

TERMS OF REFERENCE

BOARD OF ELDERS

Purpose

The Board of Elders acts as the governing body of Metropolitan United Church, is accountable to the congregation, and carries out a number of responsibilities as required by the United Church of Canada ([The Manual 2013](#), section B7 and all of section G).

Membership

To be eligible to serve as an Elder, an individual must be a full member of Metropolitan United Church. The Board of Elders consists of nine (9) voting members elected by the congregation and three (3) automatic members who also have voting privileges ([The Manual 2013](#), section A.7.1, page 49). The Senior Minister, the Chair of the Ministry and Personnel Committee and the Chair of the Finance Committee are the three automatic voting members.

Term of Service

Beginning with the 2008 annual congregational meeting, Elders are elected to a term of three (3) years. The goal is to have one-third (1/3rd) of the Elders replaced each year to provide for continuity and renewal.

Confidentiality

In accordance with requirements stated in the Risk Management Policy (section 3.0), an Elder must sign a Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix E of the Risk Management Policy).

Chair Position

The Chair's responsibilities and other requirements are set out in detail in [The Manual 2013](#), section 7.6.1, and [The Rules of Debate and Order](#) (pages 211-215) in the Appendix of [The Manual 2013](#).

As the Presiding Officer, the Chair may vote on motions when a tie vote occurs. As the Presiding Officer, the Chair cannot make a motion. That would put the Chair in a conflict with his/her responsibilities in chairing Board meetings. If the Chair wishes to make a motion, the Chair has the option of asking someone else to chair the meeting temporarily so that the Chair may make a motion. It's not uncommon for the Chair to indicate to the governing body that the Chair would be prepared to entertain a particular motion if made by another member of the governing body.

Interim Replacement of Elders

In the event that an Elder resigns prior to completion of his/her term, or is no longer a member of Metropolitan United Church prior to completion of his/her term, then the Board of Elders may appoint a new Elder by simple majority vote. This interim appointment is to be confirmed by the congregation at the next congregational meeting.

Removal of an Elder

The Board of Elders may remove an Elder from office for cause or inability to serve with six of the Elders voting in favour of removal ([The Manual 2013](#), section 7.3.5).

Meetings

Any two (2) Elders may call for a meeting of the Board of Elders. The remaining Elders must receive two (2) days' notice of the meeting. The Elders may waive notice of the meeting. Notice of a meeting is made by e-mail. Normally a notice of a meeting appears in the weekly bulletin/order of service ([The Manual 2013](#), section 7.7.3).

Quorum

To constitute an official meeting, a minister must be present as well as a minimum of one-third (1/3rd) of the Elders in office ([The Manual 2013](#), section 7.7.4).

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings are monthly from September through June each year, as needed during July and August each year, and when called by the Chair of the Board of Elders and the Senior Minister ([The Manual 2013](#), sections 7.7.1 and 7.7.2).

Appointment of Secretary

The Elders may appoint a non-voting Secretary to take notes of each meeting and prepare a summary of each meeting ([The Manual 2013](#), section 7.6.2).

Record of the Meeting

The Elders must ensure that a summary of each of their meetings is recorded and retained. The meeting summary is available for viewing through the church office. Each meeting summary is reviewed and approved at the next meeting of the Board of Elders.

“In-Camera” Discussions

The Elders may declare a meeting to be “in camera” to deal with issues that require additional sensitivity, respect of privacy and confidentiality. A motion to go “in camera” must be seconded and then pass with a simple majority vote.

Decision Making

Decisions are made by simple majority vote after a motion is made and seconded.

Responsibilities/Duties

Elders are expected to:

1. Attend at least seventy percent (70%) of all meetings of the Elders, and
2. Volunteer to serve on at least one of the following Metropolitan United Church committees at the discretion of the Chair of the Board of Elders:
 - a. Property
 - b. Finance
 - c. Ministry and Personnel
 - d. Music
 - e. Audiovisual
 - f. Property Use, and/or the
 - g. Metropolitan United Church Foundation.

Regular and Annual Reporting of Activities

Elders are expected to submit a brief update on their Board-related activities at each meeting of the Board of Elders. The Board Chair reports annually to the congregation at Metropolitan's Annual General Meeting each February.

Related Metropolitan Policies

The Board of Elders must be familiar with all policies and terms of reference.

Related Documents/External Resources

- United Church of Canada's [The Manual 2013](#), sections A, B7 and G in particular
- United Church of Canada's [Models of Board Governance](#)

BOARD OF ELDERS: NOMINATION AND ELECTION PROCESS

1. The Nominating Team is comprised of a designated number of Elders from the Board and two (2) additional members from the congregation. The purpose of the Nominating Team is to:
 - a. Solicit nominations from the congregation
 - b. Vet nominees on behalf of the congregation
 - c. Present a slate of nominees for election or appointment by the congregation, and
 - d. Conduct an election if necessary at the annual meeting of the congregation.
2. Nominations of potential Elders are open from November 1 until December 31 each year.
 - a. A nominee must be a member of Metropolitan United Church and have three (3) other members of the congregation vouch for his/her nomination.
 - b. A nominee must agree to serve for a term of three (3) years.
3. Vetting by the Nominating Team
 - a. The Nominating Team vets nominees to ensure a mix of potential Elders who have strengths and backgrounds suitable to all functions of the Board of Elders. A nominee may be asked to make a written or verbal presentation to the Nominating Team in order to ascertain the nominee's ability to perform the functions of an Elder. A nominee is expected to demonstrate leadership qualities and capability.
4. Election
 - a. The Nominating Team presents a slate of potential Elders to the congregation to be elected to a three-year (3-year) term. If there are more nominees than open positions, a secret ballot is conducted by the Nominating Team. The nominees with the highest number of votes are elected as Elders. If the number of nominees equals the number of open Elder positions, the Nominating Team asks the congregation to approve the appointment of the nominees at the annual meeting of the congregation.

BOARD OF ELDERS: NOMINATION FORM

Nominations are open until December 31 in the current year. The office staff forward all completed nomination forms to the Nominating Team for review and vetting.

I nominate _____ to be considered as a candidate for election
(please print)
or appointment to the Board of Elders.

Nominated by: _____
(please print)

Phone number: _____

Signature: _____

Three (3) additional members of the congregation who support this nomination:

Name: _____ Phone: _____
(please print)

Signature: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____
(please print)

Signature: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____
(please print)

Signature: _____

Acceptance by the nominee:

I agree to be nominated to become an Elder.

Signature

Date

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