

SESSION RECORDS

The Stated Clerk's Office offers a Handbook for Session Clerks for download on our website here: <http://www.pcaac.org/presbyterydownloads/>

Nothing in the *BCO* addresses the duties of the Clerk of the Session other than *BCO* 12 (specifically 12-6, 7, 8). *Robert's Rules of Order, 10th Edition*, page 531, "The secretary [clerk] is elected viva voce in the same manner as the chairman. When the secretary has been elected, he should take his seat near the chairman and keep a record of the proceedings."

I. DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY/CLERK [from *RRO, 10th Edition*, page 442-3]

1. To keep a record of all the proceedings of the organization--usually called the *minutes*.
2. To keep on file all committee reports.
3. To keep the organization's official membership roll (unless another officer or staff member has this duty); and to call the roll where it is required.
4. To make the minutes and records available to members upon request (see below)
5. To notify officers, committee members, and delegates of their election or appointment, to furnish committees with whatever documents are required for the performance of their duties, and to have on hand at each meeting a list of all existing committees and their members.
6. To furnish delegates with credentials.
7. To sign all certified copies of acts of the society, unless otherwise specified in the bylaws.
8. To maintain record book(s) in which the bylaws, special rules of order, standing rules, and minutes are entered, with any amendments to these documents properly recorded, and to have the current record book(s) on hand at every meeting. [Sessional Record Books can be obtained from the Christian Education Bookstore, 1-800-283-1357, www.cepbookstore.com. They contain acid free paper for archive purposes.]
9. To send out to the membership a notice of each meeting, known as the *call* of the meeting, and to conduct the general correspondence of the organization--that is, correspondence that is not a function proper to other offices or to committees.
10. To prepare, prior to each meeting, an order of business for the use of the presiding officer, showing in their exact order, under the correct headings, all matters known in advance that are due to come up and--if applicable--the times for which they are set.
11. In the absence of the president and vice-president, to call the meeting to order and preside until the immediate election of a chairman pro tem.

II. GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING AND EXAMINING SESSION MINUTES

"Minutes" are a permanent record in an orderly form.

PERMANENT

- All minutes should be typed or legibly written in ink.
- All minutes should be kept in a bound volume for permanent record with the name of the Church appearing on the cover of the volume. Loose-leaf notebook is acceptable.

RECORD

- Include the date of celebration of the Lord's Supper, record of baptisms, the manner of reception and dismissal of members. If a member is dropped from the rolls, the Clerk must state the reason and refer to the appropriate article in the *BCO* (*BCO* 12-5).

- A copy of the annual budget approved by the Session and the annual statistical report should be attached annually (*BCO* 12-5).
- Joint meetings of the Session and Diaconate should be recorded, keeping in mind that no joint actions can be taken (*BCO* 9-4) and that notations should be made when the Session approves the minutes of the Diaconate (*BCO* 9-4; 12-5).
- The minutes should include the names of delegates to Presbytery or General Assembly as well as the report they make to the Session after Presbytery or General Assembly (*BCO* 12-5).

ORDERLY

- Every Session must meet at least once quarterly (*BCO* 12-6) and submit their minutes annually for Presbytery's review (*BCO* 12-7).
- Follow Parliamentary procedure in accordance with *The Book of Church Order* and *Robert's Rules of Order* as approved by the General Assembly.
- Each action should be put in the form of a motion, with a second and notation of whether the motion passed or failed. The Clerk should not write his personal opinion in the minutes, but notes may be made for historical purposes.
- The minutes of each meeting should be approved at that meeting or at the following meeting. This should be done by way of a motion.
- The Clerk must sign each set of Session minutes. Congregational meetings' minutes must be included and signed by the Moderator and the elected Clerk.

FORM

- Opening - At every meeting the Clerk should record the date, time, and place of the meeting, the names of those present, absent, and excused. The names of visitors should be recorded. The Clerk should note whether a given meeting is Stated or Called.
- Pages should be consecutively numbered, leaving no blank pages between meetings and no records left unattached.
- The minutes are to show that the meeting was opened and closed with prayer (*BCO* 12-9).
- Presbytery's Committee to Examine Session Minutes shall report its findings using the terminology employed by the General Assembly in its *Rules for Assembly Operations (RAO)*, Article 16 (exceptions of form and exceptions of substance), and Sessions shall respond to exceptions of substance Presbytery finds by the same procedure specified in the *RAO*.

REVIEWERS REPORT FORM FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF SESSIONAL RECORDS

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer either "yes" or "no" in the first blank and record page numbers where applicable in the second blank. Make two (2) copies. The original is inserted in the Session Minutes Book, and the copy is kept by the Committee on Court Duties.

NAME OF CHURCH _____

Reviewed pages _____ thru _____. Reviewed Period (dates) _____ thru _____.

	Y/N	PAGE # (S)
1. Church name appears on the outside of the front cover.	_____	_____
2. "Guidelines for Keeping Session Minutes" posted inside front cover.	_____	_____
3. A. The pages are numbered.	_____	_____
B. Each page contains information (no blanks).	_____	_____
4. A. The date of each meeting is recorded.	_____	_____
B. The place of each meeting is recorded.	_____	_____
C. The type (stated or called) of each meeting is recorded.	_____	_____
5. A. Record of quorum present at each meeting (BCO 12-1,7)	_____	_____
B. There is a record of the names of those present or absent.	_____	_____
C. There is a record of invitation to seat non-members.	_____	_____
6. A. When the pastor (moderator) was absent, there is a record of appointment of a moderator. (BCO 12-2, 3)	_____	_____
B. When the clerk of session was absent, record election of acting clerk.	_____	_____
7. A. Each meeting was opened with prayer. (BCO 12-9)	_____	_____
B. Each meeting was closed with prayer. (BCO 12-9)	_____	_____
8. A. When new members are enrolled, there is a record of how received (profession of faith, transfer of letter, or re-affirmation of faith).	_____	_____
B. When new members are enrolled by transfer of letter, there is a record of the name and location of the church from which they came.	_____	_____
C. When members are dismissed, there is a record of the name and location of the church to which they were transferred.	_____	_____
9. A. Record of election of ruling elder commissioner(s) to Stated Presbytery meetings. (January, April, July, October)	_____	_____
B. Record of reports to Session by commissioners to Presbytery. (January, April, July, October)	_____	_____
10. A. Record of election of commissioner(s) to General Assembly. (June)	_____	_____
B. Record of report to session by commissioner to General Assembly.	_____	_____
11. Record of an annual (quarterly or monthly) examination of the minutes of the Board of Deacons. (BCO 9-4)	_____	_____
12. Record of Session approval of annual statistical report.	_____	_____
13. Record of stated times the Lord's Supper was observed during the year. (BCO 58-1)	_____	_____
14. A. Record of the Call and Purpose of each congregational meeting.	_____	_____
B. Record of names of officers elected, their examination and/or date to be installed.	_____	_____

15. Minutes of any ordination and/or installation services as Called meetings of _____
the Session in the presence of the congregation for the officers elected by
the congregation.
16. A. Signature of moderator at the end of minutes. _____
B. Signature of the clerk of session at the end of minutes. _____
17. Session held at least four stated meetings during the year (*BCO* 12-6) _____
18. In a judicial case before the Session, there is a record of full _____
proceedings as required in the rules of discipline. (*BCO*, Part II)
19. Note of its annual review and accuracy, of its record of "baptism of _____
communing members, of non-communing members, and of deaths
and dismission of church members." (*BCO* 12-8)
20. Minutes of previous meetings were read and approved by Session. _____
21. OTHER COMMENTS: _____

Signed by Reviewer: _____

Date Reviewed: _____