

Presbytery of the Highlands
Stated Meeting
Administration and Coordinating Team
November 12, 2024

Items for Consent Agenda:

None.

Items for Action:

ACT-1

The ACT recommends the attached Anti-Racism Policy for the Presbytery of the Highlands.

ACT-2

The ACT recommends the renewal of Rev. Dr. Steven Shussett's contract as resourcing staff and that he be elected as the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Highlands for another three years (January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2027.)

ACT-3

The ACT recommends the 2025 budget. The budget reflects the changes to the Board of Pensions and the 2% increase for the staff.

Items to Report:

From the October 29, 2024 Meeting:

Act-4

The ACT reviewed the September Presbytery meeting and the upcoming November meeting agenda.

ACT-5

Reviewed the year-to-date Financial Reports. The treasurer, Elder Becky Moody, reported that our bank account was compromised due to check washing. The funds have been recovered and she and Liz are working with the bank to set up a new account or additional safeguards and to update our authorized signers.

ACT-6

The ACT approved that Rev. David Harvey and Elder Pete Peterson as authorized signers for the Presbytery of Highlands financial accounts.

ACT-7

The Personnel Committee conducted the annual review of Rev. Dr. Steve Shussett. Other staff reviews will come later in November.

ACT-8

The Personnel Committee reported that they have received notice that Liz Hutchinson, Financial administrator, will be retiring effective April 1, 2025. The Personnel Committee will be meeting in November to discuss and recommend the next steps.

ACT-9

The Personnel Committee recommended that the Presbytery Leader and Stated Clerk receive a 2% increase in their effective salary. The Presbytery leader opted for the Covenant Pastor's Package and PPO health Care. This provided a savings of over \$6,000 compared to the Transitional Pastor Package which was originally in the budget.

ACT-10

The Funds Development Team is working on a series of workshops for 2025 on Developing a Financial Sustainability Plan for congregations.

ACT-11

The Discernment Team reported that they are close to the finish line. There will be a leadership retreat for Visioning and Action Steps on November 14.

ACT-12

The Moderator reported that she has officiated at 3 installations and 1 ordination/installation in the last two months

- September 8 – Installation – Rev. Arlene Romaine – Community Presbyterian Church of Ringwood
- September 29 – Ordination and Installation - Rev. Pamela Osborne – First Presbyterian Church Stanhope and Andover Presbyterian Church
- October 6 – Installation - Rev. Eric Lai -Taiwanese American Fellowship Presbyterian Church, Hillsborough
- October 20 – Installation of Rev. Tom Brown - Presbyterian Church of Chatham Township

ACT-13

The Stated Clerk reported that the GAPJC affirmed the decisions of the Synod PJC, which indicated that we made several errors in our process. The

COM is working to ensure compliance moving forward. However, the GAPJC also indicated for the first time that a psychological evaluation can be mandated for any minister member at any time, provided that stated process is followed and an opportunity for the member to be heard is offered. Additionally, it is the duty of the sending presbytery to ensure that members undergo psychological testing.

ACT-14

The Presbytery 2023 Minutes were reviewed by the Synod and approved without exceptions.

ACT-15

There are two "cross" presbytery partnerships projects in process. The 2025 Youth Triennium will be with Northeast Presbytery and Hudson River Presbytery. The four New Jersey Presbyteries and Long Island Presbytery are working together to develop a "Preachers' school for Ruling Elders. More information is coming soon.

ACT-16

The ACT approved the 2025 Presbytery Meeting dates as the following:

- March 11, 7PM, Zoom
- May 13, Time TBD, Hybrid
- September 9, Time TBD, Hybrid
- November 11, 7PM, Zoom
- There will be NO January Presbytery meeting. Instead, we will have two in-person Presbytery gatherings, one in January/February and one in October or December focused on community building and learning together. More information will be available soon.

ACT-17

Approved the request from Committee on Ministry to appoint an Administrative Commission for the First Presbyterian Church of Ogdensburg to assist them in the dissolution of the congregation in 2025. The following have been appointed at this time for the commission: Rev. Julie Raffety, First Presbyterian Church of Franklin, Elder Howard Alden, First Presbyterian Church of Branchville and Rev. Dr. Pat Sileo, First Presbyterian Church of Sparta.

ACT-18

Approved a request from Thompson Memorial Church, New Hope, PA to implement Mission projects in Lambertville area, working specifically with Fisherman's Mark. *Background: Thompson Memorial Presbyterian Church is in the Philadelphia Presbytery. They are only a few miles from Lambertville,*

New Jersey and would like to expand their mission work with Fisherman's Mark by developing their involvement with the project in Lambertville. They needed the permission of the Highlands Presbytery to expand their mission in our presbytery (G-3.03). The Thompson Memorial Church team is looking forward to expanding their mission partnership with Fisherman's Mark in Lambertville and continue to partner with our congregations in this project.

ACT-19

Rev. David Harvey, Blairstown Presbyterian, gave a report of the latest Blair Academy Consultation Team meeting.