

Bills and Overtures Committee
Shenandoah Presbytery
January 19, 2008

Present: Rev. John Bethard, Rev. Charlie Carlsson, Rev. Dan McCoig, Paul Miller
The Rev. Carrie Evans, associate pastor of Warrenton Church and member of the committee, voluntarily recused herself in order to avoid any conflict of interest

The Bills and Overtures Committee has been considering the overture brought to the presbytery at the November , 2007 stated meeting by the Warrenton session, which seeks to significantly revise chapter eight of the *Book of Order*.

The Bills and Overtures committee met following hearings on Saturday, January 19, 2008 at First Presbyterian Church in Winchester. Hearings were also held on Tuesday, January 15, 2008 at Second Presbyterian Church in Waynesboro. Representatives from sixteen churches from throughout the presbytery were present at these meetings, as well as a couple of honorably retired ministers.

The committee discussed at length issues raised by those attending the hearings, as well as concerns by those on the Bills and Overtures Committee. Following this discussion, the committee came to a unanimous conclusion:

In the matter of the Warrenton overture to presbytery, the Bills and Overtures Committee encourages a negative vote by Shenandoah presbytery.

The Committee is concerned about the following issues:

1. The overture fails to address how property issues in chapters other than chapter eight of the *Book of Order* will be impacted by this action.
2. Membership in the PC(USA) is voluntary, and defining it as coercive, which this overture appears to do, is misleading.
3. Passage of the overture would weaken the expressed connectionalism found in the Principles of Presbyterian Government (G-4.0301f).
4. Passage of the overture would bring a congregational flavor to an already volatile issue, only furthering confusion.

The Bills and Overtures committee would like to thank both First Church Winchester and Second Church Waynesboro for providing venues for hearings in this matter.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Bethard, Moderator