

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWING SYNOD RECORDS

Approved by the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly
January 16, 2020

Content of the Minutes

The following matters shall be included in the minutes, as applicable:

1. The minutes shall contain a table of contents.
2. The date, time, and place of the council meeting; the name of the moderator presiding; and whether it is a “stated,” “adjourned,” or “special” council meeting (*Robert’s Rules*, Chapter XV, Section 48).
3. The call of the special meeting and the name of requester(s) and/or the caller in accordance with Synod’s own rules (G-3.0405 and *Robert’s Rules*, Chapter IV, Section 9).
4. The opening of each meeting with prayer (G-3.0105).
5. The closing of each meeting with prayer (G-3.0105).
6. The roll of commissioners in attendance and their presbyteries (G-3.0104).
7. The names of absentees and their presbyteries.
8. A statement that a quorum was present. (G-3.0405).
9. A record of the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, if applicable (G-3.0401b).
10. The report of the Committee on Representation (G-3.0103, G-3.0401) showing implementation of the principles of participation and inclusiveness in order to assure fair representation in decision-making (G-3.0401).
11. The names of members of commissions, committees, and similar groups, including those groups that exist only during a synod meeting.
12. Action taken on reports and recommendations and all reports with clear indication of amendments.
13. The decisions of the Permanent Judicial Commission and other commissions should be reported. A report should be made that lawful injunctions to the presbyteries have been obeyed.
14. Actions concerning the organization of new presbyteries or the division, uniting, or otherwise combining of presbyteries or portions of presbyteries previously existing, subject to the approval of the General Assembly (G-3.0403c).
15. The review of the records of presbyteries, including any exceptions taken (G-3.0403, G-3.0108a).
16. The report of the synod entities, if any, and action on its recommendations (G3.0108a).
17. The approved synod budget (G-3.0113).
18. The complete report of the full financial review (G-3.0113).
19. Report of its ecumenical relationship, if any (G-5.01, 5.04).

20. Indication that the minutes have been approved by the synod according to its own rule prior to presentation of the peer review.

21. A record of the synod having considered matters referred to it by the General Assembly (G-3.0402).

22. An alphabetical roster of former members for the last six years of the Permanent Judicial Commission who may be called upon when necessary to constitute a quorum (D-5.0206b).

23. A report of property and liability insurance carried by the Synod (G-3.0112).

24. Actions taken by synod entities/commissions held between synod meetings.

General Provisions

1. Each synod shall deliver to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, ~~during the spring meeting to peer review minutes,~~ one copy of the minutes of all sessions of the synod that have occurred since the last review by the General Assembly, provided that such minutes have been approved by the synod or its authorized committee, ~~and have been printed or duplicated for distribution.~~

2. ~~5. [The minutes shall include revisions to]~~ attestation of the existence of bylaws and standing rules and all policies required by the Book of Order **[or attestation of the existence of these instruments,]** with the date of approval and/or date of revision.

3. ~~4. [The m]~~Minutes shall be **[electronically]** signed and attested by **[the]** stated clerk of the synod; such signature should appear at the end of the journal before any attachments.

4. ~~2. The minutes shall be bound in a manner that is consistent with the needs of both protection and accessibility~~**[submitted in the PDF or PDF/A file format].**

5. ~~3. The title page~~**[An approval letter]** shall show attestation that the minutes of meetings of the most recent previous session or sessions have been reviewed by the General Assembly and shall give page references to action on exceptions, if there be such.

6. The review of the minutes of each synod shall occur as peer reviews by a gathering of all synod stated clerks. Their written review of each synod minutes shall be submitted to the General Assembly Committee assigned the review of the minutes, who shall attest that the minutes of each synod have been reviewed. If peer review is not completed, the synod shall submit its minutes for review by the General Assembly Committee charged with overseeing this review.

7. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly shall ~~deposit with~~**[transfer to]** the Presbyterian Historical Society a ~~certified~~**[the signed, electronic]** copy**[ies]** of the synod minutes ~~after they have been approved by the General Assembly~~**[and their corresponding approval letters for preservation].**

Report of the Assembly Committee

1. The assembly committee reviewing synod minutes shall be resourced by at least two current Synod Stated Clerks chosen by at the peer review.

2. The assembly committee reviewing synod minutes shall report to the General Assembly as evidenced by the report of the Synod Stated Clerks whether the

- a. proceedings have been correctly recorded;
- b. proceedings have been regular and in concurrence with the Constitution;
- c. proceedings have been prudent and equitable;
- d. proceedings have been faithful to the mission of the whole church, and

e. lawful injunctions of the General Assembly have been obeyed.

3. The assembly committee shall include in its report recommended corrective actions to be taken by the General Assembly regarding irregularities or delinquencies identified as exceptions in the written review of each synod's minutes by the peer review conducted by the synod stated clerks.