

Yellowstone Presbytery Church Record Review

Why does the Presbytery review your minutes?

G-3.0107 – Records

Each council (the Session is a council) shall keep a full and accurate record of its proceedings. Minutes and all other official records.

G-3.0108 – Administrative Review

Higher councils shall review the work of lower councils in the following ways:

a. General Administrative Review

Each council shall review annually or biennially, based on the body's meeting frequency, the proceedings and actions of all entities related to the body, all officers able to act on behalf of the body, *and lower councils within its jurisdiction. In reviewing the procedures of the lower council, the higher body shall determine whether the proceedings have been correctly recorded, have been in accordance with this Constitution, have been prudent and equitable, and have been faithful to the mission of the whole church.*

It shall also determine whether lawful injunctions of a higher body have been obeyed.

b. If a higher council learns at any time of an alleged irregularity or delinquency of a lower council, it may require the lower body to produce any records and to take appropriate action.

General information about the session's duties and responsibilities – and hence why minutes should reflect that those duties and responsibilities have been carried out – are mostly found in G-3.02. Some actions are required of all councils; those duties and responsibilities are found throughout the *Form of Government* (G) sections. A free copy of the current Book of Order can be downloaded at the PC(USA) website. You can also purchase a paperback copy there or from the Presbytery office.

As you take your minutes, keep in mind this: What is happening in the life of the church – and thus reflected in the minutes of a session meeting – that might be of special interest to someone 20 years or more from now? What would be important for you to find if you were to write a history of your church sometime in the future? What might be important if a legal issue were to arise? Faithfully include information on these topics! Such topics might include:

- Pastor's names and terms of call
- Budget/financial statements/reviews of finances and procedures
- Baptisms, weddings, ordinations, deaths
- Statistical information
- New members, new officers
- Session review (and updating) of insurance policies, operational policies, policies concerning the protection and welfare of members, children and those associated with the congregation.
- Major decisions around property, building expansion or contraction, remodeling
- Decisions about special programs in the life of your church

Please send/bring a copy of the annual report distributed at your annual meeting to the Presbytery office.

Finally, have fun. Yes, take your duties and responsibilities seriously, but you're a volunteer! This should be fun and rewarding too! I'm always available to answer your questions or help you. **Don't get frustrated –Your Stated Clerk is at: statedclerk@yellowstonepcusa.org**

Presbytery of Yellowstone Review of 2019 Session Minutes and Documents

Clerk of Session's Checklist

Church _____ City _____

Clerk of Session _____ Phone _____

Clerk's Email _____

Use this checklist as you prepare your minutes and documents for examination. This should help you with your own records and when you undertake to review another church's documents. You should provide the completed checklist to the reviewer, along with your minutes and documents. *The reviewer will check the "R" column during the review.*

Please create a template for your session meeting minutes, a template you can use each month to be sure that these items happen regularly:

1. Date, time, place and type (special/stated) of each meeting
2. Moderator, clerk, and elected ruling elders present; any visitors noted
3. Meetings opened and closed with prayer
4. Minutes of previous meeting(s) approved
5. Minutes signed by the clerk
6. Financial report received by session. Income and expenses should be included.
7. Any special meetings (session or congregation); specified business only

Additionally, please create a calendar for your session, so that these annual actions are recorded reliably and regularly:

	Annual Actions	Y/N/ NA	Page #s	R
8.	Training and examination of newly elected ruling elders and deacons			
9.	Ordination and installation of newly elected ruling elders and deacons and noted class year			
10.	Report of adequacy of compensation for pastor(s) and staff			
11.	Approval of and highlights of the statistical report to the denomination (include the report in the minutes and record if supplemental information was supplied.)			
12.	Election of and term for the Clerk of Session (RE required). Clerk may or may not be on the current session but still subject to term limits. G			
13.	Election of and term for the treasurer			
14.	Approval of the schedule for administering the sacrament of communion			
15.	Results of the annual review of financial records and procedures			
16.	Approval (and insertion into the minutes) of the annual budget			

	Annual Actions	Y/N/ NA	Page #s	R
17.	Oversight of Board of Deacons and other groups/organizations of the church			
18.	Review of insurance policies (insurance coverage continues; any changes needed?)			
19.	Review of manual of operations, including mandated policies such as sexual misconduct, child protection, and financial policies			
20.	Review of membership rolls; counseling lapsed members before removing them from active rolls			
21.	Election of and reports by commissioners to Presbytery			
22.	Previous year's minutes read; with/without exceptions			

Include these occasional items in your minutes as necessary

	Occasional Items	Y/N/ NA	Page #s	R
23.	Examination and approval of new members (and addition to the rolls) and method of joining (baptism, letter of transfer, affirmation of faith)			
24.	Approval of all baptisms (and addition to the rolls)			
25.	Reports of transfers out of membership (and removal from rolls)			
26.	Reports of deaths of members (and removal from rolls)			
27.	Actions of Presbytery that affect the property associated with your congregation			
28.	Record any weddings that happen on church grounds or performed by your pastor.			

Congregational meetings:

	Congregational Meetings	Y/N/ NA	Page #s	R
29.	Election of members to the Nominating Committee by the congregation			
30.	Approval of the pastor's terms of call			
31.	Election of ruling elders and deacons			
32.	Changes to the congregation's by-laws			
33.	Voted to call and install pastor or dismiss pastor			

34.	Annual meeting of the corporation recorded. G-4.0101			
35.	Elected officers serving as trustees of the corporation recorded. G-4.0101			
36.	For Ecumenical and Union churches, are the agreements or agreement changes part of the official records? G-5.01			
37.	In churches with Joint Congregational Witness are the meetings of the multiple entities recorded by the Presbyterian Witness. G-5.05			

Reviewer's Form

Name of Church whose minutes were reviewed _____

Name of Reviewer _____

Reviewer: Please review the Clerk of Session's Checklist with G-3.0108 in mind. (printed on first page)

As you review these minutes and documents, please reflect on and respond, with examples insofar as possible, to the following questions:

1. Does the clerk's self-review give an adequate and accurate assessment of the minutes and documents of the church?
2. Do you find that these records reflect the ministry of the congregation as "prudent, equitable, and faithful to the mission of the whole church"? Do you see evidence of this congregation being engaged in ministry in healthy ways?
3. Do you have recommendations for ways these minutes could be improved?
4. Do you have comments to offer regarding good work and fruitful ministry of this church?
5. Did you find any ideas in these minutes that you plan to incorporate into your minutes?

Reviewer's Assessment:

_____ These minutes and records are recommended for approval without exception.

_____ These minutes and records are recommended for approval with exceptions as noted.

_____ Assistance from the Presbytery could be helpful in order to improve recordkeeping.

The reviewer's form and Clerk of Session checklist, should be emailed to statedclerk@yellowstonepcusa.org or mailed to Stated Clerk, Yellowstone Presbytery P.O. Box 1254, Bozeman, MT 59715

Date Received by Stated Clerk
from examiner:

_____ approved WITHOUT exception

_____ approved WITH exceptions noted

Signature – Stated Clerk

Date