

The Ministry of Presbytery Trustees

Presbytery of the Coastlands – New Jersey Missional Communities Administrative Commission

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Proviso

This document is intended to serve as a starting point for the Presbytery of the Coastlands (POTC) and the New Jersey Missional Communities Administrative Commission (NJMCAC), and expresses a *provisional, working understanding* of the leadership roles it encompasses, based on the *Book of Order* and POTC's Bylaws. As POTC continues to discern a vision for its ministry, this understanding will necessarily expand and shift. This guide should be read as *descriptive* rather than *authoritative*. It also proposes certain questions for consideration by POTC and NJMCAC.

The “Why”

At the very beginning of the *Book of Order* is a statement on God's mission in Jesus Christ. This mission statement is worth quoting in its entirety, because it is meant to guide everything we do as a church. This is why we exist as an institution:

The good news of the Gospel is that the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—creates, redeems, sustains, rules, and transforms all things and all people. This one living God, the Scriptures say, liberated the people of Israel from oppression and covenanted to be their God. By the power of the Spirit, this one living God is incarnate in Jesus Christ, who came to live in the world, die for the world, and be raised again to new life. The Gospel of Jesus Christ announces the nearness of God's kingdom, bringing good news to all who are impoverished, sight to all who are blind, freedom to all who are oppressed, and proclaiming the Lord's favor upon all creation.

The mission of God in Christ gives shape and substance to the life and work of the Church. In Christ, the Church participates in God's mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God's love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ. Human beings have no higher goal in life than to glorify and enjoy God now and forever, living in covenant fellowship with God and participating in God's mission. (*Book of Order*, F-1.01)

The “What”

The *Book of Order* requires presbyteries, where permitted, to cause the formation of a corporation to hold and manage the presbytery's property (G-4.0101). Under New Jersey law, presbyteries may incorporate—and therefore are required to do so by our church constitution. The Board of Trustees has the authority to receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for and at the direction of the presbytery.

This document describes the work of the Board of Trustees during a transitional time, as the POTC organizes itself in accordance with the governance structure approved at the stated meeting in January 2022. Members will serve until new trustees are elected as part of the final reorganization plan for POTC, which is anticipated to come before the presbytery at its stated meeting in September 2022.

Membership

The Trustees consist of no fewer than seven members, and no more than ten members. The transitional board will serve until the end of the transitional period, as stated above, or until their successors are elected, whichever is first. Thereafter, the Trustees will be elected by Presbytery for three-year terms, divided as evenly as possible into three classes, including the President. The Treasurer and the Secretary of the Corporation (the Stated Clerk) serve as *ex officio* members without vote. Nominations will be made by the Presbytery Council, until the election of a Nominating Committee.

Spiritual Gifts, Passion and Qualifications:

1. Understands and enjoys working with balance sheets, income statement, investment, tax and insurance matters.
2. Understands and enjoys advising/consulting concerning construction, building maintenance, zoning, leases/contracts and other property matters.
3. Has good communication and relational skills.
4. Creatively uses problem solving and uses business skills in a church setting.
5. Spirituality maturity, with personal depth, spiritual grounding, and resilience.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for matters outlined in G-4.02 of the Book of Order, Church Property, including but not limited to the following:

1. Review of all applications from Presbytery churches for the purchase or receipt of church properties, including manses, that are subject to an encumbrance (e.g. a mortgage), granting of easements to church property, the sale of church property, any granting of a license to use or any lease of worship space, and any granting of license to use or any lease, for a term greater than five years, of other church property. In the event a church wishes to purchase a property without encumbrance or indebtedness the Trustees shall be consulted in an advisory capacity. They may act in an advisory capacity on other property matters when requested to do so by the Session or Trustees of a particular church.
2. Review of all requests from the presbytery's churches to borrow funds such that, when added to a debt already incurred, total indebtedness will be greater than 15% of the current year's budgeted income.
3. Consideration of referrals from the Presbytery or its entities, concerning properties held in the name of the Presbytery.
4. Act on behalf of the Presbytery when commissioned to do so.
5. Manage the financial affairs of the Presbytery, including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Management of the investments and accounts of the Presbytery,
 - b. Preparing and recommending the annual budget for the Presbytery and regularly reviewing financial results.
 - c. Maintaining financial and other records in accordance with secular and denomination requirements.

- d. Providing for a financial review of the Presbytery's financial books, records and procedures through by an internal review committee, or through arranging an outside audit if the Board determines it to be appropriate.
- e. Respond to grant and funding requests. Determine and implement application processes as needed.

Additionally, during the transitional period, the Board of Trustees will organize and oversee a Personnel Team composed of three members of the Board of Trustees and three other members, who are not Trustees. The members of the Personnel Team will possess particular gifts and knowledge of personnel administration appropriate to their role, and the presbytery's Head of Staff will serve as a member *ex officio* of the Personnel Team. The Personnel Team will provide human-resources support to, and oversee the work of, the presbytery staff during the interim period. Any recommendations for action it may propose to the presbytery shall be made through the Board of Trustees. It will cease to operate once the presbytery elects a Personnel Committee under the final reorganization plan.

*The Board of Trustees is accountable to the Presbytery
for all actions in carrying out its responsibilities.*

The "How"

Beyond all the practical responsibilities discussed above, it will be important to remember that all the roles established for governing the church "presuppose[...] the fellowship of women, men, and children united in covenant relationship with one another and with God through Jesus Christ. The organization rests on the fellowship and is **not designed to work without trust and love**" (G-1.0102, emphasis added). Wherever you find yourself engaged in the mission of the church—as an officer, as a member of a leadership team, as a trustee—your ministry is never simply functional, but spiritual and relational. Attend to personal connections when you e-mail or call to ask about business. Create opportunities in your meetings for studying the scripture together and praying for one another. The promises we make as church officers do not simply direct us away from bad behavior—they should point us toward a positive duty to build up the body of Christ. Each of us needs to ask what part we can play in nurturing trust and love within the corner of Christ's body where we find ourselves.