

By-Laws for the Presbytery of Boston, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Revised November 14, 2016

Amendments

September 24, 2018



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1. PREAMBLE

1.1 Origin

The Presbytery of Boston was constituted a presbytery in the Synod of New England by the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America on January 1, 1959, through the merger of the Presbytery of Boston of the United Presbyterian Church of North America, organized July 11, 1854, and the Presbytery of Boston of The Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., organized October 11, 1870. The Presbytery of Boston has continued through the reunion of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America with the Presbyterian Church in the United States on June 10, 1983, and as a presbytery of the resultant Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). As a presbytery

of the PC(USA) the Presbytery of Boston is governed by the Constitution of the PC(USA).

1.2 Bounds

The territory for which the presbytery is responsible is that area of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts east of the western boundary of the County of Worcester; south of 42° 35' of latitude; and north of the Connecticut and Rhode Island state lines and 42° of latitude but including none of Cape Cod; and including the following churches organized in the years indicated:

Boston, Church of the Covenant (1852)

Boston, Fourth Presbyterian Church (1870)

Boston, Hyde Park Presbyterian Church (1896)

Boston, Primera Iglesia Presbiteriana Hispana (EUA) (1991)

Boston, Roxbury Presbyterian Church (1885)

Brookline, First Presbyterian Church (1894)

Brookline, Korean Church of Boston (USA) (1985)

Burlington, The Presbyterian Church in Burlington (1962)

Cambridge, First United Presbyterian Church (1892)

Clinton, First United Presbyterian Church in Clinton (1893)

Easton, Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church (1996)

Natick, Hartford Street Presbyterian Church (1886)

Needham, Presbyterian Church in Needham (1887)

Newton, Newton Presbyterian Church (1846)

Newton, Taiwan Presbyterian Church of Greater Boston (1998)

Quincy, First Presbyterian Church (1884)

Quincy, Quincy Young Sang Presbyterian Church (1989)

Somerville, Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church (1882)

Sudbury, Presbyterian Church in Sudbury (1961)

Whitinsville, United Presbyterian Church at Whitinsville (1874)

Worcester, First Presbyterian Church (1886)

Together with any other churches which may be added to this roll.

2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Churches

All churches listed in Bylaw 1.2 are members of the Presbytery of Boston and are represented at its meetings by ruling elders commissioned by their sessions. The number of elder commissioners from each church is determined in accordance with G-3.0301 in the Book of Order.

2.2 Teaching Elders

All teaching elders who are continued on its active and at-large rolls are members of the Presbytery of Boston.

2.3 Adjustment of Ruling Elder / Teaching Elder Imbalance

The stated clerk at the first presbytery meeting of each calendar year shall report any imbalance between teaching elder and ruling elder members. The presbytery shall redress this imbalance in accordance with G-3.0301 in the Book of Order.

2.4 Corresponding Members

Presbyters (Ministers of the Word and Sacrament or ruling elders) in good standing in other councils of this denomination or in any other Christian Church, who are present at any meeting of presbytery, may be invited to sit as corresponding members, with voice but without vote.

2.5 Additional Members

Each ruling elder officer of the presbytery, chairperson of a continuing committee and member of the Presbytery Council shall be enrolled as a member for the term of office whether or not commissioned by his/her session, along with any ruling elder serving as exempt administrative staff.

2 MEETINGS

3.1 Stated Meetings

3.1.1 Frequency

The presbytery shall hold at least three stated meetings each year, with the dates to be recommended by the Presbytery Council and approved by the presbytery at the last meeting of the previous year.

3.1.2 Lord's Supper

At least one stated meeting each year shall include the celebration of the Lord's Supper during worship.

3.2 Adjourned Meetings

An adjourned meeting may be designated by Presbytery action to adjourn from a stated or another adjourned meeting to a fixed time or place.

3.3 Special Meetings

The moderator shall call a special meeting at the request, or with the concurrence, of two teaching elders and two ruling elders, the ruling elders being of different churches. Should the moderator be unable to act, the stated clerk shall, under the same conditions, issue the call. If both moderator and stated clerk are unable to act, any three teaching elders and three ruling elders, the ruling elders being of different churches, may call a special meeting. The synod may direct the presbytery to convene a special meeting for the transaction of designated business. Notice of a special meeting shall be sent not less than ten days in advance to each minister and to the session of every church. The notice shall set out the purpose of the meeting, and no other business than that listed in the notice shall be transacted.

3.4 Quorum

A quorum of the presbytery shall be any four teaching elder members and the ruling elder members present, provided that at least three congregations are represented by ruling elders.

3.5 Rules of Order

Meetings of the presbytery, its Council, commissions and committees, shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, except in those cases where the Book of Order provides otherwise. Committees and task forces of the presbytery and its Council shall ordinarily meet in face- to-face sessions but may meet by teleconference or videoconference as needed, provided that full opportunity for simultaneous communication is available to all members and that minutes are duly kept and approved.

3.6 Recording Clerk

3.6.1 Election and term of office

A recording clerk shall be elected at the appropriate last meeting of the year for a term of three years, and shall be eligible for re-election. The recording clerk may be a teaching elder or an active member of any church of the presbytery and is not an officer of the presbytery.

3.6.2 Role and duties of the recording clerk

The recording clerk shall keep and provide to the stated clerk a full and accurate record of all proceedings of the presbytery's meetings.

4. OFFICERS

The officers of this presbytery shall be a moderator, vice-moderator, stated clerk, treasurer and the trustees of the Corporation.

4.1 Moderator

4.1.1 Election and term of office

The moderator shall be elected for one term of one year. The moderator shall assume office during the last meeting of the calendar year.

4.1.2 Incomplete term

If the moderator is unable to complete the term of office, the vice-moderator is to fill the unexpired term.

4.1.3 Role and duties of the moderator

The moderator moderates presbytery meetings and serves as moderator of Presbytery Council. From time to time, the moderator may ask the vice-moderator to preside at a

presbytery or Council meeting due to conflict of interest or other exigency. The moderator also presides at ordinations and installations, and is the first official representative of the Presbytery of Boston at other ecclesiastical occasions and at civic functions and gatherings, unless otherwise provided by the Synod of the Northeast. When unable to fulfill these responsibilities, the moderator may request that the vice-moderator or another presbyter respond. The role and duties shall be as defined in the Book of Order and specified in Robert's Rules of Order, and as assigned by these bylaws, the standing rules and actions of the presbytery and its Council. The moderator is a member ex officio of all committees without vote.

4.2 Vice-Moderator

4.2.1 Election and term of office

The vice-moderator shall be elected for one term of one year. The vice-moderator shall assume office during the last meeting of the calendar year.

4.2.2 Incomplete term

If the vice-moderator is unable to complete the term of office, the vacancy shall be filled as soon as possible by presbytery election.

4.2.3 Role and duties of the vice-moderator

The role and duties of the vice-moderator shall be as assigned by these bylaws, the standing rules and actions of the presbytery and its Council, and shall include standing designation as first substitute for the moderator should that officer be unable to fulfill one or more official responsibilities.

4.3 Stated Clerk

4.3.1 Election and term of office

The stated clerk shall be elected for a term of three years, and shall be eligible for re-election. The stated clerk shall assume office immediately upon election.

4.3.2 Incomplete term

If the stated clerk is unable to complete the term of office, the vacancy shall be filled as soon as possible by Presbytery election.

4.3.3 Role and duties of the stated clerk

The role and duties of the stated clerk shall be as defined in the Book of Order and specified in Robert's Rules of Order, and as assigned by these bylaws, the standing rules and actions of the presbytery and its Council.

4.4 Treasurer

4.4.1 Election and term of office

The treasurer shall be elected for a term of three years, and shall be eligible for re-election. The treasurer shall assume office immediately upon election.

4.4.2 Incomplete term

If the treasurer is unable to complete the term of office, the vacancy shall be filled as soon as possible by Presbytery election.

4.4.3 Role and duties of the treasurer

The treasurer is a member of the Board of Trustees. The role and duties of the treasurer, who shall be bonded at the expense of the presbytery, shall be those assigned by these bylaws, the standing rules and actions of the presbytery and Presbytery Council, to include:

4.4.3.1 having custody of all funds and securities of the presbytery;

4.4.3.2 receiving and disbursing all presbytery funds as approved by Presbytery;

4.4.3.3 paying the annual apportionment to the synod and General Assembly;

4.4.3.4 presenting a status report at each meeting of the Council;

4.4.3.5 presenting a full and accurate account of all funds and securities at the first stated meeting in the calendar year after February.

4.4.3.6 submitting annually all records for full financial review in accordance with the requirements of G-3.0113 in the Book of Order. 4.4.4 Assistant treasurer

The presbytery shall elect an assistant treasurer to serve for a term of three years. The assistant treasurer, who shall be bonded at the expense of the presbytery, shall assist the treasurer as requested and may serve in place of the treasurer, as directed by the trustees, when the treasurer is unable to fulfill his or her duties.

4.5 Trustees

4.5.1 Election and term of office

Three ruling elders and three teaching elders shall be elected trustees at an appropriate stated meeting, in three classes of equal numbers, for terms of three years. The treasurer of the presbytery shall be one of the six members of the Trustees and shall serve as the treasurer of the Corporation. The term of office of the treasurer of the Corporation shall coincide with his/her term of office as treasurer of the presbytery. The president of the Trustees shall be elected by the presbytery. The Trustees shall assume office immediately upon election, and shall continue in office until successors are elected.

4.5.2 Incomplete term

If a trustee is unable to complete the term of office, the vacancy shall be filled as soon as possible by Presbytery election.

4.5.3 Role and duties of the Trustees

The duties of the Trustees shall be those assigned to the presbytery's Board of Trustees by these bylaws and as provided for in the Book of Order and by the General Laws and Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to include:

4.5.3.1 maintaining the Corporation according to the General Laws and Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, making property decisions based on the historic principles of our Church's government (F- 3.0101-3.010);

4.5.3.2 overseeing all presbytery assets;

4.5.3.3 overseeing the financial aspects of church property purchases and sales, mortgage grants and loans in consultation with the Presbytery Council and recommending appropriate action to the presbytery;

4.5.3.4 reviewing all plans, specifications and funding sources for building projects requiring presbytery approval, in consultation with the Presbytery Council, and recommending appropriate action to the presbytery;

4.5.3.5 offering assistance, upon request, to congregations on financial facilities and property matters;

4.3.5.6 obtaining an annual full financial review of the records of the presbytery

4.3.5.7 Overseeing the Investment committee

There shall be five voting members of the committee, including three members elected by presbytery, the treasurer and one representative from the Trustees. The members elected by the presbytery do not need to be presbyters but shall be members in good standing of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The members elected by the presbytery shall serve 3-year terms, in three classes of one member each; no member shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

This committee shall be a committee of the Trustees and shall report and be accountable to the Trustees. The chair, vice-chair and clerk shall be elected by the committee from among the three members elected by the presbytery, subject to confirmation by the Trustees.

5. STAFF

5.1 General Principle

The presbytery may employ administrative staff in accordance with the provisions of the Form of Government (G-3.0110).

5.2 Resource Presbyter

5.2.1 Duties

5.2.1.1 The responsibilities of the resource presbyter will be those contained in the latest approved position description.

5.2.1.2 The resource presbyter shall fulfill such responsibilities as agreed upon.

5.2.2 Accountability

The resource presbyter shall be accountable to the council.

5.2.3 Annual Review

Regular review of the resource presbyter shall be conducted in accordance with the latest approved job description.

5.2.4 Termination

Termination of the resource presbyter shall be subject to approval of the council and be otherwise in accordance with the applicable procedures of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

5.3 Other Administrative Staff

The presbytery may establish one or more full-time or part-time positions, which will be filled by the presbytery on recommendation of the council.

6. STRUCTURE

6.1 Permanent Judicial Commission

6.1.1 Establishment

The commission shall be established and shall function in accordance with relevant provisions in the Book of Order.

6.1.2 Membership

The commission shall be composed of not fewer than seven members, the majority of which may be either teaching or ruling elders, with not more than one elder from any one church.

6.1.3 Investigating Committee

As needed in instances of preliminary procedure for discipline, the moderator of the presbytery in consultation with the stated clerk shall appoint an investigating committee

of three to five persons to fulfill the responsibilities listed in D-10.0201-2 in the Rules of Discipline, reporting to the presbytery at its next stated meeting the names of those appointed.

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6.1.4 Committees of Council

As needed when the presbytery becomes a respondent in a remedial complaint, the moderator of the presbytery shall appoint a committee of counsel of no more than three persons to fulfill the responsibilities listed in D-6.0302 of the Rules of Discipline, reporting to the presbytery at its next stated meeting the names of those appointed.

6.2 Continuing Committees

The continuing committees shall consist of church members and teaching elders as provided in the Book of Order, with at least half the membership being church members, and shall have responsibility for the ongoing concerns and functions of the presbytery as provided in these bylaws. Committee members are elected to a three-year term and are eligible for re-election; after six years of consecutive service one year must elapse before the member is eligible for re-election to that committee. The chairperson and vice-chairperson of each committee shall be elected by the presbytery. The presbytery moderator, resource presbyter and the stated clerk shall serve as ex officio members of all continuing committees, without vote.

6.2.1 Committee on Representation

6.2.1.1 Membership: The Committee on Representation shall have ~~six~~ *three* members, and shall meet the membership requirements of G-3.0103 and G-3.0109 in the Book of Order.

6.2.1.2 Function: The function of the Committee on Representation is to advise the presbytery concerning its implementation of the principles of participation and inclusiveness to ensure fair and effective representation in the decision making of the presbytery, consulting with the Nominating Committee of the presbytery and serving as an advocate in accordance with G-3.0103.

6.2.2 Nominating Committee

6.2.2.1 Membership: The Nominating Committee shall have six members, and shall meet the membership requirements of G-3.0109 in the Book of Order.

6.2.2.2 Function: The function of the Nominating Committee is to nominate persons to fill all presbytery offices and commissioner and delegate vacancies, and all vacancies on continuing committees (except itself), the Presbytery Council and its task forces, the permanent judicial commission and other entities of the presbytery, in accordance with G-3.0111.

6.2.3 Committee on Preparation for Ministry

6.2.3.1 Membership: The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall have a voting membership of six, and shall meet the membership requirements of G-3.0109 in the Book of Order.

6.2.3.2 Function: The Committee on Preparation for Ministry is to function according to the process and provisions of G-2.0601 – G-2.0610 and G-3.0307 in the Book of Order and of the Standing Rules of the Presbytery of Boston, to enable the presbytery to fully and pastorally participate in its covenanted responsibilities with inquirers and candidates who are preparing for ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

6.2.4 Committee On Ministry

6.2.4.1 Membership: The Committee on Ministry shall have a voting membership of seven teaching elders and seven ruling elders, in accordance with G-3.0109.

6.2.4.2 Functions: The Committee on Ministry shall serve as pastor and counselor to all members of the presbytery, in accordance with G-3.0307. It shall be responsible for these constitutional responsibilities given to the presbytery in the Form of Government as well as for any other duties assigned to the committee by the presbytery:

1. oversee according to presbytery procedures the calling of pastors, in accordance with presbytery procedures for seeking, nominating, electing, ordaining and installing candidates and teaching elders (G-2.08);
2. recommend minimum compensation standards for pastoral calls and Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the presbytery (G-3.0303c);
3. recommend and oversee according to presbytery procedures the dissolving of pastoral relationships, appointing a moderator where there is no pastor (G-2.09);
4. recommend validation of ministries in accordance with G-3.03036 and G-2.0503a, and annually review and recommend approval of the ministry and membership of teaching elders in validated ministries (G-2.0503a) and of members on the at-large roll (G-2.0503b);
5. recommend any changes in the enrollment of teaching elders (G-2.0508);
6. recommend presbytery designation of teaching elders as honorably retired on the roll (G-2.0503c);
7. recommend and oversee according to presbytery procedures the release of teaching elders from the exercise of active ministry (G-2.0507) and the reactivation of those previously released from the exercise of active ministry (G-2.0507);

8. recommend, facilitate and oversee the transfer and reception of ministers of other denominations (G-2.0505);
9. review, make recommendations for and participate in the presbytery's commissioning of ruling elders to particular pastoral service (G-2.10);
10. review, make recommendations for and participate in the presbytery's certification of Christian Educators and others to be certified in accordance with G-2.11;
11. counsel with a session concerning reported difficulties within a congregation, including advising the session as to appropriate actions to be taken to resolve the reported difficulties, offering to help as a mediator, and acting to correct the difficulties if requested to do so by the session or if the session is unable to do so informing the Presbytery Council of church conditions that would be best responded to by an administrative commission (G-3.0303d).

6.3 Program Committees

The presbytery moderator, resource presbyter and stated clerk shall serve as ex-officio members of all program committees, without vote.

6.3.1 Committee on Mission and Congregations

6.3.1.1 Membership: There shall be three voting members of the committee and shall meet the membership requirements of ~~G-3.0103~~ G-3.0109 in the Book of Order. The members shall serve three-year terms, in three classes of one member each. No member shall serve more than six years consecutively, after which one year must elapse before the member shall be eligible for re-election to the committee.

6.3.1.2 Function: This committee is charged with the task of appointing and coordinating working groups and task forces involved in the Presbytery's mission.

6.4 Presbytery Council

The Presbytery Council is to provide servant leadership by guiding and challenging the presbytery with respect to the presbytery's vision and mission, to strengthen congregations, and to foster partnerships to accomplish the presbytery's mission goals. The Presbytery Council is elected by and accountable to the presbytery.

6.4.1 Voting Members

The members of the Presbytery Council with vote shall be the moderator, the vice-moderator, the immediate past moderator of the presbytery, the designee of the Board of Trustees, the designees of the Committee on Ministry, Committee on Preparation for Ministry, Nominating Committee, the Committee on Mission and Congregations and three at large members to be elected by the Presbytery with attention given to diversity

and inclusion and shall meet the membership requirements of G-3.0109 in the Book of Order.

6.4.2 Continuing Members

Continuing members with voice but no vote are the presbytery's resource presbyter, stated clerk, treasurer and one current commissioner to the Synod of the Northeast as designated by the serving commissioners.

6.4.3 Quorum

The quorum of the Presbytery Council shall be a majority of the voting members.

6.4.4 Responsibilities

6.4.4.1 Develop and maintain a long-range plan for the Presbytery.

6.4.4.2 Coordinate and evaluate the work of all presbytery committees and task forces.

6.4.4.3 Coordinate the planning of the presbytery's work by proposing annual goals for the presbytery. The proposed goals shall include what will be done, what committee or task force will do it, and what resources are required.

6.4.4.4 Maintain relationships with the Synod and General Assembly to interpret mission and policy.

6.4.4.5 Propose to Presbytery an annual budget for Presbytery action.

6.4.4.6 Oversee the presbytery's personnel functions.

6.4.4.7 Nominate members of the Nominating Committee for presbytery election.

6.4.4.8 Receive and approve mission grant requests. 6.4.4.9 Prepare and recommend an annual budget for the Presbytery.

6.4.4.10 Develop a plan for stewardship within the Presbytery

6.4.5 Meetings

The Presbytery Council shall meet at least six times per year. The moderator of the presbytery shall serve as the moderator of the Presbytery Council, and the immediate past moderator of the presbytery shall serve as the clerk of the Presbytery Council, taking minutes of Presbytery Council for distribution to the presbytery not later than one week after each meeting.

7. COMMISSIONERS AND ADVISORY DELEGATES TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND SYNOD

7.1 Time of election

Nomination and election of commissioners and advisory delegates to Synod and General Assembly shall be at least four months prior to the opening of their respective assemblies. Commissioners and advisory delegates to the Synod and General Assembly will take office upon election.

1.2 Eligibility

7.2.1 Teaching and ruling elder commissioners

Any teaching elder who is on the active or at-large roll of the presbytery and any ruling elder who is on the active roll of a church within this presbytery is eligible for election as a commissioner.

7.2.2 Young adult advisory delegate

Any member on the active roll of a church of the presbytery who will be between the ages of 17 and 23 on the day the General Assembly convenes, is eligible for election as a young adult advisory delegate (YAAD)

7.2.3 Theological student advisory delegate

Any inquirer or candidate under care of this presbytery who has been nominated by a theological institution to represent it as a theological student advisory delegate (TSAD) or alternate will be presented for election by the Nominating Committee.

7.3 Nomination

7.3.1 Selection process by the Nominating Committee

The presbytery shall devise and include in its standing rules a process for the orderly election of nominees for commissioners, advisory delegates and alternates.

7.3.2 Report of the Nominating Committee

The report of the Nominating Committee shall include the names of churches represented by the elder and young adult nominees, and a sufficient number of alternates listed in order of priority.

7.3.3 Nominations from the floor

Nominations from the floor may be made of any person meeting the eligibility requirements of Bylaw 7.2, prior acceptance of the nominee having been secured.

7.4 Election

Whenever nominations from the floor are made or its it moved to change the order of alternates, the vote shall be by ballot.

7.5 Responsibilities

7.5.1 Presbytery attendance

Commissioners and advisory delegates to General Assembly and synod will be expected to attend presbytery meetings from their election until one presbytery meeting after their terms of service end.

7.5.2 Preparation, participation and report

If any person elected as commissioner or advisory delegate is unable to serve, she/he shall immediately notify the stated clerk of the presbytery. Commissioners and delegates shall prepare themselves, be diligent in attendance and actively participate in the assembly. General Assembly commissioners and delegates shall report to the presbytery at its next stated meeting. Commissioners and delegates to synod shall report after each meeting of the synod assembly, at the next stated meeting of the presbytery.

7.6 Terms

The term for commissioners and advisory delegates to General Assembly shall conform to the General Assembly schedule. The term for commissioners and advisory delegates to synod shall conform to the synod's bylaws.

8. AMENDMENTS AND SUSPENSION OF THE BY-LAWS

8.1 Suspension

These bylaws, excepting Bylaw 8.2, may be suspended at any stated meeting of the presbytery by a three-fourths majority of the members present and voting.

8.2 Amendment

Proposed amendment(s) of these bylaws, except this Bylaw 8.2, shall be referred to the Presbytery Council for its recommendation. A copy of the proposed amendment and any recommended revision of it from the Council shall be sent to all minister members and sessions at least ten days prior to the next stated meeting of the presbytery. Proposed amendments require for approval a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at the meeting designated for consideration of the bylaws change(s).

9. REVISION HISTORY

These Bylaws of the Presbytery of Boston were approved January 27, 2003, to become effective March 1, 2003.

These Bylaws were amended March 25, 2014.

These Bylaws were amended November 14, 2016.

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