

FIRST READING – PRESBYTERY OCTOBER 2017

[DRAFT – FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY]

Proposed Amendment to PSF Standing Rules

Draft Rule on Public Statements or Comments

[NEW] ____ .PROCEDURE FOR MAKING OF PUBLIC COMMENT ON BEHALF OF PRESBYTERY

- 1. Any proposal for a public written comment, statement, letter, article or paper or public oral statement, comment or testimony (“Public Comment”) to be released or made on behalf of the Presbytery, whether requested by any of the constituent bodies of Presbytery or a referral to Presbytery from a body or person outside of the Presbytery (such as the New Mexico Conference of Churches), shall be presented or forwarded to the Stated Clerk, who shall forward the proposal to the Chair of the Coordinating Team (CT) for immediate consideration.**
- 2. The CT may approve, disapprove, edit or refer the Public Comment to the Presbytery for action. If referred to the Presbytery, the consideration of the proposed Public Comment shall be presented to a regular stated or special called meeting of Presbytery for discussion and a vote.**
- 3. Approval of any Public Comment by CT shall be by two-thirds majority vote only after notifying all congregations of the proposed Public Comment and providing them an opportunity to respond through their respective Sessions.**
- 4. If a proposed Public Comment is approved, whether by the Presbytery or CT, it shall be signed by the Moderator of Presbytery or designee or such oral comment shall be provided by the Moderator of Presbytery or designee.**
- 5. Nothing contained within this section of the Standing Rules shall affect, limit or infringe on any of the following rights and privileges:**
 - i. The right of any congregation to publish or make any type of Public Comment on behalf of that**

- congregation only (and not on behalf of the Presbytery as a whole) either by the pastor, any designated representative or congregation body or committee, with prior formal approval of such Public Comment by the Session of that congregation; OR,
- ii. The right of any individual member of the Presbytery or any congregation within the Presbytery to take any public stance or position; provide personal input or comment on any public issue; write or publish any type of public comment, statement or paper on behalf of that particular member individually or the making of any public oral statement, comment or testimony on any subject before any public or political body or other public manner by that member, without any description of any position or office they may hold, such as Minister of the Word and Sacrament also known as Teaching Elder and Pastor or Ruling Elder of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and without any suggestion that such opinion or comments reflect the position of their congregation or the Presbytery as a whole.

[Third draft – September 26, 2017]

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