

Procedures to obtain the needed approval from the Diocese for a project

Your building committee needs to have a chairperson or leader of some kind. That person is, *ex officio*, a member, therefore, of your Pastoral Advisory Council. At the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Pastoral Council (and, note, the Stewardship Committee is not yet involved), he or she in his or her report to the Council, brings the situation to everyone's attention, along with the building committee's recommendations.

The Pastoral Council can then discuss the matter and decide, by consensus, on a course of action. In this case, there is not much choice – the roof must be repaired! However, discussion and questions from the Council are meant to accomplish several things. First and most importantly, it broadens everyone's awareness of the matter, so that all can take responsibility and ownership of the issue. Second, through their own experience and business contacts, they can bring more resources to bear than might easily be available to you and the members of your building committee. The Pastoral Council also considers the scope of the project. Shouldn't be larger? Smaller? What other matters come up as a result of this project. Note that neither the cost nor fundraising are part of their discussion at this point! Also note that the Pastoral Advisory Council is not itself the building committee there is no need for there to get into the minutiae if the building committee is doing its job.

With the advice of the Pastoral Council, you and your building committee begin to solicit bids from contractors (although there is really no reason not to begin earlier – collecting information takes time, and the more information you have, of course, the better. You can also inform the Stewardship Committee so they have advance notice of the situation.) Note, however, that it is not the Stewardship Committee's task to decide the scope of the project, pick contractors or the like. However, with advance information, your Stewardship Committee can begin to brainstorm about fundraising if needed.

Once the bids are in, the building committee should examine them and rank them in order of preference bearing in mind the opinions and advice of the Pastoral Advisory Council. By then, you should know the precise scope of the project and know the range of costs you can expect. It may happen that one or more of your contractors may recommend additional work and include it as an option in their bid. What do you think? What does the building committee The Pastoral Advisory Council should decide on which bid and options to accept, and you should go along with their decision unless there are serious, weighty reasons to do otherwise, and you are willing to express these reasons in writing to them and to me. This is what consultation is all about. The Pastoral Advisory Council should also recommend whether or not to deal with the mater in a general meeting, after the Stewardship Committee has examined the proposal.

Once you have your proposal together, you need to deal with it at a formal meeting of your Stewardship Committee. The first thing they ought to consider is: is this item already foreseen in a formal budget that has already been submitted to and approved by the Diocese? If it is, then you are acting within an approved budget and you can go ahead (and sign the contracts) with no further approval needed. If it is not, (and in this case it is not because I have yet to see, let alone approve, a formal budget from St. Mary or any of our parishes), then an extra-budget spending proposal needs to be submitted to the Diocese.

Note that it is not the Stewardship Committee's competence to decide whether or not to go ahead with the project, you, together with your Pastoral Advisory Council, have already decided that. You have to be able to convince them, however, that you have thoroughly researched the options and have chosen the most economical course of action that solves the problem. If you cannot convince them of this, and they are totally convinced that the parish totally lacks the funds or fundraising potential to meet this cost, then they will need to communicate this in writing to you and to the Pastoral Advisory Council. "In writing," in this case can mean simply the written minutes of these meetings. They must also specify what they propose ought to be done, short of the entire project. (In this unlikely event, you would want to have a meeting consisting of your Stewardship Committee, your building committee and your Pastoral Advisory Council. If this meeting is unable to arrive at a consensus, you would need to obtain resolution from the diocese. This should never happen.)

Under normal circumstances, the Stewardship Committee would not be concerned with "whether", but with "how:" how are we going to provide the resources to accomplish this project? If the parish already has the cash, then that's how. If additional fundraising will be needed, the Stewardship Committee must develop a plan to do so. Will the parish have to take out a loan or assume other debt? This must also be spelled out in the plan.

Having arrived at this point, i.e.,

1. You have identified the need
2. You have agreed on the solution
3. You have a concrete proposal to accomplish the solution
4. You have a written plan for paying for (and, if necessary, raising additional funds to pay for) this proposal

you are now ready to submit the proposal to the diocese. What do you need to submit in order to receive approval for this project? Your application needs to include:

1. A letter from you, the pastor, summarizing the problem, the proposed resolution, and the steps you have taken to get to where we are. This letter is best if co-signed by 2 chair people, signature of Pastoral Advisory Council chair and Stewardship Committee chair.
2. Copies of all bids and estimates (you have sent them)

3. A certificate of insurance and workers compensation coverage from your selected contractor
4. Current parish financial statements. By financial statements, I mean proper reports and records prepared according to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP.) If you are unable to do this on your own, you need to look into finding a qualified bookkeeper or accountant to do this for you. A listing of bank balances or a checkbook reconciliation are not enough. These statement must include:
 - a) Balance sheet
 - b) Current Annual Diocesan Report, if it has not already been submitted.
 - c) Year-to-date Income Statement (Profit & Loss)
 - d) Cash flow report
 - e) Accounts Payable, if applicable, listing all creditors and amounts.
 - f) Accounts Receivable, if applicable.
 - g) Copies of most recent statements from the bank for all accounts.
 - h) Copies of minutes from all meetings at which the project was discussed (you have sent these as well)
 - i) Copies of all drawings, site plans, or applicable technical schemas relating to the project. Photographs of the maintenance problem would also be useful,
 - j) Copies, if you have them, of all references and samples of work you may have received from your proposed contractor.
 - k) A copy of your fundraising plan, if necessary, and your financing plan or loan proposals if you will be borrowing from a bank or credit union.

This entire package should be sent, as one package, to my attention.

A complete presentation such as I have outlined will go a long way toward expediting the process of approval. Virtually any questions Jim or I may have can most likely be answered by the materials you sent in. If there is need to present your proposal to the Diocesan Finance Council or Board of Consultants we will be ready to do so. At the very least, your thoroughness will show me that you have carried out an active and effective consultation with the people, and that you have broad support and a fair chance at succeeding in your fundraising.

One final detail that bears mentioning. Under new sections of the Pastoral Typikon that will be promulgated, it is at this point that I will grant an abeyance from assessment to the fund set up to cover the project. Once a specific project has been paid for, the abeyance will end and further contributions will be combined with other parish income in determining the *cathedraticum - taxa*. It will no longer be the

case that a portion of parish income will be rendered not subject to assessment simply because it is designated a building offering or deposited in a special account. The present situation has led to some abuse which I aim to correct.

Most Rev. John Michael Botean & Very Rev. Ovidiu Marginean
Bishop Economos