

3.0 STANDING COMMITTEE OPERATIONS POLICIES

The Standing Committee of First Parish in Concord has responsibility as the primary fiduciary steward of First Parish. It will act on behalf of the membership to support the Church's mission, determine and demand appropriate organizational performance, and prevent unacceptable activities and conditions within the Church.

3.1 Functioning

The Standing Committee will function with a proactive outward vision of the future; encouragement of diversity in viewpoints; strategic leadership; a clear distinction between Standing Committee and Head of Staff roles; and an emphasis on collective rather than individual decisions.

1. The Standing Committee will cultivate a sense of group responsibility; be responsible for excellence in its own performance; be the initiator of governing policy; use the expertise of individual members to enhance the ability of the Standing Committee as a body; and meet its commitments in a timely and responsible manner.
2. The Standing Committee will guide the Staff through the establishment of broad written governing policies reflecting First Parish's values and perspectives about ends to be achieved and means to be employed and avoided. The Standing Committee's major policy focus will be on intended long-term effects.
3. The Standing Committee will operate in a disciplined manner. This discipline will apply to attendance, preparation, policy-making principles, respect of roles, and ensuring continuance of operating capability. Continual Standing Committee development will include orientation of new Standing Committee members in the Standing Committee's process and periodic discussion of improvement of the Standing Committee's process and performance.
4. The Standing Committee will "speak with one voice," which means that after a decision is reached all members will unambiguously support it outside of the Standing Committee.
5. The Standing Committee, with the treasurer, shall establish policies and limitations that adequately protect the financial health and preserve the assets of First Parish. One future consideration is a policy to develop long-term financial reserves.
6. The Standing Committee shall appoint an Audit Committee and/or Auditors to complete a yearly financial review of First Parish with a written report to the Standing Committee.

3.2 Standing Committee Job Description

The Standing Committee will produce written governing policies that, at the broadest levels, address each of the following:

1. Ends: Staff products, effects, benefits, outcomes, recipients, and their relative worth.
2. Means: Practices specified to achieve Ends Policies, and limits on Staff authority that establish the prudent and ethical boundaries within which all Staff activity and decisions must take place.
3. Standing Committee Operations: Specification of how the Standing Committee conceives, carries out, and monitors its own task.

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4. Standing Committee–Head of Staff Linkage: How power is delegated and its proper use monitored; the Head of Staff role, authority, and accountability.
5. The Standing Committee will assure Head of Staff performance against policies 1 and 2 in this list.

3.3 Chairperson's Role

The chairperson assures the integrity of the Standing Committee's process and represents the Standing Committee to outside parties.

1. The job of the chairperson is to assure that the Standing Committee behaves consistently with its own rules and those legitimately imposed upon it from outside the organization, and to assure that all deliberation will be fair, open, and thorough but also timely, orderly, and kept to the point.
2. The authority of the chairperson consists in making decisions that fall within topics covered by Standing Committee Operations and Standing Committee–Head of Staff Linkage policies, except where the Standing Committee specifically delegates portions of this authority to others. The chairperson is authorized to use any reasonable interpretation of the provisions in these policies.
3. The chairperson is empowered to establish all meeting agendas in coordination with the other members and chair Standing Committee meetings, with all the commonly accepted power of that position (for example, ruling, recognizing).
4. The chairperson has no authority to make individual decisions about Ends and Means policies.
5. The chairperson may represent the board to outside parties including announcing Standing Committee stated positions and in stating chair decisions and interpretations within the area delegated to her or him. The chairperson may delegate this authority but remains accountable for its use.

3.4 Standing Committee Members Code of Conduct

The Standing Committee commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as board members.

1. Members must represent loyalty to the interests of the entire membership. This loyalty supersedes any loyalty to advocacy or interest groups and membership on other boards or staffs. It also supersedes the personal interest of any board member as an individual member of the congregation.
2. Members must avoid conflict of interest with respect to their fiduciary responsibility.
 - a. There must be no self-dealing or any conduct of private business or personal services between any Standing Committee member and the Staff except that which is procedurally controlled to assure openness, competitive opportunity, and equal access to inside information.
 - b. When the Standing Committee is to decide upon an issue about which member has an unavoidable conflict of interest, that member shall absent herself or himself without comment from not only the vote but also from the deliberation by leaving the meeting.

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- c. Standing Committee members must not use their positions to obtain Church employment for themselves, family members, or close associates. Should a member desire employment, he or she must first resign from the Standing Committee.
 - d. Members will annually disclose their involvements with other organizations, with vendors, or any other associations that might produce a conflict of interest.
3. Standing Committee member's interactions outside of the Standing Committee are limited as follows:
 - a. Members' interaction with the Staff must recognize the lack of authority vested in individuals except when explicitly authorized by the Standing Committee.
 - b. Members' interactions with public, press, or other entities must recognize the same limitation and the inability of any Standing Committee member to speak for the Standing Committee except to repeat explicitly stated Standing Committee decisions.
4. Members will respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature.

3.5 Standing Committee Subcommittee Principles

Standing Committee subcommittees are to help the Standing Committee do its job.

1. Subcommittees ordinarily will assist the Standing Committee by preparing policy alternatives and implications for Standing Committee deliberation.
2. Standing Committee subcommittees may not speak or act for the board except when formally given such authority by Standing Committee action for specific and time-limited purposes.
3. This policy applies to any group that is formed by Standing Committee action, whether or not it is called a subcommittee and regardless of whether the group includes Standing Committee members.

3.6 Standing Committee Internal Communications

Communications from Standing Committee leadership to Standing Committee members and among Standing Committee members will be clear, expedient, and inclusive.

1. Email communications will be conducted as follows:
 - a. The Standing Committee will maintain an appropriate official email list to facilitate easy distribution of information via email to all members.
 - b. Standing Committee members will check their personal email not less than every two days for announcements and other Standing Committee business.
 - c. If Standing Committee business requiring action before Monday arises over a weekend, the chairperson will contact Standing Committee members by email, requesting a response. The chairperson will be responsible for attempting to contact by phone any Standing Committee members who have not responded to the email by the required time.
 - d. The board will maintain a second, more extensive email list to foster informal discussion with other elements of the Church leadership.
2. Document Management (*To be written*).