

FINANCIAL REVIEW GUIDE

Important Disclaimer

This checklist is provided to assist churches in fulfilling the requirement of Book of Order provision G-3.0113. The Book of Order does not require that the annual review of the financial records of a congregation be conducted by a professional accountant or attorney. Completion of this checklist should satisfy the requirement of the Book of Order. The Office of Stewardship is not rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If accounting or legal advice is necessary or required, the services of a competent professional advisor should be sought.

INTRODUCTION

This document is intended as a guide to assist Presbyterian churches with their compliance with the minimum standards of financial procedure specified in the Constitution of the PC (USA), Part II, known as the Book of Order.

Section G-3.0113 of the Book of Order outlines the church finance responsibilities and required financial procedures. The local church is required to carry out the following:

A full financial review of all books and records shall be conducted every year by a public accountant or committee of members versed in accounting procedures. Reviewers should not be related to the treasurer(s). Terminology in this section is meant to provide general guidance and is not intended to require specific audit procedures or practices as understood within the professional accounting community.

This document presents guidelines for such a committee of members as described above. It is assumed that some churches are able and do hire professional accountants to conduct a formal audit of the churches' finances. These auditors are well versed in the procedures that are necessary. It is the congregation not able to hire a professional that this document primarily addresses (though it may be useful and serve as a guide for any church no matter its size.) For the congregations that use it, this document discusses the many aspects of planning, carrying out, and documenting a financial review as required by the Book of Order.

The financial review of a congregation, regardless of the size of its membership or budget, would typically include, but not be limited to, the steps included in this guide.

NATURE OF THE REVIEW

The purpose of the review is not to catch someone in the act of misusing or stealing funds. Though it may protect a congregation and treasurer from these things, the primary purpose of the review is to insure good financial procedures and to help the congregation have confidence and trust in the stewardship of their contributions.

A financial review includes becoming familiar with every aspect of the church's financial procedures. The committee should evaluate the church's financial operations, reports, policies, and procedures. The committee should use interviews and firsthand observations to determine, to the best of its ability, the answers to the following questions. The answers received and the judgment of the committee will then affect the sample size of transactions and documentation selected for examination and independent verification.

The checklist is a way of identifying areas that are strong and those that need attention. An explanation of the items in the checklist appears at the end. It is expected that the checklist be used before the instructions and explanation section is consulted. This sequence speeds up the process and increases efficiency. The section on instructions and explanations is not designed to be exhaustive.

THE FINANCIAL REVIEW CHECKLIST INSTRUCTIONS and EXPLANATIONS

A. Confirmation

After the books are closed for the year but before the financial review begins, the committee should prepare confirmations for banks, insurance companies, and donors. Those confirmations are essential for providing independent confirmation of bank account balances and authorized signatures, the coverage level(s) and related premiums(s) for all insurance policies, and, on a test basis, donor contributions.

1. Bank Confirmations

For each bank and investment account, request the balance as of year-end and a list of person(s) authorized to sign on each account. (See items on Checklist, under Bank and Investment.)

2. Insurance Company Confirmations

Request the confirmation of the policy number, the level of coverage and the anniversary date and premium. (See insurance items on Checklist, under (E.) Administrative.)

3. Pledge and Donation Confirmations

On a test basis (a representative sample), confirm the amounts received from donors and the period for which the donation is to be booked. Copies of year-end statements may be used to facilitate this process. (See items related to donors on Checklist, under (A.) Income.)

These confirmations constitute an essential piece of the reviewing process. Second requests may be required if confirmations are not responded to in a timely fashion. The responses should be sent directly to the reviewer(s), not in care of the church.

B. CASH

Two categories of cash need to be audited at year-end: Bank or savings accounts held in the name of the church, and any petty cash accounts held in the office of the church. At this time the reviewer must have the list of all bank accounts and person(s) authorized to sign on each, a copy of all the financial statements for each month being reviewed, and the bank account statements and reconciliations for that same period. (See items on Checklist, under (A.) Income)

1. Review the bank confirmations to see that the ending balance as stated by the bank is the same figure used in the last statement of the fiscal year, then check to see that the current authorized signers as listed by the bank are the same names listed within church records. If the lists fail to match, inform the treasurer, who should investigate any differences.
2. Review all bank reconciliations to see that the beginning balance of one month is the same as the ending balance of the previous month. Note whether the book balance as listed on the bank reconciliation is the same balance presented on the financial statements.
3. Pick a month and actually perform a bank reconciliation for each account using the original books of entry, the financial secretary's records and any subsidiary journals. If you find a discrepancy between your reconciliation of the month and the reconciliation provided by the treasurer(s), research the discrepancy to find an explanation or an error.
4. The reviewer should do an independent count of all petty cash accounts. This count should tie to the books. Review expense types for their appropriate charging to program area or administrative accounts. Ascertain suitability and adherence to policies.

C. INCOME/RECEIPTS

Determine if the deposits as listed by the financial secretary and the treasurer match those listed on the bank statement. Verify, on a test basis, the deposits for Sundays during the calendar year. (See items on Checklist, under (A.) Income.)

1. Test (a random sample, not to exceed 10 items) the counter's documentation versus the Sunday receipt deposit slips and bank statements. Review original book of entry for correct posting of Sunday deposits.
2. Using the donor confirmations, determine whether the amount paid as reported by the donor is the same as recorded and received by the financial secretary. If there is a difference, research for a timing difference, inaccurate recording, or some other explanation.
3. Review the original books of entry to determine if other income has been recorded accurately (i.e., appropriate account, correct amount, unrestricted or designated vs. restricted, etc.). Trace the entries to the financial statements.

D. DISBURSEMENTS (See items on Checklist, under (B.)

1. Review the Finance Committee and other committee minutes as appropriate, for actions concerning disbursements, including benevolent and per capita payments. Reconcile those actions with any actual payments made.
2. Test to ensure that all of the disbursements have been properly authorized.
3. Review the original books of entry and disbursements journal to ensure that all disbursements have been recorded appropriately.
4. For the insurance premium disbursements, check to see whether the amount disbursed is the same as that listed by the insurance company as premiums due.
5. Verify that income designated for special mission purposes has been distributed or allocated accordingly.

If there is a purchase order system in conjunction with disbursements, note whether the purchase orders have been authorized and approved by the appropriate person(s) and matched against the actual disbursement or invoice.

E. PAYROLL AND TAX RECORDS (See items on Checklist, under (B.) Payroll.)

1. Reconcile all payroll with tax records and tax payments made.
2. Verify that the appropriate amounts have been reported on the 941s, W-2s and 1099s and that the forms have been transmitted to the federal, state and local tax authorities on a timely basis. Also verify the existence of current W-4s and I-9s for all staff. The church may not do Social Security withholding for clergy but can make voluntary income tax withholding pursuant to a W-4 form, at the pastor-s request.
3. Test that the appropriate amount of taxes have been deducted from the paychecks and can be tracked back to the W-4 as submitted by each staff person.
4. If the church is not using an accountable reimbursement plan for clergy, or other staff, the appropriate allowances need to be recorded on the W-2 form (or 1099 form, if it is still being used) issued by the church to the clergy.
5. Track the payroll and tax records to the actual disbursements made and recorded with the original books of entry.
6. If irregularities exist, research to determine (error) or cause.
7. If there are Tax Deferred Annuities (TDAs), Section 125, or other salary reduction agreements, verify existence of signed agreement and proper tax withholding applied.
8. Verify pension contribution with pension board. If there is a salary reduction agreement, review documents for accuracy and verify that agreements have been approved by Session.
9. Verify that housing allowance resolutions are in place and have been properly applied to reduce clergy's reportable 941 and W-2 income.

FINANCIAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

_____ PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

For the Fiscal Year Ended _____ Date _____

Committee Member's Signature

	<u>Date Completed</u>	<u>Initials</u>
Reconciliation of Bank & Investment Accounts		
Operating bank account #	_____	_____
Month	_____	_____
Bank account #	_____	_____
Month	_____	_____
Bank account #	_____	_____
Are bank accounts balanced monthly?	_____	_____
Verification of beginning and ending year balance	_____	_____
 BANK & INVESTMENT		
Account signatories verified	_____	_____
Telephone or other transfer verified	_____	_____
Safe deposit box access checked	_____	_____
Account balances confirmed by Bank/Company (see attached forms)		
Name _____	Confirmation Sent & Returned	_____
Name _____	Confirmation Sent & Returned	_____
Name _____	Confirmation Sent & Returned	_____
Name _____	Confirmation Sent & Returned	_____

A. INCOME

Date Completed

Initials

Offering counted by two unrelated persons

Funds deposited in timely fashion

Financial secretary's and treasurer's records
compared against deposits

Transactions checked against postings to GL

Other income processes verified

Designated funds directed to restricted accounts

Pledges recorded on donor records

Confirmations sent to donors

#sent _____ (Keep a list)

returned _____

Differences researched & cleared

Finance secretary's records reviewed

Finance secretary's records agree with general ledger

NOTES:

NOTES:

C. REPORTS

Date Completed

Initials

Complete financial picture provided by reports

Reports made helpful to committee members

Approved budget included in reports

Over-budget expenditure approvals in order

Controls for over expenditures provided Policies

for restricted funds reviewed

Restricted funds used according to policy

Regular reports provided on pledge giving to

finance committee and pastor

Reports provided in timely fashion

Reports distributed to the appropriate people

Both a balance sheet and a statement of income

and expense prepared

NOTES:

D. GENERAL LEDGER

Date Completed

Initials

Restricted funds separated appropriately

Internal controls for receipts reviewed

(see separate document for understanding of
internal controls)

Internal controls for disbursements reviewed

Other asset accounts reviewed

(equipment, buildings, contracts, etc.)

Accounts payable reviewed

Accounts receivable reviewed

Prepaid expense account reviewed

Any related party/employee loans noted

Unearned Income account reviewed

Fund balance from prior year correct

Correct fund balance carried into next year

NOTES:

E. ADMINISTRATIVE

Date Completed

Initials

Church Employer Identification Number obtained

File for EIN and tax filings safeguarded

Deed to church property and/or mortgage safeguarded

Insurance policies safeguarded

Insurance coverage appears to be adequate

Prior year insurance policies safeguarded

Church has separate bond for persons

handling money

Where and how documents are safeguarded noted

Persons with access noted

NOTES:

F. PAYROLL

Date Completed

Initials

Personnel files kept on individuals	_____	_____
Personnel files safeguarded and confidential	_____	_____
Salaries paid according to approval	_____	_____
Tax forms issued to clergy persons, employed persons, and government	_____	_____
Payroll tax deposits and timely remittances to government made	_____	_____
Time sheets filed and approved (not by treasurer)	_____	_____
Employee benefits paid and current pension ___ other ___	_____	_____
Any salary reduction plans noted	_____	_____
Session/committee approval noted and written documentation in file	_____	_____
Amount paid to persons on contract/ honorarium verified	_____	_____
Proper 1099 filing of approvals for persons paid for over \$600 paid on contract/honorarium	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

NOTES:

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Session is required to provide for an annual audit of the records of all financial officers, including the financial secretary and/or church business manager and/or treasurers of the church and all its organizations and shall report to the Session.

_____ Church
_____ Presbytery

For the period beginning _____, _____
and ending _____, _____.

1. RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, AND BALANCES

Local Church Funds (Use those applicable to your church)	(a) Balance at Beginning of Period	(b) Cash Received & Recorded	(c) Total Disbursements for Period	(d) For Transfers +(-)	(e) Balance at End of Period
General Fund	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Benevolence Fund					
Building or Improvement Fund					
Board of Trustees					
Presbyterian Women					
Presbyterian Men					
Church School					
Other Fund Organizations					
Name:					
Name:					
Name:					
Name:					
Name:					
Total amount of cash in ALL treasuries of the church.	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Auditors/Auditing Committee (circle one) has examined the accounts listed on the front side, reviewed procedures of counting and accounting under the current Book of Order G-3.0113, reconciled receipts and disbursements with bank deposits and bank balances, and has found the balances displayed correctly, presented fairly, with proper procedures, and records properly kept, except as noted below:

Signed: _____ Date _____
Financial Review Committee Chair or Auditor

COPIES OF THIS REPORT SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED
TO THE MODERATOR OF SESSION, CLERK OF
SESSION, AND ALL SESSION MEMBERS, COMMITTEE
ON FINANCE AND/OR BOARD OF TRUSTEES