

PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

The revised Code of Canon Law, promulgated in November of 1983 states in Canon 537 "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 prescription of Canon 532 –

"The pastor represents the parish in all juridic affairs in accord with the norm of law; he is to see to it that the goods of the parish are administered in accord with the norms of cann. 1281-1288."

The Finance Council is consultative. It advises the pastor. The pastor is the sole administrator of the parish goods. He has the ultimate responsibility to make the final decisions covering the handling of temporalities. The pastor is subject to norms set down by the diocesan Bishop and Universal Church Law.

Canon 537 states that the council is to be a group of "Christian faithful" who assist the pastor in the administration of parish goods. The council assists the pastor.

The prescriptions of Canon 537 requiring the Parish Finance Council to assist the pastor are fulfilled only if the pastor seeks its assistance and gives serious consideration to its advice in making decisions regarding temporalities. To act otherwise is in direct contravention to the tone of the revised Code. The Code notes that consultation is an essential step in arriving at sound decisions.

Both the pastor and the members of the parish finance council are called to participate openly and competently in the dialogue process of true consultation for the common good of the parish. The Parish Finance Council is a means of implementing shared responsibility.

The day-to-day operation of the business administration and finances is the responsibility of the pastor and parish staff. The Finance Council advises. In its role as an advisor and parish representative, the Finance Council should seek constantly to help promote all programs in the apostolate of the parish.

ORGANIZATION

Members chosen to constitute the Parish Finance Council should be appointed by the pastor from the men and women of the parish. They should not be salaried staff of the parish.

The number chosen will depend on the size of the parish. As a guideline, there should be at least three members. It is the pastor's option to appoint more than the minimum of three, if the parish fiscal needs warrants additional members. A Chairperson should be appointed by the pastor or by option of the pastor, the chairperson may be elected by the members of the Finance Council. The pastor, by virtue of his office is a voting member of the Parish Finance Council.

FUNCTIONS

The basic functions that are to be performed by the Parish Finance Council are the following:

1. Assist the pastor in the development of parish's annual budget in accordance with the guidelines provided by the diocesan policy.
2. Recommend approval of the parish's annual budget and review and comment on the ongoing financial reports at least quarterly, preferably monthly.
3. Together with the pastor, prepare, approve and submit a complete annual financial report of all parish activities at the end of the fiscal year to the Bishop, Parish Council and entire parish, and submit quarterly financial reports to the Parish Council and/or to the parish at large.
4. Develop the guidelines for the job descriptions of the parish salaried or volunteer employees including salary compensation and fringe benefits, recruitment, employment and termination.
5. Review financial reports of the various parish organizations, projects, activities, and assist in offering financial and management advice. Ensure adequate and practical accountability, and audits.
6. Together with the pastor, oversee the finances of all projects of construction, renovation, expansion and reconstruction or demolition, referring all extraordinary administrative acts to the office of the Diocesan Building Commission.
7. Offer counsel and monitor all parish assets, savings, special funds, and wills and bequests.
8. Offer counsel and assist the pastor in conducting the fund raising activities needed in the parish so that the work of the Church can be achieved and members of the parish can fully participate with their fair share and stewardship.
9. Cooperate with the diocesan legal counsel in instances of civil litigation.
10. Assist parish organizations in the development of their annual budget and review their annual reports.
11. Assure that each parish capital project over \$10,000 be brought to the attention of the Chancellor for a meeting with the diocesan building commission for permission to proceed with a given project.
12. Assist the pastor in the development of a three year fiscal plan for the parish, including operational and capital costs.