Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons

Maritime Center - Linthicum, Maryland

November 18-20, 2024

Minutes

(Approved by the Commission on February 27, 2025)

**Monday, November 18, 2024**

Members Present: Scott Barker, Anitas Braden, Lynn Carter Edmands, Andrew Dumas, Carolyn Glosby, Tom Little, Frank Logue, Craig Loya, Vanessa Marrero, Andrea McKellar, Steve Pankey, Aaron Perkins, Russ Randle, Kai Ryan, Diane Sammons, Susan Brown Snook, Eva Warren.

Others Present: Ian Douglas, representative of the Presiding Bishop; Michael Glass, Chancellor to the President of the House of Deputies; Sally Johnson, Consultant; Mary Kostel, Chancellor to the Presiding Bishop; Louisa McKellaston, liaison of Executive Council, Molly James, Interim Executive Officer of General Convention; Kent Anker, General Counsel to the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS).

Frank Logue convened the Standing Commission at 10:45 am., offered opening prayers and read the Land Acknowledgement. He then addressed some organizational and meeting protocol s and norms, noting that those addressing the group or making comments should speak slowly enough to facilitate the good work of our interpreters.

Frank referenced, and the members discussed, the Commission’s canonical mandate under the last cycle of its work, mentioning the important work assisting the members of the Church in Navajoland to become a missionary diocese and noting that Navajoland needs assistance now in drafting its constitution and canons. The discussion moved to the Title IV “capacity” work of the last two years; intake officers, Church Attorneys, investigations, parity across the orders of deacons, priests and bishops; clarifying pastoral responses; and the establishment of the office of Custodian of the Constitution and Canons, filled by Sally Johnson. This discussion wound up with a look to the transition of the Commission’s work, via its Blue Book report, to the relevant legislative committees of the 82nd General Convention, which will start meeting early in 2027.

The discussion shifted to the work ahead and the need to get off to a strong start and maintain good momentum, the Blue Book report filing date being only two years away. Consensus emerged that the Commission’s goals for these meetings are to review the Resolutions referred to us from the 81st General Convention; establish subcommittees to review the Resolutions; elect officers; discuss a work plan and meeting schedule; discuss other compelling issues and opportunities facing the Church within our mandate, and have the subcommittees start their work. We anticipate an in-person meeting of the full Commission in the Spring of 2025, and perhaps quarterly subcommittee meetings going forward, with some subcommittees deferring some of their work until others have completed a good portion of their work; this to be left to the good judgment of the subcommittees under the guidance of the full Commission.

The Commission then discussed each referred Resolution and how subcommittees should be established to handle groups of the referred Resolutions. This discussion ran into the afternoon. The following is a representative sample of the discussions on the referred Resolutions.

**Title IV Database**.Resolution A026 (Establishing a Database for Title IV Outcomes on the Office of Transitional Ministry Profiles of Clergy) has not been funded. The Church Publishing Group receives a notice of decisions for pension tracking purposes. Those who commented indicated that it was planned to have the Church Archives created and maintain this database. But neither maintains a database functional for our purposes. This work will require extensive consultations with stakeholders. There are analogues here to misconduct databases for attorneys. We must be aware of distinct concerns in the European Union TEC churches and clergy.

**Parochial /Lay Accountability for parishes without clergy**. Resolution A146 (Study of Lay Discipline for Elected and Appointed Offices). What are the governance and safety issues in congregations that do not have local clergy oversight? Should we craft a canon or is there already enough authority for a bishop or diocese to address this? Should there be a churchwide canon with standards of conduct but with diocesan canons adding more specifics? Our churchwide canons have few or no provisions on missions, quasi-autonomous parishes, faith communities and other emerging church phenomena. Our canons contemplate stable, parochial parish status, and this is no longer the norm in many places. Haiti was discussed.

And yet there are provisions for licensed ministries in the canons now, and caution may be wise before jumping into new canons where we don’t really need them. We should study prior efforts to regulate lay official misbehavior. We could look at the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. A., although the polity of PCUSA is ‘confessional’.

**Custodian of the Constitution and Canons**. Sally Johnson led a vigorous discussion of this new office, newly held by Sally Johnson, and the compelling need for it. The challenge: General Convention often passes multiple resolutions amending the same sections of the canons (such as with Title IV). Reconciling the canons was not originally included in the position of the custodian; that role is assigned in Canon V to appointed members of the legislative Committee on Constitution and Canons, but that process has not worked well, is overlooked, and/or there often isn’t time enough for it to work and make the deadline for publishing the Constitution and Canons following adjournment of General Convention. (Further, the current canon does not make it clear whether this post-General Convention work is to be done by the “outgoing” chairs or the chairs to be appointed for the next General Convention.)

Multiple enactment issues might be addressed by the chairs of the legislative Canons Committee being especially vigilant in this regard, closely tracking Resolutions in other legislative committees proposing canon changes and combining the overlapping Resolutions. And the Resolutions Review Committee plays a key role in this effort. But the work is daunting.

Someone has to figure out how to reconcile these versions, a judgment task for someone(s) very familiar with the canons. Sally Johnson, Mary Kostel, and Sharon Alexander (former member of this Commission) worked on the reconciliation of GC 81 canonical content and language. It is Important to have more than one person to do this process, as it can require hundreds of hours. Who should make the large judgment calls? There appeared to be consensus that this responsibility should be placed with the Custodian perhaps with some oversight or collaboration with some other canonical body, perhaps this Commission in some fashion.

Multiple enactment issues could be addressed by the chair/legislative committee staying on top of it – combine the resolutions? But what about resolutions that may not be confirmed and others not confirmed. We may want to see if there is version control software or artificial intelligence resources that can be used to solve at least part of this problem.

Sally Johnson gave these examples of the many canonical gaps that have been identified:

* There is no way to fill a vacancy in the office of General Convention Secretary (the holder of which is an ex officio officer in many other Church bodies) until the next General Convention.
* The process for a “council of conciliation” for when a bishop has not visited a congregation within three years.
* The use of the term “Council of Advice” is non-canonical.

There was consensus that these concerns will be assigned to a subcommittee.

It was noted that members of a subcommittee need not necessarily be voting members of the Commission.

Sally Johnson briefed the members on the history sand function of “White & Dykman,” the annotated version of our Constitution and Canons. Section I.1.2.n.1.iv of the Commission’s mandate directs us to “conduct a continuing and comprehensive review” of this resource,

which tracks the history of every canon amendment back to the first General Convention and also provides relevant commentaries. This process used to be the purview of an editorial board established by the Commission, which then worked between General Conventions to update White and Dykman and publish its work. Yet a published update has not been completed since 1994. Under Sally’s leadership, the update through the 1994 General Convention’s actions is 95% complete and is in the final editing process.

But Title III was wholesale rewritten in 2006, and Title IV has undergone two major rewrites since 1994. White and Dykman must be revived and resourced. Michael Glass noted that the Presbyterian Church has a very useful and usable digital system for updating its canons, and we should look at that.

The Commission then elected its officers:

Frank Logue, Chair

Anita Braden, Vice Chair

Eva Warren, Secretary

Tom Little, Assistant Secretary

Frank Logue then led a discussion of Resolution D022 (Create a Task Force on the Legislative Process). He said this work will be extensive and time-consuming. While the Resolution text does not create a task force, the presiding officers will be establishing it as a virtual task force, appointing some members of our Commission to join in this work and other persons of all orders from around the Church. We will refer to it as a Task Force. He said it makes sense to include Resolution D079 (Nominations for the President and Vice President of the House of Deputies) in the work of this group, so D079 will not be assigned to a subcommittee.

The Commission then walked through the remaining referred Resolutions, some in more detail than others. Then, after members and guests expressed their subcommittee membership interests, the Commission’s officers worked up the following subcommittees, their *tentative* membership and the assigned Resolutions:

**Title IV Database**: Resolution A026

Eva Warren

Andrew Dumas

Anita Braden

Susan Brown Snook

Kent Anker (DFMS Chief Legal Officer)

**Lay Accountability**: Resolutions A146, A147

Craig Loya

Lynn Carter-Edmands

Aaron Perkins

Louisa McKellaston

Russ Randle

**Dioceses Confronting Challenges**: Resolutions B007 and D071

Carolyn Glosby

Scott Barker

Andrea McKellar

Ian Douglas

Vanessa Marrero

Nancy Mahoney Cohen

(This group will use the Zoom with translation on the GCO laptop)

**Custodian of the Constitution and Canons Details and all other Resolutions** (all together for now): Addressing the cleanup and “gap” work described by Sally Johnson, plus Resolutions A020, A047, A070, D038, D065

Steve Pankey

Tom Little

Sally Johnson

Frank Logue

Kai Ryan

Diane Sammons

**Title IV** (Note: this subcommittee will not meet this week; it is expected to begin as the Title IV Database subcommittee wraps up): Resolutions A025, A107, D010, D064

Anita Braden

Kai Ryan

Diane Sammons

Susan Brown Snook

The subcommittees will organize, choose chairs and start their work tomorrow (November 19, 2024). In addition, Frank Logue shared with the Presiding Officers the names of everyone interested in being considered for appointment to the Resolution D022 Task Force on the Legislative Process:

Eva Warren

Craig Loya

Scott Barker

Kai Ryan

Andrew Dumas

Aaron Perkins

Steve Pankey

Andrea McKellar

Vanessa Morrero

Russ Randle

Anita Braden

The membership of the D022 Task Force may not be established during these meetings. The composition of the Task Force could affect the membership of one or more of our subcommittees.

The Commission identified [five] Resolutions which, while referred to the Commission, will not be taken up by the Commission, or will only be lightly reviewed, for the reasons stated:

Resolution A073 (Create a Standing Commission on Human Health and Wellness): Executive Council is taking the lead.

Resolution A076 (Strengthening of Churchwide Training in Mental Health First Aid) Executive Council is taking the lead.

Resolution A116 (Marriage Rites for Inclusion in the Book of Common Prayer (First Reading approved at GC 81, 2024): No need to take up *other than* to include a summary and Second Reading explanation in our Blue Book report. Should coordinate with the Standing Commission on Liturgy sand Music.

Resolution A223 (Create Alternative Working Group to Review Canons and Implement Changes Related to Revised Article X of the Constitution): The Resolution mentions our Commission but only in passing.

Resolution D030 (Create a Task Force in Imagining a Church Grounded in Creation Healing as Christian Ministry): Since the 81st General Convention did not establish a Standing Commission on Environmental Matters, and D030 was enacted, this Task Force would go into effect and our Commission has no need to review D030.

Resolution A044 (Develop Sustainable Congregational Revitalization Ministries): This Resolution does not propose canon changes and does not mention our Commission, but was referred here in case it becomes relevant to the Commission’s other work.

Frank Logue explained that there are two dates tentatively set aside for interim bodies to hold their next in-person meetings:

* April 3-5, 2025, in Chicago, Illinois
* May 5-7, St. Louis, Missouri

(Note: the Commission later learned that proposed alternative dates for next Fall have been released: October 1-3 (travel September 30)-Maritime Center, Baltimore, Maryland; or

November 17-19 (travel day 16)-Maritime Center, Baltimore, Maryland.)

A Doodle poll will be sent out soon to gather availability and preference input.

The members then discussed potential Commission process and its work in areas not covered by the referred Resolutions. This included:

Tom Little emphasized the need for the Commission and its subcommittees to generate and sustain good momentum in the next twelve months. He mentioned that we have access to the research resources at the Archives of The Episcopal Church.

Ian Douglas and others discussed the work of the Task Force on the Episcopacy (2015-2018) and its relevance to our work. A copy of that Task Force’s Blue Book report has been posted to the Commission’s Microsoft Teams page. Comments were shared, including: “Is our business model defunct?” And “Decline is not inevitable.”

This led to a general discussion on the state of the Church. Mary Kostel reminded the Commission of a previous push for an “innovation canon,” where variances from some Church rules could be suspended or waived for a period with the prior approval of a designated authority. The purpose would be to foster more innovation in how “we do church.” Mary Kostel posted a 2021 working draft of the proposal on the Commission’s Teams page. Scott Barker observed that a fair amount of this innovation work has been happening for some time across the Church. The members discussed the risks and benefits of such innovation and agreed that we should continue this reflection. Russ Randle reminded the members that this work should not forget to focus on laity and lay leadership in parishes where there is no active priest. Eva Warren urged that we seriously consider making this more than an ad hoc phenomenon. Aaron Perkins said we should not overlook the role of deacons here and should be prepared to fund them.

Diane Sammons then shared her concern that many in the Church feel unsafe at this time. She asked, ‘is there a place in the canons to address this? This prompted a discussion of the role of “sanctuary” in the Church. Michael Glass cautioned that the conventional conception of sanctuary is likely not legally enforceable under existing.

Ian Douglas said that the Church Publishing Group has a great deal of data about the demographics of the Church, going back a long time, and we should use that resource.

The meeting closed with Evening Prayer led by Anita Braden.

**Tuesday, November 19, 2024**

Members Present: Scott Barker, Anita Braden, Lynn Carter Edmands, Andrew Dumas, Carolyn Glosby, Tom Little, Frank Logue, Craig Loya, Vanessa Marrero, Andrea McKellar, Steve Pankey, Aaron Perkins, Russ Randle, Kai Ryan, Diane Sammons, Susan Brown Snook, Eva Warren.

Others Present: Ian Douglas, representative of the Presiding Bishop; Michael Glass, Chancellor to the President of the House of Deputies; Sally Johnson, Consultant; Mary Kostel, Chancellor to the Presiding Bishop; Louisa McKellaston, liaison of Executive Council, Molly James, Interim Executive Officer of General Convention; Kent Anker, General Counsel to the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS).

The meeting started at 10:02 a.m. with Molly James sharing a prayer. Molly then presented a series of slides with the results of the most recent (2023) Parochial Report analysis by the House of Deputies Committee on the State of the Church. The Committee’s analysis and report were recently reviewed and approved by the Executive Council. The slides from the presentation have been posted to the Commission’s Teams page and are linked here: <https://generalconvention.org/explore-parochial-report-trends/>. The slides contain many relevant facts on Church demographics and take a sort of 30,000-foot view of things. Some excerpts from the presentation are:

* The median average Sunday attendance is 38.
* The median parish seating capacity is 165.
* The Church membership is roughly where it was in the 1930’s.
* The membership reduction numbers align with the drop in the national birthrate.
* The tot.al endowment of all congregations (excepting Trinity Wall Street) is $6 billion.

Several slides presented interesting data on clergy numbers.

Kai Ryan asked, ‘what data do we still need?’ and ‘which data should congregations pay attention to the most?’ Molly James said she would love to know why growing parishes are growing. She added that we do have lots of data on congregation vitality.

Russ Randle commented that our canons should more accurately reflect the many, many congregations that essentially have no priest.

Frank Logue then asked members to contact him with any concerns about subcommittee assignments. He explained that while D022 does not, per se, create a task force, the presiding officers ask that it function in many ways as one. He reminded the members that the Title IV subcommittee would not start its work until the Title IV Data Base subcommittee has largely completed its work.

The members then broke out into their respective subcommittees to organize them and start reviewing their assigned Resolutions. This continued through the lunch break and then through 4:00 pm when Frank Logue reconvened the full Commission.

Tom Little asked the subcommittees to share who their chairs are and a summary of each subcommittee meeting.

**Dioceses Confronting Challenges Subcommittee**. Resolutions B007 (Standing Committees and Ecclesiastical Authority) and D071 (Governance Support for the Diocese of Haiti and leadership for Dioceses in Crisis). Scott Barker reported for the subcommittee on behalf of chair Andrea McKellar. The subcommittee is looking at how the Church missed the signs of trouble earlier on and failed to respond. They are asking whether the critical situation is just within a diocese or broader. Their subcommittee recommendations will reflect both perspectives. The subcommittee discussed Resolution D071 (Governance Support for the Diocese of Haiti and Leadership for Dioceses in Crisis) and will focus on revisions needed for “ecclesiastical authority” language in the canons.

**Title IV Database Subcommittee**. Resolution A026 (Establishing a Database for Title IV Outcomes on the Office of Transitional Ministry Profiles of Clergy). Chair Susan Brown Snook reported for the subcommittee, presenting a flow chart showing seven phases of the proposed Title IV data – how and where the data are generated, stored, made accessible in part or in whole, who has access and when. They hope the database can be launched before the 2027 General Convention convenes. A photograph of the flow chart will be posted on the Commission’s Teams page.

Many questions and comments ensued as members explored the privacy and transparency issues inherent in the proposal. The subcommittee seeks to balance the reasonable and appropriate privacy concerns of those whose information is placed in the database with the legitimate needs of those needing access in the hiring process and in other serious contexts. One question posed was whether a less robust access in some scenarios would be offset by a bishop’s ability to obtain detailed information from another bishop. A concern was shared than currently many bishops do not follow existing record retention requirements. Record keeping and redaction issues were discussed. The subcommittee members will take these competing concerns into consideration.

**Lay Accountability.** Resolution A146 (Study of Lay Discipline for Elected and Appointed Offices) and Resolution A147 (Referring Lay Disciplinary Canon Issue to the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons). Chair Russ Randle reported for the subcommittee. The subcommittee focused on how to develop a disciplinary-type canon for lay leaders in lay-led congregations. They expect to post a draft canon proposal this evening to facilitate discussion tomorrow morning.

**Custodian of the Constitution and Canons Details and all other Resolutions**. This is the cleanup and “gap” work described by Sally Johnson, plus Resolutions A020, A047, A070, D038, D065). Steve Pankey reported for the subcommittee, sharing the main topics the subcommittee has discussed so far:

* The replacement process when the office of the Secretary of the House of Deputies is vacant, and considering the many ex officio offices held by the Secretary.
* Likewise, the replacement process when the office of the President of the House of Deputies and/or the office of the Vice President of the House of Deputies is vacant. considering the many ex officio offices held by them.
* Updating and revising certain names and titles, e.g., “Council of Advice” should be used instead of currently used titles.
* Canons using “incapacitation” or “infirmity” language.
* How to ensure that the published Rules of Order are accurate.
* Canonical residency references in the canons – do they need revision?
* Ascending to the office when the office is vacant versus ascending to the duties of the office.
* Misuse of the term “recessed” in the canons in places where “adjourned” is correct, e.g., Canon I.1.1.i.

The subcommittee has much more work to do than this and will keep the Commission informed as it moves through its assigned Resolutions.

Frank Logue led the members in a closing prayer and adjourned the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

**Wednesday, November 20, 2024**

Members Present: Scott Barker, Anita Braden, Lynn Carter Edmands, Andrew Dumas, Carolyn Glosby, Tom Little, Frank Logue, Craig Loya, Vanessa Marrero, Andrea McKellar, Steve Pankey, Aaron Perkins, Russ Randle, Diane Sammons, Susan Brown Snook, Eva Warren.

Others Present: Ian Douglas, representative of the Presiding Bishop; Sally Johnson, Consultant; Mary Kostel, Chancellor to the Presiding Bishop; Louisa McKellaston, liaison of Executive Council, Molly James, Interim Executive Officer of General Convention; Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe.

Anita Braden opened the meeting at 9:20 a.m. with prayer.

The Chair informed the members that he posted a Doodle poll for the Commission’s meeting date and time in December. He is working with the General Convention Office to have our Teams page set up with “channels” to better organize our files. He has posted a “clean-up” draft of canon amendments from the Custodian subcommittee. He walked through the draft, starting with Canon I.1.1(b). Members offered comments and drafting suggestions, including changing “resumes the office” to “resumes the duties of the office.” The comments and suggestions will be reflected in the next draft.

Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe joined the members and shared his thoughts about the work of the Commission. He sees Resolution D022 (Task Force on the Legislative Process) as a vehicle, tethered to the Commission, for the Church to look at a wider scope of canonical and noncanonical changes to the function of the General Convention. We cautioned that the Church should avoid repeating the unnecessary symbolic wars of the past, such as ‘Is the House of Deputies too large?’ He envisions assembling cross-functional teams from all orders to do the D022 work, assisted by a project manager to coordinate and resource the work. He stressed that much of the outcomes of the work hopefully should involve culture changes more than canon changes. He hopes enough progress can be made so some significant changes can be tried out at the 81st General Convention. He commented that the Church wasn’t ready for the 2015 TREC report’s findings and recommendations, which didn’t have the sponsorship of the presiding officers. He said that he thinks the Church now is ready.

Frank Logue shared with the Presiding Bishop that the Commission is reviewing the 2018 report of the Task Force on the Episcopacy while preparing to address its work.

The members commented on Presiding Bishop Sean’s remarks and thanked him for joining them.

Frank Logue then resumed his walk-through of the Custodian subcommittee’s initial working draft of various canon clean-ups, as follows.

**Canon I.1.1.h**. This canon currently provides:

h. In case of the resignation, death, or total disability of the President and Vice-President [of the House of Deputies] during the recess of the General Convention, the Secretary of the House of Deputies shall perform such ad interim duties as may appertain to the office of President until the next meeting of the General Convention or until such disability is removed.

The subcommittee’s initial draft amendment would provide:

h. In case of the resignation, death, or total disability of the President and Vice-President ~~during the recess of the General Convention, the Secretary of the House of Deputies shall perform such ad interim duties as may appertain to the office of President until the next meeting of the General Convention or until such disability is removed.~~ *, the lay and clergy members of the Executive Council shall elect a President of the House of Deputies, provided the candidate meets the qualifications and completes a background check.*

The subcommittee believes that if both the President and Vice President have resigned, died, or are totally disabled, a process is needed to elect a replacement President. The subcommittee offered that the lay, priest and deacon members of Executive Council are the body that can best represent the House of Deputies in such a circumstance. They also pointed out that the use of “recess” in the current canon is incorrect, as it should instead be “adjournment.”

**Canon I.1.1.i and j**: These canons currently provide:

i. If there is a vacancy in the office of Secretary of the House of Deputies, the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop shall appoint a Secretary, who shall hold office until a successor is elected. In case of temporary inability of the Secretary to act, from illness or other cause, the same officials shall appoint an Acting Secretary who shall perform all duties of the Secretary until the Secretary is able to resume them.

j. At every regular meeting of the General Convention, the Secretary elected by the House of Deputies shall, by concurrent action of the two Houses of the General Convention, also be made the Secretary of the General Convention, who shall have responsibility for assembling and printing of the Journal of the General Convention, and for other matters specifically referred to the Secretary and shall serve until a successor is elected. In case of a vacancy, by death, resignation, or otherwise, in the office of Secretary of the General Convention, the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop shall appoint a Secretary, who shall hold office until a successor is elected. In case of temporary inability of the Secretary to act, from illness or other cause, the same officials shall appoint an Acting Secretary who shall perform all duties of the Secretary until the Secretary is able to resume them.

The subcommittee’s initial draft amendment proposes to amend the provisions as follows:

**i.**If~~, during recess,~~ there is a vacancy ~~shall occur~~ in the office of Secretary of the House of Deputies, ~~the duties thereof shall devolve upon the First Assistant Secretary, or, if there be none such, upon a Secretary~~*~~pro tempore~~*~~appointed by the President of the House, or if the office of President be also vacant, then by the Vice-President, and if both offices be vacant, then by the members from the House of Deputies of the Joint Committee on Planning and Arrangements for the next General Convention, appointed by the preceding General Convention.~~ *the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop shall appoint a Secretary, who shall hold office until a successor is elected. In case of temporary inability of the Secretary to act, from illness or other cause, the same officials shall appoint an Acting Secretary who shall perform all duties of the Secretary until the Secretary is able to resume them.*

**j.**At every regular meeting of the General Convention, the Secretary elected by the House of Deputies shall, by concurrent action of the two Houses of the General Convention, also be made the Secretary of the General Convention, who shall have responsibility for assembling and printing of the Journal of the General Convention, and for other matters specifically referred to the Secretary and shall serve until a successor is elected. *In case of a vacancy, by death, resignation, or otherwise, in the office of Secretary of the General Convention, the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop shall appoint a Secretary, who shall hold office until a successor is elected. In case of temporary inability of the Secretary to act, from illness or other cause, the same officials shall appoint an Acting Secretary who shall perform all duties of the Secretary until the Secretary is able to resume them.*

Frank Logue explained that these proposed changes provide a process for the Presiding Officers to fill a temporary or permanent vacancy in the offices of the Secretary of the House of Deputies and Secretary of General Convention. The subcommittee is aware that this language may not be perfect in every respect, and that when an officer becomes infirm or disabled, the degree of impairment is not always clear – nor its duration. The subcommittee believes, however, that this amendment would substantially improve the canon.

**Canon V.1.6; add a new Canon V.1.7**. Canon V.1.6 currently reads:

6. At the close of each regular meeting of the General Convention, the Custodian of the Constitution and Canons, in consultation with the chancellor to the Presiding Bishop, the chancellor to the President of the House of Deputies, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Commission on Governance, Structure, Constitution, and Canons, will (a) certify the changes, if any, made in the Canons, including a correction of the references made in any Canon to another, and to report the same, with the proper arrangement thereof, to the Secretary of the General Convention; (b) certify in like manner the changes, if any, made in the Constitution, or proposed to be made therein under the provisions of Article XII of the Constitution, and to report the same to the Secretary of the General Convention, who shall publish them in the Journal, and (c) certify in like manner the changes, if any, made to the Joint Rules of Order. The Custodian shall also have and exercise the power of renumbering of, and correction of references to, Articles, Sections and Clauses of the Constitution required by the adoption of amendments to the Constitution at a meeting of the General Convention in the same manner as provided with respect to the Canons and the Joint Rules of Order.

The subcommittee proposes to revise subsection 6 and add a new subsection 7, as follows:

6. At the close of each regular meeting of the General Convention, the Custodian of the Constitution and Canons, in consultation with the chancellor to the Presiding Bishop, the chancellor to the President of the House of Deputies, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Commission on Governance, Structure, Constitution, and Canons, will (a) certify the changes, if any, made in the Canons, including a correction of the references made in any Canon to another, and to report the same, with the proper arrangement thereof, to the Secretary of the General Convention~~;~~*,* *and* (b) certify in like manner the changes, if any, made in the Constitution, or proposed to be made therein under the provisions of Article XII of the Constitution, and to report the same to the Secretary of the General Convention, who shall publish them in the Journal~~, and (c) certify in like manner the changes, if any, made to the Joint Rules of Order~~. The Custodian shall also have and exercise the power of renumbering of, and correction of references to, Articles, Sections and Clauses of the Constitution required by the adoption of amendments to the Constitution at a meeting of the General Convention in the same manner as provided with respect to the Canons and the Joint Rules of Order.

*7. The President and Vice President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop and Vice President of the House of Bishops shall provide the Custodian of the Constitution and Canons any changes to the Rules of Order of their respective house within 60 days of adjournment of the General Convention.*

The subcommittee believes the proposed changes would provide more detail on who approves of the exact text of the Rules of Order of the House of Deputies and the Rules of Order of the House of Bishops to be printed with the Constitution and Canons.

The Commission members commented on these three proposals and the subcommittee members responded to questions.

The walk-through of the “clean-up” canon ended there. The subcommittee then presented its initial proposal for revising the Title III canonical residency canon.

**Canon III.9.4**. This draft addresses concerns raised around the Church about the use and possible misuse of canonical residency. The subcommittee’s initial draft proposes a new subsection € to Cannon III.9.4:

*e. If a Priest not in parochial employment moves to another jurisdiction, but does not have a cure, the Priest may present Letters Dimissory to the Bishop Diocesan of that jurisdiction. The Bishop has discretion to not accept any Letters Dimissory for a priest without a cure provided this is not based on the applicant’s race, color, ethnic origin, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities, or age.*

The subcommittee’s goal is to clarify the discretion a bishop maintains regarding Letters Dimissory for a priest who moves to their jurisdiction without a cure.

Presiding Bishop Rowe commented that it is known that when reviewing and determining whether to accept letters dimissory, some, perhaps many, bishops apply policies that are not stated in the canon. Others in the group affirmed this. The draft is an initial effort to address at least parts of this concern. Someone suggested that we should define “cure” in the canon, as it isn’t defined in this context. Eva Warren urged that we do not limit our review to the recent concerns about misuse, but rather take a holistic look at the canon. She also suggested we may need to define “retired.,” are many clergy retire but continue to work in some capacity on a somewhat regular basis. There are many scenarios.

Members shared these other comments:

* Dioceses have their own canonical residency canons, and we shouldn’t overlook that.
* Many bishops are not interested in having a lot of retired or semi-retired clergy with canonical residence, no cure, and who are eligible to vote in diocesan conventions – including electing conventions.
* Shouldn’t we have consistency across the Church?
* Is canonical residency based on where the priest resides or on the location of their parish?
* There is a definition of “working” in Canon III.8.7€, and perhaps a version of that could be used here.
* Let’s not overlook that in many situations a pastoral approach by a bishop may be the best approach.
* This canon does need to be clearer.
* I know of situations where a priest was gaming the canonical residency to avoid supervision.
* Is there a pension component? The initial reaction was that there isn’t.
* There are retired clergy who serve parishes in some capacity, who do believe they have good reason to be given seat and vote at diocesan convention.
* We could look at requiring bishops to make this decision not on their own but as part of a diocesan body, possibly the standing committee.
* Should all priests seeking canonical residency have background checks?
* What provision should there be for deacons?

**Discipline of Elected and Appointed Diocesan and Congregational Lay Officers**. Russ Randle walked through his subcommittee’s November 19 working draft of a lay disciplinary canon, posted last night. The Purpose section reads as follows:

*In order to protect the safety of our people and the financial integrity of dioceses and congregations, and to demonstrate accountability in our ministries to carry out the Gospel and keep the Baptismal Covenant, the following authorities are added to provide enforceable standards of conduct for the elected and appointed lay officers of congregations and dioceses*

The draft places the proposed canon outside of the Title IV process, as that proposal from 2006 was widely criticized and went nowhere. This is not modeled on any other particular accountability rule or regulation. Anita Braden applauded the initiative; she suggested it would be helpful to include a non-exhaustive list of behaviors or acts that would be considered grounds to initiating the process. Other comments were:

* We need centralized training for some lay offices, e.g., treasurer of a congregation or diocese.
* There may be state law issues to be aware of.
* Drop the “disciplinary” reference and use “expectations” or accountabilities.”
* We need to understand better the distinction between removal and suspension, to whom it applies, etc.
* What if the office of bishop is vacant – who would take action then? It can’t be the standing committee since it has an important role elsewhere in the process. Could it be another bishop in the province?
* Should the canon give the respondent lay person the right to legal counsel?

The group briefly discussed the role of the Joint Rules of Order of the House of Bishops and House of Deputies, pondering whether some of the Joint Rules should better be placed in the canons. IT was observed that in the provision dealing with the certification of General Convention amendments to the canons, we need to specify the certifiers are members of the “outgoing” Standing Commission – and not members of the to-be-appointed Standing Commission.

Molly James explained the research resources available at the Church Archives and how to access them.

Frank Logue said that each active subcommittee should meet in December and keep the whole group informed of their work. He reminded everyone of the Doddle poll for the December meeting of the full commission. He gave warm thanks to all members for their diligence and energy over the last three days.

Ian Douglas led the members in closing prayer and the meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

**Exhibit to the Minutes**

**Agenda**

The Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution, and Canons

Maritime Center in Linthicum Heights, Maryland – November 18-20

**Monday, November 18**

11 am-12 noon Orientation to the work and begin with resolutions

referred by GC81

1:30-2:30 pm Custodian of Constitution and Canons

3-5:30 pm Begin working as a committee of the whole, taking up again referred resolutions and the clarifications and corrections brought to our attention. This is also a time for Commission members to name other areas of concern the group could decide to take up.

Then propose sub-committees and commission members express interest in which they want to serve on

7-8:30 pm Elect Officers:

**Tuesday, November 19**

10 am-12 noon Sub-committees meet

1-2 pm Sub-committees continue meeting

2-5 pm Sub-committees report in Work as full Commission

**Wednesday, November 20**

9:30 am-12 noon Vote on any matters ready for a decision

Set schedule for the coming year

*All committee meetings are in the Bridge Room*