

ROBERTS RULES, THE GOLDEN RULE & COMMON SENSE

Basic Assumptions to Consider:

1. The unity of the Church is a gift of its Lord and finds expression in its faithfulness to the mission to which Christ calls it.” (G-4.0201) As Presbyterians, we covenant to work with one another as visible expressions of the Body of Christ and as representatives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
2. We are to seek unity, yet encourage diversity, and understand that through discussion and prayer we can more clearly discern God’s will and direction.
3. In all assemblies we must strive for a balance of expression of individual conscience and the will of the majority. As individuals, we have several rights: the right to know what is going on and why; the right to speak and be heard under the rules of debate; the right to vote; and the right to hold office.

To more effectively accomplish the work of the Presbytery, the following documents are included:

1. Making Motions at a Presbytery Meeting: Gives a brief definition of the motions most likely to be used at a meeting of Presbytery.
2. The Consent Agenda: If an item is to be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the agenda for action, a commissioner needs to ask for it to be removed prior to voting. At the time of removal there are no questions or debate, the item is simply removed. The item will be placed under new business or in another place in the agenda for consideration.
3. Motion Form: (Available from the parliamentarian). This form **MUST** be completed for all motions brought to the floor of Presbytery.

In order to facilitate discussion of motions, these general rules will be followed:

Time Limit on Debate: Once a motion has been proposed and seconded (if necessary) debate on the motion will be limited to 20 minutes. The assembly can vote to extend debate if it deems necessary.

Time Limit on Speakers: Individuals can speak for up to two minutes either for or against a motion. If an individual wishes to speak to the same motion a second time, he or she can do so only after all others who wish to speak have had a chance to speak once. An individual can only speak twice to a motion on the same day. The Presbytery can change the time limit per speaker as it sees fit; typically the Presbytery would grant voice to someone who would further the debate along or someone who has a report to give.

Who May Speak: Teaching Elder members, Ruling Elder commissioners, and ruling elder chair of the Presbytery Commissions/Committees and the moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery. The Presbytery can grant voice to whomever it desires.

Process for Debate: The maker of a motion has the right to speak first to the motion, after which the floor is open to debate by other members and commissioners (see “Who May Speak”). If the

motion directly addresses the work of a specific individual or group, the moderator may give that individual or group the right to speak before opening the floor to general debate. The moderator may choose to extend the speaking time for the maker of the motion and those the motion addresses as the moderator deems helpful. If there are many people who wish to speak to a motion; the moderator will choose people who will speak in favor of the motion, then people who will speak against and back and forth as necessary until everyone who has a desire to speak has done so.

Making Motions at a Presbytery Meeting

Commissioners to the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys have the right to make motions. To make a motion, rise from your seat, wait until the moderator recognizes you, state your name and affiliation, then simply and clearly state: “Mr./Ms. Moderator, I move the following motion and if seconded will speak to it.” State your motion. It is not discussion time until the motion as been seconded and the moderator invites you to speak to the motion. All motions of any length must be given in writing to the stated clerk. This is imperative if debate is lengthy. Only one motion will be considered at a time.

A motion must clearly state: what it is intended to accomplish, who is affected, when it is to be done, how it will be done and why it will be done.

Motions

Main Motion: Any motion which proposes an action to be taken by the council. Main motions are debatable.

To Amend: A motion to amend is to perfect the main motion; therefore an amendment contrary to the intent of the main motion is out of order. A motion to amend a motion takes precedence over the main motion. It must be adopted or rejected before the main motion is considered. If adopted, it becomes a part of the main motion. It is debatable.

To Substitute: A motion to substitute is an amendment. It takes precedence over a main motion. If approved, it replaces the main motion.

To Postpone Indefinitely: This is a motion to kill consideration. It is debatable.

To Postpone Definitely: This motion includes a specific time and/or date on which this motion will be presented to the deliberative body. It is debatable and may be amended.

To Commit or Refer: A motion to refer must include the body to which this action is referred. The desirability or the details of the referral are debatable, but the matter being referred is not under debate.

To Reconsider: Once a question has been decided, it must not be reconsidered again at the same assembly, unless a motion to reconsider is made by a person who voted with the majority. It is debatable.

To Move the Previous Question: This is a motion to close debate and to bring the issue to vote. The motion must say, "I move the previous question." A voice calling out, "Question" is not appropriate and should be ignored. This motion requires a 2/3 vote and should not be used to close off debate or opposition prematurely. The moderator can rule, prior to the vote, that in their judgment there has not been sufficient debate and that the motion is out of order. This motion requires a second and is not debatable.

PARLIAMENTARIAN

To ensure consistent parliamentary assistance prior to and during meetings of Presbytery, the following has been approved:

The Stated Clerk shall act as the Parliamentarian and may co-opt people to help.

The responsibilities of the Parliamentarian shall include:

1. Being available at least thirty minutes prior to the Call to Order of each Presbytery meeting to answer parliamentary and procedure questions as well as assist persons who wish to bring a motion to the floor of Presbytery.
2. Being available during the meeting and during break times to answer individual parliamentary questions as well as assist persons who wish to bring a motion to the floor of Presbytery.
3. Being aware of possible parliamentary needs during the meetings of Presbytery and speak as necessary or upon request.
4. Making certain that all motions are in writing using the Motion Form.

MOTION PRESENTATION FORM

ALL MOTIONS ARE TO BE PRESENTED IN WRITING. To assist in presenting motions, please use this form. A motion must clearly state: what it is intended to accomplish, who is affected, when it is to be done, how it will be done and why it will be done.

TEXT OF MOTION: (Please print clearly)

MOTION MADE BY: _____
 (Print name and sign)

DATE: _____