

# Good Shepherd Parish

Diocese of Portland, Maine

## Finance Council Bylaws

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## BYLAWS

### Article I: Council Name and Mission

#### Section 1: COUNCIL NAME

The name of this body is *Finance Council of Good Shepherd Parish*, located within the Diocese of Portland (Maine), hereafter referred to as “the Council”

#### Section 2: MISSION

The mission of the Council is to provide expertise and consultation through financial analysis, planning, and policy development. It ensures close observance of Church and civil law in all financial, business and administrative matters of the parish. The Council assists the pastor in managing temporal goods ensuring the full resources of the people of God are appropriately put to the mission of the local and universal Church (*Financial Council Policies & Norms (FCPN)*, p. 12).

### Article II: Submission, Amendments, Practices

#### Section 1: SUBMISSION OF BYLAWS AND MEMBERSHIP TO THE DIOCESAN FINANCE OFFICE

Council bylaws and membership must be updated and submitted to the diocesan finance office within the first quarter of each year (*FCPN*, #16).

#### Section 2: SUBMISSION OF SIGNED STATEMENTS TO THE BISHOP

Within the first quarter of each year, the pastor and the Council members must submit a signed statement to the bishop containing the following:

- a. The names and professional titles of the parish Council members
- b. The meeting dates of the preceding fiscal year’s Council.
- c. The dates when the approved parish financial statements and budgets were made available to the parishioners.
- d. A copy of the published parish financial statements (*FCPN*, #17).

#### Section 3: AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed at any regular meeting of the Council and adopted at a subsequent Council meeting through a two-thirds vote of those present.

#### Section 4: OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Council establishes and maintains a set of operating procedures specifying such matters as meeting time, location, composition of committees, method of selecting committee members, and other matters (*FCPN*, #14).

- a. The secretary or her/his designee maintains the record of operating procedures as a document to support and supplement these bylaws.
- b. Operating procedures are subject to Council revision as warranted and established, modified, and discontinued through a regular meeting of the Council and by way of majority vote of those present.

## Article III: Purposes and Limitations

### Section 1: PURPOSES OF THE FINANCE COUNCIL

- a. *Assist the pastor* in development and monitoring the performance of the annual budget in accord with the goals and objectives recommended by the Good Shepherd Pastoral Council and approved by the pastor.
- b. *Review the income statement and balance sheet.* The Council is to review the income statement listing the year-to-date and most recent month's actual and budget amounts. Moreover, the Council is to review the balance sheet.
- c. *Develop and monitor internal controls.* The Council is to develop and monitor the existence and effectiveness of internal controls over the assets.
- d. *Monitor all investments.* The Council is to monitor investments to ensure that they are in accordance with diocesan policy.
- e. *Ensure thorough and understandable financial statements.* The Council is responsible to ensure that the financial reports are thorough and understandable and are presented to parishioners annually.
- f. *Parish Records.* The Council is to oversee the maintenance of all parish financial records, manuscripts, deeds, titles, and census information.
- g. *Inventory of Parish Goods.* The Council is to see that accurate and detailed inventory of all parish goods and resources are kept along with a complete description and appraisal.
- h. *Approve acts of extraordinary administration.* The Council is to study and approve "acts of extraordinary administration" such defined by church law and diocesan regulation. Such acts include the sale of parish property and other major financial transactions (FCPN, p. 12).

### Section 2: LIMITATIONS OF COUNCIL AUTHORITY

- a. *Financial Issues.* The Council discusses any and all temporal matters relating to the life of the people in the parish. It does not discuss matters pertaining to individuals (FCPN, #11).
- b. *Recommendations.* The Council is a consultative body; therefore, its recommendations are directed to the pastor and become effective only after he affirms and acts upon them (FCPN, #15).
- c. *Implementation.* The Council does not implement recommendations. Implementation is the responsibility of the pastor, the staff, the commissions, and/or other organizations associated with the parish.

## Article IV: Membership

### Section 1: TYPES OF COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

- a. *Configuration of the Council Membership* The council consists of ex-officio members and no less than 7 voting members (FCPN, #4).
- b. *Voting members.* Any registered member of Good Shepherd Parish who is fully initiated and in good standing with the Church is eligible for voting membership in the Council, with the following exceptions:
  - i. Paid staff.
  - ii. Immediate family members of Council members and paid staff (FCPN, #2).
- c. *Council staff and ex-officio members.* The following are *ex-officio* members of the Council and are not voting members:
  - i. Pastor, who serves as the Council's president;
  - ii. Parochial vicar(s)
  - iii. The business coordinator
  - iv. The principal(s) of the Catholic school(s)
  - v. Other ex-officio members and support staff may be specified in the Council's operating procedures (FCPN, #1 and 2).

### Section 2: NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT

- a. *Nomination process.* Nominations for voting members come from parishioners, the council, and the pastor himself. The Council solicits nominations from parishioners in late winter, both informally through conversations and formally as set forth in the Council's operating procedures. The Council considers nominations for candidates for the following term from all sources as it prepares a formal list for the pastor in May (FCPN, #1).
- b. *Appointment to council.* Voting members are appointed to the Council by the pastor based on nominations and are never elected. The pastor must seek to appoint individuals qualified in accounting, finance, property management and other business matters. He should ensure that there is a balanced representation of lay men, women, religious and individuals with various expertise, ages, and geographic areas throughout the parish (FCPN, #1 and #4).

### Section 3: TRANSITION AND TENURE

- a. *Transition.* The Council is dissolved one year after the transfer, retirement, resignation, or death of the pastor. A new pastor must constitute a new council at that time. (FCPN, #7).
- b. *Tenure.* Council members have staggered three-year terms, beginning in July. When a new Council is formed, members draw lots to determine initial allocation of 1-, 2-, and 3-year terms. Council members are limited to two successive three-year terms, after which the individual is ineligible for one year. When a new Council is formed, members who draw 1-, and 2-year terms are eligible for two additional 3-year terms at the conclusion of their short first term. (FCPN, #6).

#### Section 4: COUNCIL VACANCIES

To fill a vacancy, the Council undertakes an abbreviated nomination process requiring no formal solicitation from all parishioners. The pastor makes the determination. The appointment is for the unexpired term of a vacancy, after which the member may serve up to two additional terms in her or his own behalf.

#### Section 5: NONPARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Any Council member absent for three regular meetings without having notified the chair or pastor may, after meeting with the chair or designee, be asked to resign from the council.

### Article V: Offices

#### Section 1: COUNCIL OFFICERS

Council officers are the chair, the vice-chair, and the secretary. Voting members are eligible for these three offices (*FPCPN*, #3).

#### Section 2: ELECTION PROCESS

- a. *Terms of Office.* Council officers are determined annually at the first meeting following July 1 of the calendar year. Each year, all three officers are designated by the voting members and approved by the pastor. Offices have no term limits (*FPCPN*, #3).
- b. *Designating Officers.* Members, including ex-officio members, may offer nominations. The officers are determined by a majority vote of the voting members of the council present at the meeting.
- c. *Officer Vacancies.* In the event the office of chair becomes vacant, the vice-chair completes the term of the chair. In the event of the office of vice-chair or secretary becomes vacant, the Council conducts a new election at its next meeting.

#### Section 3: DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL CHAIR

- a. To preside at meetings.
- b. To work closely with the pastor in discharging the following responsibilities:
  - i. To call special meetings with the approval of the pastor;
  - ii. To appoint chairs and members of special committees;
  - iii. To develop the agenda of each council meeting, in consultation with the pastor and other parties.
- c. To lead the Council in monitoring progress of committee programs and activities.
- d. To handle Council correspondence, with assistance of support staff.
- e. To coordinate Council members' service on committees.

#### Section 4: DUTIES OF THE VICE CHAIR

- a. To assume the duties of the chair in her/his absence or at her/his request.
- b. To work with the chair in monitoring the work of committees.

#### Section 5: DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY

- a. To keep accurate minutes of Council meetings and publish these minutes following each meeting.
- b. To alert parishioners, through an announcement in the parish bulletin, of upcoming council meetings.
- c. A week prior to an upcoming Council meeting, to provide Council members with these materials:
  - i. Minutes of previous meeting;
  - ii. Agenda for upcoming meeting;
  - iii. Pertinent background information.
- d. To maintain bylaws, operating procedures, financial reports, planning documents, and other current and archived Council files by coordinating with the chair and with Council support staff.
- e. To submit bylaws, membership, and other Council materials required annually by the diocese.

#### Section 6: DUTIES OF EACH MEMBER

- a. To be present, prepared, and participate in Council meetings and activities.
- b. To alert the chair about anticipated absences, avoiding more than three unexcused absences in a year.
- c. To serve as liaison and as a member of a parish committee.
- d. To stay informed about parish activities and developments through frequent, ongoing communications with parishioners, groups, and committees.

### Article VI: Council Meetings

#### Section 1: REGULAR COUNCIL SESSIONS

- a. The Council must meet in regular session at least four times during the year, and it may meet more frequently. Details of meeting times, locations, and other logistics are set out in the Council's operating procedures and announced in advance in the parish bulletin (*FCPN*, #8).
- b. Each regular session is called by the pastor. It requires an agenda, the presence of the pastor (or, in an emergency, his designee), the chair or someone acting in the chair's behalf, and a quorum of at least half the voting members of the Council (*FCPN*, #9).

- c. Regular Council sessions are open to all parishioners. Business may involve – but is not dominated by – committee status reports (*FCPN*, #8 and #13)

#### Section 2: EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

- a. The pastor calls the Council into executive session if needed to discuss issues of a sensitive or confidential nature. Executive session involves the same requirements as a regular Council session (*FCPN*, #8).
- b. Executive sessions are closed to the public (*FCPN*, #8).

#### Section 3: WORK SESSIONS

- a. The Council meets in a work session as determined by the pastor. The work session may meet in the pastor's absence and need not conform to the requirements of a regular session (*PCPN*, #10).
- b. Work sessions are open to the public.

#### Section 4: DECISION POLICY

- a. The Council reaches decisions through natural consensus though the Pastor or the Chair may request votes from time to time to assess the positions of the Council members.
- b. Decisions become authoritative only with the assent of the pastor. The pastor's decision typically emerges informally as part of Council discussion (*FCPN*, #15)

### Article VII: **Commissions, Committees, & Church Organizations**

#### Section 1: ESTABLISHING COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

- a. The Council establishes commissions and committees based on the perceived needs of the parish community. The commissions or committees may be, but are not limited to, Property, Budget, Development, and Cemetery (*FCPN*, #12).
- b. Commissions serve the parish as a whole and are permanent bodies. Committees are either permanent or *ad hoc*. Permanent committees serve a segment within the parish and *ad hoc* committees serve the parish on a temporary basis.
- c. The Council sets forth the charge for each commission/committee and monitors the impact of the commission/committee.
- d. A Council member works with each commission and serves as liaison with the Council. This individual need not chair the commission.

#### Section 2: COMMISSION/COMMITTEE OPERATION

- a. The commission/committee chair is encouraged to recruit parishioners from throughout the parish. The majority membership in each commission/ committee should not to be Council members.
- b. Commissions/committees set the times and dates of their meetings, activities, and events, publishing them in the parish bulletin.

- c. Commissions/committees report to the council periodically, as their activities warrant. Each chair is encouraged to meet directly with the council at least once a year.

### Section 3: OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE PARISH

- a. *Pastoral Council.* The Pastoral Council and Finance Council are independent bodies within the parish. The two councils and their leaders work closely to benefit the parish community, and the councils exchange meeting minutes. As with other committees and commissions, a voting or ex-officio member of the Finance Council also serves on the Pastoral Council. Annually, the Finance Council prepares a parish budget for the coming fiscal year; the proposed budget is subject to Pastoral Council approval prior to the beginning of the fiscal period (*Pastoral Council . . . Norms*, pp. 8ff).
- b. *Finance Council Subcommittees.* The Council creates subcommittees as needed in the course of its responsibilities. Although membership is typically within the Council, subcommittees at times draw on expertise beyond the Council's ranks. Both voting members and ex-officio members may serve on subcommittees.