

Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons
Maritime Center - Linthicum, Maryland
September 29 to October 2, 2019

Minutes

Sunday, September 29, 2019

Present: Sharon Alexander, Sean Rowe, Molly James, Sally Johnson, Michael Glass, Valerie Balling, Wendell Gibbs, Carmen Figueroa, Richard Helmer, Luz Montes, Nancy Cohen, Bill Powel, Marisa Tabizon Thompson, Jake Owensby, Adam Trambley

Sharon Alexander convened the Standing Committee at 7:15 pm.

Evening Prayer was led by Valerie Balling.

Bill Powel moved acceptance of the November 2018 meeting minutes. Nancy Cohen seconded. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

Sharon Alexander discussed some of the overall ideas for the Commission's initial work at these meetings. Initially, we want to try to get to low hanging fruit and to put together explanations of resolutions and then other groups of people with experience can help with drafting them.

Molly James noted that the we don't need to do a lot of formatting for Blue Book resolutions at this point, since the Blue Book report will be uploaded via an on-line app process instead of submitting a Word document. Revisions and updates are also being implemented to the Extranet for improved utility.

Our next meeting is April 21-25, 2020, at the Hilton Hotel at the St. Louis, MO airport. Many different interim bodies will be present at that meeting to foster collaborations and synergies.

An Extranet site exists for all chairs of task forces and interim bodies, and Sharon reached out to offer our help and remind the other chairs that our mandate includes reviewing issues of constitutional and canonical changes. The disability and deafness task force said they will be asking us to look at creating a committee or commission on disability issues that is in existence longer than one triennium. The Ecumenical Task Force has also noted that their work is longer than one triennium.

A discussion ensued about some of the resolutions that were sent to us that either lacked direction or asked us to look at particular issues we may find unhelpful. We noted that our response to a resolution may differ from what the resolution may have sought either because we could not discern the initial intent or because our wisdom leads us in a different direction.

Molly James noted that there was currently a September 2020 date for all interim bodies to submit resolutions to us. Upon further discussion, the Commission asked for an earlier date,

perhaps in July, so that there would be time for us to respond and the other interim body to revise its proposed resolution.

Sally Johnson noted that the Task Force to assist the Office of Pastoral Development has a number of resolutions from their meetings last week that they are giving us for feedback at this meeting.

A number of other resolutions have come to us and will be able to be discussed at this meeting.

Michael Glass noted that in terms of Cuba, the Executive Council has to demonstrate that the Cuba canons are compatible with ours, that their clergy have had certain trainings, and a few other things. Once Executive Council certifies that this has happened, Cuba will be an official diocese of the Episcopal Church. One of the biggest barriers is getting visas for deputies to General Convention. They will have to go to Mexico City and wait for up to two weeks to get a visa and then hope that the visa timing allows them to go to General Convention.

Richard Helmer asked about the proliferation of task forces arising from General Convention actions, and ways to deal with that. Sharon noted that this is within our mandate to think further about. There is one triennial budget line item with a lump sum for all interim bodies, and that number is set well before the end of General Convention when many task forces are created.

Sharon introduced Richard Helmer as the newest member of the Commission. Richard is secretary of the House of Deputies Resolution Review committee.

Michael Glass noted a there is resolution to create a Title IV database, but the Archives is not going to have funding for that database. We need to think about how we can follow up with the Archives and Executive Council for funding to ensure that this happens. This database is a key component of the Church being able to do Title IV work well going forward.

Bill Powel wondered if the rules around task force creation could be restricted. Michael Glass noted that there is currently discussion to move the resolution deadline earlier with a signed notice saying that people have looked at who else may be assigned to this work and that they have looked at previous actions of General Convention that may have addressed this.

Bill Powel brought up an idea he had about insurance to cover an ordained person's costs of defending a Title IV complaint. The idea would be to go to an insurance company and allow clergy to buy insurance to cover defense costs with some of the premiums going to train a panel of lawyers. Michael Glass noted that to do this we would need some further infrastructure and a database to look at this. The premium would be covering the defense costs and training for the panel.

Since everyone is on more than one Subcommittee, Sharon will look at the best way to use our small group time and set up some schedules between now and the morning. The first goal is low-hanging fruit so that Tom Little can start getting the Blue Book together. We also want to know what we need to bring to the larger group.

Will meet here at 9:00am tomorrow. Luz will do a morning devotional tomorrow. The meeting recessed at 8:25pm.

Monday, September 30, 2019

Present: Sharon Alexander, Sean Rowe, Molly James, Sally Johnson, Michael Glass, Valerie Balling, Wendell Gibbs, Carmen Figueroa, Richard Helmer, Luz Montes, Nancy Cohen, Bill Powel, Marisa Tabizon Thompson, Jake Owensby, Adam Trambley, Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, Annette Buchanan, Mary Kostel, Christopher Hayes, Tom Little, Mike Klusmeyer.

Luz led us in morning prayers at 9:05 am. The Commission presented Luz with stoles in celebration of her upcoming ordination.

The subcommittees then convened, to work for the balance of the morning.

A plenary session of the Commission was held after lunch, to review the progress of the subcommittees and address issues relevant to the full commission's work. The subcommittee chairs gave their reports, referring to the line numbers of the master spreadsheet the Commission is using to track its work.

Bishops and Dioceses, Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows.

Line 4 – A113 – a bit more drafting needed.

Line 6 - remedy GC 2018 oversight

Line 7 – III.11.3.c: narrow “this Title” to, we think, “this section.”

Series of bishop-related items, largely coming from Episcopacy Task Force. Sharon and Sean to review and advise.

Line 17 – diocesan vitality items. MMRs on diocesan-bishop level.

Line 18 – Defer to dioceses.

Lines 19-20 – Missional review prior to a Bp. Search starting. OPD Task Force working on this as well.

Line 21 – OPD Task Force working on this.

Lines 22-23 – Technical canonical fixes. Use of “foreign lands” question raised by Mike Glass.

Line 24 – III.11.1(a) – bishop elections are under the supervision of diocesan standing committee (Sally Johnson has drafted this in connection with OPD task force).

Consensus that subcommittee drafts should be posted not only on the Extranet but also on the SCSGCC Google drive.

Molly James summarized a new data tool GCO is using to store and access congregational data; useful in congregational vitality analyses, especially comparative analyses (congregation-to-congregation). Will assist in developing measurements of vitality.

Lines 56-62 – Provinces. Subcommittee not inclined to push these big changes, instead to encourage dioceses and provinces to be flexible and creative in establishing networks for mission and ministry.

Line 63 – Best practices for posting lay positions at diocesan level.

Line 64 – essentials of orders, including direct ordination to priesthood.

Line 65 – Canon trainings seem to be happening already, via seminaries and chancellors.

Line 66 - Minority reports in Blue Book reports? Process, timing, fairness issues. Threshold number of members needed for a minority report? HOB Rules for legislative committees sort of address this.

Line 67 – When notifications of adopted resolutions are sent to interim bodies. How do IBs know about referrals to other IBs? Tom – inconsistency of IBs posting their minutes.

Line 68 – Canonical mandate to review CCABs and look for ones that can/should be phased out. Sharon mentioned that there is an Extranet group of the chairs of all interim bodies, which theoretically can be used to query what other IBs are up to and if they are proposing changes to CCABs.

Per Molly James, the General Board of Examining Chaplains wants to get smaller.

Line 69 – GC creates confusion or error in enacting canonical changes.

Line 70 – Don't forget TREC.

Line 71 – DFMS Bylaws – Jane Cislucis is looking at this.

Line 72 – Bi-vocational clergy concerns for resources and support. Very substantial and important area.

Canonical Changes Subcommittee, Mike Glass.

Line 33 – Canon III.8.7 et seq.: There are diocese-to-diocese inconsistencies, and inconsistencies within dioceses over time. We require Ds (Standing Committees) to certify to other SCs as to certain things – and some of them don't do the psychiatric/medical checks. OPD Task Force is working on this also. Should canon be clearer/more explicit about what a SC is certifying as to.

Line 36 – Update to White & Dykman. Status report from Sally Johnson and Tom Little. Title IV updates are well underway but not complete. The III revisions from 2006 forward are relatively untouched.

Line 45 – Rector authority over lay employees and operations. Does Canon III.9.6 need clarifying? Or is this not a good canonical-level change? Better left to best practices, or to diocesan canons? Much discussion ensued.

Other canonical proposals?

General Convention and Rules of Order. The members walked through these items on the spreadsheet.

Formation Subcommittee, Valerie Balling.

Line 78 – reporting back from GC: No canonical or structural change needed.

Line 79 – Leadership development: Re-instate a standing commission on formation – not a task force.

Line 80 – Title III review: how to promote vitality?

Line 81 – Not making much progress in collaborating with the task force on formation

Line 82 – Discipleship. Ditto. Jake Owensby – The 'Way of Love' message works.

Line 83 – inspiration for change: how do we get people excited to try and do new things?

Line 84 – Encourage diversity: ask Committee on the State of the Church to suggest ideas?

Line 85 – Tools for conversation: need them. A set of cards approach was developed by North Carolina – Go Speak. Kaleidoscope Institute.

Line 87 – Marketing. Request budget allocation for marketing? Call it what it is/should be: evangelism.

Tom Little gave some advice about the structure and format of the Commission's Blue Book report, based on prior practice and GCO guidelines. He suggested that each member read over the last two Blue Book reports of the Commission to become familiar with the format, structure, level of and style.

Christopher Hayes mentioned that Polly Getz, currently the lead person on overseeing the Title IV website, has asked him to take that over from her as she is retiring.

Christopher then summarized a presentation he made at the recent Episcopal Chancellors Network conference, covering concerns about the gaps in Title IV resources and competencies at the diocesan level across the church. Should we move to a churchwide intake model?

Subcommittees are to meet again following this plenary session and also this evening. We will gather again in plenary Tuesday morning.

The subcommittees then broke out and continued their research, drafting and discussions through the afternoon and evening.

Tuesday, October 1, 2019

At the morning plenary session, brief updates were presented on subcommittee work and then the subcommittees reconvened.

After lunch, the Commission convened in plenary session.

B030 – Nominations to the Church Pension Fund Board

Nancy Cohen led a discussion of B030 as adopted by General Convention in 2018, noting the continuing sense of many that Joint Rule of Order 22 and Canon I.8 regarding nominations from the floor for members of the Board of The Church Pension Fund, are in conflict or at least generate confusion.

B030, as adopted in 2018:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons to review the process for nomination of candidates to serve as Trustees of The Church Pension Fund contained in Canon I.8, the Joint Rules of Order of the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies and any other relevant Canons or rules, and propose amendments to address any inconsistencies.

Wendell Gibb commented that under the 2018 change to Joint Rule 22, the nominations would only be okay if disclosed at least four months in advance - more like a petition process than a nomination from the floor. A petition process allows for background checking to be complete prior to the convening of General Convention. In a petition model, the nominations would still,

technically, come from the floor but presumably as presented by the Joint Standing Committee on Nominations.

Not all GC-elected candidates now are required to have background checks. Should we change that? The Commission could propose a petition process for the canon, or revise the joint rule to align with possibly clarified Canon I.8 language – or strike that from I.8 and incorporate the idea into the joint rule.

Molly James noted a timing issue – any changes to the canons and joint rules would not take effect until after the next GC starts – how can the changes apply to elections at the next GC? Endeavor to have the changes done at the very start of GC? Or will rushing court error and confusion? And, who reviews the criminal background check results and decides whether a conviction is disqualifying? Under Joint Rule 22, it is the office of the Secretary of the General Convention. The Commission's consensus seems to be to not try to make these changes effective for elections at the 2021 GC.

The Joint Standing Committee on Nominations appears not to have authority on its own to require background checks of the nominees whose desired office is not specifically mention in the Joint Rule.

Bi-Vocational Clergy; Title IV.4.1(h).

Christopher Hayes led a discussion of whether the canons in this area need clarification, concerning the obligation of clergy to inform their bishop of outside employment and obtain the bishop's approval. With the growth in outside employment, should noncompliance by the clergy member be a Title IV offense? If it is an offense, should it be written or structured differently? How well is this canonical obligation known by clergy? Richard Helmer offered that the foundation or purpose of the canon is to foster full relationship between a clergy person and bishop.

Christopher – is this more norm-setting, and therefore not appropriate for disciplinary action?

Sean Rowe suggested looking to Canon III.9.3(f) as a possibly analogous scenario.

Sally Johnson gave a condensed history of this Title IV canon. Early on, the provision was contingent on the bishop recalling the clergy person to fulltime ministry and making reasonable provision for the clergy person's support.

Sean – historically it is about to whom the priest "belongs."

Our Blue Book report should explain why we feel that the need for a wider discussion in the Church precludes action on this proposal at this time.

Adding a Standing Commission on Formation.

Sharon led a discussion here. Tom mentioned his Bishops and Dioceses subcommittee's morning discussions. Consensus is to re-establish this standing commission, but with a new statement of mandate. TEC Church Center staffing for such a re-established SC would not be easy to obtain.

A staff position would be quite useful in view of the multi-disciplinary nature of formation. We need to be realistic about the scope and authority of a reestablished standing commission. Valerie's subcommittee will work with Tom to continue drafting on this proposal.

The Constitution and Canons Resources website was described and presented as a critical asset for the Church – and critical to maintain in a current and accessible manner.?

The Commission discussed the next steps after this meeting, including outreach to other interim bodies prior to and at the April joint meetings. Perhaps we should seek time at a joint session in April to make a presentation about consulting with SCSGCC about resolutions that propose changes to the canons and constitution, or otherwise affect the structure and governance of the Church.

In the evening, subcommittee and individual drafting work continued.

October 2, 2019

Present: Sharon Alexander, Sean Rowe, Molly James, Sally Johnson, Valerie Balling, Wendell Gibbs, Carmen Figueroa, Richard Helmer, Luz Montes, Nancy Cohen, Bill Powel, Marisa Tabizon Thompson, Adam Trambley, Annette Buchanan, Christopher Hayes, Tom Little, Mike Klusmeyer.

Opening prayers were led by Adam.

Sharon asked Tom to explain the next step for the group. Tom said that we would now go through each item on the spread sheet to agree on the status and progress of each item – indicating where drafting was in progress and where no further action is recommended. All members participated in the review, and Molly James annotated the spreadsheet to clearly reflect the status and next steps for each item. The spreadsheet is attached to these Minutes (together with the Agenda).

Consensus was reached in favor of recommending repeal of the changes made by in 2018 by Resolutions A160 and A161, in view of the fact that they were a package together with A156 – which was not adopted, leaving unintended consequences.

The formation standing commission discussion continued. What should its title be – discussion the “standing commission for formation of lay and ordained disciples”?

Following completion of all items on the spreadsheet walk-through, the Commission reviewed next steps, subcommittee plans, and then adjourned.

Minutes – As Filed with GCO on 10/25/2019

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September 29 to October 2, 2019

AGENDA

Sunday, September 29, 2019

6 pm – Dinner in Chesapeake Dining Room

7 – 7:30 pm – Evening Prayer Bridgeroom

Approve minutes

Group discussion and updates

- what can be done quickly

- what needs more discussion

- process for getting items ready for Blue Book

7:30 – 9 pm – Subcommittee work Bridgeroom and

Breakout rooms

A314 and A315

Monday, September 30, 2019

7 – 9 am – Breakfast in Chesapeake Dining Room

9 – noon - Morning Prayer and updates
Subcommittee work

Bridgeroom and
Breakout rooms
A314 and A315

noon – 1 pm – Lunch in Chesapeake Dining Room

1 – 3 pm - Group discussion of major topics
as requested by subcommittees

Bridgeroom and
Breakout rooms
A314 and A315

4 – 6 pm Return to subcommittee work if time

6 – 7 pm – Dinner in Chesapeake Dining Room

7 – 9:30 pm – Subcommittee work

Bridgeroom and
Breakout rooms
A314 and A315

Tuesday, October 1, 2019

7 – 9 am – Breakfast in Chesapeake Dining Room

9 – noon - Morning Prayer and updates
Subcommittee work

Bridgeroom and
Breakout rooms
A314 and A315

noon – 1 pm – Lunch in Chesapeake Dining Room

1 – 3 pm - Group discussion of major topics
as requested by subcommittees

Bridgeroom and
Breakout rooms
A314 and A315

4- 6 pm Return to subcommittee work if time

6 – 7 pm – Dinner in Chesapeake Dining Room

7 – 9:30 pm – Subcommittee work

Bridgeroom and
Breakout rooms
A314 and A315

Wednesday, October 2, 2019

7 – 9 am – Breakfast in Chesapeake Dining Room

9 – noon - Morning Prayer and updates
Group discussion and planning

Bridgeroom and
[Breakout rooms
A314 and A315 if needed]

noon – 1 pm – Lunch in Chesapeake Dining Room