

# Written Questions Sent to the PSC and/or the Church Council

## Comment:

Dear Members,

I just wanted to tell you that I appreciate all the time and effort you have put into the process of searching for a pastor. I think yesterday's proposal was a good one and I hope it moves forward.

Blessings,

## Question 1

Who are the current deacons and are they assigned church members to assist when needed?

***Council: The deacons are assigned to cover the various services of the church (1<sup>st</sup> hour, 2<sup>nd</sup> hour, etc.) and specific homebound or widowed individuals.***

Why was the salary for Erin increased significantly if he is still doing the job he has always been doing and the only change was the title? Also, there is a significant difference in executive pastor salary and campus pastors' salary. Sounds out of line.

***PSC: This was not the job he was hired to do. He was hired as discipleship pastor. He has stepped up and taken on more responsibilities without a pay increase to keep the church going during this time. The pay increase is to compensate for the increased responsibilities. His salary is higher than the campus pastors because of the wide range of responsibilities he will have. It is still much less than we were planning to pay a lead pastor. I hope that helps.***

## Question 2

Dear committee,

Thank you for sending out the details of the proposed changes for voting. I have read through the highlighted portions that tell what the changes are but am having trouble understanding how voting process will proceed. The bylaws, old and new, state that the pastor (no matter which title) must be voted upon before assigning that role.

Will there be several line items on the ballot so it is clear we are voting on a pastor hiring as well as bylaw changes?

Will it be possible to vote on the bylaw changes with one answer and pastor hire with another?

I'm wondering if it is a single line item to be yes or no, yet the vote actually covers multiple items has this set a precedent of not conducting a vote as the bylaws stipulate leaving the church vulnerable to future legal issues?

Thank you for taking time to answer these questions when I know you have already spent a tremendous amount of time on this topic.

***Council: Thank you for your careful consideration of these changes! I for one am thankful for our congregation participating so actively in the operation of our church and keeping us on the council accountable to you all.***

***After our careful consideration and deliberation, the council agrees that the voting process hasn't been presented clearly or in alignment with our bylaws and the changes to our bylaws we've presented.***

***Yes, there will be one vote to approve the changes to the bylaws and budget and then separate votes on a different day to approve the men the council submits to the congregation to fill the executive pastor and campus pastor positions. As you've said, that's the process that is supported by our bylaws and their changes, and so that's the process we will follow.***

***Thank you again for your engagement and your thoughts!***

### **Question 3**

Unfortunately, I believe that **three missteps** were taken in this process, and I would like to share them with you.

**Firstly, moving Erin into the position of executive pastor should have never even been considered without a vote.** There is no question that he has stepped up and filled a similar role in the interim for CBC, but a clear promotion into this position should be voted on regardless of how much of a slam dunk it may seem or how long he has been assuming the responsibilities. Our bylaws are written carefully and dutifully to be emblematic of Biblical values for a church as laid out throughout the Bible, and any attempt to bypass or circumvent those bylaws for any reason should be of great concern. I do not agree or believe that anyone on our church staff is malicious, and I find it abhorrent that it was even suggested during our meeting. Everyone involved in this process has been faithful to CBC for years and deserves no such accusation. However; circumventing the laws laid out for our church is circumventing the biblical foundation upon which we stand. Our church is a congregational church, one where our power lies within our congregation. Making a conscious decision to take such an important decision out of the hands of the congregation can easily sow dissent between the congregation and their leadership and muddies the water as to where the line is for whether a pastor should be voted on or not.

**On the second note; The church leadership lacks consistency in certain sections of this matter.** While I am in awe of this strategy, I believe it is clear that certain corners were attempted to be cut and certain decisions were made in conjunction that failed to be consistent between each other.

**Erin has been suggested by the PSC for the executive pastor position in spite of any listing, posting, or other attempt to find a possible outside choice for CBC's executive pastor that I am aware of. I am not inherently against or in objection to this, as Erin is an invaluable member of our church, and I believe he will do well in the role. However, you've handled our campus pastor position entirely differently, as you immediately decided to post the listing rather than look internally first before posting a listing as you did with Erin, and invited current staff to apply as if they were of the general public.** This concerns me for two reasons: The first is that any inconsistency here opens up scrutiny for bias or discrimination as the role for this campus pastorship was not publicly encouraged as "Internal

first, outside later" and will instead seem to suggest that all of the incoming candidates will be treated with no bias towards our own current staff. This has not happened with the executive pastor position, as the position was discussed with Erin (I would assume at length) PRIOR to it being announced or voted on by the congregation. The second reason this concerns me is that it leads me to believe that this position and system was designed specifically with Erin in mind and was never intended or expected to be opened up to any other member of our church. This creates multiple possible issues that it does not seem that we are prepared to handle, such as if the vote for him were to fail. I don't project that specifically to be a concern, but leveraging a position with only a singular person in mind at the time leaves room for issues were that position to be vacated for any reason.

**Finally, I believe we should be treating our search with as much diligence and care as possible (as we have been), and so the thought of at any point rushing any aspect of this concerns me. The campus pastor's role is, in many ways, even more important than the executive pastor's role on a Sunday as he would be the face, voice, and heart of our church. That carries a great responsibility and given the massive shift in what the PSC is looking for and what the goal is for the roles should be handled with more intentionality.** We have been steadily growing for an extended period of time and while I do believe that there are a plethora of factors for this, rushing to change a working system incites risk that is unnecessary. My tone would be very different if CBC was critically underperforming as a church, but I believe our continued growth and stability through this storm is something to be applauded and, more importantly, preserved. Rushing to push either Erin into the executive pastor role and any person into our campus pastor role by cutting corners during our voting and organizational process creates more risk than necessary.

I know how tired our church leaders are and the impact that this system will have in removing much of that load, but bypassing the system creates more chaos than it saves. Prayer and deliberation is invaluable during this time and allowing a congregational church's congregation time to process and perfect this proposal can only improve our success. God is working well in CBC, both in Bastrop and in Smithville. CBC's groups are flowering beautifully as well with how successful Awana has been, The Bridge having their first baptism this week, and the Women's Conference being such a success, to name a few. We are so close to finding a solution to this path God has taken us down, and I encourage the PSC to consider listening carefully to the congregation that you have all so faithfully served.

I thank you all for your time and attention. You are faithful servants of Christ, of that there is no doubt. I come to you not with some wild accusations or vicious scolding, but in the hope that a bird's eye view of the situation can create clarity where it is hard to find in the trenches.

Proverbs 27:17- "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another."

***PSC: Thank you for taking the time to explain your concerns. I want to assure you that I am trying to answer your questions and mean no disrespect in my answer. I believe God will lead us to the right process and I welcome the input. We have worked long hours, and we may have inadvertently missed something. I assure you no one wants anything but God's best. It was absolutely not our intention to circumvent anyone or any processes. We have tried to consider everything in this very slow and painstaking proposal.***

***In the development of the proposal, we looked at who was already doing this work—Erin was already taking on so much more than we hired him to do.***

***In order to create these two positions, we had to make many changes to the bylaws. We were not trying to cut corners or circumvent anything. We thought, maybe incorrectly, that others would see this as a recognition of the extra work that Erin had already started doing. I personally never thought of opening that position to anyone else. Maybe that was wrong. I certainly did not want to create two job openings to be filled in our church.***

***We also were looking ahead to the time when Smithville is autonomous. If a different person is hired for that job, when we separate, will we have the funds to keep them both? Who would we get rid of? I have already had people tell me that our church cannot afford this proposal when the churches separate. It is very complex, and hours and days have been spent trying to see the impact of every possibility.***

***We discussed this with Erin. We will and do discuss the job with every candidate we talk to. Then we bring the package to the congregation for a vote once we have worked out all the details the candidate is willing to accept if the church approves them.***

***I am sorry if you feel we are trying to rush through this. We tried to get the information out as quickly as possible to keep rumors down. I have been asked some really amazing questions in the last month. I have people come to me almost every week almost in a panic because we have not hired a new pastor yet. I cannot say this does not impact my desire to move forward with this process as quickly as possible, but I want to go at God's pace not mine. We tried hard to figure out every aspect. I tried to explain that to the church. Obviously, not successfully!***

***I saw the executive pastor position as a promotion and recognition of Erin's skill set. This position doesn't exist unless the bylaws changes are accepted. The church has to accept our proposal to put Erin in that position. The church will vote on it. The church decides.***

***I saw the campus pastor position as a continuation of the search we had begun with a few changes. We haven't had any staff come to us to express an interest in the pastor position. The campus pastor position doesn't even exist unless the bylaws are changed.***

***Technically, there is no campus pastor position in the bylaws, so Phillip's position is not defined there either.***

***Maybe I am completely wrong.***

***I did not see anything in the discussion last night as vicious or attacking anyone. If anyone felt my comments were hurtful, please tell me so I can go to that person and apologize.***

***I hope this helps to clarify and I welcome your continued input. We will put the questions and answers we receive on the website. I just wanted to be sure you are ok with us putting this out there.***

***Council: In addition to the PSC's points, the Council had discussed what the church organization should be shortly after Stephen left in 2022 and we agreed that an Executive pastor made a lot of sense once we grew to 600-700 people.***

***Since that time, we had asked Derek first, with a minor raise. When he left we asked Erin to lead the staff and ministries in an ever-increasing role with no raise for doing this. We believe he has done a great job and when the PSC independently proposed creating the job and recommended Erin, the Council was in full agreement. We did not want to post that job because if someone new was hired, we would have to fire Erin since we would be adding \$87k instead of \$15k to the budget.***

***For the campus pastor, we believe the redefinition of duties to focus just on preaching and shepherding the church in Bastrop is a better fit for the church and will make it easier to find a new and more focused pastor.***

***Based on feedback we plan to take Erin's name off of the proposal and vote only on the bylaws and budget changes. The Exec pastor candidate will be presented separately per bylaws. We believe this will address the concerns as we understand them.***

## **Question 4**

To the Church Council,

After having looked at the changes to the by-laws, it appears by the arrangement that the Campus Pastor is under the Executive pastor. I would suggest a minor change which does not change the meaning but, might clarify things and match better with the organization chart.

### **SECTION 4 – PASTORS**

(move the first sentence under Pastoral staff to here)

Pastors are recognized as the under-shepherds of Jesus Christ and spiritual leaders of CBC.

### **EXECUTIVE PASTOR**

### **CAMPUS PASTOR**

***Council: This is a helpful suggestion that will be taken up in the next Council meeting, thank you. It adds clarity but doesn't change the substance.***

## **Question 5**

Dear Team;

A couple of questions, specifically about the minimum qualifications for the Campus Pastor position:

- 1) Would the PSC consider a recent seminary graduate with limited pastoral experience?
- 2) Would the PSC consider a candidate, with experience, but who had not graduated from seminary? Graduation typically means having a M Div degree.

***Council: The answer is yes for the right man, but the preference is some experience and seminary education.***

## Question 6

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***Council: Thank you for your careful consideration of these changes! I for one am thankful for our congregation participating so actively in the operation of our church and keeping us on the council accountable to you all.***

***After our careful consideration and deliberation, the council agrees that the voting process hasn't been presented clearly or in alignment with our bylaws and the changes to the bylaws we've presented.***

***Yes, there will be one vote to approve the changes to the bylaws and budget and then separate votes on a different day to approve the men the council submits to the congregation to fill the executive pastor and campus pastor positions. As you've said, that's the process that is supported by our bylaws and their changes, and so that's the process we will follow.***

## Question 7

I have other thoughts/ concerns/ questions that are probably being asked by others. Will we have access to all questions and answers?

I'll go ahead and ask this one:

If the bylaw changes are not approved, what would be the next step? Would the requirements for lead pastor remain in place? (education, experience, etc.)

***Council: Yes, we're going to post all the questions and answers we've collated up on the church website, and I believe we'll be sending an email notification regarding their availability as well.***

***If the bylaw changes are not approved, nothing changes. The lead pastor position remains in place, the executive pastor position does not get added to the bylaws, and the campus pastor position does not get added to the bylaws. There will be many who will be disappointed, of course, but regardless of how things turn out, we will all rest in the gloriously comforting fact that the Lord God is sovereign over His church, and everything is going according to His plan.***

## Question 8

First, I would like to express my gratitude to the Pastor Search Team and the Church Council for all the prayer, time, and work that has gone into developing these recommendations for the CBC Family. I am very grateful for your dedication and service to our church.

Considering the Proposed Bylaws and Budget Changes presentations, it seems there are two items to be voted on, 1) the bylaw and budget changes and 2) filling the Executive Pastor position. I am wondering about how the vote is planned. Will there will be:

- a. one ballot with one proposal for approval of both items
- b. one ballot with two proposals for approval of items individually
- c. two ballots, one for bylaws and budget and the other for Executive Pastor

I believe providing for the membership to vote on individual items (as in b. or c. above) would be more in alignment with our bylaws and less controversial.

Another option is to only have a vote on the bylaw and budget changes. If that passes, appoint Erin as the interim Executive Pastor with the recommendation that he fill that position permanently then present that for a membership vote.

What has been laid out for the new organizational structure of our church is one I agree with and support. My concern is about the Executive Pastor position being filled without a distinct vote by church membership. Maybe this will not be an issue.

I also have a couple of suggestions for minor changes in the final **Proposed Bylaws** document:

1. **Page 7, Section 2 – Election of Church Officers** - The last sentence of Section 2 states - “The processes for selecting Pastoral Staff candidates are covered in Sections 4 and 5 respectively.”
  - a. I suggest removing the word “respectively”.
  - or–
  - b. Change the last sentence in Section 2 to something like this – “The processes for selecting Executive Pastor and Campus Pastor candidates are covered in Section 4 and Pastoral Staff candidates are covered in Section 5.”
2. **Page 11, Hiring Pastoral Staff** – In the second paragraph, the third word “Council” is missing the “l”.

***Council: There will be one vote to approve the changes to the bylaws and budget and then separate votes on different days to approve the men the council submits to the congregation to fill the executive pastor and campus pastor positions. As you've said, that's the process that is supported by our bylaws and their changes, and so that's the process we will follow.***

***We have made the applicable changes to the Bylaws you helpfully suggested.***

# **Additional Questions and Answers from the 10/6 Family Meeting**

*Written by the Pastor Search Committee*

The following questions were asked to the Church Council or Pastor Search committee after the family meeting. We are compiling this document to capture the unique questions and provide answers for review. If you do not see your question on this list, please email it to [churchcouncil@cbcfamily.net](mailto:churchcouncil@cbcfamily.net)

## **Why stop looking for a Senior pastor?**

The Pastor Search Committee (PSC) has been searching for God's man for this role for over two years. At that time, we had some candidates the team felt strongly about, and we asked them to come in view of a call, but we were turned down for different reasons. Most candidates were either unqualified or their philosophies did not match CBC's.

As Teresa pointed out in the meeting, finding “Superman” on a budget is challenging. We felt it was time to review what was working and how changes in the current pastoral positions would allow the church to move forward with what is working while filling the need for a spiritual leader.

## **Why are you proposing we change the current system when it has been working for a while?**

The proposed bylaws changes do not change the current system; they formalize and document what the church is already doing without a senior pastor. The executive pastor role covers all of the administrative aspects of the senior pastor role, while the preaching pool we have been using, along with Alex as an interim pastor, has handled the spiritual side of the senior pastor role. The campus pastor would then formalize that aspect within the church.

## **Will Erin be voted on by the church or “appointed”?**

The bylaws present a grey area here. The church voted Erin to be a Discipleship Pastor. He could be appointed if the council desired him to become the NexGen pastor (if we had one). The difference here is that we're talking about an Executive Pastor position that is newly created in the Bylaws AND is at a higher level than his current pastoral position. In this case, the church should be allowed to Vote.

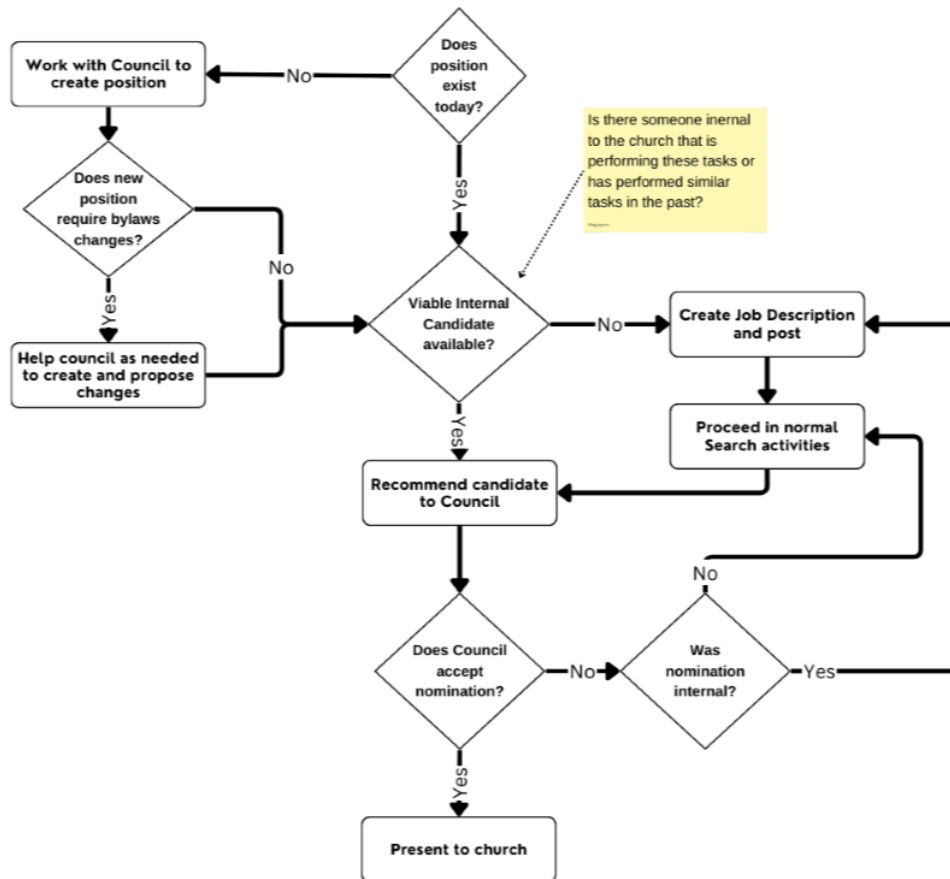
## **Why are you nominating someone internally for the Executive Pastor and posting the position for the campus pastor?**

There have been many comments about the PSC making arbitrary decisions on how we are moving forward with each role. The reality is that both roles were run through the same workflow, and based on specific information, one or another branch was followed. We have created a visual representation of that flow that shows this in detail.

The first order of the PSC is to examine the role and determine if there are internal resources that would fill that role. Doing so utilizes the talent we already have in the church and reduces downtime, not only for the search but also for someone from the outside coming up to speed on the church, its congregation, and ways of operation. Barring internal resources, the committee must create job descriptions, post the job, etc., as we have done for the senior pastor.



# PSC Decision Tree



Looking at that flow diagram, you can see that different answers were provided for each position when you walk through it.

## Executive pastor decision

### Does position exist today?

No – Worked with the Council to create the position.

### Does the new position require Bylaws changes?

Yes – Worked with Council on bylaws changes and presentation

### Viable Internal Candidate Available?

Yes, Erin, recommended to the council. While the search continued, the council had already asked Erin to perform the senior pastor's administrative and paid duties.

### Does the council accept the nomination?

Yes

### Present to church

## Campus pastor decision

### Does position exist today?

No – Worked with the Council to create the position.

### Does the new position require Bylaws changes?

Yes – Worked with Council on bylaws changes and presentation

### **Viabile Internal Candidate Available?**

No, none have performed the tasks as laid out in the bylaws.

### **Created Job Description**

**Ready to post job once bylaws changes are approved.**

### **Was this position explicitly designed with Erin in mind? Was it ever intended to be open to other church members?**

The position was created to split the Senior pastor's duties into two distinct roles. The PSC reviewed what was working in the church, seeing both the work behind the scenes and the spiritual work that Alex and the pastoral pool were doing. The executive pastor's role was discussed in family meetings before, so it was not a new vision but an agreement that moving to that model would benefit the church. When we presented it to the council, the PSC indicated that Erin would be a good candidate. The council then let us know that he had already been appointed to an interim role to handle the administrative functions of the senior pastor. The PSC also did not recognize anybody else in the church who could do those tasks without excessive training and mentoring. Introducing an unknown into an already working system did not make sense. Based on that, we elected to nominate Erin. Erin was asked if that role would interest him because if he were not interested, we would have to post the executive pastor position as well.

### **Why are we forcing ordination or licensing on all the elder roles, including Deacons?**

The definition of “ordained” as it applies to non-pastoral positions is a ceremony that typically includes prayer and laying of hands upon the person but does not have to involve as extensive an examination or educational requirement as a pastoral ordination would.

The licensing aspect applies because someone transferring from another church may be licensed or have credentials allowing an individual to perform certain ministerial functions within a specified period. A licensed minister may have some authority to preach or officiate at services but may not have the same authority as an ordained minister. If they hold a valid license that meets the requirements for the role, they may opt for an ordination as well since it is a blessing for them as they start this role.

### **Our bylaws are emblematic of Biblical values for a church as laid out throughout the Bible. Do you feel there is an attempt to bypass or circumvent the bylaws for any reason? Do you feel you are circumventing the laws laid out for our church? Our church is congregational, one where our power lies within our congregation.**

The simple answer is no; the bylaws are written so that the congregation can vote on changes presented by the council. The council works with other leaders to address concerns and issues within the church. The recommendations for a Senior and Campus pastor exist within the Baptist faith and are executed through other Baptist churches today.

### **Why was the requirement of “CBC membership has affirmed its call to CBC” removed from the Pastoral Staff description in Article B, Section 5? Why was it not included in the requirements for Executive Pastor or Campus Pastor?**

To reduce redundancies. Every section in Article B includes a process to fill an empty role, which culminates with a vote by the CBC membership on a candidate for that role. Article B, Section 2 also includes mention of bringing candidates to a membership vote. So, a CBC membership vote has not been removed as a requirement for any position, but we are now only saying it is required two times instead of three times.