

1 **OVERTURE 78** from the Southeast Alabama Presbytery (to CCB, OC, AC, CDM,  
2 MNA, MTW, RUF)

3 “Amend *RAO* 4-21 to Authorize Electronic Meetings for GA Committees and  
4 Commissions”

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6 **Be it resolved** that *RAO* 4 be amended by adding the language below as a new paragraph  
7 numbered *RAO* 4-21, the existing paragraph 4-21 be renumbered as 4-22, and a cross-  
8 reference in *RAO* 14-11.a be amended to reflect the renumbering (underlining for  
9 additions; ~~strike through~~ for deletions):

10  
11 **4-21.** Committees and commissions of the General Assembly established by the *Book*  
12 *of Church Order* and these *Rules*, except the Overtures Committee and Committees of  
13 Commissioners, may meet electronically (see RONR [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 9:30-36) if that  
14 committee or commission so determines according to its own rules. Ad hoc and ad  
15 interim committees and commissions are authorized to meet electronically at the call  
16 of the Chairman or Convenor.

17  
18 **4-21~~2~~.** **Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees and Agencies**  
19 **of the General Assembly**

20  
21 **14-11.a**

22 2) The Assembly’s Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees  
23 of the General Assembly, as to form, structure, and minimum content (4-21~~22~~);  
24 and

25  
26 So the amended sections will then read as follows

27  
28 **4-21.** Committees and commissions of the General Assembly established by the *Book*  
29 *of Church Order* and these *Rules*, except the Overtures Committee and Committees of  
30 Commissioners, may meet electronically (see RONR [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 9:30-36) if that  
31 committee or commission so determines according to its own rules. Ad hoc and ad  
32 interim committees and commissions are authorized to meet electronically at the call  
33 of the Chairman or Convenor.

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35 **4-22. Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees and Agencies of**  
36 **the General Assembly**

37  
38 **14-11.a**

39 2) The Assembly’s Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees  
40 of the General Assembly, as to form, structure, and minimum content (4-22);  
41 and

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43 **Rationale:**

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45 Recent editions of *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised* (beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> ed. [2000])

1 and more fully in 12<sup>th</sup> ed. [2020], 9:30–36) include explicit provisions governing electronic  
2 meetings, including videoconference and teleconference participation. Under RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.)  
3 9:35, committees may meet electronically only when such meetings are authorized by the  
4 appointing assembly.

5  
6 At present, the permanent committees, agencies, and special committees of the General  
7 Assembly have not been expressly authorized by the Assembly to meet electronically.  
8 Nevertheless, many have met electronically by custom. While custom may describe current  
9 practice (cf. RONR [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 2:25), it does not satisfy the requirement that electronic meetings  
10 be authorized by the appointing body.

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12 The *Book of Church Order* has recently been amended to authorize electronic meetings for  
13 Sessions (*BCO* 12-6) and Presbyteries (*BCO* 13-4) if those bodies make provision for it in  
14 their own rules. Additionally, the Standing Judicial Commission of the General Assembly is  
15 expressly permitted to meet by telephone conference call (*OMSJC* 4.1). Thus, the  
16 constitutional and judicial framework of the Church has already recognized the legitimacy of  
17 electronic meetings in appropriate contexts.

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19 Because the *Rules of Assembly Operations* functions as bylaws for the General Assembly (see  
20 RONR [12<sup>th</sup> ed.] 2:8), an amendment to the *RAO* is appropriate and necessary to regularize  
21 current practice. This amendment explicitly grants General Assembly committees and  
22 commissions the ability to meet electronically when a committee or commission so desires  
23 and establishes in its own rules.

24  
25 Furthermore, a distinction is made for ad hoc and ad interim committees. Because these  
26 committees are temporary and composed of geographically-dispersed members, requiring  
27 them to hold an initial in-person meeting solely to adopt rules for future electronic meetings  
28 creates an unnecessary financial and logistical burden. Therefore, this amendment provides  
29 direct authorization for these temporary committees to meet electronically at the call of the  
30 Chairman or Convener, ensuring they can commence their work immediately and efficiently.

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33 *Adopted by the Southeast Alabama Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 21, 2026*

34 *Attested by TE Kevin Corley, Stated Clerk*