

9.0 STANDING COMMITTEE OPERATING DETAILS (Second Level)

9.1 Prior to Each Meeting of the Standing Committee (SC)

1. The agenda will be set by the Chair of the SC, working with Vice-Chair and the minister, at least a week in advance and distributed for comments, changes and/or additions. The Chair shall keep a schedule of events that need to be scheduled annually (such as budget deadlines) and make certain that they are not overlooked.
2. The following reports will be written and distributed at least two days (or with as much in advance as possible) prior to the meeting:
 - a. Report from the Senior Minister as Head of Staff
 - b. Report from the Treasurer
 - c. Report from the Trustees as requested
 - d. Minutes from the previous meeting (distributed by the Clerk)
3. Members are expected to read all reports and minutes prior to the meeting and to arrive at meetings on time.

9.2 Meeting Agenda

1. The Chair of the SC shall conduct the meeting. The Vice-Chair will conduct the meeting when the Chair is unable to attend.
2. The meeting will open with a moment of silence and a brief check-in with each member.
3. The Chair will see that all agenda items are covered. The Chair may appoint a process observer. Each year, the Chair will appoint at least one member to be conversant with the by-laws and governing policies should questions arise.
4. The first agenda item of each meeting will be to review the strategic goals for the year and evaluate progress to date. Each meeting will contain time for long-range planning and strategic thinking.
5. As discussion proceeds, the Chair may request people to raise their hands for permission to speak as needed.
6. Decision making:
 - a. Sub-committees will work between meetings and bring recommendations to the SC.
 - b. Some decisions can be made through a vote, following a simplified Robert's Rules process. A motion is proposed by one member and seconded by another member. The Chair then asks, "Are you ready to vote on the question?" If there is no more discussion, the vote is taken. If the discussion does not lead to a vote, a motion may be made to Table the subject under discussion, to be taken up again at a future date.
 - c. For larger strategic questions, the SC will try to reach a general consensus – that is everyone can live with the solution even though it may not have been their most preferred option. SC members are encouraged to discuss issues openly and honestly, to listen to

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each other, to be willing to entertain new ideas and viewpoints and to respect each member's right to disagree.

- d. Some decisions will be made by the Chair after discussion. He or she will say, "I believe the sense of the meeting is (the decision)." If no one moves for a vote, the decision stands as stated.
 - e. When the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Head of Staff meet without the presence of other SC members and make decisions, they will share these decisions with the entire SC at the next meeting or by email.
 - f. Decisions requiring voting will be conducted through email only under emergency conditions where a deadline makes it impossible for the entire SC to meet for a vote.
 - g. After a vote or general consensus has been reached, the Chair will announce that a decision has been made and repeat the decision. The decision will then be included in the minutes in bold.
 - h. Once a decision is made, the SC shall "speak with one voice"; that is, disagreements shall be put aside and each member shall support the decisions of the committee as a whole.
7. The Senior Minister and Minister are welcomed at each SC meeting, unless the meeting is specifically called for SC members only. Other members of staff may be asked for written reports or may attend meetings when invited by the SC or the ministers. The ministers attend as full participants, contributing to strategic planning and the SC's vision for First Parish. The Senior Minister as Head of Staff will distribute a written report monthly as to the staff's progress in attaining the strategic goals for the year, which will be reviewed by each member prior to the meeting.
8. Members of the congregation may attend open meetings as visitors. They will be introduced at the beginning of the meeting. Visitors may engage in discussions at the discretion of the Chair.
9. Meetings shall conclude with a time for each member to state what he/she liked about the meeting as well as concerns about the meeting.
10. The Clerk shall distribute the minutes of the meeting by email within the next week and shall also submit a brief report for the church newsletter. Members may submit changes to the minutes via email. The Clerk will distribute the final draft of the minutes prior to the next meeting, and all members shall come prepared to vote on acceptance of the minutes. The minutes are posted on the bulletin board near the church office and are available on the First Parish web site.
11. Members are encouraged to give feedback that will help to make meetings more effective. The effectiveness of the meeting is the responsibility of each member of the committee.
12. Communicating by email:
 - a. All reports and minutes shall be distributed by email.
 - b. Emails should be identified at the outset with "Reply requested" if there is need for discussion or an answer to a question. Otherwise, emails need not be answered.

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- c. No decisions will be made by email unless circumstances demand it due to scheduling difficulties. The Chair will send out an announcement labeled “Decision on...” stating the need to reply with a decision-making vote or comment. The Chair will tally the votes and email the results as soon as possible. The Chair will restate the decision at the next full meeting for their inclusion in the minutes.
- d. SC members will check their email when possible.

9.3 Procedures for Handling Complaints from Parishioners

The Standing Committee Chair or designee will acknowledge receipt of the complaint. If the SC determines that a response is warranted, the SC Chair or designee will respond to the complainant. This policy does not prohibit the SC from taking any other action it may deem appropriate.

9.4 Goals for the Year

1. The first meeting will include an orientation for new members.
2. Setting the strategic goals for the coming year which reflect the ends stated in the governing policies is a critical agenda item and needs to be complete by October. The SC may elect to hold a retreat early in the church year to set these goals.
3. A primary job of the SC is to communicate with the congregation. The SC will establish methods for ensuring that it is in touch with all aspects of congregation life and has an opportunity to hear from all of the members of the congregation.
4. The SC will act as the link between staff and the congregation. The Head of Staff will ensure that the staff is working towards the strategic goals. The SC will evaluate Head of Staff annually, preferably in late spring before the annual meeting.
5. The SC will review the Governing Policies at least annually to evaluate and consider revisions.
6. The SC will appoint an Audit Committee to complete a yearly financial review of First Parish.
7. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk will collaborate to prepare a written summary of the year’s work for the Annual Report of First Parish (and to present at the Annual Meeting).
8. The Clerk shall keep a record of the minutes of each meeting and all documents generated, including the bylaws and reports from recent years, and have them available for the SC if the need arises.