

THE PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT

CHECKLIST FOR REVIEW OF SESSION RECORDS

(Must be completed by the clerk of session and submitted with the records)

Clerks and Pastors may find this checklist helpful in establishing the duties and requirements of Session. The intention of this checklist is not only to ensure the proper "form" of the minutes, but also the proper content. That is, it lays out those things that Robert's Rules and the Book of Order say must happen.

INTRODUCTION

This checklist is based on Presbytery Policy, the Book of Order (as approved in 2011), and Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th Edition, 2011). Your reviewer will use this checklist when reading your minutes and reviewing your records. The following citations are used to determine the degree to which records conform to the requirements of the Constitution and policy:

YES = ALWAYS, USUAL = USUALLY, NO = SELDOM OR NEVER

NO minutes can be reviewed until they have been approved by the session. In some cases there are *italic* notations. These notations are an attempt to give additional guidance where the Book of Order/Robert's Rules citations are not explicit or clear.

_____ Presbyterian Church

Date Reviewed: _____ Reviewed by: _____

LIST OF MINUTES SUBMITTED. _____ volumes, for dates _____, 20____ through _____, 20____. The last review went through _____, 20____ on page _____. (Unless they were approved without exceptions, all records submitted last time must also be submitted.)

LIST OF REGISTERS SUBMITTED. _____ volumes.

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- _____ Does the Church have a Board of Trustees that is identical to Session? (That is, is it a "unicameral" system?) (Yes or No) G-4.01
- _____ Does the Church have a separate Board of Deacons? (Yes or No) G-2.0202
- _____ Does the session have a sexual misconduct policy? (Yes or No) G-3.0106
- _____ Does the session have child protection policy? (Yes or No) G-3.0106
- _____ Does the session have a manual of administrative operations? G-3.0106

GENERAL NATURE OF MINUTES

REGULAR CONTENTS

This section gives the general intent and composition of minutes that are true for minutes of any organization (as applied to Session).

- _____ 1. Contain a full and accurate, and correct common sense recording of what occurred in the meeting. G-3.0107
- _____ 2. Contain all information necessary for completeness and clarity. Robert's Rules, p.470
- _____ 3. Mainly state what was done, not said, without editorial comment. Robert's Rules, p.469
- _____ 4. Main motions and what happened to them. Robert's Rules, p. 469f
- _____ 5. Where the motion is important, the name of the mover. Robert's Rules, p.470

- _____ 6. Amendments to motions ordinarily indicated by parenthetical note to main motion (except where necessary to give the full sense of the proceedings). *Robert's Rules, p.469ff*
Ordinarily only the final form of a motion is recorded in the minutes, with the notation that it was amended (where appropriate). The Clerk should use his or her judgment in recording the specific procedures of amendments. Where an issue is controversial or very important, the clerk may wish to include the full citation of amendments as they happened.
- _____ 7. All points of order and appeal, with reasons given by the chair for the ruling. *Robert's Rules, p.470*
- _____ 8. When a count has been ordered or the vote is by ballot, the votes on each side are recorded. *Robert's Rules, p.470*

SPECIFIC ITEMS FOR ALL MEETINGS

This section gives the specific events that ordinary rules of parliamentary procedure require for all organizations and the congregation

- _____ 9. Name of church & organization *Robert's Rules, p.468*
- _____ 10. Date, time & place of meeting *Robert's Rules, p.468*
- _____ 11. Description of kind of meeting *Robert's Rules, p.468*
- _____ 12. Where a special meeting is called, minutes must indicate that proper notice was given, and the stated purpose of the special meeting (as the agenda of the meeting). *Robert's Rules, p.89*
- _____ 13. Presence of moderator & clerk, & names if not regular ones. *Robert's Rules, p.468*
- _____ 14. Record of elders present, excused, & absent *G-3.0104*
- _____ 15. Guest speakers' names and subjects (But ordinarily not any summary of what was said). *Robert's Rules, p.471*
- _____ 16. Approval of minutes with dates. *Robert's Rules, p.469*
- _____ 17. The hour of adjournment. *Robert's Rules, p.470*
- _____ 18. Minutes are signed by the clerk. *Robert's Rules, p.471*

PRESBYTERIAN REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL

This section gives the general intent and requirements for Session minutes as established by the Constitution and Presbytery Policy.

- _____ 19. All minutes are promptly (within 90 days) transcribed into the official minutes book after session approval. *Presbytery Policy*
- _____ 20. Entries on the official rolls and registers of the church are made in a timely manner (within 60 days of the applicable date). *Presbytery Policy*
- _____ 21. Minutes are kept in the standard Westminster minutes book. *Presbytery Policy*
- _____ 22. Proceedings are prudent, equitable, faithful to the mission of the church. *G-3.0108a*
- _____ 23. Proceedings conform to the Constitution and the lawful injunctions of higher governing bodies. *G-3.0108a*
- _____ 24. When previous actions of session are referred to, the page number is given. *Presbytery Policy*
- _____ 25. No erasures, interlineations, nor footnotes. *Presbytery Policy*
- _____ 26. No insertions on separate sheets of paper (except for Annual Statistical Report to the General Assembly). *Presbytery Policy*
A specific report may be included in the minutes on sequentially numbered, low-acid, 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper by designating it as an attachment in the minutes.

SPECIFIC EVENTS

This section gives the specific actions that Session must do and record in the minutes as established by the Constitution and Presbytery Policy.

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| _____ | 27. Annual election of Treasurer. | G-3.0205 |
| _____ | 28. Election of Clerk and specification of term. | G-3.0104 |
| _____ | 29. Records that meetings are opened and closed with prayer. | G-3.0105 |
| _____ | 30. Record of completion of a period of study and preparation, and examination of deacons and elders. | G-2.0402; G-2.0104b |
| _____ | 31. Determine date and record ordination & installation of elders & deacons. | G-2.0402 |
| _____ | 32. Annual statement of composition of session. | G-3.0201 |
| _____ | 33. Report of the annual review of Roll. | G-3.0201c |
| _____ | 34. Session authorization to observe the Lord's Supper. | G-3.0102b; W-2.4012 |
| _____ | 35. Administration of Lord's Supper is recorded at next meeting. | Presbytery Policy |
| _____ | 36. If administered privately, names of elders assisting are listed. | Presbytery Policy |
| _____ | 37. Authorization to conduct Baptisms. | G-3.0102b; W-2.3011 |
| _____ | 38. Baptisms of adults and infants are recorded at next meeting. | Presbytery Policy |
| _____ | 39. Marriages are reported at next regular meeting. (see #68) | Presbytery Policy |
| _____ | 40. Election of Presbytery commissioners. | G-3.0302a |
| _____ | 41. Report of Presbytery commissioners. | G-3.0302a |
| _____ | 42. Approve annual budget, and include the complete line-item breakdown in the minutes of Session. | G-3.0113; G-3.0205 |
| _____ | 43. Record of annual full financial review of the financial records (with names of reviewers). | G-3.0113 |
| _____ | 44. Submission of General Assembly Annual Statistical Report, G-3.0202f, and insertion into the minutes book. | Presbytery Policy |
| _____ | 45. Annual review of compensation of all pastors & other staff. | G-2.0804 |
| _____ | 46. Any joint meeting of session and board of deacons. | G-3.0204 |
| _____ | 47. Entries demonstrating that the session takes oversight of all organizations of the church. | G-3.0201c |
| _____ | 48. The Clerk of Session shall report and enter into the minutes that the records have been reviewed by Presbytery, and all corrections and exceptions. | Presbytery Policy |

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

This section gives the specific requirements of Congregational meetings, and how the minutes are to be recorded, approved, and reported. (See also #'s 9-13)

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| _____ | 49. Where Session has approved the minutes, record that the minutes of prior meeting were reported to the congregation and made available for correction or additions.
<i>Where corrections or additions are made to minutes of a previous meeting, they should be recorded in the minutes of the later meeting as a motion approved by the congregation.</i> | RONR p. 474 |
| _____ | 50. Record of election of elders, deacons, trustees, and members-at-large of nominating committee. | |
| _____ | 51. Approval of all specific terms of pastor call(s) (broken down by category, and including vacation and study time) by the congregation, and inclusion in the minutes.
<i>The congregation must specifically approve and place in the minutes the terms of each pastor's call.</i> | G-2.0804 |
| _____ | 52. Record that the budget was submitted to the congregation for its information as approved by Session.
<i>The budget is approved by the Session.</i> | G-3.0205 |

_____ 53. Minutes of congregational meetings ordinarily approved at next meeting of Session and entered into session minute book. RONR p. 474

If the minutes of a congregational meeting are read and approved at a meeting before it adjourns, Session will not approve the minutes. In such a case the minutes will be entered in the Minutes Book as approved by the congregation.

_____ 54. Minutes are attested by the secretary (clerk of session). G-1.0505, RONR p.471

TRANSACTIONS AND RECORDS ABOUT PEOPLE

MEMBER TRANSFERS

This section describes the specific actions Session must take with regard to members, and how they are to be recorded in the minutes. Note that member receptions, transfers, and any changes in status are also recorded in the Register.

_____ 55. All actions to remove, add or transfer members to or from rolls, including death are recorded. G-3.0201c

_____ 56. A chronological number is assigned to each member (from the Register) following the name. Presbytery Policy

This number is a clerical matter and does not need Session approval. It can be added to the minutes when they are typed into the Minutes Book.

_____ 57. Chronological roll number is always included following the member's name in Session actions pertaining to membership, rolls, transfer, death, marriage, ordination. Presbytery Policy

ROLLS

The Book of Order calls for certain "Rolls" of members as cited below. These rolls are technically different than the Register, though the register and the rolls should be congruent. That is, you should be able to prepare a roll of active members by going to the Register. In practice, however, the use of the Register for this purpose is difficult. In some cases, as in "baptized members," the Register in common use has no place for keeping such a roll. In general, the clerk should have available a roll available for each one of these categories, and be able to produce it as necessary.

_____ 58. Roll of Baptized Members. G-3.0204a

Lists active members' children who were baptized elsewhere

_____ 59. An Active Member Roll. G-3.0204a

_____ 60. An Affiliate Members Roll (Affiliate membership must be renewed every 2 years). G-3.0204a

REGISTERS

General Comment: The Register is the record of an event. The Book of Order is generally silent about a Register, but the recording requirements essentially require a recording of events in a way that allows reference not practical by referral to the minutes. The Register in common use has been developed historically to provide that record. It is a very valuable historical document, because it keeps names and specific events about specific people in a useable form. In some cases, the Register provides a record that is acceptable in general law when records are no longer available. Sometimes courthouses burn and records of births and marriages are lost; church records then can have legal status.

The entry of names and events in all cases reflects an action of Session (or the congregation). The process is then for the events to be authorized (where necessary) and recorded in the minutes of Session or the Congregation. These events are then also recorded in the Register. Note that the member number is assigned in the Register.

_____ 61. The standard Westminster register is used. Presbytery Policy

_____ 62. The Register of Marriages includes W-9.002 and State Law

Marriages of all church members (wherever conducted)

All conducted by the ministerial staff

All conducted on church property

_____ 63. The Register of Baptisms

W-2.3012d; G-3.0204b

_____ 64. The Register of Elders includes.

G-3.0204b; Presbytery Policy

Elders (and deacons) should be entered into the register by classes, with appropriate reference to earlier ordination and service.

Full name of person

Name of church in which ordained

Date of ordination

Terms of active service

Record of removals

_____ 65. The Register of Deacons includes.

G-3.0204b; Presbytery Policy

Full name of person

Name of church in which ordained

Date of ordination

Terms of active service

Record of removals

_____ 66. The Register of Pastors includes.

G-3.0204b; Presbytery Policy

All pastors, co-pastors, associate pastors, assistant pastors, interim pastors, stated supplies, and parish associates

Full names and dates of service