

Descending Overtures from the 43rd General Assembly Evangelical Presbyterian Church

DESCENDING OVERTURE 43-A

That the *Book of Government* 17-5 be deleted, with the following sections renumbered, and the *Book of Government* 6-8D and 18-3H be amended. [Rationale: This amendment clarifies the authority of the Session alone over all financial matters of the Local Church and eliminates outdated, ambiguous, or confusing references to financial responsibility of the Board of Deacons.]

Current <i>Book of Government</i> 17-5	Proposed <i>Book of Government</i> 17-5 <i>Amendments in bold italics</i>
<p>BOG 17-5 Treasurer</p> <p>A. Where the responsibility for the finances of the local church falls to the Board, it shall appoint a Treasurer to handle the financial matters of the congregation. This person may or may not be a Deacon.</p> <p>B. Where the Session retains responsibility for financial matters, it shall follow this stipulation: the Treasurer shall report to the appointing body at each stated meeting, keeping a careful record of financial matters. The appointing body shall be responsible for an annual audit of the finances of the church.</p> <p>BOG 17-6 Meetings</p> <p>A. Frequency The Board shall meet at least quarterly unless otherwise provided for by the Session. It shall meet at the call of the Moderator, or when ordered to convene by the Session. When requested in writing by one-fourth of the Board, the Chairman shall call a meeting. The purpose shall be clearly stated. No business other than that stated in the call may be transacted.</p>	<p>BOG 17-5 Meetings</p> <p>A. Frequency The Board shall meet at least quarterly unless otherwise provided for by the Session. It shall meet at the call of the Moderator, or when ordered to convene by the Session. When requested in writing by one-fourth of the Board, the Chairman shall call a meeting. The purpose shall be clearly stated. No business other than that stated in the call may be transacted.</p> <p><i>[Subsequent sections to be renumbered]</i></p>

Current <i>Book of Government</i> 6-8 D	Proposed <i>Book of Government</i> 6-8 D <i>Amendments in bold italics</i>
D. If a local church does not elect Trustees (or if Deacons have not been given the responsibility of property), the Session, or a designated portion of the court, shall serve as the Trustees of the local church.	D. If a local church does not elect Trustees (or if Deacons have not been given the responsibility of property) , the Session, or a designated portion of the court, shall serve as the Trustees of the local church.

Current <i>Book of Government</i> 18-3H	Proposed <i>Book of Government</i> 18-3H <i>Amendments in bold italics</i>
H. To determine the budget of the church and the benevolence objectives of the congregation.	H. To determine <i>and oversee the finances of the local church including the budget</i> and the benevolence objectives of the congregation.

DESCENDING OVERTURE 43-B

That the *Book of Discipline* be amended by adding the following statement to the end of *Book of Discipline* 1-1. [Rationale: Church Discipline is not designed to deal with criminal acts apart from the authority of the civil magistrates. (Westminster Chapter 23-4). This preface to our practice of Ecclesiastical Discipline does not replace our responsibility to obey civil authorities and to protect the victims of abuse.

Current <i>Book of Discipline</i> 1-1	Proposed <i>Book of Discipline</i> 1-1 <i>Amendments in bold italics</i>
<p>1-1 Definition of Church Discipline</p> <p>There are two kinds of authority vested in the church; the responsibility of order and the authority of jurisdiction.¹⁹⁶ Both kinds of authority are given the church by the Lord Jesus Christ to instruct and guide her members and to promote her purity and welfare. Discipline is the exercise of the responsibility of order, particularly in regard to the reproving of the erring.¹⁹⁷ As the exercise of such authority may adversely affect the membership rights of an individual who has been accused of an offense, the authority requires the use of ecclesiastical judicial procedures.</p> <p>The word “discipline,” when used in the <i>Book of Discipline</i>, chapters 1-11, shall therefore refer to the use of ecclesiastical judicial procedures.</p>	<p>1-1 Definition of Church Discipline</p> <p>There are two kinds of authority vested in the church; the responsibility of order and the authority of jurisdiction.¹⁹⁶ Both kinds of authority are given the church by the Lord Jesus Christ to instruct and guide her members and to promote her purity and welfare. Discipline is the exercise of the responsibility of order, particularly in regard to the reproving of the erring.¹⁹⁷ As the exercise of such authority may adversely affect the membership rights of an individual who has been accused of an offense, the authority requires the use of ecclesiastical judicial procedures.</p> <p>The word “discipline,” when used in the <i>Book of Discipline</i>, chapters 1-11, shall therefore refer to the use of ecclesiastical judicial procedures.</p> <p><i>Church discipline does not supersede or negate the legal responsibility to report cases of suspected abuse to civil authorities according to local and state requirements.</i></p>