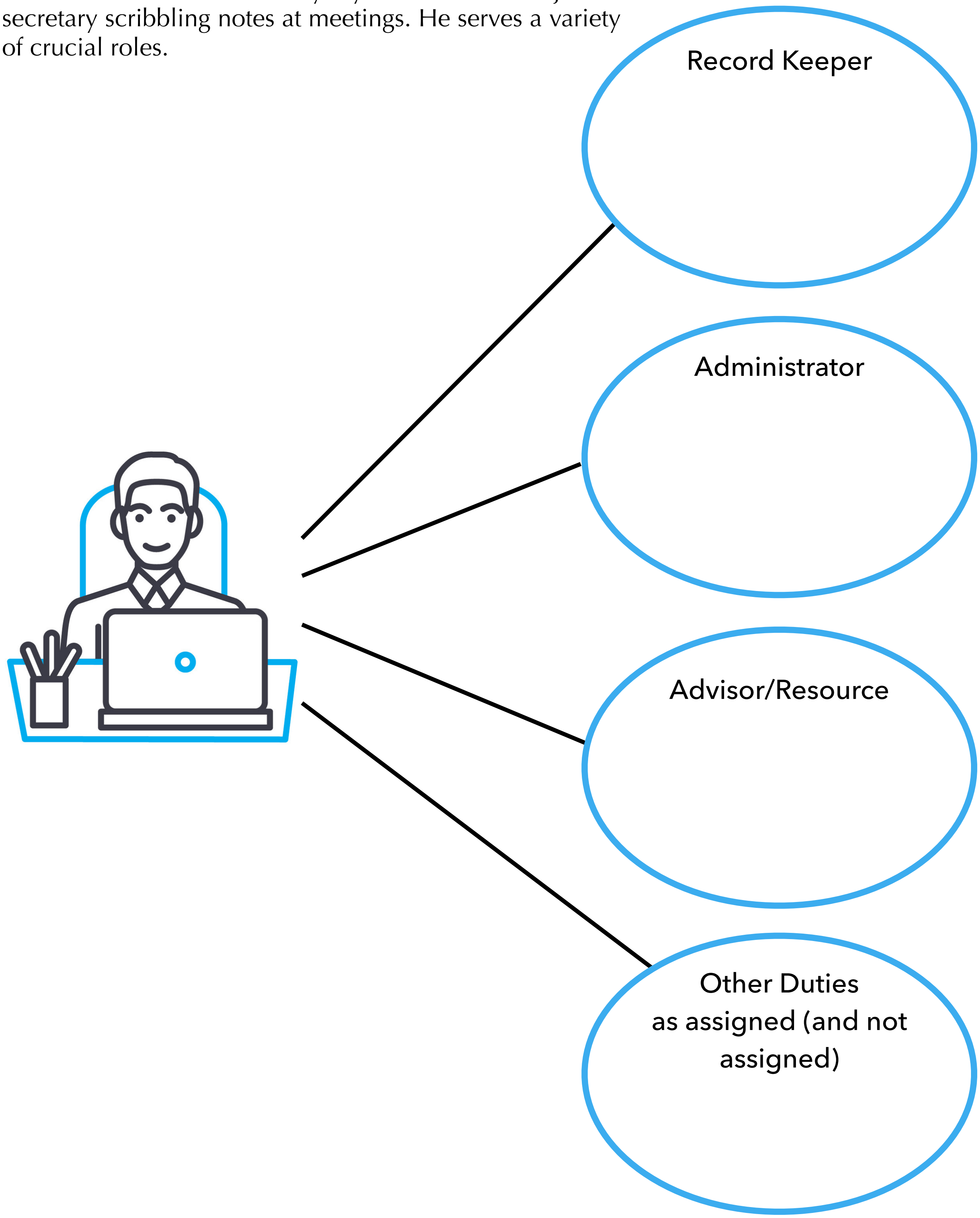
Role of the Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk of Presbytery is more than just a secretary scribbling notes at meetings. He serves a variety of crucial roles.



The Clerk is Presbytery's:

Personal Assistant

Other Duties as assigned (and not assigned)

Pretty much anything that Presbytery wants—whether stated somewhere or not

The Prepared One

Helping Presbytery to think deeper about issues and see what is behind what is before them

Awareness

Background

Understanding

Google

Advisor/Resource

The place to ask any question that comes up

Parliamentarian

BCO and Robert's Rules (12th ed.)

Presbytery Resource

General place to ask questions

Clearing House

Chief Administrative Officer for Presbytery

The one who gets done what needs to get done

Communication

Both communication to Presbytery and on behalf of Presbytery

Paperwork

Tracking Presbytery's Actions

More than Minutes

Presbytery Records

A Presbytery's records are more than their minutes.

Help for the Overwhelmed

Resources available for you

1. ***Handbook for Presbytery Clerks***
   Available from the Presbytery Clerks Download page (below).

2. **Presbytery Clerks Download Page**
   https://www.pcaac.org/resources/presbyteries/presbytery-clerks-download-page/

3. **The Stated Clerk and his office**
   Dr. Bryan Chappell and the staff of his office are there to support us as clerks. You can reach them by calling the Stated Clerks office or find their emails on https://www.pcaac.org/staff/. Those of the staff with whom you are most likely to deal with are:

   Dr. L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk Emeritus—questions about the *BCO*, procedures, etc.
   Dr. Dixie Zietlow, Business Administrator—questions about operations, finances, etc.
   Heidi Harrison, Operations Manager—the clearinghouse for any question; she'll get you connected to the right person
   Monica Johnston, Database Secretary—anything involving Presbytery rolls and the information the Portal
   Margie Mallow, RPR Administrative Assistant—anything involving RPR and the review of your Presbytery's records.

4. **Conference**: 1st Friday & Saturday of December
   This is a conference of, by, and for the stated clerks of presbyteries. It offers components of camaraderie, support, and consistency.
   - Camaraderie to enforce the sense that we are all in this together
   - Support to validate each man's efforts to faithfully carry out his duties through prayer, companionship, and encouragement
   - Consistency (not necessarily uniformity) to ensure that we are functioning in relative unison across the denomination

5. **The Other Clerks**
   You are not alone. There are 87 other men in the same position. We are a connectional church and there are a number of ways that we support each other.

   5.1. Email list
   There is an email list of clerks and a few others (e.g., former clerks and selected staff) where questions can be posted, advice or examples sought, etc. To subscribe, speak with Heidi Harrison (hharrison@pcanet.org).

   5.2. Mentoring
   New clerks can be connected with an experienced clerk, who will reach out to them occasionally to check in on how they are doing and give them another clerk that they have personally connected with to whom they can reach out with questions they don't want to ask on the general email list. To receive a mentor, contact Per Almquist (per.almquist@freegrace.us).

   5.3. Personal Contact
   Every presbytery clerk knows the difficulties of the job and we are all willing to help each other out. Call or email any other clerk and they will happily help any way that they can.

Behind the Minutes

Why we keep minutes

An official record of the actions of Presbytery

> The purpose of records is not to give nit-picky elders something to argue over. Their real importance is for the peace and purity of the church.

The details included are there in order to make sure that we have done our duty as elders

Why Review and Control (*BCO* 40; *RAO* 16)

- To make sure that we have adequate records of our actions for our benefit
- To review our actions for the glory of God and peace and purity of the Church

Remember: these are Presbytery's records, not yours

Philosophy of Minutes

No comprehensive list
but *RAO* 16-3: Guidelines for Keeping Presbytery Minutes

> However, there is a philosophical decision that each Presbytery must make: how much to include in their records.

Factors to consider:
- confidentiality
- review & control
- historical record
- Presbytery's personal record

Attachments/Appendices

Permanent Copies

Guidelines for Keeping Presbytery Minutes

What follows are some of the more common items that are required to be in the minutes. Unless otherwise noted, the following requirements come from *BCO* 13 or *RAO* 16-3.

Items that Should Be Included Every Meeting

1. The kind of meeting: stated, called, or adjourned
2. Opened and closed in prayer
3. The date, time, and place of the meeting
4. The name of the moderator
5. Those present and absent and whether absences are excused or unexcused.
6. All actions and motions are to be clearly recorded
7. Time the meeting opened and adjourned
8. Approval of current or previous minutes
9. Minutes should be signed by the clerk
10. Reports on interns (*BCO* 19-12)
11. Written reports presented

Items that Should Be Included when Appropriate

1. The numbers of votes when a count has been ordered or it is by ballot
2. Exceptions to minutes by General Assembly together with the responses adopted by the Presbytery
3. The minutes of each commission erected
4. <u>All</u> the elements of an examination, including a candidate's sessional endorsement and 6-month membership
5. The approval of the specific arrangements of a call
6. Minister's, ministerial candidate's , and licensure candidates stated differences in their own words and Presbytery's judgment of their differences according to the specified options
7. The signing of ministerial obligation forms whenever a TE is received into membership

At Least Annually

1. Reports on candidates (*BCO* 18-6)
2. Reports from TEs laboring out of bounds (*BCO* 8-7), including chaplains (*BCO* 8-8)
3. Reports from TEs without call (*BCO* 13-2)
4. The review of Sessional records from each church (*BCO* 13-9.b, 40-1)
5. Exceptions to minutes by General Assembly and Presbytery's response (*RAO* 16-10)

General Tips

1. Make motions easy to identify. It is helpful to bold the disposition of a motion (for example, "It was **MSC** to…"). The use of **MSC** / **MSA** / **MSP** to denote moved, seconded, carried/agreed/passed is acceptable.
2. Every main motion should be in a separate paragraph but motions to amend, etc. may be included in the paragraph with the main motion to which they pertain.
3. Numbering each item of business makes the minutes clearer and easier to follow.
4. Pages should be numbered (*RAO* 16-3.b). Keeping a sequential numbering through the entire year (e.g., 2023-1), makes finding things in the future even easier.
5. Motions that fail are not required to be recorded, but may be, if significant.
6. Noting on each set of minutes when they were approved makes it easy to track that every set of minutes has been approved and none were missed.
7. Establishing a template for meeting minutes and for specific items that are handled will help to ensure that all required actions and elements are properly taken and recorded.

Executive Session

Any meeting or portion of a meeting at which the proceedings are confidential

Closed Session: any meeting or portion of a meeting at which only members of the Presbytery are to be present

> Executive sessions are covered in *Robert's Rules*, RONR (12th ed), 9.24-27

Some notes on executive sessions:

1. Any non-Presbytery members who need to be present must be authorized by motion.
2. Discussion and action taken in executive session should not be discussed outside of executive session.
3. Action taken in executive session that is public in nature (e.g., excommunication or the deposition from office of a teaching elder) is considered a public action.
4. Even though confidential, minutes must be kept for executive sessions and must be submitted for review.
5. Minutes of executive sessions must be discussed and approved in executive session.
6. If an executive session consisted of only discussion with no action having been taken, or the only action taken was public by nature, separate minutes do not need to be kept. In this case, the minutes should include a note indicating that.

Example when no separate minutes are kept:

It was **MSC** to enter executive session. It was **MSC** to allow John Doe to remain.

It was **MSC** to approve the minutes of the executive session from the January 19, 2023 stated meeting.

It was **MSC** to rise from executive session. No other actions were taken in executive session and no separate minutes were kept.

Example when separate minutes are kept:

It was **MSC** to enter executive session. It was **MSC** to rise from executive session with prayer. Minutes from this session were kept separately.