

GLG Presbytery,

I write to propose some updates to our presbytery financial processes. The goals of this approach include:

- Improving continuity of understanding of financial approaches and decisions from year to year.
- Ensuring communication between the finance committee and the treasurer(s).
- Aligning our financial processes closer to denominational operations.
- Aligning our committee approach to finances to other presbytery committees (such as Candidates/Credentials).
- Strengthening our ability to steward the resources God has provided this presbytery.

This proposal has been shared with the current treasurer/assistant treasurer, and they are aligned that this would be a good step forward.

The proposal in short:

- Form a standing 3-man finance committee. On this committee,
 - Membership would be 3 years long.
 - The committee would function with rotating “classes”, such that 1 member would rotate off yearly, ensuring continuity from year to year on the committee.
 - The committee would appoint its own chairman. The chairman would be responsible for convening committee meetings and ensuring committee representation at presbytery meetings where the finance committee would present.
- Appoint the treasurer/assistant treasurers as *ex officio*, non-voting members of the committee.¹
- The committee would have the role of putting together the yearly budget, proposing the total assessment number for the year², and addressing other financial concerns that arise throughout the year, in conjunction with the treasurer(s).
- The workload of the committee would, Lord-willing, be reasonably light.

How this proposal differs from current operations:

- Currently, a finance committee of the day is appointed at presbytery meetings to draw up a yearly budget. This proposal here changes the committee from a committee of the day to a standing committee. The committee could still work at the presbytery meeting, but much of the work could be done in advance. Hopefully, at least one committee member could attend presbytery to facilitate work on issues that arise at the meeting.
- Currently, communication between the treasurers and the committee might occur, but it is not part of the formal “committee of the day” structure.
- Currently, finance committee members come from attendees at the presbytery meetings. This proposal allows a broader pool for finance committee members.

How this proposal does *not* differ from current operations:

- The committee would still present a budget to the presbytery at annual meetings, at which point the presbytery will vote on the final budget.

¹ This aligns to how denominational boards (like the Benefits Board on which I serve) draw treasurer Jim McFarland into discussions.

² The committee would propose the presbytery’s total assessment across all congregations. The treasurer would still oversee calculating and assessing the specific assessments for individual congregations.

- In recent history, the committee has had member(s) serve on the committee of the day in many successive years. These members have tracked certain financial issues through the year, often with the working assumption that they will be nominated again at the next year's meeting. Thus, in effect these have been serving as a kind of volunteer yearly finance committee (perhaps of 1). This proposal puts on paper that some form of continuity like this is a good idea.

Rationale for this proposal. Faithful oversight of finances requires a working knowledge of ...

- Financial categories, historic expenses, and yearly procedures for financial maintenance.
- Access to financial spreadsheets and records and how they are used.
- Issues faced by and connectivity with the treasurer(s) in their work and alignment/understanding of monthly financial operations.

All of this working knowledge is hard (or impossible?) to obtain for an *ad hoc* created finance committee of the day.

We have perhaps worked around this problem in the past by having known stated individuals tracking yearly finances and communicating with the treasurer on a continual basis. However, there are risks in that level of individual dependence. These include:

- What happens if a certain key individual is unavailable at a presbytery meeting? (This happened at the spring 2023 meeting).
- Are we assigning one individual to become a *de facto* lifetime chair of the committee, at least until he finds and fully trains a suitable replacement? This topic is relevant to the author who was committee chair at the last meeting and hopes not to chair this committee for the, Lord-willing, many decades of service in this court.

A steady system based on continuity will seemingly work more effectively.

Recommendations:

1. Form a standing 3-man finance committee. On this committee,
 - a. Membership would be 3 years long.
 - b. The committee would function with rotating "classes", such that 1 member would rotate off yearly, ensuring continuity from year to year on the committee.
 - c. The committee would appoint its own chairman. The chairman would be responsible for convening committee meetings and ensuring committee representation at presbytery meetings where the finance committee would present.
2. Appoint the treasurer/assistant treasurers as *ex officio*, non-voting members of the committee.
3. Direct the AIC to appoint the initial membership of this committee before fall 2023, so that this committee can be ready for presentations at any fall 2023 presbytery meeting or spring 2024 presbytery meeting.

With thanks,

Joel Hart