

## ***Overtures before the Holland Classis***

### **1. Definition of an Overture**

A. RCA Glossary for the Book of Church Order: “**Overture**: a request sent from a lower assembly to a higher assembly of the church.”

B. The RCA polity primer says, “An overture is a request for action made by an assembly to a higher assembly.” (RCA Stated Clerks Manual, Appendix H)

An overture is a communication from one body to another (i.e. a consistory to a classis or a classis to General Synod) which requests an action.

### **2. References**

Book of Church Order Reference:

“The General Synod may receive overtures from a classis or regional synod. It shall not receive overtures which deal with matters under adjudication or which make either direct or implied charges against persons. Overtures from classes shall be submitted to the General Synod office or postmarked not later than March 31.” (3. II. 2. 7, p.114)

Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised Reference

Robert’s Rules of Order speaks of “communications” from one body to another. This authoritative reference says, “The reading of a communication does not in itself formally bring a question before the assembly. After the reading or at the time provided by the order of business, a motion can be offered proposing appropriate action. If no member feels that anything needs to be done, the matter is dropped without a motion.” (RONR (10<sup>th</sup> ed.), p.27, l. 30-35)

Holland Classis Rules of Order Reference

Under the Overtures and Judicial Business Committee responsibility: “Recommend to the Classis action on overtures sent to the Classis from churches. Overtures for General Synod must be submitted to the committee no later than January 31, unless circumstances prevented the meeting of this deadline” (Art VIII, Sec F.2.d). Overtures to the Great Lakes Synod must be received by December 31, since our January session is the last opportunity to consider such overtures.

### **3. Process for Dealing with Overtures from Consistories in Holland Classis**

A. An overture that comes from a consistory is a communication which the classis takes under consideration and decides how to respond. An overture is not a motion before the assembly. A motion for action on the overture comes from a recommendation from the classis OJB committee. The Classis assembly then attends to the committee’s recommendation (its motion) related to the overture. This means, therefore, that the classis votes on the committee recommendation, not the original overture itself.

B. The committee may choose, as its recommendation, that Classis; a) affirm the overture as it is presented, b) deny the overture, c) change part of the overture, d) place a substitute overture before the body, or d) recommend an action that the committee believes to be in the best interest of the classis.

C. If the committee's recommendation is defeated, no motion is pending before the assembly and the business of classis continues, unless a motion is made from the floor.

**4. Process for Dealing with Overtures from Committees in Holland Classis**

A. When an overture is presented by a classis committee, classis is the originator of an overture rather than the recipient of an overture. Any classis committee can move that the classis overture a synod, because the classis "is a permanent body that functions between sessions through committees." (BCO 1.II.1) It is not required that an overture from a committee be referred to the OJB committee prior to being presented before the classis assembly.

B. A committee can present an overture before the Classis assembly at any session provided that the overture has been submitted to the stated clerk in writing at these three weeks prior to the session, and that the overture is able to be included in the printed agenda distributed ahead of the session.

**5. Rubrics for Overtures**

A. The first part of an overture states a) who overtures whom; b) what action is being requested; and c) what mode of implementation is being requested.

B. The second part of the overture is a presentation of reasons in support of the action being requested.

C. If the overture entails financial costs, the overture shall specific how the proposed action would be funded and the projected impact on assessments.

D. The overture shall be submitted with information stating the place and date of the meeting at which the overture was adopted. It is signed by the clerk and/or the president.