

The Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery (RPCNA)

Proposed Fall Mtg Agenda
Drafted 9/19/23

CLERK

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ASST. CLERK

Nathan Eshelman
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2023 GLG FALL MEETING

Time: Fri Oct 6, 2023 from 1:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Place: Sycamore Reformed Presbyterian Church
300 E. Mulberry St. Kokomo, Indiana 46901

1. **CALL TO ORDER & PRAYER OF CONSTITUTION** (Hughes) +5 mins [1:05]
2. **ATTENDANCE: ROLL CALL** (Eshelman) +5 mins [1:10]
3. **CLERK'S REPORT** (Kuehner) +15 mins [1:25]
 - A. Oral Report
 - B. Recommendations ('second' required)
 1. That presbytery appoint the following parliamentarians for this meeting: Steve Rhoda, Bryan Dage, Frank Smith (Alt-1), Josh Smith (Alt-2), James Odom (Alt-3), Wade Mann (Alt-4), Aaron Murray (Alt-5).
 2. That presbytery receive the transfer of Rev. Colin Samul's ministerial credentials from the Pacific Coast Presbytery (RPCNA).
 3. That presbytery dismiss Rev. Craig Scott from the roll of Teaching Elders at his request, per DCG 6.13 (D-33).¹
 4. That presbytery approve the financial disbursements proposed in GLG 23-30.²
 5. That presbytery transfer Reed and Alexandria Staver, along with their baptized daughter Rosie, from the membership roll of presbytery to Reformation OPC in Grand Rapids, at their request.
 6. That presbytery grant the RPCL session permission to have Pastor Jonathan Sturm moderate the Session in Pastor Adam Niess' absence at their next meeting.
 7. That presbytery adopt the proposed agenda.
 8. That presbytery approve the clerk's report.
4. **FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS** (First-Time Delegates, Fraternal Delegates, Special Guests) +5 mins [1:30]
5. **CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT** (Niess) +20 mins [1:50]
 - A. Oral Update & Recommendations 2.5 mins
 - B. Care Status Interview — Nathan Shaver (Testimony, Q&A, Voice Vote) 15 mins
 - C. Approve Report 2.5 mins [1:50]
6. **BORG RESOLUTION COMMITTEE REPORT** (N/A) +5 mins [1:55]
 - A. Oral Report (N/A)
 - B. Recommendation: That the Borg Resolution Committee be dismissed.
 - C. Approve Report

¹ DCG 6.12 (D-33): "The presbytery... may... dismiss teaching elders who desire to withdraw from this denomination."

² Note: This recommendation does not reflect the clerk's perspective on the proposal, but simply the desire to put the matter before the court for deliberation.

7. CYPUB BOARD REPORT (Planalp) +10 mins [2:05]
 - A. Oral Report
 - B. Recommendation(s)
8. HETHERTON VISITATION COMMITTEE REPORT (Hanson) +10 mins [2:15]
9. FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT (TBD) +15 mins [2:30]
10. AD INTERIM COMMISSION REPORT (Anderson) +20 mins [2:50]
 - A. Approve Minutes (7/31, 9/4) 5 mins [2:35]
 - B. Recommendations 15 mins [2:50]
 1. **That the appellant, his advisor, and the members of session be recognized as the parties in the case and not be permitted to participate in deciding the appeal (BOD, II.1.7; II.4.12).**
 2. **That if the whole Presbytery hear and decide the appeal, a committee of three men appointed by the moderator be formed at the beginning of the proceedings to write the reasons of the court's decision. The committee will give its report before the end of this meeting.**
 - Rationale: *The Book of Discipline, II.4.15 says: "A full record shall be kept of all the proceedings with the reasons for each decision." Recording the reasons for each decision from the floor of Presbytery is not practical.*
 3. **That the following suggested preliminary steps be approved and enacted.**
 - a) *That the clerk ensure that a full record is kept of all the proceedings (BOD, II.4.10, 15).*
 - b) *That the moderator request everyone in the room to turn off non-essential electronic devices so that there are no unnecessary interruptions and that members of the court may give their full attention to the hearing of the appeal.*
 - c) *That the moderator lead or appoint at least one member of the court to lead in prayer for the proceedings.*
 - d) *That any parliamentarians who determine that they have a conflict of interest in the matter be given opportunity to recuse themselves and replaced with pro tem parliamentarians during the hearing of the appeal.*
 - e) *That the moderator restrict the discussion of the case to the written record (BOD, II.4.15).*
 - f) *That the moderator, in consultation with a clerk of GLGP, confirm that the appeal is in accord with the Book of Discipline, II.4.10,11,14):*
 - (1) *That the appellant filed with session's clerk a written notice of appeal & a summary statement of the reasons for the appeal within thirty days after the accused was informed of the action;*
 - (2) *That the appellant had at least sixty days for preparing the appeal (along with a full statement of the reasons for the appeal & providing all relevant documents) and transmitting the same to the AIC clerk;*
 - (3) *That Presbytery has had thirty days to read and process the appeal;*
 - (4) *That the material records & papers pertaining to the case are present for considering the appeal;*
 - (5) *That the reasons assigned by the appellant in the appeal are the same as those presented to the lower court.*
 - g) *That the moderator remind the members of the court of the solemn duty in which they are about to engage, and of their responsibilities as judges in the Lord's house, and enjoin them to dismiss from their minds all prejudice or personal considerations, and to concern themselves with the spiritual welfare of the church (cf. BOD, II.3.2).*
 4. **That the following procedural steps be approved and enacted (based on Book of Discipline, II.4.14a-g, [E-]15).**
 - a) *The clerk shall read the sentence appealed from.*
 - b) *The clerk shall read the appeal and reasons assigned by the appellant, which must be the same as those presented to the lower court.*

- c) *The moderator shall remind the court of the grounds for appeal (BoD, II.4.10, E-17).*
- d) *The Presbytery shall waive the reading of the record based on the court having “sufficient opportunity to review the records and papers” (BoD, II.4.14.c, E-17), with the qualification that “Either party may request the reading of specific portions of the record important to the case if the reading of the full record is waived.”*
- e) *The Presbytery grant the parties up to twelve minutes each to present their opening speeches (appellant first, then session), then the appellant up to seven minutes for his closing speech including any rebuttal comments.*
- f) *Members of the court shall be permitted to respectfully ask, by addressing the moderator, clarifying questions of both parties for up to five minutes.*
- g) *Opportunity shall be given for discussion of the case by the members of the court for up to fifteen minutes.*
Suggested prior to general discussion of the case:
 - (1) *That if either party objects, no member of the court who has not been present during the whole appeal shall be allowed to vote in the final decision.*
 - (2) *That the moderator remind the court who is not permitted to participate in deciding the appeal.*
 - (3) *That the moderator ask those who are not participating in deciding the appeal to withdraw from the room, while the court deliberates.*
 - (4) *That the court begin its deliberation with prayer for Divine guidance in weighing the evidence and in reaching a just decision.*
- h) *When the deliberation is finished, a vote shall be taken on sustaining or not sustaining the appeal, each specification of error being voted on separately. Suggested:*
 - (1) *That the moderator remind the court that its decision must be based solely on the records of the lower court.*
 - (2) *That the moderator again remind the court of the grounds for the appeal (BOD, II.4.10, E-17).*
 - (3) *That the clerk of Presbytery read each specification of error and ask: “Shall this specification of error be sustained?” A standing vote should be taken on each specification of error separately and with no further discussion. The clerks shall count the votes and the moderator announce the decision. A record of the aye’s and nay’s should be recorded. A simple majority vote is required to sustain a specification of error.*
 - (a) *If none of the specifications of the appeal is sustained, then the appeal is not sustained, and the court has upheld the decision of the lower court.*
 - (b) *If at least one of the specifications of the appeal is sustained, the moderator will call for a fifteen-minute recess to give time for motions to be carefully formulated and written down.*
 - (c) *After the fifteen-minute recess, the moderator will entertain a motion on whether:*
 - i) *the lower court has not followed the prescribed order in the conduct of the case. The court may, at its discretion, return the whole case to the lower for a new trial.*
 - ii) *the decision of the lower court appears unjust and unwarranted. The higher court may determine to have the Presbytery to try the case itself.*
 - (d) *If the case is not retried, the moderator shall entertain a motion that will either:*
 - i) *not sustain the appeal.*
 - ii) *reverse in whole or in part the decision of the lower court.*
 - (4) *When the court has reached its decision, the parties are to be recalled and the result announced.*
 - (5) *That the clerk of Presbytery, or its Commission, notify the parties, in writing, of its decision.*
 - (6) *That Presbytery conclude the hearing of the appeal with prayer.*

12. MANRING COMPLAINT (23-27) HEARING +30 mins [3:35]

- A. Complainant 5 mins [3:10]
- B. Defendant 5 mins [3:15]
- C. Floor Questions 5 mins [3:20]
- D. Floor Discussion 10 mins [3:30]
- E. Standing Vote to Sustain or Not Sustain 5 mins [3:35]

13. AFTERNOON BREAK #2 +15 mins [3:50]

14. MANRING APPEAL (23-26) HEARING +100 mins [5:30]

- A. Preliminary Steps (Moderator, Clerk) 5 mins [3:55]
 - A. Ensure full record of proceedings (Clerk)
 - B. Turn off non-essential electronics (Moderator)
 - C. Appoint delegate to pray for proceedings (Moderator)
 - D. Allow parliamentarians to self-recuse (Moderator)
 - E. Restrict discussion to written record (Moderator)
 - F. Confirm that appeal is in order (Moderator, Clerk)
- B. Procedural Steps (Clerk, Moderator) 5 mins [4:00]
 - 1. Reading of the Appealed Sentence (Clerk)
 - 2. Reading of the Appeal & Its Reasons (Clerk)
 - 3. Reminder of Proper Grounds for Appeal (Moderator)
 - 4. Waive reading of the record if distributed in advance (Moderator)
- C. Hearing of the Case (Parties: Appellant & Session) 45 mins [4:45]
 - A. Appellant's Opening Speech (12 mins)
 - B. Session's Opening Speech (12 mins)
 - C. Appellant's Rebuttal Speech (7 mins)
 - D. Questions for the Session (5 mins)
 - E. Questions for the Appellant (5 mins)
- D. Judicial Deliberation 25 mins [5:10]
 - A. Withdrawal of those not deciding the case (5 mins)
 - B. Prayer for the deliberations (5 mins)
 - C. Floor discussion of the case (15 mins)
- E. Judicial Verdict 20 mins [5:30]
 - A. Reminder of proper basis/grounds for appeal (Moderator)
 - B. Prayer for discernment (Moderator)
 - C. Standing Vote to Sustain or Not Sustain
 - D. Excuse Verdict Rationale Committee (If Applicable)
 - E. Bring parties (etc) back into the room
 - F. Pronouncement of the Verdict (Moderator)
 - G. Prayer for the parties, etc. (Moderator)

15. AFTERNOON BREAK #3 +10 mins [5:40]

16. VERDICT RATIONALE COMMITTEE (Chairman) +10 mins [5:50]

17. READING OF THE MINUTES (Clerk) +5 mins [5:55]

18. PRAYER OF ADJOURNMENT (Appointed by Moderator) +5 mins [6:00]