

COMMITTEE ON CHURCH RECORDS AND OVERSIGHT
The Presbytery of Long Island

GUIDELINES FOR SESSION MINUTES

OVERVIEW OF SESSION MINUTES

- Be clear to the reader in future years. They are the official record/history of your church. When abbreviations are used, they must first be defined.
- Be free of erasures, interlines and footnotes. Label unavoidably blank pages “This page intentionally left blank”
- Be free of excessive blank spaces and pages to prevent possible future changes.
- Be free of any loose papers or papers attached to pages.
- Refer by page number or meeting date to a previous action of Session when a subsequent related action is noted.
- Be attested to by the signature of the Clerk. Congregational minutes must be attested to by both the Moderator and the Clerk

WHEN SUBMITTING MINUTES FOR REVIEW:

- Submit the page with the most recent stamp of approval by Presbytery and all subsequent pages (usually one year).
- Indicate whether your church has deacons, elders, and trustees or whether your elders act as the deacons or trustees.
- Indicate the number of elders on your church's Session.

MINUTES OF SESSION MUST INCLUDE:

- Date, time, place, and type of meeting.
- Name of the Moderator.
- Names of elders present, absent with excuse, absent without excuse and the names of guests.
- Meeting opened and closed with prayer. [G9.0301(b)]
- Approval of minutes of previous stated meeting and prior special meeting(s), if any.
- Authorization by the Session for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper by date; and the later report the date it was celebrated as ‘authorized on --- (cite page or date of the minutes)’ . [W-2.4012]
- Authorization of persons to assist and participate at special communions. [W-2.4010]
- Special communion administered, by whom, and the name(s) of the authorized assistant(s) participating. [W-2.4010]
- Authorization for the Sacrament of Baptism with, name, parents' names and the planned baptismal date. After the baptism, report the fact that the baptism took place on that date and reference the page in the minutes that authorized the baptism. If an infant baptism, the child's birth date and the names of the persons presenting the child for baptism (ordinarily the parents) should also be recorded. [W-2.3011 and G10.0202c(2)]
- Report and record all marriages conducted by the pastor, and those conducted on church property. The minutes should report the marriage date, their full names and their membership status (member or non-member). Marriages of a church member should always be reported and recorded regardless of where it was performed. [G10.0302 c.(1)]
- Proper reception of applicants for church membership by (a) letter of transfer, (b) profession of faith, or (c) reaffirmation of faith. [G10.102 b and G10.0302]
- Review of the membership rolls of the church at least annually. Record the efforts made, including counseling, with those who have neglected the responsibilities of membership. [G-5.0502]

- Proper restoration of inactive members to the active roll. [G-10.0302]
- Proper removal of members by (a) letter of transfer, (b) death, (c) transfer to inactive roll or (d) deletion. [G-10.0302]
- Authorization of special offerings.[G10.0102(i)]
- Annual review of staff compensation. [G-10.0102(n)]
- Session's approval of the annual budget [G-10.0102(i)].
- Annual election of church treasurer by the Session [G-10.04011]
- Receipt of church treasurer's reports, including mission treasurer's reports if separate. (It is recommended that the minutes show the opening balance, total receipts, total disbursements, and closing balance or some other overview indicating a clear understanding of the financial status.) [G-10.0401(c)]
- Annual audit of all church funds. [G-10.0401d]
- Approval of the Session Annual Statistical Report, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), on membership and finances. (It is recommended that Session authorize that the report be appended to the minutes) [G-10.0102p(7)]
- Composition of the session with regard to racial ethnic members, women, men, and age groups, and how this corresponds to the composition of the congregation. [G-10.0301]
- Appointment of commissioners to presbytery and subsequent report following attendance. [G-10.0102p(1)]
- Call of the congregational and corporation meetings properly made in advance of the time needed for public notice. The Call as authorized by the Session should be reported in the minutes [G-7.0303]
- Session approval granted for addition of extraneous material to the minutes.
Example: A copy of the Statistical Report.
- Receipt of report of Committee on Church Records and Oversight. (It is recommended that any exceptions be noted in the minutes and any action or directives by the session in response to the review be recorded.) [G9.0407(a)]
- Minutes of any congregational/corporate meetings with confirmation of proper public notice of the call and the presence of a quorum.[G7.0303(b)]
- Approval by the congregation/corporation of the minutes of the congregational/corporate meeting. These minutes shall be attested to by the signatures of the Moderator/presiding officer and the Clerk/Secretary.[G7.0307]
- Proper nomination and election of church officers, being placed in nomination by church's nominating committee and a call for nominations from the floor. [G14.0204(b)]
- Names and terms of office of elected elders, deacons, and trustees and the names of those being succeeded.
- Report the completion of a period of study and preparation and the examination by Session of newly-elected Elders and Deacons, prior to ordination. [G10.0102(l) and G-14.0205]
- Authorization of ordination of newly-elected officers, with names and date; and the fact that the ordination and/or installation took place, with names and date. [G14.0205]
- At least one joint meeting of the Session with the Deacons annually. [G6.0405]
- Approval by the congregation of the compensation of an installed pastor.[G-7.0302a]

Revised: November 7, 2001