

1 **OVERTURE 6** from Covenant Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
2 "Amend *BCO* 24-1 Allowing Some Session Discretion on the Timing of  
3 Portions of the Examination of Elder and Deacon Candidate Nominees"  
4

5 **Whereas**, in *Crouse v. NW Georgia Presbytery* (2019-03), the Standing Judicial Commission  
6 declared that the sequence in *BCO* 24-1 is mandatory: there is a nomination period; all  
7 nominees shall go through training; and then all nominees shall go through  
8 examination; and  
9

10 **Whereas**, only after examination would it be possible to remove nominees from the process;  
11 and  
12

13 **Whereas**, the SJC further declared that if sessions desired more flexibility in the process, they  
14 should submit an overture to the General Assembly seeking such; and  
15

16 **Whereas**, this overture seeks to amend *BCO* 24-1 simply by adding a word and eliminating a  
17 word; and  
18

19 **Whereas**, the word added, "qualified," keeps in place the general mandate of *BCO* 24-1,  
20 represented by the "shall" statements, while granting sessions flexibility to remove  
21 "clearly or grievously disqualified" nominees from the process apart from the  
22 instruction and examination process; and  
23

24 **Whereas**, the word removed, "then," allows sessions to sequence their examinations as they  
25 desire; and  
26

27 **Whereas**, some sessions may desire to do the examination for Christian experience first prior  
28 to instruction; removing "then" would allow such to happen; and  
29

30 **Whereas**, the overture keeps the "shall" statements to ensure that all the parts of the  
31 instruction and examination process remain in place for qualified nominees;  
32

33 **Therefore, be it resolved** that *Book of Church Order* 24-1 be amended as follows  
34 (underlining for additions, ~~strike through~~ for deletions):  
35

36 24-1. Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and  
37 deacon in the following manner: At such times as determined by the  
38 Session, communicant members of the congregation may submit names  
39 to the Session, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be  
40 an active male member who meets the qualifications set forth in  
41 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. After the close of the nomination period,  
42 qualified nominees for the office of ruling elder and/or deacon shall  
43 receive instruction in the qualifications and work of the office. Each  
44 qualified nominee shall ~~then~~ be examined in:

- 1 a. his Christian experience, especially his personal character and family
- 2 management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and
- 3 Titus 1:6-9),
- 4 b. his knowledge of Bible content,
- 5 c. his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained
- 6 in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* Preface III,
- 7 The Constitution Defined),
- 8 d. the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and
- 9 e. his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination. (*BCO*
- 10 24-6)

11  
12 If there are candidates eligible for the election, the Session shall report to  
13 the congregation those eligible, giving at least thirty (30) days prior notice of the  
14 time and place of a congregational meeting for elections.

15 If one-fourth (1/4) of the persons entitled to vote shall at any time request  
16 the Session to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing additional  
17 officers, it shall be the duty of the Session to call such a meeting on the above  
18 procedure. The number of officers to be elected shall be determined by the  
19 congregation after hearing the Session's recommendation.

20  
21  
22 **So that if adopted it would read:**

23  
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25 the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session, communicant  
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- 34 management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and
- 35 Titus 1:6-9),
- 36 b. his knowledge of Bible content,
- 37 c. his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained
- 38 in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America (*BCO* Preface
- 39 III, The Constitution Defined),
- 40 d. the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and
- 41 e. his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination.
- 42 (*BCO* 24-6)

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7 procedure. The number of officers to be elected shall be determined by the  
8 congregation after hearing the Session's recommendation.

9  
10 *Adopted by Covenant Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 4, 2020*

11 *Attested by /s/ TE Robert O. Browning, stated clerk*