

PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL GUIDELINES

In 1983, the Code of Canon Law was revised and enhanced to describe the responsibilities of the Canonical Pastor or parish life coordinator to establish a finance council to assist and advise in the fiscal matters. In particular, Canons 532 and 537 require that a finance council be established.

Canon 532

The Canonical 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 Canon 1281-1288.

Canon 537

Each parish is to have a finance council which is regulated by universal law as well as by the norms issued by the diocesan Bishop; in this council the Christian faithful, selected according to the same norms, aid the Canonical Pastor in the administration of parish goods with due regard for the prescription of Canon 532.

With the guidance provided by Canon Law, the following are the guidelines for parish finance councils:

- Members are to be men and women of integrity who are registered members of the parish that are skilled in financial, business and or legal matters. Members are to represent the diversity of the parish and its ministries.
- Two to seven members of the parish are to be chosen by the discernment process or appointed by the pastor/administrator. The size of the finance council is to be reflective of the size of the parish. The chairperson is to be appointed by the Canonical Pastor.
- Members of the finance council are appointed for a three year term with the option for a second term of three years. Members **may not** serve more than two consecutive terms. Terms should be staggered so that one-third of the members' terms end each year.
- The chairperson of the finance council will serve as an ex-officio voting member of the Commission for Stewardship Ministry (if one exists) and the Parish Pastoral Council.
- Members of the finance council may not have a conflict of interest due to relation, business affiliation, or other reasons.
- Members of the finance council may not be related to the Pastor.

Responsibilities

- Respond to requests for consultation from the pastor/administrator regarding the administration of parish goods according to universal law and diocesan guidelines and policies.
- Coordinate the preparation of the annual parish budget and a long-range financial plan in accordance with the mission, values, and goals set by the Parish Pastoral Council and in consultation with other committees. To provide assistance to parish departments and committees in preparing and submitting budgets by providing guidelines, timelines and resources. To ensure that accurate annual budgets and financial reports are filed with the diocesan Financial Services Office.
- Evaluate the financial condition of the parish by analyzing revenues and expenses against the budget for revenues and expenses. This analysis should also include a thorough review of the balance sheet, which must be inclusive of all parish financial assets. This includes providing assistance to parish departments, committees and related organizations (such as Home and School Association, Athletic Boosters, Men's Club, Altar Society, etc.) in preparing and submitting reports to the finance council by providing guidelines, timelines and resources.
- Review and compare bank reconciliations monthly of all parish bank accounts with the financial statements by a finance council member. This is particularly important when bank statements are downloaded from the bank's website.
- Ensure that permanent, accurate and complete minutes are kept as a record of all finance council meetings.
- Provide parishioners with semi-annual and annual written reports on the financial condition of the parish. The reports are to include a summary of revenues and expenses as well as a summary of the balance sheet.
- At the beginning of each fiscal year submit the Finance Council Information Sheet.

Resource Constrained Parishes

Recognizing the reality of resource constrained parishes and missions, the Diocese of Youngstown recognizes that there is a need for flexibility in implementing these guidelines. As such, parishes and missions with average weekly collections of \$2,000 or less are encouraged to follow these guidelines as closely as possible.