

Using Consensus

A Board decision-making style can be deeply embedded and shaped by the founding and history of the organization. In the Anabaptist tradition, we value mutual accountability and by tradition believe in a separation of church and state; understanding that Jesus is our model for how to live and be in community. Thus, Anabaptist culture would lean toward a group consensus style for decision-making.

A consensus requires that all members of the board agree unanimously on the decision, or motion, being made. Reaching a consensus may require additional time for deliberation amongst board members, but it is also the most democratic approach. Decision-making in a consensus model can also nurture a sense of group discernment that fosters a spirit of unity rather than a hierarchical process.

Here are some benefits of consensus:

- All voices are heard.
- Requires that all participants make the best decision for the group, rather than focusing on personal preference.
- Creates buy-in from all members, increasing the likelihood of success.

And also, some obstacles:

- Time-consuming.
- Can be difficult in larger groups.
- Can be a tedious process.