

St. Dominic Catholic Church

Parish Finance Council Charter

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I. ROLE OF THE PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

A. DEFINITION

The Parish Finance Council is a consultative body of the Christian faithful established to advise the Pastor in matters pertaining to the financial affairs of the parish. The Council's function is to assist the Pastor in the prudent planning and administering of all parish financial matters and in the setting of policy and procedure to provide effective management of parish assets.

Canon 537 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law requires the creation of a Parish Finance Council, placing in it the competence to advise the pastor in the administration of parish temporalities.

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Parish Finance Council must be directed by the values of the Gospel as well as by good business practice. Efficient and effective use and management of parish resources must be measured as much by their contribution to parish mission and ministry as by commonly accepted business standards.

B. COMPETENCE OF THE PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

The Pastor has authority from the Bishop and the universal law of the Church to decide and act on behalf of the Parish (Canon #532). The Parish Finance Council works closely with the pastor and assists the pastor in fulfilling his responsibilities. The Parish Finance Council is a decision making body.

For the Parish Finance Council to fulfill its mission it must have access to the financial information including parish financial accounts, balances, income and expenditure

statistics and other matters related to the financial status and operation of the parish. Such information must be received and given in a spirit of confidentiality and prudence.

C. DUTIES

1. To assist in establishing and maintaining a system of internal controls which provide a clear audit trail, particularly in the following areas:
 - a) Cash Receipts (particularly, Offertory Accounting, Tuition Accounting and Proper Documentation)
 - b) Cash Disbursements (Check Requisition, Documentation, Separation of Duties, Check Limits, Petty Cash).
 - c) Banking Authority
2. To see that a suitable and safe archive is provided for the parish's important financial documents and records.
3. To review a complete annual financial report of the parish that is to be submitted to the diocesan bishop and presented in summary form for the parish community.
4. To review and advise in the areas of stewardship, development and special collection programs administered in the parish.
5. To provide counsel to the Pastor in acts of extraordinary administration related to parish financial transactions.
6. To establish and direct a sound budgeting process including the publication of the budget for the parish community.
7. To provide consultation in the hiring and dismissal of all parish financial and office staff.

8. To review and advise in the areas of cash flow analysis and purchasing.
9. To ensure that proper payroll accounting and record keeping is implemented and that appropriate employer reports are filed in a timely manner.
10. To provide the Parish Pastoral Council with periodic reports (at least quarterly) on the financial status of the Parish.
11. To ensure that the parish fulfills all requirements of federal and state tax laws and maintains an accurate record of payment.
12. To ensure that diocesan policies relative to financial matters are being followed.

Pastors and parish administrators are obliged to administer parish goods, according to the church law as found in Canon 1281-1288. The Parish Finance Council shall assist the Pastor/Administrator in fulfilling these responsibilities by fully implementing their duties.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

A. MEMBERSHIP

1. The Parish Finance Council shall be composed of the Pastor/Administrator, not less than five members of the Christian faithful, and the Deacon. The pastor/administrator appoints membership.
2. The Pastor/Administrator and the Deacon are ex officio members of the Parish Finance Council.

3. The First Officer of the Parish Finance Council will recruit a secretary who shall serve as note taker and prepare and file “Notes of Actions Taken” for the record.
4. The Pastor/Administrator and the Finance Council members shall select the Executive Officers of the Parish Finance Council from among the members. The First Officer chairs the council, prepares for meetings and implements those proposals of the Council which have been accepted and ratified by the Pastor. The Executive Officers shall perform other tasks that are delegated by the Pastor. The Second Officer will assume the duties of the first officer when the officer is unavailable. The Executive Officers shall be appointed for a two-year term. The Second Officer shall succeed to the position of the First Officer.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Those to be appointed to the Parish Finance Council should meet the following criteria:

- a) good communication and oral presentation skills
- b) Initiative
- c) Integrity
- d) Analytical ability
- e) Sensitivity
- f) Leadership
- g) Good decision making ability
- h) Planning skills
- i) Ability to organize and monitor work

Each member must be a member of the Christian faithful whose family is active in the parish.

TERM OF OFFICE

Members of the Parish Finance Council shall serve a three-year term and may be appointed to a second or third three-year term. When a member of Council is unable to complete a term of office, the Pastor/Administrator shall name his or her successor. The terms of Parish Finance members shall be staggered.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of the Parish Finance Council are expected to:

1. Maintain discretion and confidentiality.
2. Attend all Parish Finance Council meetings.
3. Participate in the Bishop's Annual Appeal.
4. Assist with parish social activities involving fund raising.
5. Learn all duties of membership.
6. Have a good understanding of all aspects of parish life.
7. Be a goodwill ambassador of the parish.
8. Be active in decision making.
9. Be willing to assume leadership positions.
10. Continue their development and education in the Catholic faith.
11. Be prepared to discuss the agenda.

Members are directly responsible to the Pastor and parish community.

B. MEETINGS

The Parish Finance Council shall meet monthly. The agenda, the previous meeting's minutes, and pertinent financial reports will be distributed at the monthly meetings.

III. RELATIONSHIPS OF PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

A. The Pastor and Staff relate to the Parish Finance Council by:

1. Consulting with the Parish Finance Council in acts of ordinary administration described in the duties of the Parish Finance Council.
2. Seeking counsel of the Parish Finance Council in all acts of extraordinary administration such as:
 - Acquisition or disposal of property (restriction of use; sale, purchase, mortgagee, etc.)
 - Leasing
 - Acceptance or refusal of a major gift or bequest (over \$10,000)
 - Implementation of special collections or fund drives
 - Approval of the Annual Budget
 - Material variances to the operating or capital budget (single occurrence in excess of \$2,500 or aggregate annual variances in the amount of \$25,000).

B. The Parish Pastoral Council relates to the Parish Finance Council by:

1. Involving the Parish Finance Council in long-range planning to assist in the financial implication of the goals/objectives and to comment on the allocation of the resources available.
2. Each month the ex officio members of the Parish Finance Council, the Pastor/Administrator and the Deacon, shall attend the Parish Pastoral Council in order to maintain proper communication between the two councils.

C. The Parish Finance Council relates to the Diocese of Columbus by:

1. Interacting with appropriate diocesan offices and governance bodies.
2. Acting on recommendations of Diocesan parish review process, i.e. review comments.

IV. OPERATING PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

The Pastor consults with the Parish Finance Council for advice on issues affecting the financial welfare of the parish. The Parish Finance Council can be of great service to both the Pastor/Administrator and the parish by seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit and acting in their advisor capacity in a true spirit of Christian community.

Honor, personal accountability and an understanding of the mission of today's Church and his/her parish are as important to the Parish Finance Council member as are efficiency and effectiveness. It must be remembered that this work is that of the Lord.

This is not to be interpreted to mean that a parish should not strive to become more business like in its management of resources. The Pastor/Administrator, staff and Parish Finance Council must find the balance that best combines a sense of mission with a sense of business.

V. AGENDA PREPARATION

The Pastor, the First Officer and the secretary shall prepare the agenda. A possible format may be:

1. Opening Prayer
2. Introduction of new members and or visitors
3. Approval of minutes from the last meeting
4. Budget Review
5. Old Business

6. New Business
7. Closing Prayer