

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

RULES OF ASSEMBLY OPERATIONS **AMENDMENTS ADOPTED BY THE 47th GENERAL ASSEMBLY** **2019**

ITEM 1. Amend **RAO 11-5** (to Prevent Confusion and Possible Contradictory Actions on Overtures by Multiple Committees of Commissioner) as follows (proposed additions underlined):

11-5. Upon receipt the Stated Clerk shall refer all overtures requesting amendment of the *Book of Church Order* or the *Rules of Assembly Operations* to the Committee on Constitutional Business for its advice to the Overtures Committee. Upon receipt, the Stated Clerk shall forward all overtures concerning presbytery boundaries or a new presbytery to the permanent Committee on Mission to North America. Any overture, other than an overture proposing amendment to the Constitution (which shall be referred to the Committee on Constitutional Business for its advice to the Overtures Committee), having to do with the nature or responsibilities of a permanent Committee or Agency shall be referred by the Clerk to the appropriate permanent Committee or Agency or ad interim committee. All other overtures shall be referred to the Overtures Committee. An overture proposing amendment to the Constitution shall be referred only to the Overtures Committee for consideration and recommendation; such an overture, however, may be referred to other Committees of Commissioners, other permanent Committees or Agencies, or other ad interim committees for advice only, to the Overtures Committee. All overtures shall be published in the *Commissioner Handbook* with reference for consideration indicated.

Grounds: This Overture is needed to prevent contradictory recommendations on overtures from multiple committees with respect to Constitutional amendments.

ITEM 2. Amend **RAO 11 and 13** (to Disallow Memorials) by adding a new **RAO 11-12**, by revising **RAO 13-2** by adding a final sentence, and by striking **RAO 13-6** in its entirety. All parts to be considered as a single proposal, considered together. (Underlining for proposed additions; strike-through for proposed deletions.)

Add new RAO 11-12.

11-12. No communication or overture shall be received that seeks to memorialize someone.

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Revise RAO 13-2 by adding new final sentence.

13-2. New business must be presented to the General Assembly before the recess of the afternoon session on the second day of business, and if it was not first presented as an overture to a Presbytery, the proposal must include an explanation for why it was not. If received by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the commissioners present and voting, [it] shall be referred by the Stated Clerk to the appropriate committee of commissioners. No proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be received as new business. No proposal that seeks to memorialize someone shall be received as new business.

Strike all of RAO 13-6.

~~**13-6.** Any overture that deals with a memorial resolution which honors a recently deceased Teaching Elder or Ruling Elder and is received by the Stated Clerk within thirty days of the convening of a General Assembly shall be received by the Assembly and included by the Stated Clerk in the minutes of the General Assembly, if the overture 1) has been approved by a Presbytery, 2) memorializes an elder who has played a significant role in the General Assembly, and 3) is no longer than one thousand words. Ordinarily, memorial resolutions shall not be read to the Assembly.~~

Grounds: While Memorial overtures have historical precedent in the PCA, recent history suggests that they may be problematic. There is no provision in the RAO to prevent negative content from being included. There is also no good mechanism for determining who should or should not be memorialized by the Assembly.

ITEM 3. Amend RAO 16-4.c.1 to add “and their status” after “with their addresses” in reference to the current directory (underlining for proposed additional wording).

16-4

- c. In addition to the minutes themselves, the presbytery shall submit three (3) copies of the following items:
 - 1) A current Directory of Presbytery, including (1) a list of all teaching elders, with their addresses; and of all churches and missions with the address of the church, and the name and address of the Clerk of Session, (2) a listing of all officers and committee members of the regular committees of presbytery, and (3) a list identifying all candidates under care, interns, and licentiates of the presbytery with their addresses and their status.

Rationale: If the status is not present, there is no way to determine whether annual reports were received for teaching elders without call or laboring out of bounds.

ITEM 4. Amend RAO 16-4.a as follows (strike-through for proposed deletion; underlining for proposed additional wording):

16-4

- a. The stated clerk of each presbytery is to provide the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly with ~~three (3)~~ copies of all minutes to be reviewed, in one of two formats: (1) four bound, paginated hard-copies or (2) two bound, paginated hard-copies and one paginated digital copy (preferably as a single document).

Rationale: See Item 5.

ITEM 5: Amend RAO 16-4.d as follows (strike-through for proposed deletion; underlining for proposed additional wording):

16-4

- d. The minutes are to be reviewed and the items listed under 16-4c shall be mailed to the office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly ~~not less than sixty (60) days prior to the opening of the Assembly by~~ March 15 each year.

Sub-Committee Rationale for amendments to RAO 16-4 a and d

1. The dates would be as follows: Presbyteries file Minutes by March 15. Minutes are sent to Read Committees by April 1. Read Committees electronically file their reports May 1.
2. This will expedite RPR business.
3. This will provide a more thorough review because three RPR members, rather than two, will read the entirety of a Presbytery's minutes.
4. Unlike our present practice, the new rule requires the three-reader committee to interact on a Presbytery's minutes in order to adopt a recommendation for each of four items: (1) judgment on Responses, (2) any exceptions of substance, (3) any exceptions of form, and (4) any notations.
5. RAO only requires: "Each set of Presbytery minutes and other material submitted under RAO 16-4c *should be read by at least two members* of the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records." (RAO 16-6.b). RAO does not require second readers.
6. This would allow *all initial motions* for each Presbytery to be in hand prior to the convening of the RPR meeting in May.
7. Presbyteries would be encouraged to also file its minutes electronically, which could be forwarded to the Read Committees. This would also allow Read Committees to cut-and-paste directly from Minutes (e.g., the exact wording of an examinee's stated difference).