

Article 17 Pastor 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 three members, that the members should include both laity and clergy and that a council member of the congregation may be included. PCR recommends that classis select members who have some expertise and experience in caring for pastors and that they are trusted as objective (able to both assist AND evaluate). Generally speaking, committees benefit more from *consulting* with council members than *including one as a member* of the committee. By consulting with council members, the committee can clarify key issues of concern and growth for the pastor. Council members can, at times, struggle to maintain the level of objectivity required to serve well as a member of the committee.

Committee Mandate: Assist and Evaluate

The church order says that if a released minister needs “evaluation and assistance” before accepting another call, the classis shall appoint an oversight committee to “plan and monitor an evaluation of readiness for the ministry that focuses on professional competence and personal/emotional status.”

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 pastor by helping the pastor identify, understand and learn from the dynamics that contributed to an undesirable separation.
4. The committee will help the pastor identify steps the pastor can take to address those issues that might otherwise prevent the pastor from serving another church well.

Evaluate

1. The committee will contact Pastor Church Resources to arrange a professional assessment of the pastor's psychological fitness for ministry.
2. The committee will receive from the pastor a written rule or rhythm of life in which the pastor articulates what they've learned about themselves and God through this experience. This rule or rhythm of life will include the practices, relationships or rhythms that they have or will incorporate to help them sustain a healthier life of ministry moving forward.
3. The committee will provide a written recommendation to the classis as to whether or not the classis should declare the pastor eligible for call, extend the period of evaluation and assistance, or release the pastor from ministry.

Committee Timeline

1. The committee shall provide written reports of their work six weeks before each classis meeting.
2. The pastor's two-year eligibility for call shall begin on DATE and end (or require extension) on DATE.
3. Ordinarily, 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.