

Constituting A Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

Book of Order G-2.0802 Election of a Pastor Nominating Committee

The session shall call a congregational meeting to elect a pastor nominating committee that shall be representative of the whole congregation. The committee's duty shall be to nominate a pastor for election by the congregation.

Election to a Pastor Nominating Committee is a sacred trust.

1. The Pastor Nominating Committee is typically composed of 7 persons ... any more than that can get cumbersome. The session suggests the size of the PNC to the congregation (*our session has suggested 7*), but the final decision rests with the congregation.
Note: There does not need to be an odd number for the sake of breaking a tie! PNCs strive for consensus in all their decision-making.
2. Nominations for the PNC should come from two sources. The congregational nominating committee should provide a mechanism for the congregation to suggest names, as well as reviewing names suggested from within the committee itself. The congregation must give careful and prayerful attention to the election of persons to serve in this important role.¹
3. PNC members should be broadly representative of the entire congregation. The PNC should reflect the diversity of the congregation in age, race, gender, marital and family status, theological position, worship and program preferences.
4. It is sometimes helpful to have a session member on the PNC, simply for the convenience of reporting purposes, but it is not required. Remember, of course, that the PNC is a *committee of the congregation*, *NOT a committee of the session*, and any reporting to the session would also be made to the congregation. If a member of session does wind up serving on the PNC, this member would not be chosen by the session, but by the nominating committee, or by the congregation, and **does not** represent the session in any official way.
5. The PNC elects its own officers. They are not appointed or specified by the nominating committee or the congregation.
6. The following qualities are among those needed to serve on a PNC:
 - a) PNC members should be spiritual leaders and persons of integrity actively involved in the life of the church.
 - b) They should be knowledgeable about the church and community, Presbyterian theology, and government.²

¹ *On Calling a Pastor, A Manual for Churches Seeking Pastors*. PCUSA Office of Vocations, Church Leadership Connection. Page, 23.

² *Ibid.*

- c) They must be able to make a significant commitment of their time, energy, and very best wisdom.³
 - d) They should be willing to accept this as a task of spiritual discernment, not being easily influenced by personal desires or congregational politics, but rather listening for the voice of God.⁴
 - e) They should understand that this is a *call process* whereby the PNC seeks to discern God's call for new leadership in the church, rather than simply a *hiring process*.
 - f) The work of the committee must be kept absolutely confidential, even from family members.
 - g) Members must be willing to support the denomination's and Presbytery's EEO/AA policies.
 - h) They must be willing to follow the process and work well with others.
 - i) They must be willing to work towards consensus, putting the best interests of the congregation over personal interests or agendas.
7. Those asked to serve on the PNC should be made fully aware of the responsibility and commitment involved.
- a) The search process may take 12+ months, with the PNC meeting weekly much of that time. It is time-consuming and labor-intensive, and oftentimes emotionally charged.
 - b) The work involves preparing the church's Ministry Information Form, possibly reviewing 100+ pastors' Personal Information Forms, interviewing candidates, hearing/watching them preach/lead worship, and checking references.
 - c) There may be out-of-town travel (usually on weekends) to hear a candidate preach.
8. The members of the PNC will not be doing their work in isolation. The interim pastor will help train them and be present with them as often as needed/wanted. First Presbyterian Church has already been assigned a liaison from the Committee on Ministry, the Rev. Gary Marshall, pastor of our Countryside Church, who will also help to train them and be present with them as often as possible. Our Transitional Presbytery Executive, Steve Benz, who is also a member of this church, will bring training from the Executive's perspective to the committee, as well – this is best done at the PNC's very first meeting. Each of these named has a deep desire to walk alongside the committee, offering whatever resources, information and guidance that may be helpful. Their number one priority is to serve the committee in a way that helps make the call for the First Presbyterian Church a great one!

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.