

1 **OVERTURE 79** from the Calvary 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, Nominating
13 Committee, and Committees of Commissioners, may meet electronically (see RONR
14 [12th ed.] 9:30-36) for called meetings if that committee or commission so determines
15 according to its own rules. Ad hoc and ad interim committees and commissions are
16 authorized to meet electronically at the call 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 (4-2122);
24 and

25
26 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, Nominating
30 Committee, and Committees of Commissioners, may meet electronically (see RONR
31 [12th ed.] 9:30-36) for called meetings if that committee or commission so determines
32 according to its own rules. Ad hoc and ad interim committees and commissions are
33 authorized to meet electronically at the call of the Chairman or Convenor.

34
35 **4-22. Guidelines for Keeping Minutes of Permanent Committees and Agencies of**
36 **the General Assembly**

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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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44 **Rationale:**

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1 Recent editions of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (beginning in the 10th ed. [2000]
2 and more fully in 12th ed. [2020], 9:30–36) include explicit provisions governing electronic
3 meetings, including videoconference and teleconference participation. Under RONR (12th ed.)
4 9:35, committees may meet electronically only when such meetings are authorized by the
5 appointing assembly.
6

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

13 The *Book of Church Order* has recently been amended to authorize electronic meetings for
14 Sessions (*BCO* 12-6) and Presbyteries (*BCO* 13-4) if those bodies make provision for it in
15 their own rules. Additionally, the Standing Judicial Commission of the General Assembly is
16 expressly permitted to meet by telephone conference call (*OMSJC* 4.1). Thus, the
17 constitutional and judicial framework of the Church has already recognized the legitimacy of
18 electronic meetings in appropriate contexts.
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20 Because the *Rules of Assembly Operations* functions as bylaws for the General Assembly (see
21 RONR [12th ed.] 2:8), an amendment to the *RAO* is appropriate and necessary to regularize
22 current practice. This amendment explicitly grants General Assembly committees and
23 commissions the ability to meet electronically for called meetings when a committee or
24 commission so desires and establishes in its own rules. Restricting this provision to called
25 meetings protects the integrity and effectiveness of the regular stated meetings of the General
26 Assembly's committees and commissions. Certain special committees of the General
27 Assembly (i.e., Overtures and Nominating) are excluded from the provision due to the
28 occasional nature of the business referred to them, and the desirability of reserving said
29 business to in-person deliberation.
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31 Furthermore, a distinction is made for ad hoc and ad interim committees. Because these
32 committees are temporary and composed of geographically dispersed members, requiring
33 them to hold an initial in-person meeting solely to adopt rules for future electronic meetings
34 creates an unnecessary financial and logistical burden. Therefore, this amendment provides
35 direct authorization for these temporary committees to meet electronically at the call of the
36 Chairman or Convener, ensuring they can commence their work immediately and efficiently.
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39 *Adopted by Calvary Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 23, 2026*

40 *Attested by /s/ RE Melton L. Duncan, Sr., Stated Clerk*