including but not limited to, Church Planting, Leadership Development, Evangelism and Missions, Engaging, and Church Revitalization.
 - 2. Engage Team members must be active members of a church in the Association.
 - 3. The number of members and responsibility of each Engage Team shall be established by the Director of Missions, who serves on each Team as an ex-officio member.

ARTICLE 2. MEETINGS

SECTION 1. Order and Decorum

- A. *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be used as the standard for conducting business.
- B. Special rules of decorum may be adopted by two-thirds vote to facilitate discussion or to transact business.

SECTION 2. Annual Meetings

- A. The Association shall meet annually to worship, fellowship, and transact the business of the Association.
- B. A quorum of the Annual Meeting consists of the number of messengers present.
- C. The Director of Missions and Officers shall recommend to the Executive Board for approval the location, time, theme, and speakers for the Annual Meeting.
- D. Each church in good standing, as defined in [Article 4, Section 2 of the Constitution](#), shall be entitled to five messengers for the first fifty members and one additional messenger for each additional fifty members. No church shall have more than ten messengers. All messengers shall be chosen and sent by their churches. Only messengers from churches in good standing may vote.
- E. Teams shall report at the Annual Meeting on the business transacted and ministry accomplished during the year.
- F. All questions shall be decided by a majority vote of the messengers present, unless otherwise stated in these Constitution and Bylaws.

SECTION 3. Executive Board Meetings

- A. The Executive Board of the Association shall transact the business of the Association between the annual meetings and promote the purpose and objectives of the Association as stated in [Article 2 of the Constitution](#).
- B. Elected members who attend the meetings shall constitute a quorum.
- C. The Board shall meet a minimum of three times annually. The President and Director of Missions may call additional meetings when deemed necessary.
- D. When personal attendance is not possible, Board Members may join the meetings by means of technology by arrangement.

SECTION 4. Emergency Meetings

- A. In times of emergency, crisis, or adverse circumstance, meetings may be held through the means of technology.
- B. Emergency meetings must be duly called, requiring the approval of the Director of Missions or a majority of the Support Team members, and duly recorded in minutes.

ARTICLE 3. FINANCES

SECTION 1. The fiscal year of the Association shall be the calendar year.

SECTION 2. The bookkeeping service shall verify all expenditures.

SECTION 3. Audits shall be made of financial records and procedures on a regular basis.

ARTICLE 4. AMENDMENTS AND REVIEWS

SECTION 1. Proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing at a scheduled Executive Board meeting prior to the Annual Meeting. Once approved by the Executive Board, the proposed amendments will be distributed to the churches for consideration.

SECTION 2. The Constitution and Bylaws shall be amended by a two-thirds vote of the messengers present at the Annual Meeting of the Association.

SECTION 3. Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws modify the Association's policies, procedures, and job descriptions automatically without further action of the body.

SECTION 4. The Support Team and Executive Board will review and update the Constitution and Bylaws as needed.