

Timeline of Constitutional Revision Process (Approximate)

Spring 2018 - guiding elders (the governing board) begin to work on constitution updates to better reflect the organization we have grown into and to address the legal climate of our day as you advised.

Summer 2018 - communicated to the congregation through a quarterly meeting at each campus (not business meeting - we have 3 ministry update meetings each year for communication purposes - not voting purposes - we call them family forums) that we were working on revisions and shared the main areas we were making changes. Opportunity for Q&A.

Fall 2018 - we communicated again at a family forum at each campus the changes we were working on, in general. Opportunity for Q&A.

Fall 2018 - we communicated with all of our elders and their wives (5 campuses, elders at each campus, a total of 35 elders overall) some of the detail behind the changes - but still fairly general. Opportunity for Q&A.

January 2019 - presented the elders and wives with a draft revision. Asked them to all read through it and come back with their feedback.

February 2019 - we updated the document to address feedback received from the elders.

February 2019 - presented a public draft revision to the church via meetings at each campus. Provided opportunity for live Q&A and also for people to submit questions online. (Sugar Grove - Feb 8, Aurora - Feb 24, Plano - Mar 3, Indian Creek Mar 10)

- This webpage went live: www.villagebible.org/constitution
- a video summary of the changes
- our existing constitution
- our first public draft revision
- a comparison document of the old and the new draft
- a form for people to present questions and ideas

March 2019 - respond to questions and make adjustments to the original public draft resulting in 4/1/2019 version.

March 24 - Video of Family Forum presentation emailed to all members so those who didn't attend a meeting could be informed: <https://conta.cc/2RpFtFm>

April 4 - 4/1/2019 version submitted to Mauck & Baker for legal review

April 22 - Legal review of 4/1/2019 version

May 3 - Legal review of 4/22/2019 version, resulting in version 5/12/2019

May 15 - Sent version 5/12/2019 to all elders for review

May 17 - Constitution version 5/12/2019 (Draft Version #2) emailed to all members along with instructions for submitting questions and suggestions until May 31: <https://conta.cc/2x49UHQ>

May 19 - Family Forum meeting at the Sugar Grove Campus. Constitution changes addressed along with Q&A.

May 22 - Legal review of 5/12/2019 version, followed by creation of 6/1/2019 version

June 10 - Legal review of 6/1/2019 version, followed by creation of 6/11/2019 version

June 13 - Legal review of 6/11/2019 version, followed by creation of Revision #3

June 16 - Constitution revision #3 distributed to all elders.

June 21 - Revision #3 edited and finalized, resulting in Final Draft 6/20/2019. Emailed to all members. <https://conta.cc/2N1VOBM>

June 24 - Final Revisions

June 25 - Letter mailed to all members letting people know:

- that the proposed constitutional revision has been finalized and is available for review
- vote will take place Friday, 7/26 - Monday, 8/5. All campuses on those Sundays, at the Sugar Grove campus on the weekdays

July 21 – Minor editorial revisions posted and email sent to members with attorney's endorsement. Reminder to review the documents and vote next week.

<https://conta.cc/2Y2g6Lp>

July 26 – August 5 Vote (see details above)

August 4, 2019 – vote results emailed out:

The results are in and we would like to officially announce the approval of the proposed church constitution.

The vote was overwhelmingly positive with a 98.5% approval rate. 267 of our Village Bible Church members across all campuses voted yes with 4 members voting no. Thank you to all of our members who took the opportunity to vote on this matter.

Thank you for your faithful prayers and support over this past year as we completed this process. This new constitution will serve Village well as a governing document for many years to come.

Your Guiding Elders

Tim Badal, Scott Brown, Keith Duff, Chad Duncan, Bill Griffith, Travis McGuire, Jon Pilkington, & Ben Sperry

Commendation for the Revised Constitution

I'm Rich Baker with the law firm of Mauck & Baker, LLC. Recently, I worked with Pastor Duff and other members of the pastoral team with regard to the revision of the Constitution for the Church. The reason for the revisions were several fold: 1) to insure that the Church's governing documents remain consistent with the beliefs and purposes of the Church; 2) to address and safeguard the Church's teaching and practices in light of the changing trends in our culture which, at times, run counter to Biblical faith and practice; 3) to clarify the roles and procedures by which the Church's leadership guides the Church; and 4) and to provide greater transparency in all the governance of the Church.

One way to look at the process of enacting a Church's Constitution is to think of it as though it were a suit of clothing. Because each church is unique, its governing documents should be tailored to fit the particular spiritual body for which it is being created. In my experience, many churches just want to get on with "doing the Lord's work", and pay little attention to the ever growing regulations of the State that churches face. For them, an ill-fitting standard set of bylaws (Constitution) "off the rack" is fine. However, failure to pay attention to the specifics of how a particular church is governed will often lead to a Church failing to follow its own written rules and thereby leaving the Church and its leadership exposed to litigation and liability. Having worked with Pastor Duff through many drafts in revising the Church's Constitution, I can commend the Church's leadership in its determination to carefully work through the issues at hand in order to tailor your Constitution to this unique body of Christ followers.

By way of a few examples, the Elders have worked hard in Articles II – IV to lay out the Church's beliefs and purposes and I recommend that everyone familiarize themselves with them. In doing so, the Church has not only provided a summary of the Church's teaching on doctrine, expectations for Christian living and other matters of Biblical ethics for its members, but also has laid the ground work to claim religious exemption from the ever increasing body of laws that may impinge on the exercise of the Church's beliefs.

Articles V lays out the provisions for membership and the responsibilities that go with membership. Article VI and VII lay out the roles, responsibilities and voting requirements for those governing the Church through the Eldership and the newly added offices of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. These latter officer positions were added for clarity when working with various government entities, lenders and others who are only familiar with working with these offices in their transactions.

Among the issues the leadership expressed concern for was the need for transparency and accountability. To that end, a great deal of time through several revisions was spent on addressing the issues of discipline of leadership. Article VI of the Revised Constitution has added or clarified certain provisions to guard against abuse.

Unusual among church constitutions that I have worked on are the provisions for member-initiated removal of a leader in the Revised Constitution. Article VI, Section 6.G.2.d. provides careful Biblical guidelines for a member initiated removal of a leader. Of particular note is the provision in Article VI, Section 6.G.2.d.2.b) which recognizes that there may be an imbalance of power in a member approaching a leader that he or she has an issue with and recommending an alternative to avoid sweeping the problem under the rug:

There are certain circumstances when approaching the offender is not only inappropriate but also unwise. In such situations, the offended member should not go to the offender but immediately to one of the elders.

All in all, Pastor Duff and the leaders of the Village Bible Church have worked hard to carefully tailor this Revised Constitution to address the many issues facing this Church both internally and externally. Though requiring effort, review of the Constitution will be well worth the time you spend and should give you an appreciation for the Church's express desire to steward the charge it has been given well.