

RULES OF PROCEDURE

CLASSIS BRITISH COLUMBIA NORTH-WEST
of the
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

MISSION STATEMENT: Classis BCNW is a community of Christian Reformed Churches from Central BC, Vancouver Island and the Metro Vancouver region that exists to encourage, empower, and support the local church in its ministry and, when prudent, come alongside the local church to support its ministry for mutual accountability and to advance and teach the religious tenets, doctrines, observances and culture associated with Christian Reformed faith and doctrine.

I. CONVENING AND CONSTITUTION OF CLASSIS

- A. Classis shall convene and be constituted:
1. As prescribed by the Church Order and these Rules of Procedure.
 2. Normally on the first Tuesday and Wednesday of March and the first Tuesday and Wednesday of October.
 3. In extraordinary meetings convened:
 - a. Upon the decision of classis.
 - b. Upon the decision of classis in *Classis Contracta* with a quorum of half the churches of classis plus one. (Acts of Synod 2000, p. 668)
 - c. Upon the request of a church to the Classical Ministry Interim Committee for the purpose of conducting a *Colloquium Doctum* or the examination of its minister-elect.
 - d. Upon the request of at least three churches to the Classical Ministry Interim Committee.
- B. Classis Meeting:
1. Classis shall consist of two delegates from each church, usually one minister or commissioned pastor, and one elder or deacon. Churches shall still send two delegates when a church does not have a minister or commissioned pastor, or such person is unable to attend.
 2. Classical delegates will be reimbursed for travel and loss of wages up to the amount determined by classis and at their request. Request for reimbursement for expenses to be made to the Classical Treasurer, by means of the expense committee, on the first day of the meeting of classis. For wage loss, all requests to be submitted to the stated clerk.
 3. All meetings of classis shall be open to office bearers of the churches within classis. They shall have the right of the floor upon the permission of the assembly. The public may attend the meeting unless classis decides to meet in executive session.

II. MATTERS LEGALLY BEFORE CLASSIS

A. Overtures:

Councils or individuals presenting overtures to classis shall send a copy to the Stated Clerk at least 7 weeks before classis convenes. (See appendix #1 for regulations and formatting guidelines for overtures.)

B. Reports:

1. Classical committees, and delegates to various denominational boards and committees, shall forward their reports to the Stated Clerk seven weeks before the meeting of classis for inclusion in the agenda. If the timing of the board meeting does not allow these delegates to follow this procedure, they shall present written reports for all Classical delegates at the beginning of the meeting they are to present to. Ordinarily, reports shall not be read on the floor of classis.

2. Ministry Reporting:

- a. All classical interim ministries teams and standing committees shall report to each classis meeting.
- b. All denominational boards and ministry representatives shall verbally report to classis on a rotating schedule, approximately every 2 to 3 years. They may, however, report to each classis agenda by way of a written report, if needed. CMIC shall provide a rotation schedule for reporting from these Ministries and Boards.
- c. All non-denominational ministries shall not normally report to classis except in written form. These ministries are encouraged to report directly to the churches.

C. Matters Presented on the Credentials:

When submitting their Classical Credentials churches may request advice or help from classis with regards to a ministry issue. These issues are to be reviewed by the credentials committee and reported to each classis meeting. At a minimum of one meeting annually sufficient time shall be allocated to discuss at least one ministry issue that the classis considers to be especially important.

D. Appeals:

Individual members presenting appeals to classis shall submit copies of such appeals to their council in sufficient time for their consideration.

E. Exception:

Materials not appearing on the agenda or credentials may be taken up by special decision of classis.

III. CLASSIS OFFICERS AND FUNCTIONARIES

A. Classis shall appoint:

1. For each of its sessions, ministers or commissioned pastors to serve by rotation as:
 - a. President, Vice-president, and Recording Clerk.
 - b. Each minister, or commissioned pastor, shall successively serve as Vice-

- president, President, and Recording Clerk according to the alphabetical order of the churches they serve.
2. A Stated Clerk and an alternate:
 - a. These shall serve for a three year term, and will be eligible for additional terms.
 - b. Classis shall provide an honorarium to the Stated Clerk. This honorarium shall be reviewed every two years by the CMIC and brought in line with a mean average for all Canadian classes (if needed).
 3. A Classical Treasurer and an alternate:
 - a. These shall serve for a three year term, and will be eligible for additional terms.
 - b. Classis shall provide an honorarium to the Classical Treasurer. This honorarium shall be reviewed every two years by the CMIC and brought in line with a mean average for all Canadian classes (if needed).
 4. A qualified person to serve as Auditor:
 - a. Upon the recommendation of the Classical Ministry Interim Committee.
 - b. The auditor shall serve a two-year term and be eligible for additional terms.
 5. Church Visitors:
 - a. Shall ordinarily be constituted by one minister of the Word, or commissioned pastor, plus an additional office-bearer of each church.
 - b. In cases of need, the CMIC may appoint a team of two or three visitors constituted from any church in classis.
 6. Church Counselors: to serve vacant churches according to the rules of Synod.
- B. All classical functionaries and committee members shall ordinarily be elected and appointed at the March meeting. (See VI.A.1.-8. for general provisions for committees)

IV. THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

- A. The President:
1. Shall assume the chairmanship of classis only for the duration of its meeting.
 2. Shall call for the credentials of the delegates, and have all first-time delegates sign the *Covenant for Office bearers*.
 3. Shall welcome fraternal delegates and/or guests to classis, respond to greetings received or appoint delegates of classis for this purpose.
 4. Shall not preside in any matter that concerns the chair or the church the chair serves.
- B. The Vice-President:
1. Shall render all possible assistance to the President.
 2. Shall conclude the meeting of classis with devotions.
- C. The Recording Clerk:
1. Shall record in the concept minutes the proceedings of the meeting of classis.
 2. Shall read the concept minutes only at the request of the chair. (Article 3.2, October 2014)

V. THE DUTIES OF OTHER CLASSICAL FUNCTIONARIES

A. The Stated Clerk:

1. Shall convene the meetings of classis ...
 - a. By notifying the churches of classis, the reporters of its committees, and its denominational board delegates approx. 14 weeks prior to the date of the meeting. (Classis Minutes, March 2002, p. 368, art. 14.2)
 - b. By preparing and sending the agenda to the councils, and others as needed, six weeks before classis meets.
2. Shall serve as the custodian of the seal, records, files and archives of classis.
3. Shall produce minutes from the concept minutes, and send them to each council and others as needed.
4. Shall keep an up-to-date record of the committees of classis and the terms of office of all classical functionaries.
5. Shall conduct the correspondence of classis.
6. Shall convene and meet with the Classical Ministries / Interim Committee to deal with all matters related to classis during the interim between its sessions.

B. The Classical Treasurer:

1. Shall receive and disburse the Ministry Shares approved by Classis and Synod.
2. Shall keep an accurate record of all funds received and disbursed and shall issue receipts for monies received.
3. Shall report to each classis meeting, and give an annual report to the March meeting.
4. Shall normally disburse funds at least 2 times during the fiscal year, in the months of July and January.
5. Shall have ex-officio privilege of the floor in the financial matters of classis.

C. The Classical Auditor:

1. Shall audit/review annually the work of the Classical Treasurer.
2. Shall submit a written report to the fall meeting of classis.

D. Church Visitors:

1. Shall visit the churches biennially according to the schedule prepared by the CMIC.
2. Shall present a written report of their work to classis in the fall meeting immediately following each visit. Unless there are matters of concern in the report, the reports need not be read on the floor of classis.
3. Shall distribute these reports as follows:
 - a. Send one copy to the church visited prior to reporting to classis.
 - b. Place one copy in each church file folder.
 - c. Send an electronic copy to the Stated Clerk who has to send a copy to the Historical Committee of CRC. (Note: see minutes of Mar '86 p.5, art.5.1.A.3.c)

E. Church Counselors:

1. Shall report on their work with the vacant church to classis annually.
2. Shall present a written report to classis upon completing their assignment.

VI. COMMITTEES/TEAMS (C/Ts)

A. General Provisions:

1. Classis is or may be served by 3 types of committees/teams (C/Ts):
 - a. Standing C/Ts serve permanently between the meetings of classis.
 - b. Advisory committees serve as appointed by the CMIC upon distribution of the agenda through the duration of the subsequent meeting of classis.
 - c. Ad hoc committees, e.g. a study committee, which serve between the meetings of classis.
2. To legitimately function all such C/Ts shall be appointed by classis.
3. C/T members shall be members in good standing of a church in Classis British Columbia North-West.
4. Members of a Standing C/T shall be elected for a 3-year term. (see III.B.), and shall be eligible for additional terms.
5. Ordinarily C/Ts shall submit nominations for each vacancy that occurs.
6. Alternate members no longer needed. (see Min 9/08; p484; art. 3.15, Rev. 1)
7. C/Ts are servants of classis and shall take action only within their mandate.
8. Each C/T, except the SFC [see VI.B.2.a.6).], shall submit a written or electronic report of its actions and recommendations in time for the agenda of each classis meeting.

B. Standing Committees/Teams:

1. Classical Ministry Interim Committee (CMIC):
 - a. Mandate: the Committee shall ...
 - 1) Act for classis between meetings in matters that require immediate action.
 - 2) Ensure that the provisions of the Church Order and Classis' Rules of Procedure are adhered to.
 - 3) Be responsible for church visitors, church counselors, classical examinations, licensure of exhorters, financial management, abuse response, other teams i.e., Ministry to Seafarers Committee, Student Fund Committee, and diaconal related ministries.
 - 4) Ensure that communication, coordination, collaboration, encouragement and vision for classis be maintained through direct consultation with all existing teams requiring additional expertise and input at a broader level.
 - 5) Will automatically grant licenses to officiate at weddings only to ordained ministers and commissioned pastors. All un-ordained ministry staff requests for licenses be reviewed by CMIC and only be granted with approval and supervision of local council. (Article 3.2 October 2014)
 - b. Membership shall consist of seven members: the Stated Clerk as leader, the Classical Treasurer; the chair of the Student Fund Committee, the elected alternate stated clerk and three at large members (preferably one from the Northern, one from the Island and one from the Lower Mainland churches), and the Safe Church Team Coordinator in an ex-officio capacity.
2. Student Fund Committee (SFC):

Note: SFC is distinct from the bi-classis CMLT with BCSE, although the SFC members from BCNW are automatically members of the bi-classis CMLT.

- a. Mandate: The Committee shall ...
 - 1) Encourage and receive applications for aid from this Fund from students who intend to study for the Christian Reformed Ministry at Synodically accepted colleges and seminaries. Students must ordinarily be from CRC churches within Classis B.C.N.W to receive funding / grants.
 - 2) Process all applications in accordance with SFC rules and conditions, and present them for approval to classis.
 - 3) Propose a classical Ministry Share and encourage special gifts for this Fund.
 - 4) Require students who have received aid but do not enter the Christian Reformed Ministry to repay the aid received.
 - 5) Require those who leave the Christian Reformed Ministry within five years of ordination to pay back proportionally their aid at the discretion of classis.
 - 6) Submit a written report of its actions and recommendations at least once each year in time for the agenda of the fall classis meeting.
 - b. Membership shall consist of three members (Rev.1). These members shall also serve on the bi-classis CMLT.
 - c. Classis entrusts the SFC to make decisions, including funding requests, after consultation with the CMIC, to be ratified by Classis rather than deciding their requests at regular Classis meeting. (March 2014 Article 3.5)
3. Classis Ministry Leadership Committee (CMLT):
As part of the CRC's revised process for equipping persons to enter ordained Ministry of the Word in the CRC, the Classis Ministry Leadership Team oversees this process at a Classis level.
- a. Mandate: The Committee shall...
 - 1) Advise and provide information to Councils, Classis and the LDN or anyone else interested in ordained ministry on the candidacy process.
 - 2) Encourage local churches to be pro-active in identifying possible candidates for CRC ministry, especially as young people search out God's will for their vocation in life or as older persons consider a change of calling toward ministry vocations.
 - 3) Oversee the application for and movement through the candidacy process for potential candidates for ministry and to present the appropriate progress reports and recommendations to Classis and the denominational Candidacy Committee (CC) when they are needed.
 - 4) Submit a written report and recommendations, including financial recommendations, to classis in time to be included in the agenda of each classis meeting
 - b. Membership shall consist of six members: three members from Classis BCNW (these members shall also serve on the SFC), and three members from Classis BCSE.
4. Ministry To Seafarers Committee (MSC):
- a. Mandate: The Committee shall...
 - a. Submit to classis nominations for each vacancy that occurs.

- b. Be responsible for the Ministry to Seafarers on behalf of both classes.
 - c. Supervise the work of the Chaplain.
 - d. Review the job description of the Chaplain annually.
 - e. Prepare a budget and submit it to both classes for approval.
 - f. Report to both classes.
- b. Membership shall consist of the Chaplain and 6 members who have shown interest in and commitment to the work among seafaring people, including the Classical Treasurer of Classis BCNW. Classes BCNW and BCSE shall have equal representation, and each classis may (Rev. 1) appoint an alternate.
5. Association for the Christian Reformed Campus Ministry in British Columbia:
- a. Mandate is given in the constitution and bylaws of the association.
 - b. Membership: The directors are to be nominated by the association and appointed by Classis. The number of directors is spelled out in the constitution and bylaws of the association.
6. Safe Church Team (SCT):
- The mandate for the SCT is being re-written in consultation with the SCT coordinator Faye Martin and our classis SCT rep. Currently the CMIC is acting as the executive board for the SCT as there is no team in place. Once reps from each church are identified and trained, they will become the board of the SCT and out of that group they will elect their own executive to oversee the work of the SCT and coordinator. Once that's all done, a new mandate for our ROP can be written, which may well include the old mandate with re-writes, updates and revisions.*
7. Nominations Committee:
- a. Mandate: The Committee shall ...
 - 1) Solicit the churches and committees/teams for nominees to serve in the various classical and denominational functions. The main functions to be filled are the following: classical committees/teams and standing committees, Council of Delegates (COD) of the CRCNA, Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary, Synodical Deputy, and classical delegates to Synod.
 - 2) Allow for additional nominations from the floor of classis. Nominations from the floor must have the approval of the person being nominated.
 - 3) Propose these nominees to classis by normally presenting a printed ballot listing all the nominees for the vacancies. Voice votes, with delegates' approval, are acceptable.
 - b. Membership shall consist of members from the CMIC (Rev. 1).
- C. Advisory Committees:
- 1. Advisory committees shall serve in order to facilitate the work of classis.
 - 2. Advisory Committees shall present their recommendations as motions, which need to be seconded from the floor.
 - 3. If any such motion is substantially different from an Overture or Study Committee report submitted to classis, the recommendations of the Overture or

Study Committee report shall take precedence.

4. The Classical Ministries / Interim Committee or Stated Clerk shall propose Committee members and the President of classis shall appoint them.

D. Ad Hoc / Study Committees:

1. Ad hoc or Study committees shall serve for a time and purpose as specified by classis and shall report as instructed by classis.
2. Classis may appoint Ad hoc or Study committees as the need arises.

VII. CLASSICAL APPOINTMENTS

A. Classical Appointment Guidelines (Revised October 2014):

1. Definition:

Classical appointments are preaching assignments given by Classis via the CMIC/Stated Clerk at the request of a church in need due to pastoral vacancy or leave. These are obligations to which the churches of Classis have covenanted together. So our churches are obligated to lend their minister to fulfill these assignments when made by Classis.

2. Guidelines:

- a. To receive classical appointments a vacant church must request them from the stated clerk.
- b. The stated clerk will prepare a schedule and send it to the churches and ministers involved.
- c. Assignments are normally for the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the months January to May and September to December. No assignments will be made for the months of June through August. In case of special services such as Thanksgiving, Easter, Christmas or any of the long stat weekends, then pulpit supply would be assigned for the following Sunday.
- d. If the churches and/or ministers desire to make changes in the schedule, they are expected to work them out between themselves and inform the stated clerk.
- e. A vacant church is obligated to pay the amount per service set by Classis to the church lending its minister. (\$125.00 per service). Note: In the case of a preacher without a church, the vacant church will pay the preacher directly. (see #4 below)
- f. In addition, the vacant church must pay the minister for his/her traveling expenses. Classis will reimburse the vacant church 50% of the traveling expenses. (see #2 below)
- g. Lodging and meals for the minister, if needed, are the responsibility of the vacant church if the minister accepts what the church provides. Otherwise he/she pays for it him/herself.

B. Reimbursements:

1. Vacant churches shall reimburse visiting ministers directly for their travel cost.
2. Classis will reimburse the vacant church 50% of the traveling expenses from the classical expense fund upon receipt of travelling documents.

3. Lodging and meals, if needed, is not included in the travel cost, but to be supplied by the vacant church.
4. The vacant church shall reimburse the church of the visiting minister \$125.00 per service as set by classis. In case the pastor assigned does not have a home church, (i.e. chaplains, commissioned pastors, candidates, retired pastors, youth pastors, seminary students, persons holding licensures to exhort, un-ordained ministry staff, other gifted individuals etc.) the payment of \$125 will go directly to the pastor/person assigned.

C. Notes:

1. Lodging: It has been customary that the pastor is put up by a family of the congregation. If the pastor does not like this arrangement he needs to discuss that with the church and see what other arrangement can be made. But this is not to be included in the travel cost and cannot be claimed from the Classical Expense Fund.
2. 2nd Service: If the hosting church normally has two services, arrangements must be made with the visiting pastor to see if he/she can do the second service. In case of the northern churches, please keep in mind that the 2nd service times may have to be altered so that the visiting pastor can make Sunday evening flights back to the lower mainland.
3. Pastors / Preachers: Ordinarily, Classis will assign an ordained pastor for the 1st Sunday of the month. The Classical appointment for the 3rd Sunday maybe filled with either an ordained pastor or else another preacher (i.e. commissioned pastor, licensed exhorter, seminary student, chaplain etc.).

VIII. EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES

- A. As soon as a candidate has accepted a call, the council shall notify the Stated Clerk.
- B. When a candidate accepts a call, the Stated Clerk shall request and receive from him:
 1. A copy of the Letter of Call and
 2. A copy of the letter of acceptance.
- C. The Classical Ministry/Interim Committee shall make arrangements for the examination, which shall be conducted according to the rules of Synod.

IX. DELEGATES TO SYNOD

- A. Classis shall elect at its fall meeting four delegates and their alternates to the annual Synod.
 1. The Minister delegate and their alternate are appointed by way of rotation as per classis rules of procedure for senior ministers who have served the longest within the classis and have not been delegated to a synod meeting. The alternate for this position would be the following year name on the rotation list.
 2. The elder delegate is selected by vote from a list of elder nominees presented to Classis for delegation to synod.
 3. The deacon delegate is selected by vote from a list of deacon nominees presented to Classis for delegation to synod.
 4. The fourth delegate and their alternate are selected by vote from a list of nominees

from any of the three offices presented to Classis for delegation to synod. This would include all ordained ministers within Classis BCNW and all elder and deacon nominees left over from the first round of elections. (Classis BCNW: Minutes March 1st & 2nd, 2016)

5. The elder and deacon not elected as the fourth delegate or the alternate, and who received the next highest number of votes in the elder and deacon delegate vote, will become the alternate elder and deacon delegate.

- B. Elders and/or deacons delegated to Synod can be reimbursed for loss of wages up to the amount determined by classis. Requests for reimbursement must be made to the Stated Clerk.

X. RULES OF ORDER

In our ecclesiastical assemblies, “ecclesiastical matters only shall be transacted and that in an ecclesiastical manner,” as Article 28 of our Church Order stipulates. Our classis meetings should therefore not be bound to observe detailed parliamentary rules. These may be proper in other gatherings, but they do not fit into the pattern of ecclesiastical assemblies, which demand a large measure of freedom in discussion and action. However, a few general rules of order may serve a good purpose.

A. Closed Sessions of Classis:

1. An executive session means a session of classis at which only the delegates, other ordained office bearers of Classis BCNW, and members of the CMIC are present. Classis shall not exercise the right to go into executive session except in unusual or delicate situations.
2. Strict executive session means only the delegates shall be present. Classis retains the right to go into strict executive session whenever it judges such a course is dictated by due regard for personal honor or the welfare of the church in very unusual situations.
3. The stated clerk, as an elected officer of classis, bound by the Covenant of Office Bearers, remains in attendance at either executive session even though he or she may not be a current sitting office bearer.

B. A Main Motion:

This is a motion that presents a certain subject to classis for its consideration or action.

1. A main motion is acceptable under the following conditions:
 - a. If the mover has been recognized by the President.
 - b. If it is seconded by a member of classis.
 - c. If the motion has been recognized as acceptable by the President.
 - d. If, at the request of the President, the motion has been presented in written form.
2. A main motion is not acceptable under the following conditions:
 - a. If it conflicts with the Church Order or is contrary to Scripture as interpreted in our Forms of Unity.
 - b. If another motion is before classis or if it conflicts with any decision already made by classis.

- c. If it is verbally or substantially the same as a motion already rejected by classis or if it interferes with the freedom of action by classis in a matter that was previously introduced but of which no disposal was made.

C. A Motion to Amend:

This is a proposal to alter a main motion in language or in meaning before final action is taken on the motion.

- 1. A motion to amend may propose any of the following: to strike out, to insert, or to substitute certain words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs.
- 2. A motion to amend an amendment is not a proper motion if it nullifies the main motion or is not germane to it.
- 3. A motion to amend is permissible and is called a secondary motion. (Only one motion to amend a pending amendment is in order at one time.)

D. A Motion To Defer, Table, Or Withhold Action:

- 1. When classis deems it advisable, it may table a motion temporarily. Tabling a motion implies that the assembly will resume consideration of the motion at a later hour or date.
- 2. If a matter has been deferred to a definite time, and classis is at that time busy with an undecided question, classis need not be disturbed or interrupted in its work by the consideration of postponed matters, if this matter can wait until the question before classis has been disposed of.
- 3. If classis prefers not to take action regarding a matter, it may adopt a motion to withhold action.

E. Objection to A Ruling of the President:

If any member is not satisfied with the ruling of the President, the matter is referred to classis for decision, with the Vice-President presiding over the challenge to the chair.

F. Right of Protest:

- 1. It is the right of any member to protest against any decision of classis. Protests should be registered immediately, or during the session in which the matter concerned was acted upon. Protests must be registered individually and not in groups.
- 2. Members may, if they feel the need, ask to have their negative vote recorded. Such requests must be made immediately after the vote is taken.

G. Call for a Division of the Question:

At the request of one or more members of classis, a motion consisting of more than one part must be divided and voted upon separately, unless classis decides that this is not necessary.

H. Procedural Inquiry:

Any member of classis may request advice of the President as to how to accomplish a purpose for which he does not know the proper means.

I. Motions to Bring Matters Once Decided Again Before Classis:

If any members of classis for weighty reasons desires reconsideration of a matter once decided, the following course may be pursued:

1. A motion may be offered to reconsider the matter. The purpose of this motion is to propose a new discussion and a new vote. (The motion must be made by one who voted with the prevailing side.)
2. A motion may be made to rescind a previous decision. The purpose of this motion is to annul or reverse such a previous decision. (Rescinding applies to decisions taken by the Classis in session; it does not apply to decisions taken by previous classes. A succeeding classis may alter the stand of a previous classis; or it may reach a conclusion which is at variance with a conclusion reached by an earlier classis. In such cases the most recent decision invalidates all previous decisions in conflict with it.)

J. Discussion:

1. A speaker to obtain the floor must be recognized by the President.
2. If a member having the floor should fail to adhere to the point under discussion or should become unnecessarily lengthy in his/her remarks, the President shall call his/her attention to these faults and insist on pointedness and brevity.
3. If any member has spoken twice on a pending issue, others who have not yet spoken twice shall ordinarily be given priority by the President.
4. When the President believes that a motion under consideration has been debated sufficiently, he may propose cessation of debate. If a majority of classis sustains this proposal, discussion shall cease and the vote shall be taken.
5. Whenever any member of classis deems a matter to have been debated sufficiently, the member may move to close the discussion. Those who call for the question shall be recognized in the same manner as others who gain the floor of classis, i.e. by taking their turn on the list of those who have requested the privilege of the floor. The vote on the motion to cease debate shall be taken at once. Should a majority be in favor of ceasing debate, the vote on the matter before classis shall be taken only after recognizing those who had previously requested the floor.

K. Voting:

The various methods of voting are:

1. By voice (Yes or No). This is the ordinary method of voting.
2. By the raising of the right hand so a count can be taken. The count is to be recorded by the Vice-president and clerk.
3. By ballot. In delicate cases of discipline and other matters of a personal or critical nature and/or of great importance, including the election of persons, and motions to admit candidates to the Ministry of the Word or office of Commissioned Pastor, classis shall vote by ballot.

L. Rule Changes:

These rules for classical procedure may be suspended, amended, revised, or abrogated by a majority vote of classis upon the recommendation by the Classical Ministry Interim Committee.

APPENDIX # 1

FORMATTING & PRESENTATION OF OVERTURES TO CLASSIS

A. Definition:

1. An overture is a request for action made by an assembly to a higher assembly, or by an individual to their council.
2. A council may overture Classis; a classis may overture Synod.
3. Individual members of churches may only overture a Classis or Synod after first overturing their Council and respective Classis. A council may only overture Synod after first overturing Classis. Only when overtures are not acceded to, do individuals, councils, and classis appeal by overturing a higher assembly.

B. Format:

1. The first part of the overture is a statement of three parts:
 - a. Who overtures whom – e.g., “the Council of 1st CRC overtures Classis BCNW”.
 - b. What specific action is being requested – e.g., “to instruct Classis BCNW to study...”.
 - c. What mode of implementation is being requested – e.g., to report to the Spring 2015 meeting of Classis BCNW”.
2. The second part of the overture is a presentation of grounds in support of the action being requested. Unless such grounds are brief, they are customarily itemized.
3. If the overture affects the classical ministry share assessment, include an approximation of the costs involved and the impact on assessments.
4. The overture is to be as succinct as possible while still being definitive.
5. If the Bible is quoted, the version used must be cited.
6. If other publications are quoted or referred to (e.g. book, Bible, article), they must be referenced properly. If the Acts of Synod are referred to, list the title, year, the recommendation number (if there is one) and the page number (e.g., AOS, 2013, R-4, p. 255).

C. Cautions:

1. “Careful and prayerful deliberation” (Church Order Commentary, 2011, p. 184) ought to precede the submission of an overture. Grounds must demonstrate that “the petitioner’s conscience is inappropriately infringed upon” (COC, 184) by the matter raised.

2. Overtures which deal with matters concerning the discipline or charges against persons must be dealt with sensitively. Individuals and Councils must bear in mind Church order articles 78 ff. In certain cases, the Council may request and/or Classis will invoke Judicial Code (C.O. Art. 30c & its supplement).

D. Procedure:

1. An overture being submitted should be accompanied by a cover letter, stating the place and date of the meeting of the assembly at which the overture was adopted; the letter is to be signed by the council clerk and/or chair.
2. If more than one overture is being submitted, each should begin on a separate page. A single cover letter will suffice.
3. Council overtures to classis must be submitted to the stated clerk seven (7) weeks prior to a classis meeting in order to be on the agenda. Overtures received late will be deemed out of order, unless Classis rules otherwise.

~~~~~

### **CLASSICAL OVERTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

An advisory committee simply gives advice to the classical assembly.

1. In the case of an overture, advisory committees serve well by:
  - a. Communicating first with the Church council or individual overturing classis. Verbal communication can especially provide a sense of the background for the overture, its weight for the church/individuals and parties involved, and give opportunity for clarification.
  - b. Meeting face-to-face before final deliberations, so as to pray together about the matter, and to come to clear consensus on the advice they will render.
  - c. Selecting a chair and a reporter for the committee. They ought to be designated as such in the list of those serving on the committee, which is included at the end of the advisory report. Should there be any possible conflict of interest, an advisor should ask the chair of classis, or, preferably, the Interim committee to be excused from the work. (Note also that any delegate(s) who represents the overture (as an individual making the overture, or as a member of the council making) may have privilege of the floor, and participate in discussion. However, such a delegate is not privileged to vote).

- d. Communicating to the chair/vice-chair of Classis what amount of time is likely needed to handle the overture during the assembly. Be sure to check also with those bringing the overture to see if they will be needing additional time to present their overture.

## 2. Advisory Reports

- a. Advisory reports must be written, be clear, concise, and address the overture directly. Reports should also include a listing of the materials that may also have been submitted to the classis regarding the material. Advisory committees may add further recommendations, broaden the mandate, and provide additional grounds.
- b. The report of an overture advisory committee takes precedence over the presentation of the overture when being brought to the floor (unlike advisory committee reports concerning study or task force reports which take precedence).
- c. Classis may dismiss the report to address the overture without advice, or recommit the matter to the advisory for further work, or simply table the whole matter. Its decision is final until Synod rules otherwise, or Classis decides to revisit the matter.
- d. A report should be formatted similar to what follows:

**Classis BC Northwest – Month, Year  
Overture Advisory Committee Report**

Materials:

Observations

The advisory committee ...

Recommendation

The advisory committee recommends that Classis accede/not accede to the overture that  
“Classis BCNW ...”

Grounds:

- 1.
- 2.

Advisory committee members:

First, last name, chair  
First, last name, reporter  
First, last name