

Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship
Consensus Building and Decision Making Workflow
March 2018

The primary goal of the Fellowship's choice to use Consensus Building Principles and Guidelines is to develop stronger relationships by collaboratively developing proposals. We believe adhering to consensus building practices will naturally result in improved relationships. The secondary goal is to development meaningful proposals. Church council will be responsible for monitoring and supporting the utilization of consensus building practices and guidelines during proposal development and discernment. Inclusion of minority opinions in the process as a source of wisdom is important in developing a proposal that minimizes opposition while maintaining substantive content.

1) Proposals can be initiated in two ways:

- Proposals for recurring church administrative functions are initiated and developed by church council. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Annual Budget, Annual Committee Slate
- CMF stakeholders may bring an idea, initiative or concept to council for proposal development consideration. Council is responsible for making a decision whether or not to engage the Fellowship in a proposal development and discernment process. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Welcoming Statement, Sanctuary Proposal, Building Purchase, Building Renovations

Initiatives brought by a CMF stakeholder and approved by council for proposal development and discernment move to Step 2. Proposals developed by council move to Step 3.

2) Fellowship members collaboratively develop proposals utilizing consensus building guidelines and principles.

Generally this will involve a number of meetings over an extended period of time and could include the following:

- Information Gathering, Educational Meetings, Survey, Discussion, Input Solicitation, Reflection

Following the completion of work required to fulfill step 2, the group's efforts will be documented in the form of a concise and clearly written proposal. Council will be responsible for approving the written proposal for submission to the Fellowship for consensus testing.

3) Consensus testing of the proposal (Consent/Stand Aside/Oppose) – depending on proposal content, council will determine if a paper ballot, show of hands or other methods are used to test consensus.

- Choose response based on your understanding of God's guidance for the Fellowship and your sense of the group's discernment based on consensus building discussions.
- Communicate results of consensus test to Fellowship

4) Work with consensus test outcome (council will determine if this step is required based on outcome of Step 3, consensus testing)

- If there is substantial lack of consensus, the proposal may need to be revised
 - Document and understand the rationale for all responses
 - Modify the proposal to make it more agreeable to all participants
- If there is strong consensus, the proposal may move directly to step 5

5) Final Discernment (Consent/Stand Aside/Oppose)

- Discernment guide: choose response based on your understanding of the group's wisdom and God's guidance for the Fellowship. Paper ballot signed by member. Fellowship attendee indicates participation in consensus building process including participation in consensus test.

6) Follow-Up

- If proposal passes, finalize implementation plan and implement
- If proposal fails, proposal is referred back to church council for close out
- Debrief session encompassing relationships and process