



Presbytery of the Northern Plains PRESBYTERY COMMITTEE RESTRUCTURING

Introduction:

In 2012 the Presbytery of Northern Plains approved a five year strategic plan for a new staffing model for the presbytery. Whereas the role of Executive Presbyter was eliminated, a new part time pastoral care position and a full time administrator position were added, and job descriptions for other staff/officers were changed, the committee structure for the presbytery has remained stagnant. Many of the responsibilities of the Executive Presbyter were assigned to staff. Some of the tasks were also absorbed by Committee on Ministry (COM) or other committees.

The Book of Order, was amended in July 2011 to include the new Form of Government (nFOG) which allows flexibility in assigning tasks to presbytery committees. Whereas certain tasks still need to be accomplished to remain compliant with the denomination, these tasks do not need to be assigned to any particular committee. We're not limited by any pre-determined tradition or precedent.

In the Spring of 2015, the Council created a task force to look into restructuring the committees to address several different obstacles the Presbytery was facing. The primary goal is to accomplish the tasks of Presbytery more efficiently. A noted concern is that the current committee structure calls for certain positions to be filled by PC(USA) teaching elders. As the number of leaders with this qualification decrease within the presbytery, it's becoming more difficult for the Nominating Committee to fill these positions. Other obstacles identified are: decreased membership, oversized committee structures, geographical limitations, lack of training, unbalanced workload between committees, aging leadership, etc.

The Committee Restructuring Task Force, preliminarily, presented Council with the option of simply removing some of COM's responsibilities and giving them to other committees, i.e. Session Records could handle various annual reports and CPM could manage the training AND oversight of CREs and TREs. Council opted for the more muscular option of overhauling the entire committee structure.

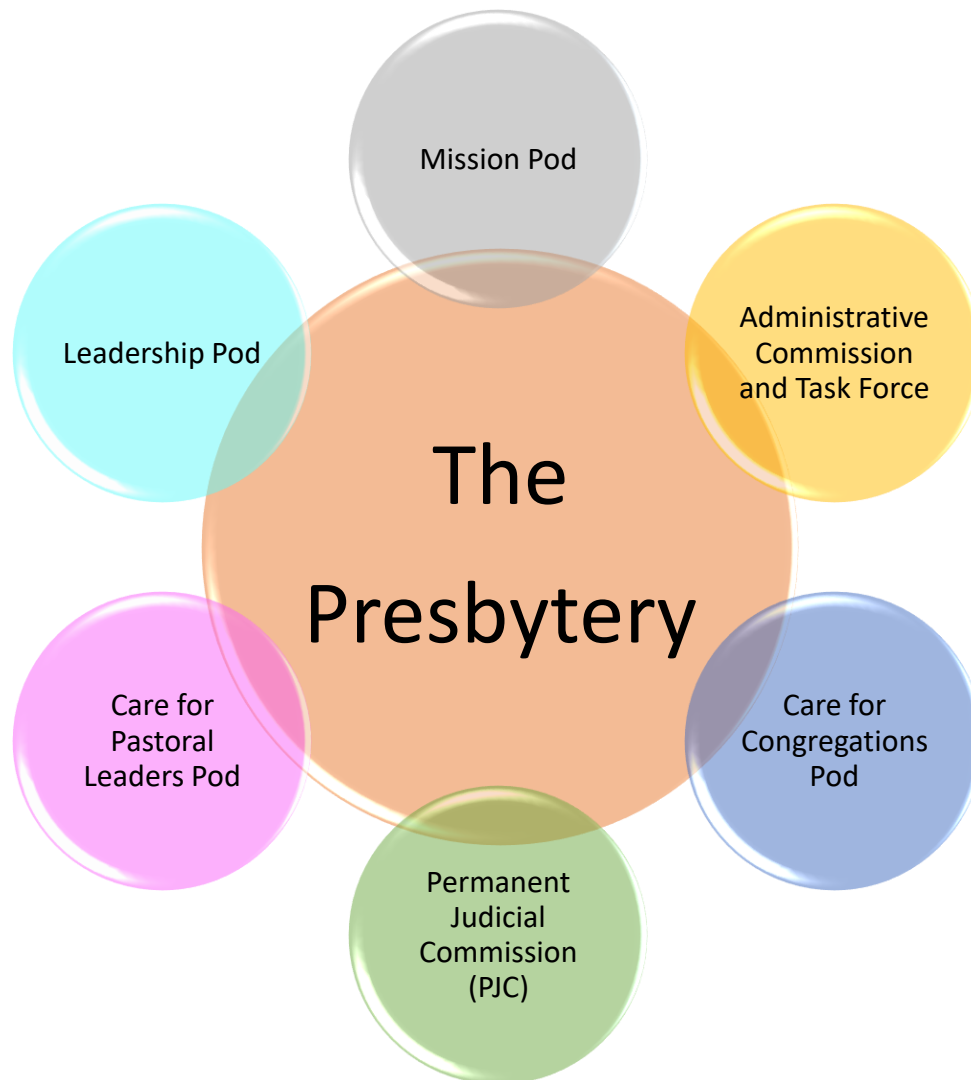
Tasks ordered by the Book of Order:

The Book of Order is flexible and does not prescribe which committees a presbytery/council must create. However, in most cases it sets forth what a presbytery/council must **do**. How these requirements are met is up to the presbytery/council to determine. Here are those responsibilities which have traditionally been part of a committee. In our restructuring efforts these responsibilities must not be lost.

Summary of BOO Description	BOO Reference	Current Committee
Establish by own rule, Committee on Representation to fulfill various functions, i.e, unity, diversity, advocacy for diversity in leadership.	F-1.0403, G-3.0103	Committee on Representation
Shall review annually session records.	G-3.0108a	Session Records
Organizational structure to support mission	G-3.0109	many organizational bodies
Election/hiring of staff, responsibilities, performance review, manner of termination.	G-3.0110	Nominating Committee Personnel Committee
Process for nominating persons to serve in positions requiring election by the council.	G-3.0111	Nomination Committee
Requests from congregations for permission to take actions regarding real property.	G-3.0303f	Council Sub-committee Corporate Affairs
Validating ministries within its bounds.	G-3.0306 G-2.0503a	COM
Examine each teaching elder or candidate who seeks membership in it.	G-3.0306	CPM/COM Presbytery
Develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to guide, nurture, and oversee the process of preparing to become a teaching elder.	G-3.0307	CPM
Oversight of inquirers and candidates, reception of members, approval of calls for pastoral services and invitations for temporary pastoral service, etc.	G-3.0307	CPM/COM

New Structure

Presbytery responsibilities have been divided into four pods of core responsibilities – MISSION, LEADERSHIP, CARE FOR CONGREGATIONS, and CARE FOR PASTORAL LEADERS. The Permanent Judicial Commission and Administrative Commission/Task Force(s) created by the Presbytery would still be stand alone entities outside of the pod structure.



Each one of these four pods would have a chairperson and “task leaders” would be assigned to a task (see pages 9-12 for position descriptions). The Nominating Committee would be responsible to evaluate Teaching and Ruling Elder skill sets so proper tasks may be assigned to the individual (sometime even calling on others in the presbytery that could serve as team members for short periods of time). The idea is to allow an individual (or small group) to focus and gain the training needed to become knowledgeable in that given area. Each task leader would be part of a pod with other task leaders. A chairperson would oversee the pod to make sure the task leaders are accomplishing their assigned tasks.

Some of the tasks within the Presbytery will need to have additional individuals trained and ready to help when needed. Each congregation will be asked to elect (three year term) at least one Ruling Elder to serve at the Presbytery level. Congregations over 100 members will be asked to elect additional Ruling Elder(s) to aid in the responsibilities of the Presbytery. This practice is already encouraged by the Presbytery.

Each pod is listed with its responsibilities.

Mission Pod (8 to 12 pod members)

Each **Ministry Team** continues as it's been: Chogoria, Youth, 1001 Worshipping Communities, Bdecan and Earth Care. Each team would have an identified task leader and as many interested participants as the team wishes.

Presbyterian Women, with its current leadership structure, continues as it's been.

Ministry with and for the **University of Jamestown** and **Presbyterian Clearwater Forest** falls into this pod. The Presbytery of the Northern Plains has two seats on the Clearwater Forest Board.

Self-Development of People may continue as Presbytery wishes. Their structure is dictated by the denomination.

The Mission Pod has an assigned chair person, who stays in touch with the task leaders from within this pod.

Leadership Pod (aka Council) (10 pod members)

The Leadership Pod will have the other three pod chairs, along with the Moderator, and Vice-Moderator as members. The reason is to ensure "Presbytery assisted duties" are completed and relay important communication to each other to foster a joint working relationship between all leadership within the Presbytery.

Financial Review: A team would conduct ongoing financial reviews of the Presbytery books. This team would bring forth policy changes as needed to address any concerns related to fiscal policies of the Presbytery

Budget: The Treasurer would have added responsibility to coordinate and bring forward the PNP budget to the Leadership Pod which would then recommend it to the Presbytery.

Insurance: The Stated Clerk would review annually to ensure the Presbytery has the proper coverage of insurance. Stated Clerk would report it to the Presbytery.

Real Property: Any request dealing with real property would be brought forward to the Leadership Pod or Presbytery by the Stated Clerk.

Tasks centered around record-keeping will also be in this pod, namely, **approval of session records, and members-at-large/validated ministry reports**. They are responsible for the gathering of the reports. If follow-up or disciplinary action is

necessary with congregations and/or pastoral leaders, leaders from the Care for Congregations and Care for Pastoral Leaders pods will be contacted.

Personnel: One person (Personnel Leader) would be responsible to ensure that all personnel issues are being addressed and that annual reviews are completed on the presbytery staff: Stated Clerk, Treasurer, Minister of Pastoral Care, Administrator of Connections and Records, and Administrator of Communication and Finance. They would bring concerns to the Leadership Pod. Reviews would be completed by at least one to two members of the Leadership Pod with the Personnel Leader.

There are two committees from the current structure that duties shall remain the same and leaders shall have a seat in the Leadership Pod.

- **Nominating Committee:** There are positions that need to be elected, including, moderator, vice-moderator, GA and Synod commissioners, the PJC, Representation Committee and leaders of each pod. In addition, the Nominating Committee would be responsible to evaluate Teaching and Ruling Elder skill sets so proper tasks may be assigned to the individual. The Vice-Moderator would nominate and Presbytery would elect members to the Nominating Committee.
- **Representation Committee:** Issues of diversity, unity and advocacy are to be addressed for us to remain in compliance with the denomination. The same individuals elected to the Nominating Committee will serve on the Representation Committee.

The Leadership Pod has an assigned chair person, who stays in touch with the task leaders from within this pod.

Care for Congregations Pod (5 to 6 pod members)

Participants in this pod will work with congregations to maintain a healthy environment between congregants, with pastoral leaders, and with other congregations. There will be a leader of this pod and as tasks are listed below, they, too, will have identified leaders and participants with passion for the task.

This pod will notify the Presbytery's Moderator when a session needs to **secure a new session moderator** and may offer assistance to the Moderator in these appointments.

A group of **vacancy counselors** will work with congregations and Pastoral Nominating Committees in order to secure good, prompt, faithful pastoral leadership. This group will be comprised of a leader and others who have a passion for this specific ministry.

The chairperson of this pod will be in frequent communication with the chairperson of the Care for Pastoral Leadership Pod as **conflicts between a congregation and pastoral leader** become known.

When conflict arises **in congregations**, a trained **conflict mediator** (currently called Mediation and Conflict Resolution Ministry Team) will be deployed to help in such

matters. This is not mandated by the Book of Order, however we believe this is where this ministry team would best serve the Presbytery.

Care for Pastoral Leaders Pod (5 to 6 pod members)

Participants in this pod will work with teaching elders, Commissioned and Trained Ruling Elders and other Pastoral Leaders. The Minister of Pastoral Care will be part of this pod to provide care for the presbytery's pastoral leadership.

The care, following and oversight of inquirers and candidates is a requirement of this pod, much in the same way the current CPM cares for our students.

Teaching elder installations are the responsibility of the presbytery. The Moderator will appoint the installation commission and the oversight of these installations will be in this pod.

The process for pastoral leaders to enter and leave the presbytery, in consultation with the Stated Clerk, is housed in this pod.

The chairperson of this pod will be in frequent communication with the chairperson of the Care for Congregations Pod as **conflicts between a congregation and pastoral leader** become known. A conflict mediator team might be called, if needed, to help address the situation. This is not mandated by the Book of Order, however we believe this is where this ministry team would best serve the Presbytery.

Implementation of New Structure

If the committee restructuring plan is approved by the Presbytery of the Northern Plains, the following implementation plan will be followed as a general guide and timeline. The implementation plan is designed as a tool to provide the critical steps in developing and fulfilling the new structure.

Phase 1: October 2016 – Fall Presbytery Meeting

The Moderator of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains will appoint an Enactment Task Force (ETF) to carry out the implementation plan. The task force will be supported by the members of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains and its staff by prayers and encouragement.

The ETF shall consist of at least five members. The Moderator of the Presbytery in consultation with the Presbytery Vice-Moderator and the Stated Clerk has the authority to replace members of the task force as needed. The task force may co-op additional members on a temporary basis with skills necessary to assist in carrying out specific portions of the implementation plan. Use of co-op members shall be approved in the same manner as replacing task force members.

It is proposed that the ETF members shall be: Teaching Elder Darrel Cory, Ruling Elder Michael Lochow, Ruling Elder Marilynn Ogden, Ruling Elder Jane Holtzclaw, Ruling Elder Laurie Elhard and Alissa Anderson.

2016-2017 Projected ETF budget is \$5,000.

Phase II: October 2016 to April 2017

All current committee members, congregations (aka session) and members of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains will be informed of the new structure and the process in which leadership will be selected.

The new structure depends on significant participation from every congregation. Therefore, the ETF will expect all sessions to elect a Ruling Elder from their congregation as a Presbytery Commissioner to serve at least a year term at the Presbytery level. Names are to be submitted by January 31, 2017, to the Presbytery office.

The ETF will create a skills inventory to help identify where Teaching and Ruling Elders' skills/passion fit into the new structure. Through discernment with the Nominating Committee and the ETF, a slate of names will be brought forward, for pod and task leaders, to the April 2017 Presbytery meeting.

The ETF to work with the Stated Clerk on update bylaw language to reflect the new structure.

Phase III: April 2017 Presbytery Meeting

Educational portions of the meeting will focus on equipping leadership with those skills necessary to implement the new structure including an understanding of the new pod structure and training (knowledge acquisition and skill development) required to carry out the tasks. Presenter(s) may be recruited locally, or from the Synod/GA level.

Circulate and present first reading of the updated bylaw language.

Nominating Committee will present a slate of pod and task leaders for election.

Phase IV: April 2017 to October 2017

A pod leadership retreat will be held following the April Presbytery meeting. During this retreat leadership education, fellowship, and envisioning the future of the Presbytery will be the primary focus.

A second leadership retreat will be held for pod and task leaders. It would focus on leadership education, fellowship and identifying the goals and objectives of each pod.

Pods will begin work on auditing policies (Manual of Operations, Bylaws, and Committee Handbooks) to meet their goals and objectives. Any changes, deletions, or additions would be brought forward at the October 2017 Presbytery meeting for approval.

Phase V: October 2017 Presbytery Meeting

Education will build on the preceding educational retreats to further equip members with the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out assigned tasks. Presenter(s) may be recruited locally, or from the Synod/GA level.

Present second reading of the updated bylaw language to be brought forward for approval.

Celebration of the leadership and history of the committee structure in the life of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains. Committees would be dissolved and the new structure would be fully functional.

Conduct Installation Service of pod and task leaders that were elected.
Presentation of changes to policies, resulting from policy audit, to be brought forward for approval.

The ETF would be dissolved with thanks and gratitude.

Summary

In summary this is not meant to be a manual of operation, but instead, a restructuring of the tasks entrusted to the presbytery. The goal is to match tasks with members' skill sets/passions, and to streamline a system that will work more efficiently with our declining numbers.

Currently, the only tasks listed are those either required by the Book of Order or are independent groups such as ministry teams/PW who don't rely on the committee structure for their management and success.

The first review of this committee structure will be done in two years (when the staffing model is scheduled to also be reviewed), and annually, thereafter.

Pod Chair Position Description

Presbytery of the Northern Plains (PNP)

Purpose of Ministry:

To provide administrative oversight for and moderation of one of the four Pods (Care for Pastoral Leaders Pod, Mission Pod, Care for Congregations Pod, and Leadership Pod) of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains.

Accountability:

Pod-Chairs are accountable to the Presbytery of Northern Plains. This happens through regular reporting at Presbytery meetings and through mutual accountability with and to other Pod-Chairs.

In addition, each Pod-Chair has a position on the Leadership Pod (to which all Pod-Chairs will belong and which will function in a way similar to a presbytery Council) ensuring “Presbytery assisted duties” are completed and relay important communication to each other to foster a joint working relationship between all leadership within the Presbytery.

Responsibility:

1. Provide administrative oversight for all the tasks within a Pod – delegating the work to task leaders and holding those leaders accountable to complete the tasks assigned. This includes appropriate monitoring of progress between meetings.
2. Maintain a regular schedule of meetings and communication so progress can be assessed and tasks completed.
3. Moderate conversations within the Pod in a way that all voices are heard and treated respectfully, and which leads to faithful discernment and effective decision-making.
4. Maintain an appropriate balance between time spent in the pod on:
 - a. getting things done
 - b. teaching and learning.
5. Attend to external relations — ministry of each pod is ministry which has to be sensitive to relations and coordination with the ministry of other pods, *and* to other presbyteries and governing bodies. The chair must take leadership of the need to keep these relationships healthy and lines of communication open.
6. Provide Guidance for decision making — The Pod-Chair is responsible for making sure the work of the task groups under the pod is in order. This person needs to be knowledgeable of the Book of Order, the By-laws and policies of the PNP, and of polity in general.
7. Present an oral and written report to Presbytery

Gifts, Talents:

Attention to details, ability to delegate, leadership, judgement, prudence, ability to keep confidentiality, highly developed organizational skills, integrity, compassion, confidence, self-awareness, honesty, communication, commitment, and ability to maintain healthy boundaries.

Service Time:

The Pod Chair must be able and willing to devote the time necessary to assure that the Pod fulfills its duties and also be available to serve on the Leadership Pod. Due to the newness of this position, it will require a generous amount of time and attention with an average expectation of 10 hours per week.

Length of Service:

Term of service one year, renewable.

Requirement:

Must be either a Teaching or Ruling Elder.

Training/Orientation:

The PNP will provide on-going training opportunities for Pod chairs.

Pod Member/Task Leader Position Description

Presbytery of the Northern Plains (PNP)

Purpose of Ministry:

To provide care, support and assistance to the Pod to which they are elected.

Accountability:

Pod-Members/Task Leaders are accountable to the Presbytery of the Northern Plains. This happens principally through mutual accountability within the Pod and under the oversight of the chair of the pod.

Responsibility:

1. To make the work of the pod a priority so that tasks assigned to you are attended to in an efficient and timely manner.
2. To pray for the ministry entrusted to your care.
3. To attend meetings as scheduled and to communicate when unable to attend.
4. Present an oral and written report to the Pod in which they are elected too.

Gifts, Talents:

Care for Pastoral Leaders Pod: Compassion, ability to effectively assist in resolving conflictual situations, assertiveness, working knowledge of the Book of Order and PNP Policies, communication, commitment, ability to maintain healthy boundaries, a heart for the support and nurture of pastoral leaders.

Mission Pod: Compassion, communication, commitment, healthy boundaries, working knowledge of the Book of Order and PNP Policies, and love of mission work at a local and international level.

Care for Congregations Pod: Ability to effectively assist in resolving conflictual situations, working knowledge of the Book of Order and PNP Policies, assertiveness, listening, communication, commitment, healthy boundaries and love for the local church.

Leadership Pod: Administrative wisdom, financial acumen, ability to effectively assist in resolving conflictual situations, assertiveness, listening, communication, commitment, healthy boundaries and a love for the Presbytery of Northern Plains.

Service Time:

Being a Pod member/task leader requires time. Each Pod will establish its own pattern for meeting. It will require commitment of time to build and maintain meaningful relationships both within the Pod and throughout the PNP. Due to the newness of this position, it will require a generous amount of time and attention with an average expectation of 4 hours per week.

Length of Service:

Term of service one year, renewable.

Requirement:

Must be either a Teaching or Ruling Elder.

Training/Orientation:

The PNP in coordination with the pod-chair will provide on-going training opportunities for Pod Members/Task Leaders.

Task Member Position Description

Presbytery of the Northern Plains (PNP)

Purpose of Ministry:

To provide assistance to accomplish a task within one of the four Pods (Care for Pastoral Leaders Pod, Mission Pod, Care for Congregations Pod, and Leadership Pod) of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains.

Accountability:

Task members are accountable to the Presbytery of the Northern Plains. This happens principally through mutual accountability within the task group and under the oversight of the task leader.

Responsibility:

1. To complete the tasks assigned in an efficient and timely manner and report results to Task Leader either as an oral or written report.
2. To pray for the ministry entrusted to your care.
3. To attend task group meetings as scheduled and to communicate when unable to attend.

Gifts, Talents:

Willingness to accept training, perseverance (aka follow through), compassion, active listening skills, communication, commitment, healthy boundaries, and a love for the Presbytery of Northern Plains and Presbyterian Church (USA).

Service Time:

Varies.

Length of Service:

Until task is accomplished.

Training/Orientation:

The PNP in coordination with the pod-chair and task leader will provide on-going training opportunities for Task Members.