

Staffing Process Advisory Team
Results from September 12 presbytery meeting at Ballston Spa

You are encouraged to engage any of these items, using the [Google Groups forum](#)

[“Goals and Staffing Conversation”](#)

Available at <https://albanypresbytery.org/resources/transitional-planning/>

“What questions must Presbytery pursue and/or resolve in order to move forward?”

Questions clearly identified as high-priority by small discussion groups at the meeting:

1] Purpose and Direction:

What is the distinct mission of the presbytery?

What is the primary purpose of Albany Presbytery? (4x)

What is the key goal of the presbytery?

What is it that we agree on that we can look to presbytery for?

What do we really want to spend our time and money on?

How do we find/pull resources around that which is life-giving?

2] Staffing Design:

What roles do staff and Exec play in achieving the mission?

How do we envision the paid leadership of the presbytery?

Do we want single or group leadership, and how are we going to sustain it?

Can we financially accommodate the Exec and staff needed to achieve the mission?

3] Quality of communal life:

How do we support one another?

How do we get people to re-engage, not just presbyters?

How do we build an environment of trust? (2x)

How do we insure that everyone is included and heard?

How do we help people feel confident to express opinions openly?

Questions – and comments (indicated by *) –
 not explicitly identified as high priority,
 but very much related to the matters listed above:

1] Purpose and Direction:

What is our vision?

Where do we want to be in the future, and how do we get there?

What does Presbytery want staff to do?

What makes us most effective as a church?

How do we do pastoral care?

Is Presbytery’s mission global? Or focused?

How is Presbytery reaching out to congregations which are struggling?

What goals are really universal for all in the presbytery?

What can church clusters do together, instead of all coming from Presbytery?

What things should we not be doing? What can we shed? (3x)

How do we find that which is life-giving?

How do we best balance the business of the presbytery with the mission & ministry of the presbytery?

How do we recognize we aren't what we used to be, and move toward what we are?

*There is tension between the fiduciary responsibility of presbytery and presbytery's mission.

*We must be Christ-centered and mission-centered.

*The core mission is to preach Jesus Christ

*Focus on how to strengthen pastors and congregations to be the Reformed church.

*Without vision, the people perish.

2] Staffing Design:

How do we staff with less money and fewer congregations?

Can we afford to return to the previous format?

Do we need one person to help us with all we are missing?

How do we move forward without a clear vision of what we need as an Administrator?

Because the Bk.of Order requires only a Stated Clerk, what would happen if that were all we had? (3x)

Is the role of an Executive pastoral, administrative, or both? (2x)

What are the primary skills we need in a leader?

Do we need a full-time or part-time Presbyter?

How do we get the guidance and depth of knowledge we need in a timely fashion?

What do we need staff to do that we can't do for ourselves?

Who is in charge?

How long can this indefinite process go before we are hurting ourselves?

*Come to terms with how much money we have to spend on staff.

*Clearly there is major dysfunction without the Executive role being filled.

*We are missing the head person.

3] Quality of communal life:

How do we regain the faith of our congregations?

How do we build a sense of connection and desire to live together?

How can retired Presbyters serve?

Are people territorial in some ways which cause conflict?

Can ruling elders be more integrated and therefore more useful?

How can we get together the "dreamers" and "get-it-done" people?

Are there ways technology can increase participation and representation?

Who gets asked to be a leader? What % come from small churches?

Since when do we have top-down leadership making demands of the presbytery?

Re confidentiality vs. transparency: How much should the body be told in order to make a decision?

How do we motivate people to take on the work of the presbytery? (2x)

- *Power and control are important issues
- *Concern over urban/rural divide. (2x)
- *Concern over factions. (4x)
- *Concern over lack of trust (3x) (one referring specifically to the Holy Cow findings)
- *Have honest conversations about what factions formed, and why.
- *Work together in ways that are above-board, and jump in, realizing it won't be perfect.
- *We need to encourage minority leaders.
- *There is a culture of networks.
- *Live-stream presbytery meetings, so pastors & elders can participate from their own settings.
- *Connecting churches is important, so that we all know what's going on.
- *Supporting leadership – staff & committees – is needed.
- *Teaching and ruling elders need mentoring.

Questions and comments not quite so directly related to the 3 dominant categories:

4] Finances and financial policy

How do we continue to survive?

What are our resources?

How do we create resources?

What assumptions are we making about financial allocations?

How do we get out of mentality of scarcity?

Why is money controlled by Trustees?

Why can the Trustees suggest they will find certain proposals for staff with their money?

- *Avoid thoughts of scarcity.
- *Move out of a stance of scarcity.
- *The budget process is not understood.
- *Presbytery needs to understand budget realities.

<i>What scriptural/theological issues are at stake in these questions and this process?</i>

Exodus 20:1-2 (idolatry)	Matt. 17	Matt. 22:35-40	Matt. 28 (great commission)
Acts 2	Galatians 3:28	Ephesians 2 & 3 (dividing wall of hostility)	

How to be guided by the Great Ends of the Church

Christian identity

Christian behavior

Discipleship

Resolution of tension – such as when tax collectors get invited to supper

Authenticity & Transparency

Loving neighbors as ourselves