

# Moderating a Congregational Meeting to Elect a Pastor or Associate Pastor

COM, approved 12/3/2020



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When a Pastor Nominating Commission (PNC)/Associate Pastor Nominating Commission (APNC) are ready to move forward with nominating a person to serve in an installed role as Pastor or Associate Pastor in your congregation, here are some guidelines as you plan to moderate the congregational meeting.

1. Welcome, Pray, Call Meeting to Order Prayer

2. You set the stage and process: Special Purpose of today's meeting is to hear the nomination of the PNC/APNC, hear from the candidate being nominated, and then consider electing the nominee as Pastor/Associate Pastor. Mention special rule about requiring 3/4 vote of the presbytery after the congregation elects.

3) Ask the PNC/APNC to come forward and make their nomination. We nominate Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ (insert candidate name) \_\_\_\_\_ to be the Pastor/Associate Pastor.

The motion must be to call the candidate according to the **terms**, which must be included in the motion as well. For example:

*"Resolved, That \_\_\_\_\_ (insert candidate name) \_\_\_\_\_ be called to serve as \_\_\_\_\_ (insert role: Pastor/Associate Pastor) \_\_\_\_\_ for an indefinite period according to the following terms: [either list them out on a visual screen or reference the completed terms of call form, which must be attached to the congregational minutes by the clerk]."*

The congregation must see and vote on the terms.

Amendments to the motion are in order--which means you could get an amendment to change the terms agreed upon between the candidate and the PNC/APNC. Remember the PNC is making a proposal, and once they make it, their report is concluded. The agreement is not between them and the candidate, but with the congregation. A motion to amend requires a second followed by debate/discussion. A person may speak once to ANY motion (including the main motion) and then can only speak again when every person who wants to speak has a chance...then a person may speak a second time, and no more after that.

So have your PNC/APNC moderator make the motion, (it does not require a second since it is coming from a committee). As maker of the motion, the PNC/APNC moderator gets to speak first. The moderator may answer questions, but after speaking the first time, may NOT add things, speak again, agree with other comments, etc. etc. After every other person who has wanted to speak has had a chance, the PNC/APNC moderator may make final comments if it is helpful.

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4) Give the PNC/APNC the opportunity to speak to their sense of why God is calling to Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ (insert candidate name) \_\_\_\_\_ to serve as Pastor/Associate Pastor.

5) Give Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ (insert candidate name) \_\_\_\_\_ the opportunity to speak to his/her sense of why God is calling him/her to serve as Pastor/Associate Pastor.

6) The congregation can ask clarifying questions of the PNC/APNC, candidate, or anyone for any information they might need to vote as an exercise of conscience. The congregation may also make motions to amend the main motion, including the terms of call.

7) It is common practice to ask the pastoral candidate to step out as the congregation deliberates and votes. To do so, you actually have to ask the congregation if anyone objects if the candidate steps out during the discussion. This is done by congregational vote, which can be done by common consent: "Does anyone object if I ask \_\_\_\_\_ (insert candidate name) \_\_\_\_\_ to step out while we deliberate?"

However, you don't HAVE to ask the candidate to step out. . . just as pastors should not leave congregational meetings when a vote is being considered on changing terms of call. One reason for not asking the candidate to step out is that you may be anticipating that people will be voicing why they SUPPORT the motion, such as saying affirming things that would not be heard if he/she is out of the room.

If you could begin discussion, and then get a motion to amend that you would rather not have discussed in the presence of the candidate (say, to decrease the salary), at that point you could ask that candidate to step out by common consent. As moderator, it's your call, keeping in mind that the body always has a right to express its will. Someone could move *either* that the candidate stay or go, and it either way it would be by majority vote.

8) Lead deliberation and vote.

9) If the candidate has left the room, they return and everyone celebrates!

10) Adjourn.

## **Additional Resources:**

- [ZOOM CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS \(Updated January 6, 2021\)](#)
- [Recorded Calvin PC Congregational meeting to elect Associate Pastor](#)
- [Calvin PC Congregational Meeting Slides](#)