

Moderating with Grace & Order

A FIELD GUIDE FOR MINISTERS & RULING ELDERS



Presbytery of the Peaks
Based on training by Dave Baker

The Moderator's Role is Fundamentally Pastoral

Running a Meeting



Focus on efficiency.
Rigid enforcement of rules.
Driven by anxiety.

Shepherding a Community



Focus on guidance.
Setting the tone.
Driven by grace.

Key Insight: You set the **emotional thermostat**. If you are anxious, the room is anxious. If you are **gracious**, **grace** becomes possible.

- **Stay Calm:** Your composure grants permission to de-escalate.
- **Listen First:** Paraphrase before responding ("What I'm hearing is...").
- **Separate:** Focus on the proposal, not the person's motivation.

Knowing When to Switch Gears



Decision-Making Mode

Routine Business, Budgets, Schedules.
Method: Motion > Second > Vote.
Question: "What do we think?"



Discernment Mode



Pastoral Calls, Vision, Conflict.
Method: Listen, Pray, Reflect.
Question: "What is God calling us to do?"

The Moderator controls the dial.

Distinct Roles, Common Goal



THE MODERATOR

Burnished Gold Inter
Focus: Process & Flow

- Sets the agenda (with Clerk).
 - Recognizes speakers & maintains decorum.
 - States motions.
- ✘ **CRITICAL:** Does NOT take minutes. You cannot facilitate and record simultaneously.

Note: The Installed Pastor is the default moderator (G-3.0201).



THE CLERK

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Focus: Records & Documentation

- Records minutes & rolls.
- Attests official documents.
- Preserves records for review.
- Reports statistics to Presbytery.

Book of Order G-3.0104 requires meetings to be opened/closed with prayer and follow Robert's Rules.

The Pre-Meeting Timeline

1 Week Before

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3-5 Days Before

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10 Minutes Before

Burnished Gold Inter



The Agenda Strategy

- Ask for items early.
- Place controversial items in the middle, not at the end.
- Use a "Consent Agenda" for routine items.

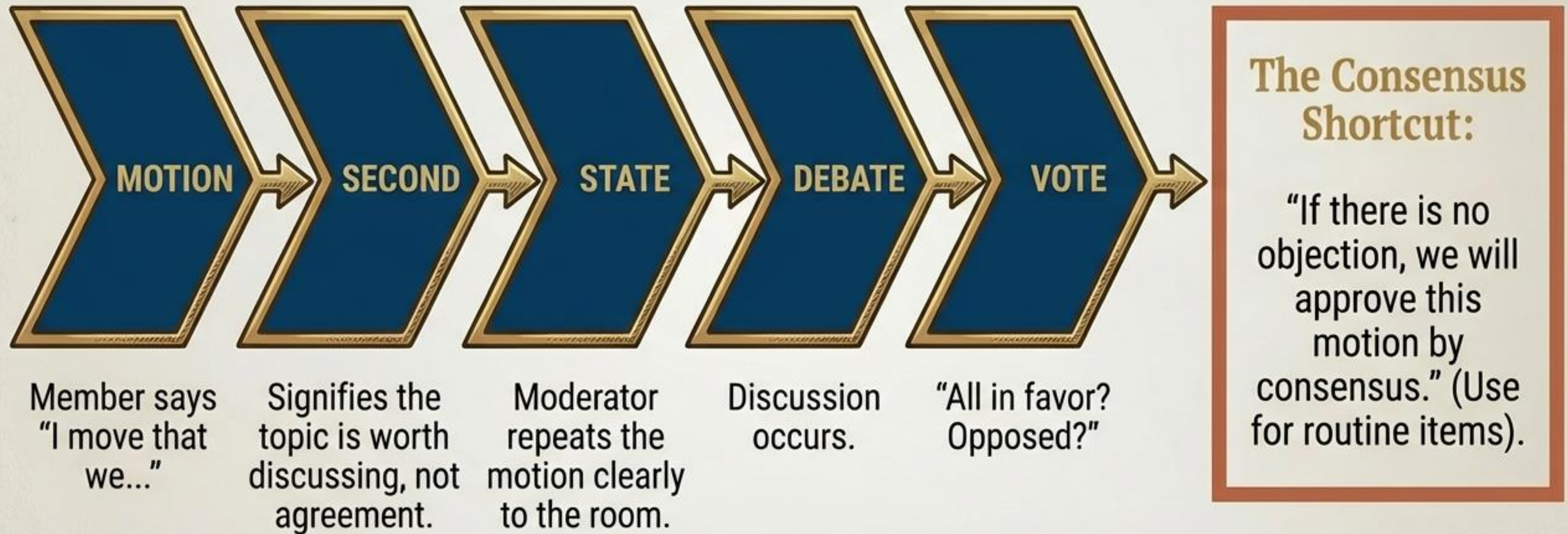
Written Reports

- Reports must be sent in advance.
- Rule: If it's written, don't read it aloud during the meeting. Assume it was read.

The Clerk Call

- Review potential landmines.
- Check for unfinished business.
- "A 10-minute call saves 30 minutes of confusion."

Robert's Rules 101: The Life of a Motion



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Robert's Rules 201: Limiting & Ending Debate



Call the Question

Ends debate immediately to force a vote. Requires a Second and a 2/3 Vote.

Note: Moderator cannot unilaterally do this.



Limit Debate

Option: "Move to limit debate to 2 mins per speaker."

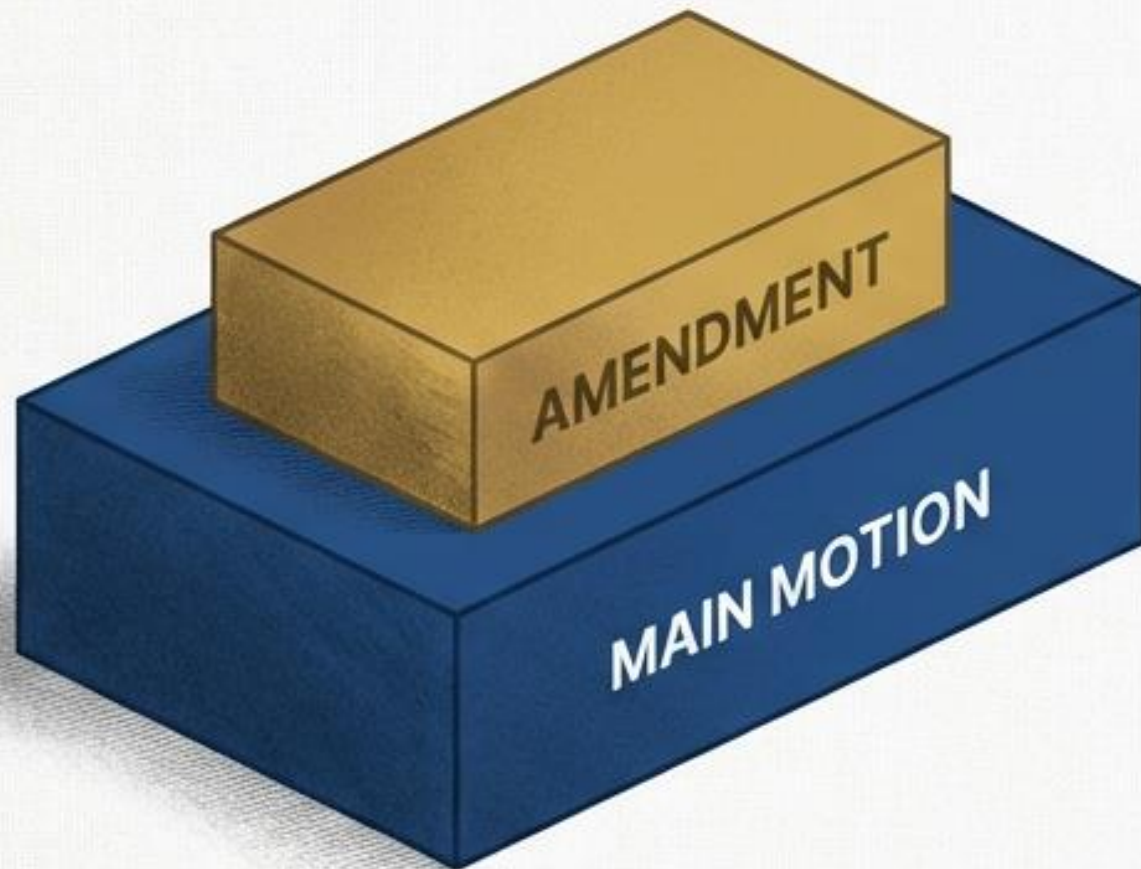
Requires a Second and a 2/3 Vote.



Soft Power

Script: "I sense we are ready to vote. Any final thoughts?" or "We've heard from several people. Are there new perspectives?"

Robert's Rules 301: The Amendment Stack



1. Move to Amend
- ↓
2. Second
- ↓
3. Debate the Amendment ONLY
- ↓
4. Vote on Amendment
- ↓
5. Return to Main Motion (Amended or not)

Myth Buster:

'Friendly Amendments' do not exist. Once a motion is stated, it belongs to the body, not the mover. The mover cannot just 'accept' a change; the body must vote or consent.

Handling Dominant Voices

Redirect

“Thanks, John. Before you continue, I’d like to hear from someone who hasn’t spoken yet.”

Acknowledge

“That’s a helpful perspective. Let’s see if there are other views.”

Pivot

“Let’s focus on the proposal itself rather than the motivations.”

Technique: Validate the contribution, then firmly pivot to the rest of the room.

Encouraging Quiet Voices



The Go-Around

Systematically asking each person for input.



The 30-Second Silence

Allow quiet thought before discussion starts.



Pair-and-Share

Discuss in pairs before the full group.

Core Insight: Silence != Disagreement. Introverts process internally. Create structures that invite them in.

De-Escalation & Executive Session

De-Escalation Protocol



PAUSE: "Let's slow down and make sure we understand each other."



PRAY: Return to silence to lower the temperature.



TABLE: "We don't have to resolve this tonight."

Executive Session (Closed Door)



WHEN: Personnel, Legal, Discipline, Sensitive Pastoral Care.



HOW: Motion to enter (Majority vote). Non-members leave.



THE MINUTES: Record ONLY that an executive session occurred. Do not record the content in the main book.



The Congregational Meeting

Congregation CAN

✓ Elect Officers (Elders/Deacons)

✓ Call/Dissolve Pastoral Relationship

✓ Buy/Sell/Mortgage Property

Congregation CANNOT

✗ Manage Staff

✗ Direct Session Governance

✗ Vote on "New Business" not in the Call

Notice Requirement: Public notice on two Sundays (one can be the day of the meeting).

Faithfulness, Not Perfection



Moderating is a gift to the Session. The goal isn't a perfect meeting; it is creating space for the **Holy Spirit** to work. Mistakes happen—stay calm, apologize, and move forward.

Resources:

- *Book of Order* (Current Edition)
- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (12th Ed.)
- Your Stated Clerk of the Presbytery

Congregational Meetings: Common Pitfalls



Pitfall 1: The Surprise Motion

Rule: A called meeting can ONLY address business stated in the Call.

Action: If new business is raised from the floor, rule it out of order immediately.



Pitfall 2: Inadequate Notice

Rule: Book of Order requires notice on 2 Sundays (one can be the day of the meeting).



Pitfall 3: Moderator Confusion

Rule: The Session Moderator moderates the Congregational meeting (not a different elected person).