



Cherry Creek Chorale Bylaws Amendments Questions & Answers March 2025

Thank you for your thoughts and for speaking up! We heard you in our February 25 rehearsal presentation and we agree with you. In emails and discussions, we want to both address concerns and protect the board and the choir. It is wonderful we have so many passionate members who care deeply about the chorale. Our goal is to combine decades of experience from amazing, giving people with a vision for the future.

Q: Why the rush to update the bylaws?

A: The bylaws have not been updated since 2009. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who wrote them because they were well thought out and have served CCC for a long time. Updates are needed though, so that they fit our current operations and future aspirations. The board has been working on this for months and we are finally ready to bring to the choir. We are trying to get things set up for next year so we will be ready to go – especially enabling the board with more options to fill current and upcoming board vacancies.

Q: Why do we want to remove term limits?

A: Currently there are multiple critical leadership vacancies - marketing, fundraising, and outreach. Not to mention VP, Membership, & Secretary are all ending their terms this spring, plus we'll need a new President-Elect. We need to have the ability to allow helpful volunteers to carry on if they are willing, especially in a group where members stay 30+ years.

Minimizing term limits is also the position of the SCFD, as low volunteerism is a growing trend in organizations beyond our chorale. A membership vote will still be required for all candidates. Importantly, the proposed removal of term limits does not change the president's 3-year arc of elect, active, and past president. This ensures 2 years between leadership terms.

We are doing everything we can to secure competent help. If you have other ideas, please share them!

Q: Why decrease the required director (committee chair) term from 36 months (three years) to 24 months (2 years)?

A: This will allow committee chairs to sit for a shorter term. A three-year commitment may be daunting or simply not possible for people who want to serve. This would allow committee chairs to serve shorter terms. It will also allow new members the opportunity to run for board positions with more frequent election of those positions.

Executive board officer terms will remain unchanged at 36 months (3 years).

Q: Why add the Ex-Officio designation to the bylaws?

A: Adding this category to the bylaws brings our organization in line with how we've been operating – with the Artistic Director and Associate Conductor welcome to attend board meetings, provide their input, but not vote. This clarifies their roles, as well as that of the Executive Director (currently vacant).

Q: Why does the Chorale have an Executive Director position if it's not kept filled?

A: It's the intent of the board to again staff the Executive Director position once the Chorale is in a better financial position to afford the role. This will enable the board to delegate a number of operational responsibilities that currently take time away from focusing on fundraising, growing our audiences, and other important topics. Our efforts to increase our budget to accomplish this currently consist of the following:

- We've budgeted for and hired a grant writer for this season to pursue additional funding opportunities with new grants.
- We're continuing efforts to rebuild our concert attendance paying audience to pre-COVID levels.
- We've redefined our corporate sponsorship program and are looking for opportunities to bring in more corporate sponsors.
- We're planning an annual donor event to incentivize and inspire donors.

Q: Why enable the board to appoint vacant board seats mid-season?

A: This allows for the flexibility to fill mid-year vacancies on priority. A mid-season appointed chair would serve out the remainder of the season. A mid-term position vacancy can be appointed by the board, with the intent to minimize disruption of rehearsal time. Any appointees will need to stand for election in the next yearly election cycle and be voted on by the choir as usual to continue in the role.

Q: Why do we want to open the board to external board members?

A: Having external board members can be highly beneficial for several reasons:

1. **Fresh Perspectives** – External members bring new ideas, insights, and best practices from other industries and organizations, helping to prevent insular thinking.
2. **Expanded Network & Resources** – They can provide valuable connections to donors, sponsors, media, and other influential figures who might support the choir financially or through collaborations.
3. **Fundraising Expertise** – Many external board members have experience with fundraising, grant writing, and donor engagement, which can be crucial for financial sustainability.
4. **Governance & Objectivity** – They provide impartiality to help ensure decisions align with the organization’s mission.
5. **Professional Skills & Knowledge** – External members can bring expertise in areas like finance, law, marketing, nonprofit management, or arts administration, strengthening the choir’s strategic planning and operations.
6. **Increased Credibility** – A diverse, well-rounded board with external members enhances the choir’s reputation and can help attract grants, sponsorships, and partnerships.
7. **Long-Term Stability** – External members can help provide continuity and institutional memory, helping to ensure smooth leadership transitions and sustainable growth.

We don’t yet know the interest of community members, but would like to see if there are people who want to serve. It will be the job of the board to vet qualifications and personal style to ensure they align with the needs and culture of the chorale. Ultimately the external board member will need to be confirmed by a vote of the membership if the vacancy they’ll be filling aligns with our fiscal year and annual meeting.

If you know someone who might be interested (family, friend, colleague, etc.), and is a fan of the chorale, please let a board member know!

Q: Who oversees board members?

A: The board is ultimately overseen by the President, but members work closely together on all projects and decisions, per the bylaws:

“The Directors will be any members in good standing and shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the President or the Board.”

“The President will be the chief executive officer of the organization. It will be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and to have general supervision of the affairs of the organization.”

The board meets monthly and are in frequent contact, sometimes multiple times a day, to coordinate and discuss topics.

Q: How are problem board members removed?

A: The bylaws state:

“any director may be removed from the Board of Directors by an affirmative vote of the majority of directors at any duly called meeting of the Board of Directors at which a quorum is present. Notice of removal vote will be given with the notice of the meeting. The director involved will have the opportunity to defend him/herself.”

Problem members are removed by a majority board vote. This standing bylaw will remain unchanged.

Q: How are problem contractors removed?

A: Problem contractors of the chorale would be dismissed based on the wording of their contract (whether they are an ex-officio board member or not), based on a board vote. There is an expectation that the contractors are following the bylaws, as well as directives from the board, since the board is employing the contractors, as per the bylaws:

“The Board of Directors shall have and exercise the power... to elect, appoint or employ officers, agents and other representatives; to determine their duties and salaries”

Q: Why do the bylaws use the term Director to refer to a board member or committee chair?

A: We acknowledge that standard board of director terminology can be confusing in the context of a chorale, that has an Artistic Director commonly referred to as ‘Director’. Given the confusion around the term ‘Director’ and the new ‘Director-Elect’ roles, the board will do further work incorporating the feedback we’ve received to raise another round of amendments for a vote at the annual meeting. Stay tuned!