



Ruling Elder Commissioner Handbook

www.PBYWY.org

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Cultivating Transformational Leaders . Equipping Christ's Followers to go into the Neighborhood

**General Presbyter, Rev. Jeromey Howard
Administrative Assistant, Jan DeBeer**

**Stated Clerk, Rev. Kellie Thomson
Treasurer, Trenda Weisshaar**

Ruling Elder Commissioner

Handbook

Welcome!

Thank you for serving the Presbytery of Wyoming as a Ruling Elder Commissioner. This is a very important role and we are very grateful for the energy, imagination, intelligence, love and of course, time, you will give to the Presbytery.

This manual contains all of the information you need to understand your role and to participate fully in the work of the Presbytery.

If you have any questions, or ever need any help or information, please contact the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, Rev. Kellie Thomson at klt@presbywy.org or 818-912-1590 (cell) or 307-514-2605 (home).

General Information

Role of the Commissioner

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Order 2023-2025 is the best source of information concerning the presbytery. From G-3.0301 “The presbytery is the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district.” It is composed of all the congregations, the ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and elected ruling elders from each congregation, in that district. Additional clergy and ruling elders may be enrolled by the presbytery according to its own rules. The Presbytery of Wyoming standing rules set forth the rules for enrolling its members.

There are two main roles the Ruling Elder Commissioner fulfills. One is to represent your session and congregation at presbytery meetings. As commissioner, you have voice and vote on all proceedings. The second role is to relay information from presbytery to your church session and congregation. This would include a report to the Session of presbytery actions and pertinent information following each presbytery meeting as well as any additional actions or information that comes up throughout the year.

Alternate Commissioners

Each Session should elect an alternate commissioner to serve in the place of the primary commissioner at any time the primary commissioner is unable to serve. Alternate Commissioners are encouraged to attend presbytery meetings but do not have voting privileges.

Service Term

The term for each congregation's Ruling Elder Commissioner and Alternate Commissioner is one year, beginning January 1 and ending December 31. There is no term limit and commissioners may be elected multiple times by the Session.

Enrollment

To have a voice and vote at presbytery meetings, Ruling Elder Commissioners *must be enrolled in the presbytery*. To be enrolled, the Ruling Elder Commissioner must be elected by their Session and the following information submitted to the presbytery office by January 31 of the year elected to serve: Church Name, Commissioner Name, Date Elected by Session, Contact Info.

Communication

The primary form of communication is through email. Commissioners should have an updated email address on file with the presbytery office. If email is not possible, a current mailing address should be on file with the presbytery office. Information sent to Commissioners is usually also sent to individual churches and may be accessed there.

Presbytery Meetings

Meeting Time & Location

There are *two stated meetings* of presbytery each year. One in the Spring and one in the Fall. The specific dates are chosen by presbytery Council¹. Meetings begin on Friday, ordinarily around 1 pm and end on Saturday, usually by Noon. The docket is prepared by Council based on program and business needs. Special meetings of presbytery may be called at any time throughout the year by Council or the Committee on Ministry (COM) with two weeks' notice by email or letter.

Meeting Attendance

Attending and participating in presbytery meetings is your primary role. Representation from all of the congregations is important to the work of the presbytery. As the representative from your church, it is expected by the presbytery that you will attend all presbytery meetings. We understand things happen in life...unexpected work responsibilities, illness, bad weather, and other things can prevent you from being able to attend. In that case, we hope the alternate

¹ Please note, the term council is used by the Book of Order to refer to all governing bodies in the PCUSA: session, presbytery, synod and general assembly. In the Presbytery of Wyoming, the term council does refer to the presbytery as a whole as a governing body. It also refers to the council of presbytery which is a committee of the Presbytery elected to act on behalf of presbytery on matters assigned to it, in accordance with the standing rules. Normally, council shall refer to the presbytery and Council (capitalized) or presbytery council shall refer to the committee.

commissioner from your church could attend in your place. But please make every effort to be at every meeting.

Meetings are conducted in a Hybrid format, meaning you may attend in person or electronically via ZOOM. In person attendance is encouraged and preferred.

Prior to the Meeting

Approximately one month prior to the stated meetings, registration information will be sent (by email) to all commissioners enrolled in the presbytery. See below for more registration details. Approximately 2 weeks prior to the stated meeting, a packet of information will be sent (by email). See below for more information on packet contents. Additional meeting materials will be sent as available, sometimes up until the meeting day. If you do not receive registration information by two weeks prior to the meeting, or a packet one week prior, please contact the presbytery office.

Registration

Commissioners are expected to register for all meetings. This can be done by responding to the registration email or contacting the presbytery office. It is important we know who and how many will be attending meetings. If you do not register, you may not be included in important information, ZOOM links, or meal planning.

Reimbursement of Expenses

Presbytery will reimburse the following expenses for presbytery meetings:
In-State round trip mileage (at 14 cents per mile) and meals.

The following meal allowances apply for meetings of presbytery:

Maximum allowance	Restaurant	Church
Breakfast	\$4.50	\$3.50
Lunch	\$6.00	\$4.50
Dinner	\$8.00	\$6.00

In order to receive reimbursement for expenses, a **voucher** must be completed and receipts submitted for items over \$5.00, within sixty (60) days of incurring the expense, except for meals which will be reimbursed at the rates shown above. Authorized personnel *must approve all vouchers* before reimbursement is made. *Vouchers are available* in person at presbytery meetings and may be submitted to the stated clerk at that time. *Vouchers are also available* on the presbytery website or can be requested from the presbytery office. For authorization of vouchers, contact the stated clerk.

Presbytery encourages churches to include in their budgets, provision for coverall all non-reimbursed expenses for commissioners, including lodging. Financial assistance may be available from the Presbytery for expenses not reimbursed by the church. Contact the stated clerk

for more information.

Packets

Meeting packets are sent out approximately two weeks prior to stated meetings of presbytery. There are usually multiple packets. Ordinarily there is the:

- **Agenda Packet(s)** Contains important meeting information, including agenda (consent and action items), docket/schedule, reports, action items/business coming before the presbytery (for major items will ordinarily be on a separate face sheet), financials, announcements. Often there is more than one agenda packet. The first one sent out approximately two weeks prior to the meeting and additional packets sent out closer to, or even on, the meeting date.
- **Minutes Packet** Contains the minutes of the previous meeting(s) to be approved. You do not need to have attended the previous meeting to vote to approve the minutes.
- **Worship Packet** Contains the materials needed for worship...bulletin, music, etc. These are needed to follow along and participate in worship. There are ordinarily three worship services at stated meetings: Friday at the start of the meeting, Friday evening (with Communion), and Saturday morning.
- **Voting/Communication Card Packet** Contains cards used to communicate and to vote when using Hybrid meeting format.

PLEASE NOTE: The only printed materials provided at the meeting in person are worship materials. All other materials are the responsibility of each commissioner to print for use. Churches are encouraged to print information for their commissioners. Electronic copies may be used. **VOTING CARDS MUST BE PRINTED AND USED BY EVERY COMMISSIONER, BOTH IN PERSON AND ON ZOOM.**

Voice and Vote

Ruling Elder Commissioners have the privilege of voice and vote at meetings. The Book of Order states that meetings of councils “shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised* except when it is in contradiction to this Constitution”. Councils may also make use of processes of discernment in their deliberations prior to a vote as agreed upon by the body. Resources for understanding Parliamentary Procedure are available if needed.

Meetings are conducted following the above provisions for in person meetings, electronic meetings and hybrid meetings.

In person voting shall follow *Robert’s Rules* and ordinarily be by voice. Electronic meetings shall utilize the voting cards. Hybrid meetings shall utilize the voting cards by all participants, whether in person or online, in order to maintain consistency and fairness across platforms.

Meeting Decorum

The following practices and customs should be observed by meeting participants. Details of each may be found in Robert's Rules of Order.

- Confine remarks to the merits of the pending question
- Refrain from attacking a member's motives
- Address remarks through the Moderator/Chair
- Refrain from disturbing the meeting/assembly

In addition to the above list, the following practices and customs should be observed by online meeting participants.

- Act online as you would if you were attending in person. Multi-tasking, eating, side conversations, children and pets are just some of the potential distractions to other participants or can give the impression you are not paying attention.
- Keep your microphone on **MUTE** when not speaking. Background noise, even small sounds you might not think are loud, can be picked up by a microphone and seem loud to other participants. Be aware of shuffling papers, clicking pens, beeping phones and the like near your microphone.
- Keep your video on whenever you can so other participants connect visually with you and get to know you. It also helps to foster community and fellowship.
- Make sure your name shows on the screen so we know who you are.

Presbytery Misconduct Policy

In 2019, the Presbytery approved a sexual misconduct policy which is required by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This policy helps us prevent any kind of abuse from happening and ensure an environment that is safe and joyful for all who participate. The more people who are aware of the signs of abuse, are trained to recognize them, and know how to report them, the better. As part of the Presbytery's policy, we have all volunteers, including Ruling Elder Commissioners, read our policy and watch two training and abuse prevention videos. Here is how to complete these items.

- Log onto the Presbytery of Wyoming website by clicking on this link or typing it into your browser: <https://www.pbywy.org/sexualMisconductPolicy.php>
- Follow the links on the website to find the Sexual Misconduct Policy page and then click on:
 - General Policy (read it)
 - Minor and Vulnerable Adult Policy (read it)
 - Policy Acknowledgement (under General Policy) (print, sign and return to the stated clerk by USPS or scan and email)
 - Policy Acknowledgement (under Minor Policy) (print, sign and return to the stated clerk by USPS or scan and email)

- Click on the Sexual Misconduct Policy Training picture and watch the 30 minute video (or click on this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdHlwK4Ewx8>). *Then send the stated clerk an email saying you completed it.*
- Watch your email inbox for an email from **MinistrySafe**. This is a company we contract with to provide abuse prevention videos. Open the email and click on the link to take you to the video. When you finish watching it (it's about 1 hr 15 minutes long) there will be a short (and easy) quiz. They will send the stated clerk confirmation that you watched it so there is nothing more for you to do.

If you need access or assistance to the online training portions, please contact the stated clerk. If you need hard copies of materials, rather than go to the website and download items, please let the stated clerk know. If you will be attending the Spring Presbytery meeting in person, copies will be available. *You may also return signed forms to the stated clerk in person at the Spring meeting.*

Resources

Helpful Documents

The following documents will be helpful for you in knowing more about the Presbytery and how it functions. Most are available on the website or from the presbytery office or online sources.

- Presbytery of Wyoming Standing Rules and Administrative Manual
- Presbytery Directory
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Book of Order 2023-2025*
- *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 12th Edition*

Presbytery Abbreviations

POW Presbytery of Wyoming

Committees: **COM** Committee on Ministry

BFS Budget, Finance and Stewardship

CPM Committee on Preparation for Ministry

CRN Committee on Representation and Nominations

PJC Permanent Judicial Commission

ROCCS Retreat, Outdoor, Camping, Conferences & Services

ECLD Evangelism, Church & Leader Development

Other Ministries/Groups:

PW Presbyterian Women

NWC New Worshipping Communities

PRM Pine Ridge Ministries

ROLES/POSITIONS:

TE Teaching Elder also **MWS** Minister of Word and Sacrament

RE Ruling Elder **AL** At Large Member

CRE Commissioned Ruling Elder

REC Ruling Elder Commissioner
PM Presbytery Moderator **PVM** Presbytery Vice Moderator
GP General Presbyter **SC** Stated Clerk
SRC Safety Response Coordinator

In POW Minutes:

MSC Motion, Second, Confirmed (or Carried)
MSF Motion, Second, Failed

Documents: **SR** Standing Rules **P&P** Policies and Procedures
SMP Sexual Misconduct Policy

SMP/MVA Sexual Misconduct Policy for Minors and Vulnerable Adults

Denominational: **GA** General Assembly **OGA** Office of General Assembly
BOP Board of Pensions

Contact Information

Presbytery Office (virtual only)

P.O. Box 1767

Casper, WY 82602

307-472-4717

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