

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
FOR THE CALL OF A PASTOR OR ASSOCIATE PASTOR**

PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE (PNC or APNC)

1. When the PNC/APNC has chosen a candidate, negotiated terms and COM has completed the credentials interview, it shall request that the session call a meeting of the congregation.
2. If the financial terms are higher than those previously approved by the session, usually in the Church Information Form (CIF), the session must vote to approve the additional funds prior to calling the congregational meeting..

SESSION CALLS THE MEETING:

1. Session votes to call a meeting of the congregation. The notice for the meeting must be given on two successive Sundays, and at least ten days in advance.
 - a. For calling a pastor it is better to have a longer “notice time” so a mailing can be sent out with biographical information about the pastor candidate.
 - b. Some churches have found it helpful to plan a gathering of the session and Board of Deacons and/or congregation to meet the candidate on Friday or Saturday prior to the congregational meeting.

PREPARATION FOR THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING:

1. If it's not appropriate for the regular moderator of the session to moderate the meeting, the moderator should invite another minister of the presbytery or member of Committee on Ministry, with the concurrence of the session, to moderate the meeting. There are times when Committee on Ministry will provide a moderator for a congregational meeting. Also see Book of Order G-7.0305
2. The clerk of session serves as clerk of the congregational meeting. If not present, the moderator nominates a clerk, and the congregation elects the clerk.
3. Ballots should be printed and ready for distribution only to church members present. There is no absentee voting.

AT THE MEETING:

1. Opening Prayer.
2. The Moderator reads the Call for the meeting and asks the clerk to affirm that the meeting

was properly called and a quorum is present. Only the purpose named can be considered at a special meeting. (The quorum for a congregational meeting is one-tenth of the official members unless the By-Laws or Standing Rules of the congregation set the quorum higher.)

3. Report of the Pastor Nominating Committee. The Chairperson of the PNC/APNC:
 - a. Explains briefly the procedure that has been followed preparatory to presenting the candidate.
 - b. Provides an informal report, giving as much helpful background as possible to enable the congregation to vote intelligently. (Report may be made in its entirety by the chairperson, but preferably several members of the committee may be prepared to highlight various facets of the personality, abilities, and experience of the ministerial candidate.)
 - c. Provides opportunity for questions and answers.
 - d. Allows for questions and answers to the nominee. [The Moderator can be very helpful at this point by redirecting any inappropriate question to the PNC or stating the question in an appropriate manner.]
 - e. Directs a member of the PNC to escort the candidate and any family members from the room so there is opportunity for questions to the PNC or discussion with the candidate not present.

4. Proceed to Vote
 - a. A motion, by the chairperson, that the nominee be elected as pastor/associate pastor of this church.
 - b. Opportunity for questions and discussion.
 - c. Appointment of tellers and distribution of ballots. (A list should have been given to the moderator by the clerk so that he/she might make this appointment. One shall be named chairperson.)
 - d. Written ballot to be taken (suggest that to expedite counting, ballots not be folded but simply turned over).
 - e. Explain who may vote, and vote shall be "yes" or "no". (All communicant members in good standing, of whatever age, are eligible to vote on the pastoral call.)

While the ballots are counted, the congregation could sing hymns, announcements can be made or the meeting is on a temporary hold, waiting for the results.

- f. The chairperson of tellers reports to the moderator who reports to the congregation the number of ballots cast - the number of affirmative, and the number of negative votes. This should be recorded in the minutes of the congregational meeting and reported to the Committee on Ministry.
- g. If there is a substantial minority number of votes against the candidate, the moderator would normally try to dissuade the congregation from proceeding further. If the majority insists on their rights, i.e., to make the vote stand, the moderator will announce this fact. Book of Order G-14.0505
- h. The official vote is the ballot vote, and a motion to make the call unanimous as an action of courtesy, would not be in order unless that vote is also taken by written ballot. (Robert's Rules of Order)

If the ballot vote was positive, the PNC/APNC presents the terms of call for the pastor/associate pastor. There is discussion on the motion and a voice vote.
- i. The members of the PNC/APNC who are present are to sign all copies of the call papers.
- j. Explain that presbytery must still approve the call including the terms of call and that a date will be set sometime in the future for the ordination and/or installation of the pastor-elect.
- k. Moderator suggests dismissal of the pastor nominating committee with commendation for its faithfulness. [It may be helpful to mention that the members of the PNC might consider themselves a support group to meet periodically with the new pastor to discuss how things are going during the first 6 to 9 months of the call.]
- l. If the pastor-elect is present, he/she should be invited to the pulpit to make any brief statement he/she may desire.
- m. Motion for adjournment and prayer.
- n. Moderator signs all copies of the call papers and sees that they are delivered to the presbytery stated clerk.