



Rules of Order

of

Cascades Classis

1. Definition and purpose of Classis Cascades.

1.1 Denominational affiliation and legal status.

1.1.1 Affiliation. The Classis of Cascades [a.k.a., *The Classis of Cascades, Inc.*; *Classis of Cascades*; *Classis Cascades*, *Cascades Classis* and *Classis*]

“...is an assembly and judicatory...[of the Reformed Church in America] ...consisting of all the enrolled ministers...and the elder delegates who represent all the churches within its bounds. The classis is a permanent, continuing body which functions between stated sessions through committees. Voting rights shall be limited to elder delegates and those enrolled ministers who are actively serving as ministers either under the jurisdiction of or with the approval of the classis.”

[Re: *The Book of Church Order of the Reformed Church in America, Chapt.1., Part II, Art. 1, 2003 ed.*, i.e., *RCA BCO 1.II.1*]

1.1.2 Legal status. The *Classis of Cascades, Inc.* exists under the laws of the state of Washington as a nonprofit corporation organized for *religious purposes*. The Executive Committee of *Classis Cascades*, defined elsewhere in these rules, serves also as the *board of directors* of this corporation. [Re: *RCA BCO 1.II.6*]

1.2 Purpose.

“The purpose of Classis Cascades is to minister to the total life of all people within its geographic bounds by providing vision, leadership and ecclesiastical superintendence of its member churches and enrolled ministers in a manner that reflects loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the governing principles of the Reformed Church in America, enabling them to develop new and to revitalize existing churches as they preach, teach and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, to the Glory of God and building up the body of Christ.”

[Re: *Minutes of Spring 1994 stated session of Classis Cascades, Servants of Christ Reformed Church, Federal Way, Washington, March 18-19, 1994*]

1.3 Responsibilities. The general responsibilities of Classis are as outlined in *RCA BCO 1.II.2*.

2. Membership, attendance at meetings and privileges.

The membership of Classis shall consist “...of all...enrolled ministers of...[Classis]...and the elder delegates who represent all the churches within its bounds ...” , as prescribed by the *Regional Synod of the Far West of the Reformed Church in America*.

[Re: *RCA BCO 1.II.1*]

Membership categories, requirement to attend sessions of Classis (as defined elsewhere in these rules) and floor/voting privileges of members at these sessions are more specifically defined below.

2.1 RCA ministers serving *under call* or *contract* in an RCA church. This membership category includes all ordained RCA ministers:

- who have not been declared retired; and
- who have been received into Classis membership, either by transfer from another classis or denomination, or by ordination; and
- who have been duly *installed* or *commissioned* by Classis as Minister of Word & Sacrament in an organized member church, mission church or new church start; and
- who are in active service in an RCA church located within the geographic bounds of Classis.

2.1.1 Attendance & Reports. Attendance at the full session of every session of Classis by RCA ministers serving under call or contract in an RCA church is a basic responsibility of Classis membership, subject to the following:

2.1.1.1 Absence from stated session: An excused absence from all or part of a stated session of Classis may be granted by Classis upon request. The following apply:

- Routine absence. A brief, written statement to substantiate the reason for an intended absence shall be submitted to the stated session (via the clerk) as soon as the need for the absence becomes apparent.
- An emergency absence from a stated session shall be brought to the prompt attention of the clerk directly or by any other member of Classis by any means available.

2.1.1.2 Absence from special session. Attendance at special sessions is encouraged, but inability to attend does not require a written notice of absence, unless specifically requested by the clerk.

2.1.2 Floor and voting privileges. Full floor and voting privileges at every session of Classis are granted to all RCA ministers serving *under call* or *contract* in an RCA church. [Re: *RCA BCO 1.II.1*]

2.2 Specialized Ministers. *Specialized Ministers* of Classis are ordained RCA ministers:

- who have been received into Classis membership, either by transfer from another classis or denomination, or by ordination; and
- who have been duly commissioned by Classis for, and are active in, a specialized ministry having the following attributes:
 - Requires a theological education; and
 - Is performed under the jurisdiction or with the approval of Classis; and
 - Witnesses to the Word in the world, or nurtures and trains Christians for ministry. The following are examples of commonly recognized specialized ministries: missionary, chaplain, pastor/staff in other than an RCA church, counselor, specialized interim minister, denominational and synodical staff, et al.] [Re: RCA BCO 1.II.10.4.]

2.2.1 Attendance & Reports. Specialized ministers are encouraged to participate in the business and life of Classis, and are invited to attend any/all sessions. Either attendance at one full stated session each calendar year, or a detailed written report to one stated session of Classis each year in lieu of attending a stated session is a basic annual responsibility of membership of *specialized ministers*. The following apply:

2.2.1.1 A written report from a *specialized minister*, when required, shall be due to the clerk prior to October 1st.

2.2.1.2 Status & contact information. Changes in status, assignment and contact information are to be reported promptly to the stated clerk.

2.2.2 Floor & voting privileges. Specialized ministers shall have floor and voting privileges at any session of Classis. [Re: RCA BCO 1.II.1]

2.3 Retired Ministers. See RCA BCO 1.II.2.9; 1.II.12.10 & 1.II.12.13.c.

2.3.1 Attendance at sessions of Classis. Ministers who have been declared retired are encouraged to remain active in the business and life of Classis, and are invited to attend any/all sessions. They shall notify the stated clerk prior to any session which they plan to attend.

2.3.2 Reports to Classis.

2.3.2.1 Retired ministers who are not actively engaged in a Classis ministry or other business of Classis, shall report annually in writing to the Fall Stated Session of Classis, and at any other time they may deem necessary. Reports shall be submitted to the clerk by October 1st.

In the absence of a minister's ability to submit a written report to Classis, a report of their circumstances, health, welfare and/or care concerns may be submitted to Classis in their behalf by a family member or other advocate. [Re: RCA BCO 1.II.12.3; .10 & .13.c.]

2.3.2.2 Changes in status, location, contact information and/or care needs shall be reported promptly to the stated clerk.

2.3.3 Voting. All retired ministers shall have privilege of the floor at any session of Classis. Those who are actively engaged in a recognized ministry under classis supervision, either on a part or full time basis, volunteer or contract, shall have voting privileges—others shall not. [Re: RCA BCO 1.II.1]

2.4 Elder delegates and Lay Representatives.

- Elder delegates to Classis are members of Classis who, as a body, represent all RCA churches located within the bounds of Classis. The number of elder delegates, terms of service and duties are governed by the provisions of RCA BCO 1.II. Art. 1, 3 & 4; RCA BCO 1.II.12.6 and/or as may be found elsewhere either in the RCA BCO or these rules.
- Lay Representatives to Classis are associate members of Classis (described elsewhere in these rules) who attend Classis sessions as representative of mission churches or new church starts.

2.4.1 Appointments & Term of Office.

2.4.1.1 Churches shall appoint their maximum number of elder delegates (per the formula and guidelines contained in RCA BCO 1.II.3) to serve as members of Classis.

The pastor of a Classis *new church start* or *mission church* shall appoint at least one lay representative to accompany them to each stated session of Classis.

2.4.1.2 Elder delegate and lay representative appointments (and contact information) shall be reported to the clerk as instructed. Vacancies/unfulfilled terms are to be promptly filled as they occur, with due notice then provided to the stated clerk.

2.4.2 Rotation of delegates. A church having more than one elder delegate is encouraged to stagger the terms of their delegates as applicable so as to avoid the rotation of all of their delegates at the same session.

2.4.3 Floor and Voting Privileges. Elder delegates shall have floor and voting privileges at each session of Classis. Lay Representatives shall have *privilege of the floor* but shall not be entitled to vote. [Re: RCA BCO 1.II.1]

2.4.4 Attendance. Attendance at the full session of every session of Classis is a basic responsibility of elder delegates and lay representatives. The following apply:

2.4.4.1 Absence from stated session:

2.4.4.1.1 An elder delegate who is unable to attend all or part of a stated session of Classis shall submit a request to be excused. An alternate or substitute may be appointed by the church upon due notification of the clerk. The following apply:

- Routine absence. A brief, written statement to substantiate the reason for an intended absence of an appointed delegate shall be submitted to the stated session (via the clerk) as soon as the need for the absence becomes apparent.
- An emergency absence or departure from a stated session in progress shall be brought to the prompt attention of the clerk directly or by any other member of Classis by any means available.

2.4.4.1.2 Should a lay representative of a *new church start* not be able to attend a stated session, the pastor shall promptly appoint an alternate and so notify the clerk.

2.4.4.2 Absence from special session. Attendance at special sessions is encouraged, but inability to attend does not require a written notice of absence.

2.4.5 Reports. The name (and contact information) of each appointed elder delegate and lay representative to Classis, and changes thereto, shall be reported by each church to the stated clerk per instructions.

2.5 Ministers—Without Charge & Inactive. See RCA BCO 1.II.1 & 1.II.13b., et al.

2.5.1 Attendance & Reports. Ordained clergy who are classified as being without charge or inactive are strongly encouraged to regularly participate in the business and life of Classis. The following apply:

2.5.1.1 Written Report. Inactive ministers and those without charge shall report at least annually in writing to a stated session of Classis prior to October 1st each year. Said reports shall be sent to the clerk, and shall address, as applicable, present occupation, significant ministry activities in which they are involved, and their intentions with respect to updating their ministers profile form, seeking a call and returning to active ministry (including associated short/long term goals they may have set).

Private, personal information involving health and welfare issues may be communicated separately and confidentially to the clerk.

2.5.1.2 Status & contact information. Changes to ministry status, contact information (including email address) and other factors that affect the ability of Classis to fulfill the nurture and oversight responsibilities outlined in RCA BCO 1.II.12. Sec. 3 & 13, et. al, shall be reported promptly to the clerk.

2.5.1.3 Absence from stated session: Inactive ministers and those without charge who do not plan to attend all or part of a currently announced stated session of Classis shall submit a brief written statement to that effect to the clerk.

2.5.2 Privilege of the floor and voting privileges. Ministers classified as being without charge or inactive shall enjoy the privilege of the floor at Classis sessions, but shall not be entitled to vote. [Re: RCA BCO 1.II.1]

[Chg in ¶2.5 and subparas above eff. 11/2004]

2.6 Associate Members. Classis may choose to enroll as *associate members* those who are confessing members of a Classis church and are presently serving as non ordained staff in key office or ministry positions within the Classis organization or region of jurisdiction. Examples of associate members are listed below:

- Theological students who are candidates for ordained ministry and are under the care and supervision of Classis. [RCA BCO 1.II. Art. 8 - 11.]
- Those who serve under the jurisdiction or with the approval of Classis, including *Preaching Elders* [Re: RCA 1.II.13], *Associates in Ministry* [Re: RCA BCO 1.II.14], and *lay representatives* from unorganized Classis churches (e.g., new church starts and mission churches.).
- Non ordained staff who serve in a church under direct supervision of a consistory, e.g., youth, music, education, worship directors and other key ministry staff in Classis churches.
- A confessing member of Classis church who has been duly appointed to serve as a Classis delegate or representative to an RCA board, commission, institution or higher judicatory of the RCA, or to serve as a member of a Classis committee, et al, if not otherwise an enrolled minister, elder delegate or *ex officio* member of Classis.

- 2.6.1 Floor and voting privileges. *Associates in Ministry* and other *associate members* of Classis shall have *privilege of the floor* at any session of Classis but shall not be entitled to vote. [Re: RCA BCO 1.II.6.5 & 1.II.14]
- 2.6.2 Attendance at Classis sessions. Associate members are invited/encouraged to participate in the business and life of Classis and are encouraged to attend sessions at their convenience, and/or, when otherwise specifically invited or required to attend. They shall notify the clerk in advance of their intentions to attend a session.
- 2.6.3 Reports. Changes to contact information and other factors that may adversely impact or otherwise facilitate the ability of Classis to provide nurture and oversight of an associate member shall be reported promptly to the clerk.
- 2.7 Corresponding Members.
- 2.7.1 Definition & Recognition. Visiting ministers, elders and deacons of the RCA, and other guests, may be recognized at a specific stated session as a *corresponding member*, at the discretion of Classis.
- 2.7.2 Floor & voting privileges. *Corresponding members* may be granted *privilege of the floor* at the discretion of Classis, but shall not be entitled to vote. [RCA BCO 1.II.1]
- 2.8 Temporary Members. Commissioned pastors shall be *temporary members* of Classis. Ordained ministers from other denominations may, upon their request, and with the approval of Classis, be granted temporary membership in Classis. [Re: RCA BCO 1.II.12.16]
- 2.8.1 Attendance & Reports. Attendance at the full session of every *session* of Classis by *temporary members* is a basic responsibility of temporary membership. The following apply:
- 2.8.1.1 Absence from stated session: An excused absence from all or part of a stated session of Classis may be granted by Classis, subject to the following:
- Routine absence. A brief, written statement to substantiate the reason for an intended absence shall be submitted to the stated session (via the clerk) as soon as the need for the absence becomes apparent.
 - An emergency absence from a stated session shall be brought to the prompt attention of the clerk or other member of Classis by any means available.
- 2.8.1.2 Absence from special session. Attendance at special sessions is encouraged, but inability to attend does not require a written notice of absence, unless specifically requested by the clerk.
- 2.8.2 Floor and voting privileges. *Temporary members* shall have *floor and voting privileges* at every session of Classis. [Re: RCA BCO 1.II.1 & 1.II.12.16]
- 2.9 Ex officio Members. *Ex officio members* hold Classis membership solely on the basis of the office or position to which they have been duly elected or appointed.

2.9.1 Attendance & Reports. Attendance at *sessions* of Classis by *ex officio members* is a basic responsibility of their membership. The following apply:

2.9.1.1 Absence from stated session: An excused absence from all or part of a stated session of Classis may be granted by Classis, subject to the following:

- Routine absence. A brief, written statement to substantiate the reason for an intended absence shall be submitted to the stated session (via the clerk) as soon as the need for the absence becomes apparent.
- An emergency absence from all or part of a stated session should be brought to the prompt attention of the clerk or other member of Classis by any means available.

2.9.1.2 Absence from special session.

2.9.1.2.1 Ex officio members shall attend special sessions of Classis when their office or appointment so requires, or if the purpose for the session so dictates.

2.9.1.2.2 Inability to attend a special session does not require a written notice of absence and Classis approval is not required.

2.9.2 Floor and voting privileges. *Ex officio members* shall have full floor and voting privileges at every session of Classis.

3. Sessions of Classis.

3.1 Schedule.

3.1.1 Stated sessions. Stated sessions of classis shall be held [~~DELETE: on the third Friday and Saturday in March, and~~ END DELETE] on the first Friday and Saturday in November each year. The Executive Committee may change the date and/or location for any good reason. [Re: RCA BCO 1.II.4.1] [*Chg. eff. 11-3-06*]

3.1.2 Special sessions. Special sessions are convened by the president as required, following ten or more days notice of the session having been published.

[Re: RCA BCO 1.II.4.2]

3.2 Location.

3.2.1 Stated sessions shall convene in such Classis churches or other facilities as shall have been determined by Classis at its previous session, or as changed or rescheduled by the Executive Committee. Host responsibilities shall be equitably distributed among the various organized churches of Classis, as practicable.

3.2.2 The location of special sessions of classis shall be as prescribed by the purpose of the session, or as may be determined by the president in consultation with Executive Committee.

3.3 Quorum.

3.3.1 Stated Session. A quorum for a stated session shall consist of the presence of a simple majority of the elder delegates and a simple majority of the active ministers enrolled in Classis. [Re: RCA BCO 1.II.4.1]

3.3.2 Special Session. A quorum for a special session of Classis shall consist of three enrolled ministers and three elder delegates. [RCA BCO 1.II.4.2]

3.4 Order and transaction of business.

3.4.1 Stated Sessions. The order and transaction of business at stated sessions of Classis shall be in compliance with RCA BCO 1.II.4.1 & 1.II.6, and as might be covered more specifically elsewhere in the RCA BCO, these rules of order, and/or the agenda and order of business for the stated session.

3.4.2 Special Sessions.

3.4.2.1 Business. Except as provided below, the business to be conducted at a special session of Classis shall be restricted to that specified in the published notice for the session. The provisions of RCA BCO 1.II.4.2, 1.II.6, et. al, and as may be found elsewhere in these rules of order, are also applicable.

3.4.2.2 Additional business. Additional business may be conducted at a special session **only if**:

- A quorum of a stated session is present and specific consent is duly granted; **and**
- The nature of the business is not otherwise restricted (by these rules of order) to consideration at stated sessions only.

4. Officers of Classis.

The officers of Classis shall include the president, vice president, clerk and general treasurer. Eligibility, membership and voting privileges are as noted below: [Re: RCA BCO 1.II.5]

- Eligibility.

Nominees for any of the above mentioned officer positions of Classis shall be either an enrolled RCA minister member of Classis or an elder in a Classis church. [RCA BCO 1.II.6.4] Additionally, they shall have been a member of this classis for at least one year or an elder delegate to Classis for a minimum of two sessions.

- Membership and privileges.

Classis officers who would not otherwise be members of Classis, shall be *ex-officio* members of Classis with *privilege of the floor* and *voting privileges*.

- Duties.

The duties of the officers of Classis are as generally outlined in RCA BCO 1.II.5, and as more specifically defined elsewhere in these rules.

- Term of office. The term of office for Classis officers shall normally be two (2) years, renewable at the discretion of Classis. Prior to an election or appointment, Classis may vote to lengthen or shorten a term of office by one (1) year in order to achieve a staggered rotation of incumbents.

4.1 President.

4.1.1 Election. A president shall be elected at a Fall Stated Session of Classis from a ballot approved by Classis. The person so elected shall be seated prior to the conclusion of that session.

4.1.2 Successor.

4.1.2.1 A president shall be elected by Classis at the end of a fulfilled term per the provisions contained in ¶ 4 and ¶4.1.1 above.

4.1.2.2 If a president is unable to complete a term of office, the vice president shall succeed the president for the remainder of the unexpired term. Executive Committee shall then appoint a vice president pro tem to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. Such action by the Executive Committee shall be duly noted for the record and reported to Classis within two weeks.

- 4.1.3 The president shall preside at all sessions of Classis and meetings of its Executive Committee unless a substitute (or ceremonial officiant, as appropriate) has been duly appointed. [RCA BCO 1.II.5.1]
- 4.1.4 The president, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall make such appointments as are not otherwise provided for in these rules of order.
- 4.1.5 President's Report (Spring stated session). The president shall prepare a report of *the state of religion* within the classis based on the *Annual Consistorial Report* submitted by each Classis church, inputs from members of Executive Committee, and personal assessments, observations and reflections. [RCA BCO 1.II.15 & RCA BCO 1.III.5.3]

4.2 Vice President.

- 4.2.1 A vice president shall be elected at a Fall Stated Session of Classis using a ballot approved by Classis. The person so elected shall be seated prior to the conclusion of that session.
- 4.2.2 The vice president shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the president, Executive Committee, and/or Classis; shall serve as a member of Classis Executive Committee, and shall serve as chair of the *Finance Committee* described elsewhere in these rules.
- 4.2.3 Successor, succession to office and/or vacancy of office.
 - 4.2.3.1 A vice president shall be elected by Classis at the end of a fulfilled term per the provisions contained in ¶4 and ¶4.2.1.
 - 4.2.3.2 If the president is unable to complete a term of office, the vice-president shall succeed the president for the remainder of the unexpired term.
 - 4.2.3.3 Whenever the office of vice president becomes vacant, Executive Committee shall promptly appoint a *vice president pro tem* to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.
 - 4.2.3.4 Action taken pursuant to the provisions of ¶4.2.3.2 and ¶4.2.3.3 above shall be duly recorded by the clerk and reported to Classis within two weeks.

4.3 Clerk.

[Re: RCA BCO 1.II.5.2]

- 4.3.1 A candidate (or candidates) for the office of clerk shall be presented by Executive Committee to Classis for election or appointment at a Fall Stated Session. The person so elected or appointed shall be seated prior to the conclusion of that session.
- 4.3.2 Successor and/or vacancy of office. If the clerk is unable to complete a term of office, the Executive Committee shall appoint a clerk pro tem to serve until the next Fall Stated Session and report same to Classis within two weeks. Classis shall then appoint or elect a clerk per the provisions of ¶4 and ¶4.3.1 above.
- 4.3.3 Membership on committees. The clerk shall be a member of the Classis Executive Committee and such other committees as might be assigned elsewhere in these rules.

4.3.4 Duties. The clerk shall serve as the primary administrator and point of contact for all Classis business, and, as such, shall serve as *staff* for the *Classis office*.

The duties of the clerk include, but are not restricted to, those that may be contained elsewhere in these rules, in *RCA BCO 1.II.5.2*, et al.; the *RCA Manual for Clerks*, et al. The following is a noninclusive list of specific duties:

- Serve as member and clerk of Classis Executive Committee.
- Locate, equip and maintain a Classis office with such equipment and supplies as may be necessary to carry on and expedite the business of Classis.
- Serve as meeting coordinator for all Executive Committee meetings and Classis sessions.
- Prepare and provide due notice to affected members for all sessions of Classis and meetings of the Executive Committee; and prepare, compile and disseminate the associated agenda and information packets for each to the applicable members/delegates at least two weeks prior to the date of the session or meeting.
- Serve as recorder for all Classis sessions and Executive Committee meetings; enlist the aid of assistants as needed.
- Prepare, circulate, present for approval, file and forward to higher judicatories of the RCA, copies of the minutes of all sessions of Classis and meetings of Executive Committee.
- Participate in installations, ordinations, seminarian exams and other special sessions, events and ceremonies, as may be required.
- File all necessary documents with the Washington Secretary of State relating to the corporate status of Classis.
- Serve as custodian of the corporate seal and all official records of Classis.

4.3.5 Stipend. The clerk may be granted an annual stipend and any recommendation for such shall be presented by Executive Committee to Classis for their approval at the same session at which the clerk is appointed/elected. A stipend so granted shall run with the term of office.

4.4 General Fund Treasurer.

4.4.1 A candidate (or candidates) for the office of general fund treasurer shall be presented by Executive Committee to Classis for election or appointment at a Fall Stated Session. The person so elected or appointed shall be seated prior to the conclusion of that session.

4.4.2 Successor and/or vacancy of office. If the general fund treasurer is unable to complete a term of office, the Executive Committee shall appoint a *general fund treasurer pro tem* to serve until the next Fall Stated Session and report same to Classis within two weeks. Classis shall then appoint a general fund treasurer per the provisions of ¶ 4 and ¶4.4.1 above.

4.4.3 Duties. The duties of the general fund treasurer shall include, but not be restricted to, the following:

- Receive and account for all general funds presented to or received by Classis, including assessments, askings and gifts; manage the general fund account and assessment budget; establish and maintain such Classis bank accounts and records as may be necessary to adequately safeguard and account for all general funds received and disbursed; and pay all bills and general synod assessments according to the budget approved by Classis.

- Present an annual general fund treasurer’s report to Classis via the Executive Committee—such shall be submitted for Classis consideration at the stated session which immediately follows the end of the fiscal year. A general fund status report shall be provided to Executive Committee upon request.
- Present the following year’s proposed general fund budget to Classis, via the Executive Committee, for approval at the Fall Stated Session. Said budget shall include the amount needed for Classis administration and operation as well as the amount that Classis has been assessed by the general synod. The method for raising funds to support the budget shall be included as part of the budget and may be either by assessment of the churches on the basis of their membership, or other method directed by Classis.

4.4.4 Stipend. The general fund treasurer may be granted an annual stipend and any recommendation for such shall be presented by Executive Committee to Classis for their approval at the same session at which the treasurer is appointed/elected. A stipend so granted shall run with the term of office.

5. Organizational Structure of Classis.

- By definition, “...*classis is a permanent, continuing body which functions between stated sessions through committees...*” [Re: *RCA BCO 1.II.1*] Accordingly,

Classis shall create committees and regionalized subcommittees of such charter and number, and with such staffing, as may be indicated and made necessary by the Classis *mission statement*, the Classis *ministry plan*, and (as stated more broadly) by the *RCA BCO 1.II.2* and *RCA BCO 1.II.6–15*.

- General qualifications of committee members. In general terms, each member of every Classis committee shall be appropriately gifted for the work of the committee to which assigned, and a *confessing member* of a Classis church...” [*RCA BCO 1.II.6.4*] Additional qualifications are as noted in the appropriate section(s) below.
- Term of office. The term of office for Classis committee members shall normally be two (2) years, renewable at the discretion of Classis. Prior to an election or appointment, Classis may vote to lengthen or shorten a term of office by one (1) year in order to achieve a staggered rotation of incumbents.

5.1 Classis shall establish the committees listed and described below, others may be established as needed:

5.1.1 Executive Committee.

5.1.1.1 Members.

5.1.1.1.1 Qualifications. As stated in *RCA BCO 1.II.1*: “...*Voting rights [of Classis] shall be limited to elder delegates and those enrolled ministers who are actively serving as ministers either under the jurisdiction of or with the approval of the classis...*”

As noted elsewhere in these rules, the Classis Executive Committee acts on the behalf of Classis between stated sessions.

Accordingly, members of the Executive Committee shall be either *enrolled ministers* of Classis or *elders* who are members of a Classis church.

- 5.1.1.1.2 Title. Those who have been duly elected or appointed to the following positions shall comprise the Executive Committee:
- President [Committee Chair]
 - Vice President
 - Clerk
 - Chairs of standing committees.
 - Regional Synod Coordinator [ex officio, voting member.]
 - Regional Synod Delegate [ex officio, voting member; appointed by Executive Committee]

5.1.1.2 Duties. Executive Committee shall provide the primary organizational leadership to Classis and all Classis committees at all times, as well as operational continuity for Classis between stated sessions. The duties and authority of Executive Committee shall extend to, but not be restricted by, the following:

- 5.1.1.2.1 Serve as *board of directors of the Classis of Cascades, Inc.*, a Washington state corporation.
- 5.1.1.2.2 Act on the behalf of Classis between stated sessions and report such actions to Classis for their information or ratification, as applicable.
- 5.1.1.2.3 Carry forward the will of Classis between stated sessions, set the agenda and order of business for all sessions of Classis, present required slates for classical elections and appointments, and other matters as may be specifically assigned to the committee by Classis.
- 5.1.1.2.4 Oversee all Classis business related to finances and real property. Specifically:
- 5.1.1.2.4.1 Recommend the following for Classis approval: appropriately gifted fund custodians and/or treasurers for appointment; annual general fund assessment rate and budget, travel allowances, staff or officer salaries/stipends (as applicable), and other requests/needs for funding.
- 5.1.1.2.4.2 Conduct periodic financial audits, receive and review annual financial reports submitted by the various treasurers, and establish other appropriate safeguards to ensure that all monies received by Classis are duly accounted for, appropriately disbursed and accurately reported.
- 5.1.1.2.4.3 Serve as Classis approval authority for requested disbursements from the *Classis First Property Acquisition Fund*.
- 5.1.1.2.4.4 Serve as custodian for real property owned by Classis.
- 5.1.1.2.5 Appoint members and chairs of committees, agents, representatives, and such task forces as deemed necessary to the business of Classis and for such terms of office as may be deemed appropriate or specified elsewhere in these rules. Such appointments shall be reported to Classis for their ratification at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.1.1.2.6 Appoint such regional and general synod delegates, representatives to RCA judicatories, assemblies, agencies and institutions as may be specified elsewhere in these rules, the *RCA BCO* and/or other directives. Such appointments shall be reported to Classis for their ratification at the earliest opportunity.

5.1.1.2.7 Circulate copies of meeting minutes to Classis churches, and to others upon request.

5.1.1.2.8 Take for action, or delegate, any Classis business not already specifically assigned to any committee or individual.

5.1.1.2.9 Submit a written report to each stated session of Classis.

5.1.1.3 Meetings.

5.1.1.3.1 Frequency/location of meetings. Executive Committee shall meet in places of their choosing at least once prior to each stated session of Classis and at other times as necessary.

5.1.1.3.2 Quorum. A simple majority of the members present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum.

5.1.1.3.3 Agenda. The agenda for each Executive Committee meeting shall be prepared/circulated by the clerk to all members at least two weeks prior to a meeting.

5.1.1.3.4 Minutes. Minutes of Executive Committee shall be prepared by the clerk, preserved in the formal, permanent records of Classis and circulated to the churches of Classis.

5.1.1.4 Reports. Reports to Classis shall:

- Be circulated with the agenda packet for each session;
- Include the minutes of Executive Committee meetings held since the previous stated session of Classis; and
- Be incorporated by the clerk into the permanent records of Classis.

5.1.2 Finance Committee.

5.1.2.1 Chair. The vice president shall chair the Finance Committee.

5.1.2.2 Members and qualifications.

- The committee shall be comprised of not fewer than three members in addition to the chair.
- Members shall be appointed by the Executive Committee—appointments shall be ratified by Classis at the earliest opportunity.
- Members shall be persons who are appropriately gifted and experienced in the fields of real estate, accounting, banking, law, church finances and management, and/or general business enterprises.

5.1.2.3 Duties include, but are not restricted to the following:

- Serve as a resource for Classis churches in all areas of clergy compensation, benefits and insurance; and church budgets, finances, mortgages, and loans; fund raising and financial records and reporting.
- Serve as a resource for Classis treasurers in all areas of Classis finances, record keeping, budgets, assessments and fund raising.
- Serve as a resource for Classis in conducting audits of Classis financial accounts
- Review applications for all loans and real property transactions submitted for approval by Classis churches—present germane action recommendations to Classis/Executive Committee for consideration as required.
- Oversee all real estate transactions in which Classis is a principal party.

- Prepare an annual minimum salary guide for use by all Classis Churches. Such will be presented to the Fall Stated Session of Classis for their approval, via the Executive Committee.
- Review call forms and contracts for *enrolled* and *prospective enrolled ministers* of Classis to ensure compliance with the minimum salary standards set by Classis; present same with an action recommendation for consideration by Classis Executive Committee.
- Report regularly to Classis on the work and function of the committee. Reports to Classis which contain recommendations for Classis consideration, shall be submitted in writing to a stated session—such reports shall be presented to the clerk for circulation with the agenda packet for the applicable session and shall become part of the permanent records of Classis.

5.1.3 Overtures, Judicial Business and Theology Committee.

5.1.3.1 Membership. The committee shall be comprised of not fewer than two (2) ministers and two (2) elders.

5.1.3.2 Duties. The Overtures, Judicial Business & Theology Committee shall serve as an advisory committee to Classis via the Executive Committee. The duties of the committee shall extend to, but not be restricted by, the following:

- The chair shall be a member of Executive Committee.
- Serve as a Classis resource on parliamentary processes, procedures and rules of order.
- Initiate and/or receive for consideration and recommendation to Classis, all overtures, appeals, questions pertaining to judicial and doctrinal matters, and proposed amendments to *Classis Rules of Order*.
- Present to Classis the actions of the previous sessions of the regional and general Synods which require the attention or action of Classis.
- Oversee reports submitted to Classis by churches pursuant to the provisions of *RCA BCO 1.II.7.1* [i.e., *Superintendence of Churches*, a.k.a., *Constitutional Inquiries Reports*] and take action as appropriate.
- Study matters of a theological nature which are referred to Classis by higher judicatories or which arise from within the classis; present action recommendations to Classis as deemed appropriate.
- Serve as a resource for Classis and Classis churches in matters involving sexual and professional ethics directives and policies.
- Report regularly to Classis on the work and function of the committee. Reports to Classis which require the action of Classis shall be submitted in writing to a stated session—such reports shall be presented to the clerk for circulation with the agenda packet for the applicable session and shall become part of the permanent records of Classis.

6. General Rules.

6.1 Committees. Except as may be noted elsewhere, the following general rules apply to committee duties, function and members:

6.1.1 Classis committee membership shall be primarily gift-based and all members shall be either an enrolled minister of Classis or a confessing member of a Classis church. Additionally, a lay member of the Executive Committee shall be an elder in a Classis church. Refer to specific committees for other qualifications.

- 6.1.2 Committee chairs and members of standing committees shall be appointed by the Executive Committee at the Fall Stated Session—said appointments shall be ratified by Classis.
- The term of office for all committee members shall normally be two (2) years, renewable at the discretion of Classis. Prior to an election or appointment, Classis may vote to lengthen or shorten the term of office for any specific position by one (1) year in order to achieve a staggered rotation of incumbents.
- 6.1.3 If provisions for the appointment of a committee chair have not been specified in another part of these rules, such appointment shall be made by the Executive Committee and presented to Classis for ratification at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.1.4 A person shall not serve as the chair of more than one (1) committee.
- 6.1.5 The chair of a committee shall be an ex-officio member of Classis if not otherwise an enrolled member of Classis or an elder delegate to Classis.
- 6.1.6 Committee reports to Classis which require action by Classis shall be presented in writing and be included in the agenda packet for the session. Such reports shall be transmitted to the stated clerk at least one month prior to the stated session in question and shall become part of the permanent records of Classis.
- 6.1.7 Committee members may request to be reimbursed for travel expenses per the provisions set forth elsewhere in this section.
- 6.2 Assessments. Funds to finance the operation of Classis and all assessments which have been levied upon Classis by higher judicatories of the RCA, may be raised through *assessments, askings* or other means approved by Classis.
- ~~[DELETE: When authorized by Classis, assessments shall be levied upon the churches on the basis of their *confessing membership* as reported by them in their prior year's *Annual Consistorial Report*. If assessments are to be levied on the churches, the rate per *confessing member* shall be set by Classis at each Fall Stated Session as part of the budget for which it is to be collected.]~~ Assessments shall be paid by the churches quarterly with payment due dates as set by the respective treasurers. General fund assessments shall be sent to the general treasurer; other assessments shall be sent to the treasurer so designated. [Chg. eff. 10/20/2012]
- 6.3 Transaction of business and rules of order. Classis and the committees of Classis, in the transaction of their business, shall be guided by *Robert's Rules of Order* and others which may also be mandated by the *RCA Book of Church Order* and/or these rules.
- 6.4 The Order of Classis Business. The order of business (a.k.a. *Schedule*) for a session of Classis shall generally be as set by Executive Committee, published in the agenda for the session, adopted by Classis at the start of the session, and also which complies with the particular provisions of *RCA BCO* 1.II.4.1 and 1.II.6.
- 6.5 Subsidies & Reimbursements.
- 6.5.1 Subsidy. A church serving as host for a session of Classis may request a modest subsidy to defray the associated cost. Such request shall be made to the cle

6.5.2 Travel and meeting expenses. Reimbursements for travel and meeting expenses are subject to the following general rules:

6.5.2.1 Enrolled members, elder delegates, lay representatives, seminarians and other members of Classis and Classis committees shall be reimbursed for travel and meeting expenses associated with the official business of Classis in which a member's participation has been required or invited by Classis. The following rules apply:

- Travel by commercial means (air, bus, rail) shall be reimbursed at not more than the cost of economy/coach travel rates.
- When travel in a personal or church-owned vehicle is appropriate, *car pools* shall be used as practicable.
- Reimbursement for travel in a personal vehicle or church-owned vehicle shall be paid at the rate set by Classis.
- Reimbursement for travel expenses other than mileage shall be accompanied by copies of commercial receipts.
- Seminarians/theological students who are under the care of Classis shall be reimbursed for travel expenses associated with classical examinations.
- Enrolled ministers who, of their own volition, live and/or serve in ministries located outside the geographic bounds of Classis may request reimbursement for travel expenses incurred when traveling to a meeting or session at which their attendance is required. The maximum amount of such reimbursement shall not typically exceed the single largest other travel payment made for that meeting or session to a member who resides within the geographic region of Classis.
- Round trip travel and other expenses associated with Classis retreats are reimbursable to the extent preauthorized by Classis, either specifically for the event, or as stipulated in the applicable budget.
- Committee chairs and/or hosts of committee meetings may be reimbursed for meeting costs to the extent authorized by Classis in the applicable budget.

6.5.2.2 Requests for reimbursements shall be submitted to the clerk. Exceptions to the general rules in ¶6.5 above shall require preauthorization by Executive Committee or Classis.

7. Appointment of Delegates and Representatives.

[ADD:

7.1 Delegates to General Synod. Classis shall appoint an equal number of clergy and elders to attend general synod sessions as delegates pursuant to RCA BCO 1.IV.1-3—a like number of alternates shall also be appointed. Appointments shall be made on the basis of the giftedness, interest and availability to attend the entire session of every general synod session that is expected to convene during the appointment period. A slate of recommended delegates and alternates shall be presented by Executive Committee for Classis approval at the fall stated session that immediately precedes the appointment period—an appointment as delegate shall run for one year and be once renewable; an alternate shall remain eligible for reappointment, either as a delegate or as an alternate. Executive Committee shall assign appointed alternates to serve as delegates whenever it becomes necessary to replace delegates who are either not able to attend a particular session of general synod, or who are no longer eligible. The stated clerk shall submit the names of Classis general synod delegates to the appropriate denominational office per their instructions.] [Chg in ¶7.1 eff. 11/2004]

7.2 Delegates to Regional Synod. Classis shall appoint minister and elder delegates to regional synod pursuant to *RCA BCO* 1.III.1 and regional synod rules of order. Also see *RCA BCO* 1.III.3, et al.

7.2.1 Executive Committee shall appoint one (1) elder and one (1) minister as delegates to the Regional Synod of the Far West for term lengths as specified in the regional synod's rules of order—such appointments shall be ratified by Classis at the earliest opportunity. With the concurrence of the regional synod, the term length of a delegate may be changed to prevent simultaneous rotation of both delegates.

7.2.2 Delegates may serve two consecutive terms, if so approved by Classis and the regional synod. Representation in the synod shall cease if a delegate moves from the bounds of Classis or becomes otherwise ineligible. The Executive Committee shall then appoint a new delegate.

7.2.3 Delegates shall begin serving with the regional synod's first session of the calendar year and shall attend the full session of every session of the regional synod.

7.2.4 One of the regional synod delegates shall be appointed by Classis Executive to sit as a member of that committee.

7.3 Representatives. Classis shall appoint representatives to serve on boards, councils and denominational agencies per current directives. Such agencies, institutions may include any or all of the following, for example: Words of Hope, Northwestern and Hope Colleges Western Theological Seminary, General Synod Council, et al. Such appointments shall be made by Executive Committee and ratified by Classis at the earliest opportunity.

8. Suspension of the *Rules of Order*.

Any of these *Rules of Order* not made obligatory by *RCA Book of Church Order* may be temporarily suspended for a single stated session by unanimous consent of the members present.

9. Amendments of the *Rules of Order*.

These *Rules of Order* may be permanently amended by a *two-thirds vote* of approval by the members present at any given stated session, provided that such alteration or amendment shall have been submitted in writing and approved by *simple majority* vote of approval by the members present at the previous stated session.

Record of Amendments

[Amended November 13, 2004 - L. Martinsen, Stated Clerk]

[Amended November 3, 2006 - L. Martinsen, Stated Clerk]

[Amended October 20, 2012 - L. Martinsen, Stated Clerk]