

Diocese of Joliet
Parish Finance Council Guidelines
Approved by the Presbyteral Council October 5, 2005

“The Pastor represents the parish in all juridical affairs in accord with the norm of the law; he is to see that the goods of the parish are administered in accord with the norms of canons 1281 - 1288.” (Canon 532)

“Each parish is to have a finance council which is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop; in this council the Christian faithful, selected according to the same norms, aid the pastor in the administration of parish goods with due regard for the prescriptions of canon 532.” (Canon 537)

A) General

1. Every Parish is required by Canon Law to have a Parish Finance Council that serves in an advisory and consultative role to the pastor.
2. The pastor, in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council, should develop specific guidelines for the Parish Finance Council adapted to local needs.

B) Membership

1. After consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council, members are appointed by the pastor for a three year term and may be reappointed for one additional term or removed in this role by the pastor.
2. Members of the Parish Finance Council should be drawn from the parish community and be chosen based on demonstrable skills or expertise in management and/or finance. The requirement of membership in the parish community may be waived in the event of special expertise if all other conditions of membership are met.
3. Membership should consist of no less than three members and should not include as members any persons who may have a conflict of interest in the view of other services, paid or unpaid, rendered to the parish, nor of any person related to a parish employee or the pastor.
4. Members of the Parish Finance Council may serve in other volunteer service roles in the parish on other committees or boards such as the Parish Pastoral Council Administration Commission if, in the judgement of the pastor, such dual service will not create conflict of interest situations.
5. Officers of the Parish Finance Council may be chosen, as determined by guidelines established by the Parish Pastoral Council (see A.2 above).

C) Duties

1. The pastor is obligated to consult with the Parish Finance Council in the following matters, although he remains the juridic authority for final decisions.
 - a) any commitment of parish resources in excess of \$20,000.00 before permission for such expenditure is requested of the Chancery.
 - b) review of the annual budget and annual parish report before submission to the Chancery. To the extent practical, they should be involved in the preparation of both reports.
 - c) provide assistance and review of the annual parish financial report to parishioners, as required by canon 1287.2.
2. The Parish Finance Council and the Parish Pastoral Council should work together so as to insure the work of the Parish Finance Council does not overlap or conflict with that of the Parish Pastoral Council. To facilitate ongoing interaction, members of the Parish Finance Committee may serve on committees or subcommittees of the Parish Pastoral Council according to the needs of each particular parish.

D) Other Considerations

1. The purpose of the Parish Finance Council is to assist the pastor in his administrative responsibilities through fiscally prudent management of parish finances and in the administration of parish goods and resources.
2. Good communication between the Parish Finance Council and the Parish Pastoral Council is essential for the growth and well being of the parish. The Parish Finance Council should be aware of the mission and goals established annually by the Parish Pastoral Council.
3. The pastor is obligated by Canon Law to consult the Parish Finance Council on certain matters (see C.1 above). Although the pastor is not obliged to follow the recommendations of the Parish Finance Council, the pastor should not act against such advice, especially when there is a consensus, unless there is an overriding reason. A prudent pastor would not ignore the advice of the Parish Finance Council unless there is a serious reason to do so.

4. When appropriate, outside advice and counsel can be sought when specific expertise is needed. The Parish Finance Council may draw upon the skills of parishioners who are knowledgeable in business, law, accounting and communication. Persons with professional knowledge and experience in engineering, construction, maintenance and purchasing could also make a significant contribution and should be consulted when advisable.
5. Meetings should be convened at least four times per year, or more frequently as deemed necessary by the pastor.
6. Members of the Parish Finance Council should observe strict confidentiality concerning all matters discussed at Council meetings, or provided to them in confidence. Members shall always speak and act, inside and outside of the Parish Finance Council in a manner supportive of the Parish.
7. Diocesan Financial Policies should be available to assist the work of the Parish Finance Council
8. The Dean may be consulted in areas not addressed by these guidelines.