

them so that there will be no evil influence surrounding you.

If you have made a misstep so serious that it should have been confessed, and it was not, seek for the healing balm of confession and repentance and forgiveness.

It is in this manner that ordinary men exercise the authority and the power of the "priesthood . . . after the holiest order of God" (D&C 84:18). Always we invoke these blessings in the name of Jesus Christ, whose Church this is. In this way, the unbroken chain of priesthood authority continues from generation to generation.

Remember, brethren! Remember! This is the Church of Jesus Christ. We have taken upon ourselves His name (see Moroni 4:3). We are commanded, "Whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name" (3 Nephi 27:7).

I bear witness of the Lord and of the sacred priesthood power which is conferred upon us and gratefully thank the Lord that we may participate through His inspiration to move the Church forward. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

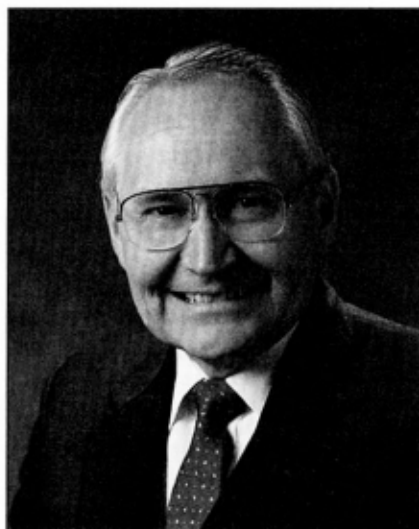
### Notes

1. See *Book 1: Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics* (1998) and *Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* (1998).
2. See D&C 20:38–47, 53–59, 70; 42:44; 46:2; 84:111; 107; see also *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2*, 161–62, 175–77.
3. See *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, 33; *Book 2*, 173; *Family Guidebook* (2001), 20–21; *Branch Guidebook* (2001), 12–13.

ELDER L. TOM PERRY

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# Stake Administration



## Priesthood Authority

One of the great blessings of the Restoration is to have the authority again to perform the ordinances that are binding in heaven as well as on earth. Without the authority of the priesthood, the Church itself could not have been restored, nor could it be governed by revelation.

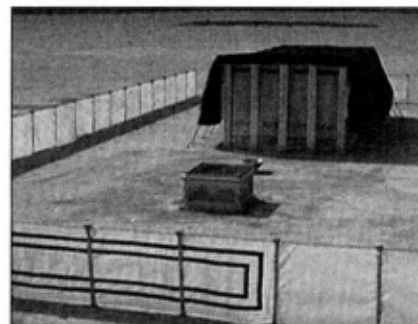
Following the fifth article of faith, which declares the restoration of the priesthood, is the sixth: "We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth."

My presentation is to cover the two organizational roles of pastor and teacher. A pastor is a priesthood leader, serving in a local Church unit. The pastors I have been assigned to speak on today are the stake president and those who serve with him in stake administration.

## Sustaining Strength

"The word *stake* in the Church comes from the word *stake*, [meaning] a stick pounded in the ground. That word, as we use it, comes from the scriptures.

"The meaning of it goes back to the Old Testament when the Israelites, after being rescued from Egypt, were wandering in the desert. They built for themselves, under the direction of the Lord, a tabernacle. It was a prototype of a temple, and it was called the Tabernacle of the Testimony.



"It consisted of a building in which there were two rooms, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. . . . In [the Holy of Holies] was the Ark of the Covenant, the breast plate, and the Urim and Thummim.

"When they moved from one place to another, they could dismantle the tabernacle and move it about with them. When they set it up again, they put the tent-like building up, then they put a wall around it to form an outer court. . . . In order to keep the building up and the wall up, they drove stakes into the ground. A stake was a supporting unit of their tabernacle or their temple."<sup>1</sup>

In keeping with this symbolism, in areas where we have concentrations of Church membership with priesthood strength which sustain and uphold the restored Church, these organized units are called stakes.

### The Stake Presidency

Stake presidents are called to preside over a stake by revelation, by one who has the authority from the President of the Church to confer the keys of presidency.

Presiding over a stake is an awesome responsibility if the president assumes the burden all alone. However, the Lord has developed an organization that allows him to share these kinds of burdens. If he uses the organization properly, he can reach out to each one over whom he presides.

At the head of each stake there is a presidency of three Melchizedek Priesthood bearers—the president and two counselors. The stake president holds the keys to preside over his stake.

"These keys are the right to preside over and direct the Church within [his] jurisdiction. . . .

"The President of the Church authorizes presidents of . . . stakes; . . . bishops and branch presidents;

and quorum presidents to hold the priesthood keys they need to preside. A person who serves in one of these positions holds the keys only until he is released. Counselors do not receive keys, but they do receive delegated authority by calling and assignment."<sup>2</sup>

### The Stake Clerk

In addition to counselors, the stake president selects a stake clerk and an executive secretary. I want to emphasize that both the stake clerk and the executive secretary are very important offices in the administration of the Church to assist the stake president in exercising the keys of his great assignment. Today I would like to give particular attention to the responsibilities of the stake clerk.

A stake clerk's responsibility falls under four main categories:

1. He is the financial officer of the stake. He is responsible for all the receipts and disbursements in the stake, to see that they are properly taken care of.
2. He is responsible for the membership records—to see that they are kept up-to-date and that every member is properly recorded, and to see that all baptisms, confirmations, priesthood ordinances, and

the sacred ordinances of the Church are properly recorded and that certificates are issued by the units of the stake.

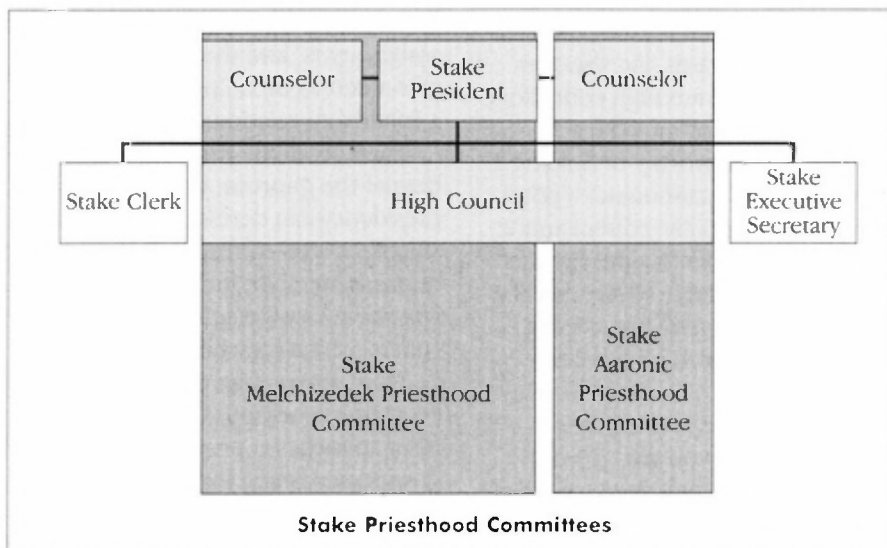
3. He is responsible for the statistical records. He must be a careful record keeper. The records are only as good as the accuracy by which they are maintained.
4. He is responsible for the historical record. He supplies the organizational memory of the stake. He is the carryover officer who has the organizational memory that will help orient the new stake presidency to prepare to fulfill their important assignments.

One of the responsibilities of the stake clerk is to be a teacher and trainer. He should go out to the wards and teach and train the ward clerks in their duties and responsibilities.

### Stake Priesthood Committees

In each stake there is an organization—a priesthood executive council, comprised of the stake presidency and high council—that forms two very important committees to assist the stake presidency:

1. The Melchizedek Priesthood committee, presided over by the stake president, with *either counselor*



in the stake presidency assigned as *vice chairman*.

2. The Aaronic Priesthood committee, presided over by the other counselor in the stake presidency. This committee, with the aid of the stake Young Men's presidency, provides support for each bishopric with the Aaronic Priesthood in the ward.

In each ward is an elders quorum and a high priests group. The stake president is responsible to see that every man understands his duty: "Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence" (D&C 107:99).

The stake president's prime responsibility is to teach and train priesthood leaders so that they will understand their duty and act in the office to which they have been called. And please notice, the scripture reads, "in all diligence." Now, the Lord has provided a way for the stake president to train diligently all these priesthood leaders. Through the Melchizedek Priesthood committee, he has teachers to whom he can delegate this responsibility for the training of priesthood quorums in their particular duties.

### High Councilors

These teachers that carry the message out to the wards and the quorums in the stake are high councilors.

A high councilor must be a seasoned leader, worthy of holding a current temple recommend, a good teacher, and a capable administrator. The stake president has the right to hold him accountable to see that the quorums are properly functioning in the ward to which he has been assigned.

Presidents, be specific in the assignments that you give to your high councilors. They need to understand exactly what you expect them to accomplish as they go out to teach

and train the Melchizedek Priesthood quorums of the Church.

Now, let me suggest some ways that high councilors can teach and train the leaders of the quorum to which they have been assigned.

There are three important functions in a quorum.

First, the quorum is a class. A quorum nourishes the members with the good word of God. High councilors, you are to observe to see that each quorum has a capable teacher assigned to teach the doctrines of the kingdom.

We have a great program in the Church, under the Sunday School presidency, called teacher improvement. This is coordinated by an individual who is a teaching resource to all the teachers in the ward. This teacher can train your quorum teachers to be more effective in their assignments and build a gospel foundation in the lives of the members of that particular quorum.

Second, a quorum is a brotherhood. See that each member of the quorum has a friend. I call your attention to what we taught you last January. Take an inventory of the quorum members. Then sit down with your quorum presidency. Using the inventory, divide the names into two lists: the active members, who are capable of taking leadership assignments, and the less active, who need to be helped in building a friendship relationship.

Then, from the list of active members of the quorum, the quorum presidency can develop the leadership necessary to reach out to every quorum member, including those who have lost the spirit of the quorum to which they belong.

Third, encourage the quorum to be a service organization. Quorums need to focus on proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead. They should focus on helping and strengthening

each member of the quorum, including reactivating prospective elders and fellowshipping new converts.

High councilors, you are responsible to see that the quorum president or group leader understands his duty. Help him get organized so he can carry out the important functions to which he has been called.

### Effective Quorum Organization

Each active member of the quorum should have an opportunity to be given an assignment. One assignment that is surely available to all is home teaching. In organizing home teaching, quorum presidents should devise it so that the strong take one who is not so strong as a companion to help develop within them the confidence of their particular assignment. Be certain as you visit each ward that the prospective elders and the less active are divided according to the strength of the priesthood quorum or group. Look at the number of active elders and the number of high priests, and ensure that the families of prospective elders are assigned to the quorum or group that has the available companionships to carry out that responsibility.

Remember the duties of a home teacher:

"See that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking;

"And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty" (D&C 20:54-55).

Once again, we remind you of the last satellite broadcast. Teach your quorum leaders how to use an inventory list. From the list of total quorum members, make a second list of active members. You can count on these members to build your programs. Build and limit your programs based on the active strength you have in the quorum.

Keep in mind that for the basic units we have basic materials. For mature units we have general Church materials. Again, we remind you that bigger is not necessarily better. Church units should grow only as fast as the size and maturity of the unit permits.

Remember the basics. President Hinckley has continued to remind us, "Do the best you can." He did not say, "Do whatever you can" but emphasized, "Do your best."

We realize that some quorums do not have enough active priesthood strength. You stake presidents, if this is true in your stake, discuss with your high council ways to reach out and bring into activity the less-active members of your quorum. Extend yourself, in priority order, to where you can get the best results with the leadership base you possess—"Do the best you can."

You high councilors, remember to be certain that the quorums you are assigned to help teach and train are nourished with the good word of the gospel with a very effective class. Be certain that each member has a friend and is building a great brotherhood in the quorum. Be certain that each member has the opportunity to assist in quorum service.

Brethren, the organization is in place.

### **Nourishing Church Members**

You stake presidents have the power to reach out to every member of your stake. You should work with the bishops in your stake to coordinate these efforts. See that you have active, functioning Melchizedek and Aaronic Priesthood committees in your stake, consisting of members of your high council. See that the high council is given direct responsibility to go out and teach and train quorums in how to function and provide support for the wards.

Brethren, if the right direction comes from the stake presidency, and if the training assignment is given specifically to the high council, you can build strong priesthood quorums that will touch the life of every member of your stake. Brethren, you have the responsibility. You have counselors, stake clerks, executive secretaries, and a high council to assist you.

Now it is your duty to see that it happens.

May the Lord bless you in the great assignment you have been given. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **Notes**

1. Boyd K. Packer, "The Twenty-Mark Note," Brigham Young University—Idaho devotional, 12 Mar. 2002.
2. *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* (1998), 161.

## A guide for High Councilors (to be a prepared and effective resource to assigned units).

### Meet with Bishopric / Branch Presidency

- Convey greetings from Stake Presidency
- Review Stake and Unit Goals.
- Review Stake Calendar.
- Current and planned ward activities? Stake support needed?
- Temple attendance, organized ward/ branch sessions, F.H. consultant functioning?
- Quality of Sacrament Meeting, Talks, Reverence,
- Activation and Missionary activity

### Meet with Bishop / Branch President

- Councilors strong, active and supportive?
- Personal and ward morale?
- Holding regular P.P.I.'s with Elders, R.S., Primary, Y.M. & Y.W. S.S. Ward Mission?
- Holding regular presidency, P.E.C., welfare, correlation? Training needed?
- Review each Aux. - functioning well, good use of budget \$, training needed?
- Are youth first priority? Scheduled and regular youth interviews?
- Quarterly Reports in on time / complete / accurate?
- Questions or messages for Stake President, Name submissions, callings
- What can I / The Stake do to help?

### Speak in Sacrament meeting often. You are a "Traveling Minister".

- Always convey greetings from Stake Presidency
- D & C 88: 77-78; Moroni 6:4; D & C 42:14
- Speaking companion - preferably a recent R.M. or soon to leave missionary
- Topics assigned by Stake Presidency or by consultation with Bishop / B.P.

### Meet with Elders Quorum Presidency

- Personal testimony and morale?
- Holding presidency meetings?
- Holding quarterly P.P.I.'s with Home Teachers HTI -
- Review Stake and quorum goals
- Three fold mission committees organized and functioning?
- Visiting every quorum member in their home annually?
- Activation and Prospective Elders, activities (having fun yet?)
- Meet with Bishop regularly? Meet with Stake Presidency member quarterly.
- Questions or messages for Stake Presidency?
- What can I / The stake do to help?

### Meet with Ward / Branch Mission Leader

- Holding Missionary correlation meetings? Include members of Quorums, Bishopric, Aux.?
- Review Stake Goals. Review Ward Goals
- Full-time missionaries working with members?
- Stake Missionaries finding people for f/t missionaries to teach?
- Questions or messages for Stake Mission President?

### After consultation with Bishop you may want to meet with Auxiliary Presidents

- Convey greetings from Stake Auxiliary Leaders
- Check if they need training or resources from the Stake.
- Questions or messages for Stake Leaders.
- Review Stake Calendar

Always be positive. Sit in council with ward / branch leaders and be an encouraging voice.

Always phone ahead of visit and set up meetings and interviews as needed. Establish yourself as a liaison between ward and stake. Be familiar with details of events on stake calendar. Inspire rather than lecture. Challenge rather than critique. Be an example of faithfulness.



For more information, stake presidents may contact the Priesthood Department at Church headquarters (telephone 1-801-240-2134 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2134).

#### Keep Needs and Assistance Confidential

The stake president should keep confidential the needs of members and the help that is provided.

#### Oversee Finances, Records, Reports, and Properties

See pages 123–42.

### High Council

The stake presidency calls twelve high priests to form the stake high council (see D&C 102:1). Elders may be considered to serve on the high council but must first be ordained high priests. (District councils may be composed of elders and high priests.) The stake presidency may call military chaplains who live in the stake to serve as high councilors.

Under the direction of the stake presidency, high councilors help oversee the work of the Church in the stake. They have advisory and administrative responsibilities as described below:

1. Represent the stake presidency in high priests groups, elders quorums, wards, and branches. Serve as advisers to stake auxiliary presidencies and the stake mission presidency. Help oversee temple and family history work and the Church programs listed on page 5.
2. Serve on the stake priesthood executive committee, stake council, and stake welfare committee. Serve on the stake Melchizedek Priesthood committee or stake Aaronic Priesthood committee as assigned.
3. Participate in stake disciplinary councils.

These responsibilities are explained in detail on pages 163–64 in *Book 2*.

The high council does not meet unless a member of the stake presidency is present.

### Stake Executive Secretary

The stake president or an assigned counselor calls and sets apart a stake executive secretary. He should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and be worthy to have a temple recommend.

The executive secretary is an assistant to the stake presidency. He meets with the stake presidency and prepares meeting agendas as instructed. He also attends meetings of the stake priesthood executive committee, stake council, and stake welfare committee.

He coordinates stake business between the stake presidency and high council. He also schedules appointments for the stake presidency. He distributes copies of the *Bulletin* and other Church publications and correspondence promptly.

He reviews the status of home teaching in the stake with the stake presidency.

He coordinates the Church magazine subscription efforts in the stake (see page 284 in *Book 2*).

He advises the stake presidency of members who are entering or already in military service. Under the direction of the stake presidency, he coordinates preservice Church orientation in the stake.

He instructs ward executive secretaries as requested by the stake president or by bishops.

### Stake Clerk

The stake president or an assigned counselor calls and sets apart a stake clerk. The stake clerk should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and be worthy to have a temple recommend. He should be an honest and careful record keeper and a capable teacher and administrator. He also should be qualified to handle financial matters.

The tenure of stake clerks should be sufficient for them to learn their duties and magnify their callings. Stake clerks do not need to be released when a stake presidency is reorganized.

The stake clerk's responsibilities are outlined on pages 123–24 and 133.

### Assistant Stake Clerks

The stake president or an assigned counselor may call and set apart one or more assistant stake clerks. These clerks should hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and be worthy to have a temple recommend. The stake presidency may assign them to each part of stake record keeping, such as financial records, member progress reporting, and historical records. Assistant stake clerks who are assigned to financial records should be qualified to handle financial matters.

The responsibilities of assistant stake clerks are outlined on pages 124–25 and 133.

## ❖ High Councilor Training and Assignments

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday – Take care of your unit (Encourage, follow-up, work with them)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – Visiting assignment
  - get to know the big picture of the Stake
  - can arrange to come on a different date than stated in the Assignment list
  - Call the Bishop/BP early and in advance
    - Would you like me to speak?
    - Is there a specific issue for which to speak? Then tailor your talk to include the issue.
- Committee Assignments (Unit Assignments, and Other assignments)
  - (see the Excel spreadsheet called Presidency Assignments)
  - Speaking Assignments (See the Excel spreadsheet)
- Branch/Ward Conferences
  - (Forms) One is for the Auxiliary presidents who meet with their Ward/Branch counterparts (*Getting to know you Sheet*) -If there is no auxiliary rep., the HC will represent them
  - The other form is for the High Councilor to use when the Stake sits down in a meeting with the Stake Presidencies and the Bishop/BP. (The Bishop/BP is there to observe only) (*Unit Summary*)
    - write down those things that need to be worked on or followed up with
    - see where Stake resources or materials are needed
  - Meet with the Bishop/BP and get the agenda for the Conference together (the HC will read the sustaining list at the Conference) - Bring the agenda to SP for approval
- Be a resource to the Unit
  - Bring Stake Resources where necessary – bring them with you or other help as required
  - If manuals are missing talk to their Clerk or the Stake Clerk and make them available
  - Be a service to the Bishop or Branch President
    - ◆ Don't create stress for him
    - ◆ Help to clear his desk so he can concentrate his energies and time on ministering
    - ◆ Help them do the best they can do
    - ◆ If you ask, "Can I be of any help?" and he gives a blank look, BE PREPARED to get the wheels turning. For example,
      - Is there any less-active people we could go visit?
      - Is there anyone in the Hospital that we could visit?
      - Could we go visiting some new converts/investigators?
    - ◆ Remember not to stir things up
      - Always talk to the Bishop first – he is the judge in that area and his authority should not be usurped
      - Get his permission before going to work in other areas like the auxiliary organizations, visiting, missionary work, etc.
- Introducing Stake Programs
  - Do not force a new Stake program on to the Bishops
    - ◆ Can push or encourage on a few points
    - ◆ introduce or tailor only those things that can be handled in that unit
  - Use the attitude of taking a Menu of things to try for the Bishops or Branch Presidents
    - ◆ Here are some things to choose from - pick from here some things to try
    - ◆ Here is something of value
      - if you feel this is something that would work in your unit try it
      - this is what is working in other areas
      - run with what you can, not the entire program
  - *encourage Bishops/BP in their calling – do not usurp their authority*
- Other things to keep in mind
  - Proper forms of address should be used in Church meetings to encourage respect - use Brother or Sister after opening prayers have been said. First names can be used after closing prayer.

## **HIGH COUNCILORS PLAY VITAL ROLE IN STAKE ORGANIZATION**

*LDS Church News     Date: 06/24/89*

High councils were organized in this dispensation even before the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was created. The Doctrine and Covenants in Section 102 records the minutes of the organization of the first high council of the Church, which occurred in Kirtland, Ohio, on Feb. 17, 1834.

On July 3 of the same year, a second high council was organized in Clay County, Mo.

The First Presidency of the Church constituted the presidency of that first high council, and the jurisdiction of that group was not confined to the borders of a stake. However, as new stakes were organized, high councils were organized for each individual stake.

In an article on the Melchizedek Priesthood published in the February 1954 Improvement Era, the function of high councilors was explained:

“High councilors play a vital role in the administration of the stake. Figuratively speaking, they constitute the right arm of the stake presidency. The degree to which they are faithful, efficient, and willing to work determines their value to the stake presidency and goes far in determining the progress made by the stake and ward organizations in which they have been called to serve.

“The duties and assignments of high councilors are very extensive and varied. Such assignments absorb much time in stakes where the stake presidencies fully utilize their high councilors in carrying forward the Church program. Experience has shown that it is wisdom for stake presidencies to make very extensive use of their high councilors, because the progress of the work of the Lord within a stake and the efficiency with which it is carried forward will be determined to a large extent by the use made of high councilors by the stake presidency.”



## Mentoring a New High Councilor

A member of the stake presidency orients the new high councilor by doing the following:

- Provide the new high councilor with the reference binder. From Section 1, overview documents that outline the speaking rotation, unit assignments, and committee structures. Ask him to read sections 1 and 5, in preparation for meeting with his mentor.
- Give materials required for his assignment (MLS printouts, handbooks, etc.).
- Apprise him of his peer mentor (a fellow high councilor).
- Discuss preferred communication methods (email, telephone) for each of you.
- Discuss preferred working styles for each of you (e.g.: lots of context or the immediate issue; big picture or bite-size tasks).
- Schedule a time for a PPI, at the end of his two-month orientation.

The mentoring high councilor schedules two or three meetings with the new high councilor to do the following:

- Overview the reference binder, especially Sections 1 and 5.
- Take the new high councilor on a 1st Sunday and a 3rd Sunday visit. Give ideas on how to select topics for 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday talks (e.g.: select one for the year, etc.).
- Explain the need to contact his assigned unit. Explain the purpose and process of doing EQ president interviews and bishop/branch president interviews. (See "A Guide for High Councilors" in Section 5).
- Overview duties concerning the annual unit conference (Section 5).
- Explain the traveling expectations and show the reimbursement form (Section 6).
- Discuss the leadership and communication styles of the stake presidency, and your own personal observations as to how to work on the high council.
- Overview the chart of calls (Section 5 contains this chart, copied from the *Church Handbook of Instructions*, "Callings and Releases" (pp. 40-47)). Explain the protocol for releases and sustainings (*Ibid.* pp. 37-39). Explain the high councilors' role in presenting names for approval at stake PEC meeting.
- Explore anxieties or questions that the new high councilor may have.

The above should be completed within two months, at which time the formal responsibility of mentoring and orienting is completed.