

Presbytery of the Highlands
Stated Meeting
Administration and Coordinating Commission
Report – Part 1
September 15, 2026

Items for Consent Agenda:

None.

Items for Action:

ACC-1

The ACC recommends the following:

- That the Presbytery approve the 2027 Per Capita of \$45.50
- That the Presbytery of the Highlands approve the recommended 2027 Operating Budget.

Background to budget

The Finance and Property presented the 2027 budget for review and recommendations.

Assumptions for the budget

- Membership 9,397
- Per Capita \$45.50
- 13% operating income to the General Assembly
- 4% to the Synod of the Northeast
- Uncollected Per Capita at 17%
- 3.6% COLA for Presbytery Staff

Highlights of the Budget

- Ordained staff in 2027 will be part of the BOP Congregational Pastor Package
- Investment Income
 - 5.5% draw from the Mission Ministry Fund as of August 31 is \$390,698
 - 4 % draw from Jim and Marie Chesnutt Fund as of August 31 is \$9,700

- Other Income to come from Special Resourcing Fund and the Peacemaking Fund for projects for the Innovations Team, Church Vitality and Discernment, and Committee on Representation.
- Planned deficit for 2027 is (\$13,523)

ACC-2

The ACC recommends the following:

- **The Presbytery accepts Rev. Radak's notice of intent to retire in June 2027 with great thanks.**
- **The Presbytery begin the search process for the next Presbytery leader using the following process.**

Rationale:

- Begin search for the next Presbytery Leader rather than hiring an interim leader. Interim Leadership Is Not Needed.
 - A primary role of interim leadership is to help an organization assess its current needs and clarify future goals. Because the Presbytery of the Highlands has already completed a discernment process addressing these questions, the ACC believes an interim Presbytery Leader is not necessary.
- **Process: Use a Consultant During the Search**
ACC approved the Personnel Committee recommendation to hire a consultant to support a duly nominated Presbytery Leader Search Committee (PLSC) while the current Presbytery Leader remains active. This **approach maintains appropriate boundaries** between the outgoing Presbytery Leader and the work of the search committee.
- **Potential "Bridge": A 3-6 month coverage** If a candidate is not hired and able to begin by July 2027, it may be necessary for the ACC to hire a part-time "Bridge" Presbytery Leader to cover the basic necessary duties of a Presbytery Leader for several months.

Search process and timeline:

Search Process Phases:

1. Initial Notification and Preparation — Spring 2026
2. Recommendations, Strategy, and Process — July to August 2026
3. Committee Formation and Public Launch — September to November 2026
4. Active Search and Discernment — January to April 2027
5. Candidate Selection and Celebration — April to June 2027

PRESBYTERY LEADER RETIREMENT AND SEARCH PROCESS

Phase 1: Initial Notification and Preparation (Spring–June 2026)

1. The Presbytery Leader notified the ACC Personnel Team of her intent to retire in June 2027.
2. In June 2026, the Personnel Team met with a consultant to discuss the search timeline and process. The Presbytery Leader also updated her job description for Personnel Team review.
3. The Personnel Team reviewed and refined the search timeline, process, and job description, then developed recommendations for ACC consideration.

Phase 2: Recommendations, Strategy, and Process (July–August 2026)

1. July 15 ACC Meeting:
 - a. The Presbytery Leader formally informs the full ACC of her planned retirement.
 - b. The Personnel Team presents its formal recommendations to the ACC.
2. The Finance Team assesses 2027 budget implications for the search process, including hiring expenses and potential moving costs.
3. The Nominating Team and Committee on Representation develop the nominating process and application.
4. Mid-to-late August 2026: The Presbytery of the Highlands shares a retirement announcement through multiple communication formats, possibly including video.

Phase 3: Committee Formation and Public Launch (September–November 2026)

1. September 15, 2026: ACC presents its recommendations to the Presbytery for approval of the Presbytery Leader's retirement and the search process.
2. A "Celebrate Jeanne Team," chaired by Stefanie Muntzel, is formed to plan retirement recognition.
3. October 2026: The Nominating Team reviews applications and prepares a slate for the Presbytery Leader Search Committee (PLSC).
4. November 2026: The Nominating Team presents the PLSC slate to the Presbytery for election.

Phase 4: Active Search and Discernment (January–April 2027)

1. January–February 2027: The newly elected Search Committee begins regular meetings and develops the Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP).
2. Early 2027: ACC reviews and approves the completed MDP.
3. February 2027 Presbytery Meeting: The Search Committee provides a progress update.
4. April 2027: The Search Committee narrows the pool to top candidates.

Phase 5: Candidate Selection and Celebration (April–June 2027)

1. April/May 2027: The Search Committee updates the ACC on its progress. ACC determines whether a three- to six-month part-time Bridge Presbytery Leader is needed to cover essential duties.
2. Saturday, May 22, 2027: The Johnsonburg picnic celebration honors Jeanne's retirement.
3. May 2027 Presbytery Meeting: The final candidate is formally presented to the Presbytery.
4. June 30, 2027: The current Presbytery Leader officially retires.

Items for Report:

ACC-3

Report of the ACC Meeting — June 1, 2026

Financial and Presbytery Business

- The YTD Financial Reports were reviewed.
- The minutes of the May Presbytery meeting were reviewed.
- The agenda for the September Presbytery meeting was discussed.

Finance and Property Recommendations — Approved

- A \$3,000 matching grant from the Manse Fund was approved to support environmental and energy-efficient upgrades to church manses.
- The following allocations from the Special Resourcing Fund were approved:
 - Sanctuary and Seed (matching grants): \$40,000
 - Communications Team (website upgrade and other communications projects): \$25,000
 - Innovation and Discernment Team (special projects): \$25,000
 - Church Vitality and Discernment (special projects): \$20,000

Stated Clerk's Report

- No response has been received to the ACC's letter to the Synod regarding Commissioned Ruling Elders.
- The "Preaching God's Word" program has been scheduled to begin in September.

ACC-4

Report of the ACC Meeting — July 12, 2026

Commission on Ministry

- Approved the formation of an Administrative Commission for Larison's Corner Church, to accompany the congregation through a difficult season. Members appointed:
 - Rev. Nancy Asbury, HR (Moderator)
 - Rev. Scott Stolte, Lamington Presbyterian Church
 - Elder Carol Skidmore, Basking Ridge (has served as the COM liaison)
 - Elder Gerald Chandler, First Presbyterian Church, Newton

Financial and Presbytery Business

- The Financial Report was reviewed.
- The agenda for the September Presbytery meeting was reviewed.
- Approved a motion setting the September Presbytery meeting for **Tuesday, September 15, at 10:00 a.m. at Johnsonburg Camp**, to accommodate the planned agenda items.

Communications

- Reviewed a draft presentation of the new Presbytery logo.

Task Groups and Policy

- Appointed a task group to develop an AI policy for the Presbytery.

Finance and Property

- Announced the completed sale of the Sparta Manse.

Property and Grounds

- Received a report on damage to the Old Clove Church Cemetery; bids for tree removal are currently being gathered.

Presbytery Meeting Planning

- Presented a possible agenda for the September Presbytery meeting.

Personnel

- Reported ongoing work to revise the Presbytery Personnel Policy and other personnel issues.

Resource Staff / Stated Clerk

- Served as a General Assembly Overture Advocate. Two of the Highlands overtures concerning Administrative Leave were approved. The Overture for ordination failed to make it out of the committee.

ACC-5

Report of the ACC Meeting — September 2, 2026

Financial & Property Updates

- **Funding Model Assessment:** The Finance and Property team announced plans to evaluate a shift in the presbytery funding model beginning in 2027. The proposed framework would transition congregations from the current per capita contribution model to a percentage-based model. Full study, design, and implementation are projected to take several years.
- **Annual Financial Reviews:** On August 18, members of the ACC and the Finance and Property team convened with representatives from the New Covenant Trust for the Annual Investment Review, followed by the presbytery's annual Financial Retreat.

Grant Approvals

The ACC officially approved \$3,000 Manse Grants for the following six congregations:

- Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, Pittstown
- Hildale Park Presbyterian Church, Cedar Knolls
- Calvary Presbyterian Church, Florham Park
- First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway
- First Presbyterian Church of Hackettstown
- Lower Valley Presbyterian Church, Califon

Presbytery Scheduling

- **September 2027 Presbytery Meeting:** The ACC set the date for the September 2027 meeting for **September 21, 2027** (the third Tuesday of the month). This adjusts the standard schedule (typically the second Tuesday) due to facility availability issues at Johnsonburg Camp & Retreat Center.