

REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR SESSION RECORDS

(Requirements are numbered to correspond to the attached Checklist)

Presbytery of the Western Reserve 2008 Session Minutes Review

INFORMATION

- A) THE SESSION RECORDS COMMITTEE WILL REVIEW MINUTES COVERING THE TIME PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2008.
- B) CLERKS AND TYPISTS OF MINUTES ARE REQUESTED TO LEAVE ONE FOURTH TO ONE THIRD OF A PAGE AT THE END OF THE MINUTES OF THE LAST STATED MEETING OF THE YEAR SO THAT THE PRESBYTERY STAMP WILL FIT EASILY.
- C) MINUTES FROM HALF OF THE CHURCHES WILL BE REQUESTED IN THE SPRING; MINUTES FROM THE OTHER HALF OF THE CHURCHES WILL BE REQUESTED IN THE FALL. (See list of Due Dates.)

GENERAL

1. The minutes should be kept on archival quality paper, at least 25% cotton fiber content, in a secure binding such as a post or pressure binder.

Notes:

- Machine copying onto the archival paper is satisfactory if the process used fuses the print well to the paper;
 - Sessions wishing to continue to reuse leather binders may find it economical to have the permanent minutes bound as 250-500 pages are completed. The yellow pages list book binderies.
 - The Cokesbury catalogue advertises paper and binders. (1-800-672-1789 or www.cokesbury.com)
2. a. Margins should be large enough so that information is not hidden by the binding of the book (especially since many churches are now having the books professionally bound). Recommended margin sizes are:

Top:	1 1/2 in.	Inside:	1 1/2 in.
Bottom:	1 in.	Outside:	1 in.
 - b. **Pages should be numbered consecutively** with material on both sides. Minutes for the succeeding meeting may be started on the remaining space on a page containing minutes of the previous meeting. When space is unused, a diagonal line should be drawn across the space.
 - c. Avoid erasures, whiteout, interlineations, and footnotes.
 - d. Do not insert in the records loose sheets of paper with written or printed matter on them, the only exception being the Checklist for Session Minutes, which is required for the annual reading by the Session Records Committee.

EACH MEETING

3. Record the name of church, the date, time, and place of each meeting, the names of the moderator and the ruling elders present, and the names of the absentees and any who are excused.
4. Record the opening and closing of each meeting with prayer.
5. Record the review and approval of the minutes of the last Session meeting. (See 21h.)

Notes:

- The record of each meeting is to be duly attested and signed in ink by the clerk or moderator.
- Record that which is vital to the transactions of the meeting. The details of discussions need not be recorded, but a summary of salient points may be included to give a sense of the discussion. Plans, which have not been adopted, and suggestions, which have not been followed, need not be recorded except by special order of the session, and the records should take note of the order. All actions taken, whether adopted or lost, should be recorded. (Robert's Rules, section 47)
- When a previous action of the session is referred to, the date of the Session meeting when it was recorded should be designated.

AS THE OCCASION DEMANDS

6. Record the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at the next regular meeting succeeding. In case the sacrament has been administered privately, the name of the elder assisting (or other person authorized by the session to assist) should be noted.
7. Record the baptism of adults and infants at the next regular meeting succeeding. Names of infants and the names of their parents (including the mother's maiden name) are to be recorded. (Record full information only once—either when authorization is voted or after baptism has been administered. The baptism must be recorded by the Session at its next regular meeting.)
8. Record the full name of the church and its location to which a certificate of transfer is granted and the full name of the person transferred, with the date of transfer. Deletion from rolls should indicate reason for this action. (G 10.0302 b [1-8])
9. Record the full name of applicants for church membership (in the case of married women, give their maiden name) and the manner of their reception:
 - a. by affirmation or profession of faith
 - b. baptism, if not previously experienced
 - c. by re-affirmation of faith
 - d. by certificate (letter) of transfer, giving the name and location of the dismissing church.
10. Record the name(s) of the elder(s) appointed as a commissioner to Presbytery; the exact period for which such appointment was made; and a report of their attendance and subsequent report to the session.
11. When the session finds it necessary to exercise discipline, the Form of Government and the Rules of Discipline should be carefully studied by a committee of the session, and if discipline be administered, the minutes of the session must contain such a record of the proceedings which will enable the Presbytery to know who was disciplined and why and how.
12. In the case of a sale, mortgage, gift or lease of property, the session records must show:
 - a) Name, address and legal description of the property
 - b) Name of buyer/lessee
 - c) Sale price
 - d) Loan amount, purpose and terms, including the name of the lender
 - e) Lease terms and liability insurance
 - f) Concurrence of presbytery

ANNUALLY

13. Include a photocopy of the certificate of insurance summarizing church's the insurance coverage and record a statement to the effect that the session has been apprised of the purchase of such insurance. Property and liability insurance is mandatory for the protection of facilities, programs and all officers (G-10.0102 o).
14. Include a photocopy of the actual document indicating the date of the latest renewal of the articles of incorporation with the state. (Form C-119 titled "Statement of Continued Existence") This must be renewed every five years.
15. Session shall approve and record in detail both the annual budget and the distribution of the church's benevolences. (G-10.0102 i) These actions shall be recorded in the minutes. (Include a photocopy of the church's budget that states dollar amounts.)
16.
 - a. Record in the minutes that the adequacy of each pastor's compensation was reviewed individually by the session, or by the session's Personnel Committee and reported to session for its recommendation to the congregation (G-10.0102 n). Compensation must reach Presbytery minimum. (G-14.0506 e) Terms of call must be recorded.
 - b. Note the annual review of adequacy of compensation for all paid staff. (G-10.0102 n)
17. Training and examination of officers-elect. The minutes should reflect that there was a review with newly elected officers and that they were given training, instruction and examined by the session.
18. Record the ordination and installation of elders and deacons and the recognition of the election of trustees (if applicable) at the next regular session meeting.
19. The Session and the Board of Deacons (if any) are to meet jointly annually. (G-6.0405)
20. Record the results of the Committee on Session Records' review of the session minutes for the previous year, and record the communication of those results to the Session.
21. Congregational and Corporation meetings:
The Session records shall include the minutes of all meetings of the congregation and corporation. These minutes shall include:
 - a. a notation that this is either a stated or special meeting; if it is a special meeting of the congregation or corporation, the minutes shall include the call to the meeting, which is adopted as the agenda
 - b. date, time and place of meeting
 - c. name of the moderator of the meeting
 - d. presence of a quorum
 - e. opening and closing of the meeting with prayer
 - f. record of all actions, whether passed or defeated
 - g. action taken by the congregation on any change in each pastor's compensation, with terms of call specified
 - h. Congregational meeting minutes must be attested and signed in ink by the moderator and the clerk. Minutes of a separate corporation meeting shall be attested by the moderator and

secretary of that meeting. If congregation does not approve minutes before conclusion of its current meeting, the Session is required to do so. (G-7.0307 and G-7.0403)

- i. minutes of the meeting of the congregation at which the annual financial reports are made should indicate, at least:
 1. report of a full financial review (formerly called audit) (G-10.0401 d)
 2. report of income and expenditures for the year
 3. report the budget, which has been adopted by the session for the ensuing year.
 4. the annual statistical report requested by the General Assembly as submitted to the Presbytery
 5. in annual meeting, details of the status of loans from G.A., Synod or Presbytery, if any, to be given

CLERK'S ANNUAL REPORT AT END OF MINUTES

22. It shall be recorded in the minutes that job descriptions have been prepared for all employed personnel, professional and non-professional. Include all job descriptions in the minutes as they are approved. Indicate by page number where the latest job description for each staff person is located in the minute book or prior minute books.
23. Record in the minutes the changes in Session, the Board of Deacons and the Trustees through death, resignation, and/or removal.
24. The minutes shall state the composition of the session with regard to racial ethnic members, women, men, age groups, persons with disabilities, and how this corresponds to the composition of the congregation. (G-10.0301) This requirement can be met by the annual statistical report required by the General Assembly, which may be photocopied into the minutes at an appropriate place.
25. Minutes of the board of deacons and the board of trustees of the particular church are the property of the session. (G-10.0301) Please record in the minutes information concerning location and storage of these records.
26. Annual narrative report—a brief summary of the year's happenings written by the Moderator or the Clerk.

ROLLS AND REGISTERS

NOTE: Sessions shall present church rolls and registers for inspection **only when requested**.

27. Every session shall maintain rolls of members as defined by G-5.0200 and registers as provided by G-10.0302. Names of members are placed upon or removed from the rolls of the church only by order of the session and in accordance with the provisions of the Book of Order. Such actions of session shall be recorded in session minutes and entered upon the rolls. The rolls shall be as follows: Baptized Members' Roll, Active Members' Roll, Inactive Members' Roll, and Affiliate Members' Roll.
28. Session shall also keep a complete register of marriages; adult and infant baptisms (with dates of birth); elders and deacons with the names of the churches in which they were ordained, the times of their ordination, their terms of active service and the records of their death or other removal; pastors, co-pastors, associate pastors, interim pastors, stated supplies, and parish associates serving the church, with the dates of service of each. There should be five registers: Marriages, Baptisms, Elders, Deacons, and Pastors. (G-10.0302 c)