



**American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region (ABCGR)
 Procedures Manual (Operating Procedures)
 Adopted [DATE]**

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Purpose. This Procedures Manual is offered as a faithful companion to the ABCRGR Constitution and Bylaws, supporting the shared life and work of the Region. It seeks to translate our governing documents into clear and accessible practices that encourage order, transparency, and trust, while making space for prayerful discernment and collective wisdom. These procedures are intended to help Delegates, Officers, the Executive Board, committees, and subsidiary organizations carry out their responsibilities with clarity and consistency in service to the mission and ministry God has entrusted to this Region.

Scope. These procedures apply to ABCRGR governance and business processes including meetings, elections, membership actions, communications/notice, committee work, ordination processes, and amendments.

Authority and precedence. If this manual (and any related Delegates Manual or other procedural guide) conflicts with the ABCRGR Constitution, Bylaws, or applicable law, the Constitution/Bylaws/law control. These procedural documents apply only insofar as they are not inconsistent with the Constitution/Bylaws. This manual may be updated administratively for clarity, but any substantive governance change (including changes to quorum, voting thresholds, or authority of bodies/committees) must be made through the amendment process in the Constitution/Bylaws.

- **Conflict-check protocol (when a procedural issue is raised).** If a proposed procedure from this manual or any Delegates Manual appears to conflict with the Constitution/Bylaws (e.g., quorum, notice, voting thresholds, committee authority), the chair rules based on the controlling Constitution/Bylaws provision; the ruling and citation are recorded in the minutes; and the Executive Board/Clerk are notified to revise the manual language for future use.

Current version and distribution. This Procedures Manual is the authoritative version as of its adoption date shown above and supersedes all prior versions. The Clerk maintains the official current version on behalf of the Region. Updated versions or revisions shall be distributed to all Delegates of record following adoption or administrative update, and the version most recently distributed by the Clerk shall be treated as the operative document for purposes of meetings, deliberations, and decision-making.

1. Key definitions

- **Region year / fiscal year:** July 1 to June 30.
- **Region Delegates:** Three (3) per member church (senior minister or designated pastoral staff member, plus two additional delegates of legal age elected by each congregation), plus officers with vote.
- **Permanent Council on Ordination (PCO) members:** All ordained clergy in good standing with ABCRGR, plus one lay representative appointed by each congregation.
- **Executive Board (Board):** Officers plus at-large members and applicable ex-officio voting members as described in the Bylaws.
- **Annual Meeting:** One Delegates' meeting each year designated as the Annual Meeting; open meeting with attendees from cooperating churches without vote.
- **Quorum:**
 - Delegates from one-third (1/3) of region churches for Delegates' meetings.
 - Fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) of Board members for Board meetings.
 - Representatives from one-quarter (1/4) of the churches for the Permanent Council on Ordination (PCO).
- **Notice:** Meeting notice with agenda/supporting materials sent at least 10 days (Delegates) or 5 days (Board) in advance, with the exception of changes to the Constitution or Bylaws, in which case the proposed changes must be sent to Delegates at least thirty (30) days prior to the Delegates' meeting.
- **Unanimous written/electronic consent:** A method to take action without a meeting when unanimity is achieved (Delegates or Board, respectively).

2. Governance bodies and role responsibilities (quick reference)

Body/Role	Primary responsibilities (procedural)
Delegates	Adopt/amend bylaws; adopt annual budget; establish/monitor goals; elect officers and Board; advise/instruct Board; determine number of professional staff positions; decide church membership actions (receive/terminate) where required.
Officers (President, President-Elect, Treasurer, Clerk, Executive Minister)	Vote at Delegates' meetings; serve as officers of the Region; lead governance workflows described in this manual (calling meetings, issuing notices, maintaining rosters/minutes, budget oversight, etc.).
Executive Minister	Spiritual leader/director; supervises regional work and staff; provides annual written report; works with Board/Delegates per Constitution/Bylaws.
Executive Board	General charge/management of affairs, funds, and property; implements Delegates' adopted goals; appoints committees/task forces; assigns church liaison responsibilities; approves certain items before they go to Delegates as required.
Finance & Investment Committee	Receives financial reports; develops finance/development procedures; oversees Treasurer; prepares annual budget for Board approval then Delegates' adoption; maintains minutes and distributes them to Board within two weeks.
Nominating Committee	Composed of at-large Board members whose terms are expiring; proposes nominees for officer/committee/representative roles; distributes slate to Delegates at least 10 days before election meeting.
Permanent Council on Ordination (PCO) & Ordination Review Committee (ORC)	ORC counsels and assesses candidates and recommends for PCO examination; PCO examines candidates and makes recommendation to candidate's church; ORC processes recognition of ordinations from outside ABC under standards.
Subsidiary organizations	Develop/implement programs under ABCRGR auspices; require Board approval and 3/4 Delegates' approval; provide annual reports; elect an ex-officio voting representative to the Board.

2.1 Decision authority and escalation (Delegates vs. Board vs. committees)

- **Delegates' reserved authority.** Actions expressly assigned to the Delegates by the Constitution/Bylaws (e.g., Constitution/Bylaws amendments, elections, adopting the annual budget, membership actions, and other specified votes/thresholds) must be taken by the Delegates and may not be altered by any committee procedure or Delegates Manual.
- **Board/committee delegated authority.** The Executive Board may act between Delegates' meetings within the scope granted by the Constitution/Bylaws and any instructions adopted by the Delegates. Committees and task forces act only within the authority delegated to them by the Board (or Constitution/Bylaws where stated) and report their actions as required.
- **When a question of authority arises.** The chair rules first by reference to the Constitution/Bylaws; if still unclear, the matter is referred to the Executive Board for interpretation and, if needed, placed on the next Delegates' meeting agenda for clarification or amendment.

3. Membership actions (receiving and terminating churches)

3.1 Receiving a church into membership

1. **Petition submitted to Executive Board.** The church submits a written petition stating: (a) desire to be admitted, (b) faith and practice, and (c) willingness to cooperate fully and effectively with ABCRGR and ABCUSA.
2. **Board review and recommendation.** Executive Board reviews the petition and votes whether to recommend membership to the Delegates.
3. **Notice to Delegates.** No less than ten (10) days prior to the Delegates' meeting at which action will occur, written notice is provided to Delegates that membership will be considered (along with relevant supporting information).
4. **Delegates vote.** Membership is granted by recommendation of the Executive Board and a three-fourths (3/4) vote of Delegates present and voting at a Delegates' meeting.
5. **Record and onboarding.** Clerk updates the roster of member churches and Delegates; staff provides the new church with current governing documents and participation expectations.

3.2 Terminating a church's membership

1. **Trigger and documentation.** Concerns may include: out of harmony with established Baptist beliefs and practice; withdrawal from ABCUSA; or a course detrimental to ABCRGR's good name. Concerns should be documented in writing for Board consideration.
2. **Board review and recommendation.** Executive Board reviews information, determines whether to recommend termination, and records its action in Board minutes.
3. **Notice to Delegates.** No less than ten (10) days prior to the Delegates' meeting at which action will occur, written notice is provided to Delegates that termination will be considered (with appropriate supporting information).
4. **Delegates vote.** Termination requires recommendation of the Executive Board and a three-fourths (3/4) vote of Delegates present and voting at a Delegates' meeting.
5. **Record update.** Clerk updates membership and Delegates rosters and archives the supporting materials with meeting records.

4. Delegates (designation, alternates, and roster management)

4.1 Annual request for delegate names

- **Timing.** Each year (recommended: by July 1, aligning with the Region year), the Clerk requests each member church to confirm its three (3) Delegates and any alternates.
- **Required information.** Each church provides names, roles (including senior minister/designated pastoral staff), contact details for notices, and the effective date of any changes.
- **Roster maintenance.** Clerk maintains the official roster of Delegates of record; the roster is used for notice requirements, voting eligibility, and quorum calculations.

4.2 Alternates and non-geographic church voting

- **Alternates.** Churches may name alternate Delegates who may substitute when a regular Delegate cannot attend. The Clerk should be notified before the meeting whenever practicable.
- **Non-geographic churches.** Delegates from non-geographic churches may vote by mail ballot (electronic or postal service) except for the meeting held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting.

- **Officers' voting rights.** In addition to church Delegates, ABCRGR officers are members with full right to vote at all meetings of the Delegates.

5. Meetings of the Delegates

5.1 Scheduling and types of meetings

- **Frequency.** Delegates meet no more than three (3) times per year, except for specially called meetings.
- **Annual Meeting.** One (1) Delegates' meeting each year is designated as the Annual Meeting; it is an open meeting to which members of cooperating churches are invited without vote.
- **Special meetings.** The Executive Board calls a special Delegates' meeting when required in writing by Delegates representing at least five (5) churches.

5.2 Notice, agenda preparation, and distribution

1. **Agenda development.** The Executive Board sets the time/place and oversees agenda development. Recommended practice: President and Executive Minister draft the agenda; Clerk confirms any required elections/votes; Treasurer/Finance Committee provide budget/financial items as needed.
2. **Supporting materials.** Include reports, proposed motions/resolutions, budget drafts, nomination slates, proposed bylaw amendments, and any membership-action notices (as applicable).
3. **Distribution timeline.** Send notice with agenda and supporting data to Delegates at least ten (10) days in advance, electronically or by postal service.
4. **Publicizing open meetings.** All regular Delegates' meetings are publicized as open meetings (recommended: notice posted to regional channels and sent to member churches for sharing).

5.3 Quorum, participation, and meeting conduct

- **Definition.** An *electronic meeting* is a meeting conducted wholly by telephone/video/online platform. A *hybrid meeting* combines in-person attendance with electronic participation.
- **Eligibility, quorum, and voting.** Delegates participating electronically are deemed present for purposes of quorum, debate, and voting, provided the meeting technology enables all participants to hear one another simultaneously and the moderator can reasonably verify each voting Delegate's identity.
- **Recognition and debate.** The moderator establishes the method for seeking recognition (e.g., raise hand feature, chat queue, or verbal request) and manages alternating viewpoints as practicable.
- **Voting method and verification.** The moderator announces the voting method in advance (voice vote, roll call, written/electronic ballot, or platform poll) and provides a reasonable means to verify and record votes when a count is required.
- **Technical interruption.** If a technical problem materially prevents participation by those electronically attending, the moderator may recess briefly, extend debate, or postpone the vote to ensure fair participation.
- **Quorum.** Delegates from one-third (1/3) of region churches constitute a quorum. *If a Delegates Manual states a different quorum, the Constitution/Bylaws control.*
- **Remote participation.** Any Delegate may participate by conference telephone, video conferencing, or similar device enabling all participants to hear one another simultaneously.
- **Chairing.** President presides; if President absent, President-Elect presides; if both absent, a moderator pro tempore is elected.

- **Clerk coverage.** If the Clerk is absent, the moderator appoints a clerk pro tempore.

5.3A Electronic and hybrid meeting standards (Delegates)

- **Definition.** An *electronic meeting* is a meeting conducted wholly by telephone/video/online platform. A *hybrid meeting* combines in-person attendance with electronic participation.
- **Eligibility, quorum, and voting.** Delegates participating electronically are deemed present for purposes of quorum, debate, and voting, provided the meeting technology enables all participants to hear one another simultaneously and the moderator can reasonably verify each voting Delegate's identity.
- **Recognition and debate.** The moderator establishes the method for seeking recognition (e.g., raise hand feature, chat queue, or verbal request) and manages alternating viewpoints as practicable.
- **Voting method and verification.** The moderator announces the voting method in advance (voice vote, roll call, written/electronic ballot, or platform poll) and provides a reasonable means to verify and record votes when a count is required.
- **Technical interruption.** If a technical problem materially prevents participation by those electronically attending, the moderator may recess briefly, extend debate, or postpone the vote to ensure fair participation.
- **Manual alignment.** Any detailed electronic/hybrid procedures adopted in a Delegates Manual apply only insofar as they are not inconsistent with the Constitution/Bylaws and this manual.

5.4 Decision-making method (consensus or Robert's Rules)

1. **Select method at meeting start.** At the beginning of each duly called Delegates' meeting, Delegates choose the decision-making method by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present and voting: (a) consensus-based process, or (b) parliamentary procedure under *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*. *If a Delegates Manual states a different voting threshold, the Constitution/Bylaws control.*
2. **Default.** If no method is adopted, the meeting proceeds under *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.
3. **Consensus definition and role of Moderator.** Consensus is a collective deliberation process aiming for a decision all Delegates can support or accept without sustained objection. The Moderator determines when consensus is reached.
4. **Voting within consensus.** If using consensus and the Moderator determines consensus cannot be reached in a reasonable time, the Moderator may call for a vote; unless otherwise required, the outcome is by simple majority of those present and voting (subject to any higher threshold required by the Constitution/Bylaws).

5.5 Taking action without a meeting (Delegates)

1. **Confirm eligibility.** Ensure the action is not otherwise restricted by the Constitution/Bylaws or applicable law and is appropriate to take without convening.
2. **Draft resolution.** President (or designee) circulates a written resolution describing the action to all Delegates of record.
3. **Obtain unanimous consent.** Consent must be unanimous and may be written or electronic.
4. **Execution requirements.** If written: the consent is executed by the Region President (signature or reasonable facsimile method). If electronic: the consent is transmitted by email with information reasonably establishing authorization by the Region President.
5. **Recordkeeping.** File the resolution and all consents with the minutes of Delegates' proceedings.
6. **If unanimity fails.** If unanimous consent is not achieved, a meeting (electronic or in person) may be convened to consider the matter.

6. Elections and terms (officers and Executive Board)

6.1 Standard election workflow

1. **Establish Nominating Committee.** At-large Board members whose terms are expiring form the Nominating Committee; they elect a chair at their first meeting and notify the President and Executive Minister.
2. **Develop slate.** Nominating Committee prepares nominees for officers, chairpersons, members of elected committees, and other special representatives as recommended by the Executive Board. Recommended practice: document the vetting process and confirm willingness to serve.
3. **Distribute slate.** Provide the proposed nominee list to all Delegates of record at least ten (10) days before the meeting in which elections occur.
4. **Conduct elections.** Delegates elect officers and Executive Board members at the Annual Meeting.
5. **Record results.** Clerk records election results in minutes and updates rosters; President welcomes and orients newly elected leaders.

6.2 Terms of office (per current Bylaws)

- **President:** elected for a three (3) year term.
- **President-Elect:** elected for a three (3) year term; after that term, they may be presented for election as Region President (per succession plan referenced in the Bylaws).
- **Treasurer:** elected for one (1) three-year term; may be reelected for one additional three-year term (maximum total six (6) consecutive years). After serving the maximum, may not serve on the Executive Board again until at least one full term (three (3) years) has lapsed.
- **Clerk:** elected for one (1) three-year term; may be reelected for one additional three-year term (maximum total six (6) consecutive years). After serving the maximum, may not serve on the Executive Board again until at least one full term (three (3) years) has lapsed.
- **At-Large Executive Board members:** serve three (3) year terms and are eligible for reelection for a second consecutive three-year term (maximum six (6) consecutive years). After serving the maximum, not eligible until one full term (three (3) years) has passed.
- **Staggering.** Terms of at-large and officer positions are staggered so approximately one-third (1/3) of the Board changes each year.

6.3 Executive Minister election, service, and removal

- **Election.** The Executive Minister is elected for an indefinite term by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of Delegates present and voting at a Delegates' meeting.
- **Service.** The Executive Minister serves unless removed by resignation, death, or by a majority vote of Delegates present and voting at a Delegates' meeting.
- **Annual report.** The Executive Minister provides an annual written report on the affairs of the Region and oversees supervision of the Region's work and staff.

7. Executive Board operations

7.1 Board composition and eligibility

- **Size and representation.** The Board consists of no more than nineteen (19) elected members; at least eleven (11) member churches must be represented.
- **Makeup.** Officers of the Region plus twelve (12) at-large members.

- **Ex-officio voting members (as applicable).** (a) One representative from any auxiliary/subsidiary organizations choosing to be represented, and (b) the Region representative to the ABCUSA Board of General Ministries (BGM). In addition, if the Region has a member serving on a national ABCUSA board, that person is nominated as an ex-officio voting Board member during their national board term and is presented as part of the slate for Delegates' election.

7.2 Board meetings (open meetings, notice, quorum, remote participation)

- **Open meetings.** All regular Board meetings are publicized as open meetings.
- **Notice.** Send Board meeting notice with agenda and supporting data at least five (5) days in advance (electronically or by postal service).
- **Quorum.** Fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) of Board members constitutes a quorum.
- **Remote participation.** Any Board member may participate by conference telephone, video conferencing, or similar device enabling all participants to hear one another simultaneously.
- **Electronic and hybrid meeting standards (Board).** Board members participating electronically are deemed present for quorum, debate, and voting, provided the technology enables all participants to hear one another simultaneously and the presiding officer can reasonably verify each voting member's identity. The presiding officer announces the method of recognition and voting in advance, ensures votes can be verified/recorded when a count is required, and may recess or postpone action if technical issues materially impair participation.

7.3 Taking action without a meeting (Board/Board committees)

1. **Confirm eligibility.** Ensure the action is not otherwise restricted by the Constitution/Bylaws or applicable law and is appropriate to take without convening.
2. **Draft resolution.** President circulates a written resolution to all Board (or committee) members entitled to vote.
3. **Obtain unanimous consent.** Consent must be unanimous and may be written or electronic.
4. **Execution requirements.** If written: consent executed by the Region President (signature or reasonable facsimile method). If electronic: consent sent by email with information reasonably establishing authorization by the Region President.
5. **Recordkeeping.** File the resolution and all consents with the minutes of the Board (or committee).
6. **If unanimity fails.** If unanimous consent is not achieved, a meeting (electronic or in person) may be convened to consider the matter.

7.4 Vacancies and attendance

1. **Unreasonable absence.** If a Board member is absent unreasonably from three consecutive Board meetings without communicating their reason to the President or Clerk, and the excuse is not accepted by the Board, the seat may be declared vacant.
2. **Filling vacancies.** When a vacancy occurs (death, resignation, or otherwise), it may be filled by majority vote of the members then in office.
3. **Term of interim appointee.** The person chosen to fill the vacancy serves until the next meeting of the Delegates, at which point they are duly elected by the Delegates.

7.5 Committees, task forces, and church liaisons

- **Creation.** The Board appoints committees and task forces as necessary or advisable and defines (in Board minutes or a written charge) their scope, delegated authority, reporting expectations, and any limits.

- **Public statements.** For committees other than the standing Finance & Investment Committee, any public releases, pronouncements, or statements must be approved by the Executive Board before issuance.
- **Limits.** Committees and task forces may not adopt procedures or take actions that conflict with the Constitution/Bylaws or expand their authority beyond what the Constitution/Bylaws or Executive Board has delegated. If a Delegates Manual contains committee guidance, it is advisory and applies only within the committee's delegated scope.
- **Liaisons.** The Board assigns liaison responsibilities among Board members to ensure communication with region churches and their Delegates (recommended: maintain a liaison list and update annually).

8. Finance and Investment Committee procedures

8.1 Composition and leadership

- **Members.** Treasurer; one at-large Executive Board member ("Board Member"); and at least three (3) additional members appointed by the Executive Board.
- **Service.** Treasurer and Board Member serve for the duration of their elected Board terms. Appointed at-large committee members serve at the pleasure of the Executive Board.
- **Officers.** Committee elects a Chair (not the Treasurer) and a Secretary for three (3) year terms.

8.2 Meetings, minutes, and reporting

- **Minutes.** Distribute minutes to the Executive Board within two (2) weeks following each committee meeting; maintain minutes on file in the region office.
- **Financial reports.** Receive and review regular financial reports; elevate issues and recommendations to the Executive Board as needed.

8.3 Annual budget workflow

1. **Draft budget.** Finance and Investment Committee prepares an annual budget for the upcoming Region year (July 1–June 30).
2. **Board approval.** Present the draft budget to the Executive Board for review and approval.
3. **Delegates' adoption.** After Board approval, bring the budget to the Delegates for adoption at a Delegates' meeting (typically the Annual Meeting).
4. **Disbursement control.** Treasurer ensures funds are disbursed in accordance with the adopted budget or as subsequently amended/revised by a majority vote of the Delegates.
5. **Recordkeeping.** Archive the adopted budget and any later amendments with Delegates' minutes.

9. Nominating Committee procedures

1. **Convene.** As soon as Board term expirations are known for the cycle, expiring at-large Board members convene as the Nominating Committee.
2. **Elect chair and notify.** At the first meeting, elect a chair and notify the President and Executive Minister.
3. **Develop nominations.** Prepare nominees for: officers; chairpersons; members of elected committees; and special representatives as recommended by the Executive Board. Care is taken to adhere to bylaw requirements and ensure nominations reflect the diversity of the Region as nominees are sought.

4. **Executive Board coordination.** Where the Board has recommendations for special representatives, incorporate them into the slate.
5. **Distribute slate.** Send the proposed slate to all Delegates of record at least ten (10) days prior to the election meeting.
6. **During elections.** Chair (or designee) presents the slate and is prepared to answer procedural questions about the nomination process (not confidential deliberations).

10. Ordination processes (Permanent Council on Ordination and Ordination Review Committee)

Applicability of procedural guidance. While this Manual supports the orderly life of the Region, provisions governing Delegates' or Executive Board meetings apply to ordination bodies only where explicitly stated; otherwise, the Permanent Council on Ordination and the Ordination Review Committee carry out their shared work of prayerful discernment according to the standards and practices set forth in this article, the ABCRGR Constitution and Bylaws, and the Ordination, Recognition, and Lay Ministry Certification guidelines of this Region.

Authority for ordination. In accordance with Baptist polity, ordination is fully the responsibility and prerogative of the local congregation, which discerns and affirms a candidate's call to ministry within its own covenanted life. When a congregation or candidate desires the wider recognition of that ordination or ministry within the American Baptist Churches USA, the congregation may choose to sponsor the candidate into the Region's ordination, recognition, or lay ministry certification process as outlined below. These processes are guided by the Ordination Guidelines, Recognition Guidelines, and Lay Ministry Certification Guidelines of the American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region, which are available on the ABCRGR website and serve to support shared standards, mutual accountability, and connectional life within the denomination.

Delegation of Duties: The Permanent Council on Ordination (PCO) assesses candidates for ordination. The Ordination Review Committee (ORC) assesses candidates for recognition of ordination and for lay ministry certification.

10.1 Permanent Council on Ordination (PCO): composition and officers

- **Membership.** Ordained ministers in good standing within the Region; one lay representative from each church appointed by that church; all members of the Ordination Review Committee; and the Executive Minister.
- **Officers.** Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are elected by the Delegates at the Annual Meeting for three (3) year terms. Officers who have served two (2) full terms are not eligible for reelection until at least one full term (three (3) years) has lapsed.

10.2 Convening the PCO and quorum

- **Request.** The PCO is convened at the request of a member church and upon approval of the Ordination Review Committee or the Executive Board.
- **Quorum.** Representatives from one-quarter (1/4) of the churches constitute a quorum.
- **Candidate limit.** No more than two (2) candidates may be examined at any one meeting.

10.3 Ordination Review Committee (ORC): membership and duties

- **Appointment.** The ORC Chair and the Executive Minister nominate committee members; the Executive Board approves.

- **Composition.** Officers of the PCO; six (6) ordained ministers; and no less than two (2) lay representatives.
- **Terms and rotation.** Each officer position carries a three-year term. Other members are appointed by the President and Executive Minister for periods of service responsive to the needs of the Region, in accordance with the Bylaws.
- **Duties.** ORC meets with and counsels candidates recommended for ordination by member churches; advises seminary students/candidates on steps toward ordination; determines readiness for PCO examination; and recommends candidates to the PCO for examination.

10.4 Candidate examination and outcomes (PCO)

1. **Sponsorship.** A church sponsors a candidate to the ORC. The ORC meets with the candidate and, if the candidate enters the process, walks alongside the candidate and their congregation to meet the guidelines of the Region. When the ORC deems the candidate ready for a PCO, the ORC notifies the sponsoring church.
2. **Convening the PCO.** The congregation then calls for the meeting of the PCO, in conversation with the ORC and Region staff. The Region staff assist in all logistical details.
3. **Preparation.** The candidate's ordination paper is circulated to PCO delegates 30 days prior to examination.
4. **Testimony.** PCO hears the candidate's extemporaneous account of Christian experience and call to ministry.
5. **Examination.** PCO examines the candidate consistent with Region expectations and Baptist practice.
6. **Recommendation.** Following examination, PCO recommends that the candidate's church: (a) proceed with ordination, (b) receives no recommendation (declines to recommend), or (c) refers the candidate back to ORC for further advisement.
7. **Documentation.** Record outcomes and file relevant materials with PCO/ORC records consistent with recordkeeping practices.

10.5 Recognition of ordination from outside the American Baptist Churches

1. **Request.** Member church submits a request for a candidate's recognition to the ORC.
2. **Assessment.** ORC evaluates whether the candidate is in harmony with the Region's standards for recognition.
3. **Decision.** ORC may recognize the ordination as provided in the Bylaws and communicates the decision to the requesting church and relevant Region leadership.
4. **Records.** Maintain documentation of the request, materials reviewed, and the ORC decision.

11. Subsidiary organizations (recognition, accountability, and reporting)

1. **Concept and purpose.** A subsidiary organization is constituted under ABCRGR auspices to develop and implement programs to promote ABCRGR's mission and purpose.
2. **Recognition approval.** To be recognized: (a) affirmative vote of the Executive Board, and (b) three-fourths (3/4) vote of Delegates at a regularly held Delegates' meeting.
3. **Accountability.** Subsidiary organizations are accountable to the Executive Board.
4. **Annual reporting.** Subsidiary organizations provide annual reports to the Delegates at the Annual Meeting.
5. **Board representation.** Each subsidiary organization elects a representative (by office) to serve as an ex-officio voting member of the Executive Board.

12. Representation to ecumenical/external bodies

The Executive Board, in concert with the Executive Minister, designates representation to external organizations as necessary. Recommended practice: record the designation (name, term, scope, reporting expectations) in Board minutes and inform Delegates at the next Delegates' meeting.

13. Records, minutes, and document retention (governance records)

- **Minutes.** The Clerk records minutes of Delegates' meetings and Executive Board meetings.
- **Distribution.** Executive Board minutes are distributed to Delegates.
- **Unanimous consent filings.** Any resolutions and unanimous written/electronic consents (Delegates or Board) are filed with the relevant minutes.
- **Rosters.** Clerk maintains: (a) roster of member churches, (b) roster of Delegates and alternates, and (c) current list of officers, Board members, committee members, and liaisons.
- **Committee records.** Committees maintain records adequate to support Board oversight; Finance & Investment Committee minutes are distributed to the Board within two weeks and kept on file in the region office.

14. Amendments (Constitution and Bylaws)

14.1 Constitution amendments

1. **Draft amendment.** Prepare the proposed amendment text along with a brief rationale and submit the draft to the Executive Board. Most amendments originate with the Executive Board; however, amendments proposed by others must be submitted to the Region President at least ninety (90) days prior to the next Delegates' Meeting to allow adequate time for prayerful consideration, deliberation, and due process. The Executive Board selects amendments for the Delegates' consideration and approval.
2. **Provide notice.** Mail written notice containing the substance of the proposed amendment to all Delegates of record at least thirty (30) days before the Delegates' meeting at which it will be considered.
3. **Vote.** Adoption requires concurrence of not less than three-fourths (3/4) of Delegates present and voting at the meeting.
4. **Record.** Clerk records the amendment and effective date in the minutes and updates the official governing documents.

14.2 Bylaws amendments

5. **Draft amendment.** Prepare the proposed amendment text along with a brief rationale and submit the draft to the Executive Board. Most amendments originate with the Executive Board; however, amendments proposed by others must be submitted to the Region President at least ninety (90) days prior to the next Delegates' Meeting to allow adequate time for prayerful consideration, deliberation, and due process. The Executive Board selects amendments for the Delegates' consideration and approval.
1. **Executive Board recommendation.** The amendment must be recommended by the Executive Board before Delegates vote.
2. **Provide notice.** Written notice of the proposed amendment is mailed (electronically or by postal service) to member churches for dissemination to their Delegates not less than thirty (30) days prior to the vote.
3. **Vote.** Adoption requires a majority vote of Delegates present and voting at a meeting of the Region.
4. **Record.** Clerk records the amendment and effective date in the minutes and updates the official bylaws.

Appendix A.

Recommended Constitutional Provisions for Member Churches

The American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region recognizes that each member church is a self-governing body. The following provisions are offered **as recommended language only** to assist member churches in maintaining healthy relationships with the Region and the American Baptist Churches USA. Adoption of these provisions is **voluntary and not required** for membership.

Member churches may wish to include language such as the following in their constitutions or bylaws:

1. *This church shall adhere to and be a member of the American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region and the American Baptist Churches USA, and shall not resign or withdraw from these bodies except by duly adopted amendment to its constitution following appropriate consultation with the Region's Executive Minister.*
2. *The pulpit or search committee of this church shall confer with the Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region regarding the qualifications and record of candidates being considered for pastoral leadership.*
3. *This church may notify the Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region of proposed amendments to its constitution as a matter of mutual accountability and support.*

Appendix B

Checklist for Delegates Meetings

A. Pre-Meeting Preparation (Before Notice Is Sent)

Executive Board / Officers

- Confirm whether the meeting is a **regular, Annual, or special** Delegates' Meeting. [\[Delegates...Procedures | Word\]](#), [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
 - Identify **items requiring Delegates' action**, including:
 - Elections
 - Budget adoption
 - Membership actions
 - Constitutional or bylaw amendments
 - Subsidiary organization actions[\[Delegates...Procedures | Word\]](#), [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
 - Determine whether any items require **advance notice periods** beyond the standard (e.g., 30-day notice for amendments). [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
 - Confirm quorum requirements for the meeting. [\[Delegates...Procedures | Word\]](#), [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
 - Ensure proposed actions are within **Delegates' reserved authority** (not Board-only actions). [\[Delegates...Procedures | Word\]](#)
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B. Notice and Agenda Distribution

Clerk / Executive Minister / President

- Prepare a **written notice and agenda** with all supporting materials. [\[Delegates...Procedures | Word\]](#), [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
 - Include:
 - Proposed motions or resolutions
 - Nominee slates
 - Budget drafts
 - Proposed amendments
 - Membership petitions or termination notices (as applicable) [\[Delegates...Procedures | Word\]](#)
 - Distribute notice and materials to all **Delegates of record** at least **ten (10) days** in advance. [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
 - Publicize the meeting as an **open meeting** to cooperating churches. [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
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C. Meeting Setup (Day of Meeting)

Moderator / Clerk

- Verify **Delegate roster** and alternates. [\[Delegates...Procedures | Word\]](#)
 - Confirm **quorum** is present (one-third of Region churches). [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
 - Confirm technology supports full participation if meeting is electronic or hybrid. [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
 - Appoint a **clerk pro tempore** or **moderator pro tempore** if necessary. [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
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D. Opening the Meeting

Moderator

- Call the meeting to order.
- Establish the **decision-making method** for the meeting:
 - Consensus process **or**

- Parliamentary procedure under *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
 - Note default to Robert's Rules if no method is adopted. [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
 - Review agenda and make any permitted adjustments.
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E. Conducting Business

Delegates / Moderator

- Receive and act on:
 - Minutes of prior meetings
 - Officer and Board reports
 - Committee and subsidiary organization reports [\[Delegates...Procedures | Word\]](#)
 - Consider and vote on:
 - Elections (officers and Board)
 - Budget adoption or amendments
 - Membership actions (receive/terminate)
 - Constitutional or bylaw amendments
 - Other matters properly before the Delegates [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
 - Ensure voting thresholds match governing documents (simple majority vs. higher thresholds). [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
 - Address procedural questions using the **conflict-check protocol** when needed. [\[Delegates...Procedures | Word\]](#)
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F. Taking Action Without a Meeting (If Applicable)

Delegates / Officers

- Confirm the action is eligible for **unanimous written or electronic consent**. [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
 - Circulate written resolution to all Delegates.
 - Obtain **unanimous consent**.
 - File the resolution and consents with the minutes. [\[BYLAWS rev...6-09.docx | PDF\]](#)
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G. Closing and Recordkeeping

Clerk

- Record:
 - Attendance and quorum confirmation
 - Decisions taken and vote results
 - Any chair rulings and cited authority [\[Delegates...Procedures | Word\]](#)
 - File:
 - Minutes
 - Adopted budgets
 - Amendments
 - Unanimous consents
 - Update rosters (Delegates, officers, Board, committees) as needed. [\[Delegates...Procedures | Word\]](#)
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H. Post-Meeting Follow-Up

Executive Board / Staff

- Implement actions adopted by the Delegates.
- Distribute minutes to Delegates.
- Schedule any required follow-up items for future meetings.