

Article 17 Church Oversight Committee SAMPLE Mandate

Background

This document is designed by Pastor Church Resources (PCR) to serve as a template. Each classis is encouraged to revise and adapt according to the unique dynamics of each situation.

Committee Membership

The church order only specifies that the committee should include at least two members and that one of the members should be the classis-assigned church counselor. We also recommend that the church visitors who worked with the church before and during the Article 17 process be included.

Committee Mandate: Assist and Evaluate

The church order says that if a church needs “evaluation and assistance” before extending another call, the classis shall appoint an oversight committee to provide a “time of evaluation and assistance before extending another call.”

Assist

1. The committee will review any reports written by the church visitors or Pastor Church Resources. Such reports shall establish the trajectory of the oversight committee’s work.
2. The committee will meet with the council, the released pastor and, if appropriate, several other key people connected to the separation, in order to obtain information about the separation and its causes or to obtain clarity regarding items found in an existing report.
3. The committee will assist the council by helping the council identify, understand and learn from the dynamics that contributed to an undesirable separation.
4. The committee will help the council identify steps the church can take to address those issues that might otherwise prevent the next pastor from serving well.

Evaluate

1. The committee will contact Pastor Church Resources to determine if it is appropriate for the church to contract with a Specialized Transitional Minister.
2. The committee will provide a written recommendation to the classis as to whether or not the classis should give permission for the church to call another pastor or whether the time of evaluation and assistance should be extended.

Reporting and Timeline

1. The committee shall provide written reports of their work six weeks before each classis meeting.
2. The committee may bring a final recommendation to classis no sooner than at the next scheduled classis meeting and no later than one year from this classis meeting.