

## Frequently Asked Questions related to Elder Board Status and Direction

Supporting Browncroft Annual Meeting on Oct. 10, 2023

1. What are the responsibilities of the Elder Board?
  - Here is a short summary of the key roles of the board under our new bylaws (adopted Oct. 2022):
    - Develop and promote the vision, mission, and goals of the church
    - Provide spiritual leadership for and guard the doctrinal, ethical, and moral integrity of the church
    - Oversee and support the work of the Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor and provide annual performance feedback
    - Oversee church financial, physical, and human resources with Audit and Finance Committee
2. What has the Elder Board been doing recently?
  - In June, we recommended Jason Harris as the next Executive Pastor. He was affirmed by the congregation with a >95% vote and has been serving in that role since June 26.
  - In July, we completed a review of key ministries and provided feedback to be factored into the 2023-2024 Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor objectives to be set in Oct. 2023.
  - In July, we decided to recommend that we reduce the size of the board from 15 to 9, with implementation beginning in October 2024. We also nominated and recruited leaders for the October 2023 Elder Board slate.
  - Together with the Audit and Finance Team, we reviewed and approved the Operations and Missions budget to be presented at the Annual Meeting. We also decided to launch a “Reach2” fund to support accelerated debt reduction (90%) as well as generate funds for special service/outreach efforts (10%).
3. Why is the Elder Board recommending a reduction of the number of elders from 15 to 9?
  - Under previous bylaws, the church elders had responsibilities to participate on each of 15 ministry teams which was the basis for the number of elders we have today.
  - The bylaws adopted in Oct. 2022 focus the Elder Board on vision discernment and ministry influence through oversight of the Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor.
  - The collective sense of current board members is that 9 members will allow us to carry out the responsibilities of the board most efficiently and effectively. We will involve other lay volunteers where needed for special projects (e.g., search teams) to ensure diverse input, distribute the work, and develop leaders.
4. Why is the board proposing to maintain a 15-member board until our 2024 Annual Meeting?
  - The bylaws require the membership to approve the number of elders recommended by the board. To allow the membership to fully understand and consider this proposal, we determined to first bring it forward at the 2023 Annual Meeting.
  - If approved, we will implement it beginning at our 2024 Annual Meeting. This will also give the board time to establish and document the practices and policies needed to fully transition to a board focused on vision and oversight.
  - NY State Law dictates the process and timing by which the board number transition to 9 lay elders would occur if adopted. In Oct. 2024, the terms of 5 elders would complete and we would not nominate/elect any additional elders. We would then have 10 lay elders on the

board until the Oct. 2025 meeting. At that time, the terms of 5 more elders would complete, and we would nominate/elect 4 elders to arrive at the target of 9.

5. How were the nominees for the Oct. 2023 elder slate determined?
  - In summary, this has typically been a recruitment and discernment process rather than one in which folks volunteer on their own initiative to serve as elder.
  - Based on our current 15-member board structure, we have five members whose terms are ending and who need to be replaced. Two of the incumbents could serve for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term and are willing to do so. Thus, we needed three new candidates.
  - The Chairman asked the Elder Board members to prayerfully bring forward potential candidates for discussion at our July 2023 meeting. Together, with suggested candidates from other members, this process generated a list of 20 candidates.
  - The Executive Committee (Chair, Vice Chair, Senior Pastor, Exec. Pastor) prayerfully prioritized the list of potential candidates based on those felt identified as best gifted and able to fulfill the role of elder defined in our current bylaws. The Chairman reached out to potential candidates one-by-one and invited a discussion about the board status and trajectory and how their gifts could support the work of the board.
  - After these discussions, potential candidates then prayerfully considered whether this was service to which God was calling them and informed the Chairman of their decision. In total, six potential candidates were approached. Three said they were unable to serve at this time, and three agreed to stand as nominees.
  - The Audit and Finance team then provided an application for the three agreeing to serve to complete a review and approval process, including reference checks. After this approval, two incumbents and three new candidates are now being presented to the congregation for approval.
  
6. Why are there only as many candidates as there are open positions? In other words, why is the membership being asked to “affirm” rather than to “select” candidates.
  - We think it is wise to trust the prayer and discernment process described above over recruiting additional nominees for the purpose of providing a selection. This approach is similar to the board’s recommendation of a single pastoral candidate (e.g. Jason Harris as Exec. Pastor) to the membership for approval, rather than a selection of candidates.
  - If the membership objects to any of the candidates willing to serve as elder, they should vote “no” on the ballot. A nominee currently requires greater than 50% yes votes to be elected to serve.
  
7. What characteristics are you looking for in elder candidates?
  - Primarily, characteristics described by early church leaders (e.g. 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3). In short summary, the Bible describes people who serve as overseers with humility, care for church members, and have a good reputation.
  - To be effective, the board needs people with a variety of gifts and abilities. For example, people who have experience establishing and promoting church vision and mission, folks gifted in overseeing and running large organizations, and people accustomed to overseeing resources (financial, physical, and human).
  - It is also important that elders have a history of serving in the church, either at BCC or elsewhere. It is also valuable if they (including their families) have been served by BCC

ministries (e.g. Small Groups or Family Ministry), and have this “front-line” experience to inform their leadership.

8. Why does Browncroft have women on the Elder Board?
  - In 1993, a committee appointed by the Elder Board studied the topic of Women in Church Leadership and generated a Leadership Statement that was adopted by the Elder Board.
  - The document (two pages) carefully considers key Bible passages and describes in detail the basis for including women on the Elder Board. Please contact us through the button on <https://browncroft.org/elders> if you would like a copy of the statement.
  
9. How are the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer determined?
  - The Elder Board nominates individuals to serve in these positions and they are then elected by church membership at the Annual Meeting.
  - If the membership objects to any of the candidates willing to serve in any of these positions, they should vote “no” at the Annual Meeting. A nominee currently requires greater than 50% yes votes to be elected to serve.