

Standing Rules of the Presbytery of Boston

Last amended November 16, 2009

A. Membership

1. An ordained elder from a congregation affiliated with this presbytery as a fellowship may be seated as a corresponding member, with voice but without vote.
2. Minister members and those elder commissioners designated by their sessions to represent their churches at presbytery meetings shall notify the stated clerk if unable to attend presbytery meetings, and the presbytery shall vote on excusing those persons from attendance.
3. In keeping with G-11.0101b in the Form of Government, active participation in the presbytery's life and work shall be used as a criterion in annually redressing an imbalance of resident ministers and elders entitled to vote.

B. Meetings

1. Written notice of all stated and special meetings, and any meeting materials, shall be sent at least ten days in advance to all ministers and churches, with the materials for elder commissioners to be sent to the clerks of sessions for transmission to them. Notice of necessary changes in meeting dates shall be handled in the same way.
2. When family responsibilities would prevent attendance of ministers and elder commissioners at meetings of the presbytery, a request for reimbursement of child care or similar expenses should be submitted to the treasurer.
3. Churches hosting presbytery meetings will provide light refreshments during the pre-meeting fellowship hour, and through the Moderator or stated clerk may request partnership assistance in providing this hospitality should the session's invitation to the presbytery depend upon sharing these responsibilities.
4. Elder commissioners and ministers are expected to be present for the entire presbytery meeting. Those needing to leave early may request presbytery's voted permission to do so.
5. The Moderator or his/her designee invites persons to lead the presbytery in worship, including at the January meeting when the sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated, and s/he shall preach or otherwise provide for the giving of a sermon at the January meeting concluding the moderatorial term.
6. If the Moderator is unable to be present at a presbytery meeting the vice moderator shall preside and, in the case of the absence of that person, the immediate past moderator or that person's predecessor in office shall be Acting Moderator.
7. At each meeting one minister and one elder shall be designated by the Moderator to read the prepared minutes of that meeting and report their recommendation regarding approval at the next stated meeting for the action of the presbytery.
8. Items presented for inclusion as new business on the docket must be in written form and distributed prior to the opening of the meeting.
9. In the event that a formal protest is filed with the stated clerk in accordance with G-9.0304, the Moderator will ask the vice moderator and the immediate past moderator, if present, or another past moderator

if needed, to rule whether the protest should be entered in the minutes. The presbytery may approve entry of a response, as provided by any member present.

10. In its annual budget the presbytery shall provide for compensation for the recording clerk.

11. If the Moderator determines that such emergency conditions as bad weather require postponing a stated meeting, the meeting shall be held on the following Tuesday at the same time and place.

12. Elders serving on committees of the presbytery have the privilege of voice at presbytery meetings during their term of service.

13. The Moderator may appoint an eligible elder or minister of this presbytery to replace an absent member of an administrative commission to ordain or install, with this authority limited to instances when such an appointment is needed in order for there to be a quorum present.

C. Officers

1. In its annual budget the presbytery shall provide for expenses incurred by its officers in fulfilling their responsibilities.

2. In its annual budget the presbytery shall provide for compensation to the stated clerk and treasurer.

3. The stated clerk shall, no later than the March stated meeting, report the annual statistical summary based on reports from the churches.

4. The stated clerk shall, no later than the September stated meeting, recommend bylaw and standing rule revisions needed to conform with constitutional changes approved by the presbyteries and ratified by the last General Assembly.

5. The stated clerk shall provide for the distribution of current bylaws and standing rules to all sessions, ministers, officers and other voting members of the presbytery

D. Staff

The general presbyter shall ensure that each member of the presbytery staff meets annually with the committee on personnel.

E. Structure

1. The permanent judicial commission shall be convened at least biennially for orientation.

2. Ordinarily a person shall serve as a voting member on one continuing committee at a time.

3. Ordinarily only one person from a particular church shall serve as a voting member of any continuing committee at a time.

4. The nominating committee shall nominate persons to chair each continuing committee, ordinarily alternating ministers and elders.

5. Ex-officio members, those serving on a committee or other entity by virtue of other elected or appointed responsibilities, are full members of those committees or entities unless specified otherwise by the Bylaws.
6. Continuing committees will submit reports for distribution prior to presbytery meetings to the general presbyter=s administrative assistant in accordance with the published schedule for pre-presbytery mailings.
7. The [appropriate mission group of the mission]* council or a continuing committee shall review and bring to the presbytery its recommendation concerning any proposed actions involving the expenditure of presbytery funds; no action may be taken on such proposals without such review and recommendation.
8. The committee on ministry is authorized to dissolve pastoral relationships in cases where congregations and pastor concur, and shall inform the presbytery of such action at the next stated meeting.
9. The committee on ministry is authorized to appoint a minister as moderator of session in a church without a pastor; it shall inform the session of such action immediately, and shall inform the presbytery at the next stated meeting.
10. The committee on ministry is authorized to dismiss ministers to other presbyteries, and shall report such actions to the next stated meeting of the presbytery.
11. The committee on preparation for ministry is authorized to certify candidates ready for examination for ordination, pending a call, and shall report such actions to the next stated meeting of the presbytery.
12. The presbytery appropriates necessary funds for disciplinary cases originating under its jurisdiction through an advocacy support team.
 - a. When the stated clerk reports to the presbytery that an alleged offense has been referred to any investigating committee pursuant to the Rules of Discipline, D-10.0103, the moderator of the permanent judicial commission appoints an advocacy support team, to consist of three presbyters, each of whom shall be a former member of the permanent judicial commission of the Presbytery of Boston, the Synod of the Northeast, or the General Assembly, and none of whom may be currently serving on the permanent judicial commission of the Presbytery of Boston.
 - b. When an alleged offense is referred to an investigating committee at a time when an advocacy support team has previously been formed, the moderator of the permanent judicial commission may choose either to refer the subsequent matter to the existing advocacy support team, or to appoint a new team.
 - c. An advocacy support team remains active until all disciplinary matters referred to it have been concluded, including during any appellate process.
 - d. Throughout the pendency of a matter, the adovocacy support team is available to the investigating committee, the prosecuting committee and the accused on an impartial basis to:
 - i. assist in identifying appropriate advocacy support; and
 - ii. facilitate Presbytery's provision of financial support for adovcacy expenses.

*Standing Rule E.7 originated under a previous presbytery structure in which there was a Mission Council consisting of three Mission Groups which functioned as broad committees of the Mission Council.

e. When the advocacy support team, after consultation with any party to a matter, determines that the Rules of Discipline require Presbyter's financial support of advocacy expenses, the team prepares and presents to Council a proposed budget as a request for the funds that the team deems to be reasonably necessary to meet Presbytery's obligation. Council will act expeditiously on any such request, with due consideration for the time requirements of the judicial process and for the financial resources available to the presbytery. The advocacy support team may bring multiple requests to Council, as the matter progresses through the judicial system.

f. Once the budget has been approved by the Council, and specific expenses have been approved by a majority of the advocacy support team, any member of the team is authorized to submit requests for payment of advocacy expenses to the treasurer of the presbytery. In cases where counsel is retained, the advocacy support team is not involved in the determination of legal strategy, and does not intrude upon the attorney-client relationship.

F. Corporation and Board of Trustees

The chairperson of the Board of Trustees shall be President of the Corporation.

G. Commissioners and Advisory Delegates to General Assembly

1. The nominating committee shall present minister nominees for commissioner and one or two alternates who are best able to represent the Presbytery of Boston. Its selections will emphasize inclusiveness as constitutionally defined as well as seniority concerns, taking into account the following presbytery records provided by the stated clerk:

- a. number of years since last attending General Assembly, since ordination to the ministry, and since reception by the Presbytery of Boston
- b. attendance at a majority of stated meetings of presbytery during each of the two immediately preceding calendar years
- c. amount of active participation on a presbytery or other governing body committee, or similar service during the two immediately preceding calendar years
- d. at least five years of membership in the Presbytery of Boston at the date of the General Assembly.

2. A minister's previous refusal of a nomination, or previous inability to serve as commissioner after election, will have no bearing on the nominating committee's decision.

3. The nominating committee shall present session-designated nominees for elder commissioner and one or two alternates, all from the same church, on a rotating basis using the following presbytery records provided by the stated clerk:

- a. number of years since each church last sent an elder as the presbytery's elder commissioner to General Assembly, or if no elder from a church has ever served as commissioner, the date of organization of the church.
- b. attendance of at least one elder at a majority of stated meetings of presbytery during each of the two immediately preceding calendar years.

4. The nominating committee shall present nominations for youth advisory delegates after communicating with all the sessions concerning this opportunity for younger members and interviewing each interested

person. Nominations shall take into account the inclusiveness concerns of G-4.0403 and congregations represented by youth advisory delegates in the preceding five to ten years.

H. Commissioners and Advisory Delegates to the Synod of the Northeast

1. The nominating committee shall present nominations of ministers and elders qualified to serve the needs of the specific synod committees whose vacancies are to be filled, taking into account the inclusiveness concerns of G-4.0403.
2. The nominating committee shall present nominations for youth advisory delegates after communicating with all the sessions concerning this opportunity for younger members and interviewing each interested person. Nominations shall take into account the inclusiveness concerns of G-4.0403.

I. Amendment and Suspension of Standing Rules

1. Amendments to these standing rules may be proposed at any presbytery meeting and may be adopted by a majority vote of those present and eligible to vote.
2. Suspension of these standing rules may be approved at any presbytery meeting by a majority of those present and eligible to vote.