



Parish Finance Council Guidelines

Diocese of St. Paul

General Rule:

Can. 537- In each parish, there is to be a finance committee to help the parish priest in the administration of the goods of the parish, without prejudice to can. 532. It is ruled by the universal law and by the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop, and it is comprised of members of the faithful selected according to these norms.

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 canons 1281-1288.

A. Purpose

The Finance Council is an advisory body and shall:

- a) Carry out the functions and fulfill the purposes assigned to it by the Code of Canon Law and other legislation.
- b) Assist the Pastor in the exercise of his responsibilities for the administration of ecclesiastical goods, as provided by the Code of Canon Law.

B. Role and Responsibilities

1. Financial Oversight

The role and responsibilities for the Finance Council include the administration of the parish goods in accordance with Canon Law 1281- 1288.

- Advise the pastor on all financial matters of the parish
- Review and adopt an annual budget for the operations of the Parish.
- Examine at the end of the year the annual financial statement for the operations of the Parish to ensure that the resources meet the needs of the goals.
- Communicate the financial status of the parish to all parishioners at least once a year and to the Parish Pastoral Council at least twice a year.
- Ensure the financial stability of the parish.
- Oversee capital and maintenance projects including regular oversight of the parish buildings and properties in the area of preventative maintenance.
- Ensure internal controls, such as cash counting is adhered to.

- Assess potential liabilities and evaluate their associated level of *risk*, e.g. property insurance coverage.
- If required, solicit greater generosity in contribution to the parish, including fundraising and grant initiatives.
- Assist with decision making regarding employment, salaries and new hires. Ensure all legal requirements are in compliance with current labor laws.
- Provide guidance with respect to charitable donations including gift receiving and receipting as required.
- Refer any proposed acts of extraordinary administration to the Office of the Bishop (canons 1273-1298) such as but not limited to
 - a. Disposal of property
 - b. Purchase of property
 - c. Leasing of property
- The pastor should consult Finance Council members and other parishioners as to suggestions of who would be fitting members.
- The members of the Finance Committee, upon taking office, must become familiar with all the diocesan policies concerning temporal administration of Church goods.

2. Meetings

- The Finance Council is presided over by the Pastor in the financial matters of the Parish.
- The Pastor will convoke all meetings.
- There will be at least four meetings a year.
- Minutes of meetings will be recorded and stored in permanent storage.

3. Subcommittees

- The Finance Council may consider the establishment of subcommittees such as Maintenance, Budget, Fundraising, Salaries, Benefits, and Cemeteries.
- The purpose of each subcommittee will be determined clearly.
- All subcommittees will be provided with roles and responsibilities.
- If there is a Fundraising Committee, it should include member(s) from the Parish Pastoral Council as well as parishioners “at large”.

C. Membership and Size

- The Pastor is an ex-officio member of the Finance Council (included in the 4 to 6 members as mentioned below).
- The Finance Council will consist of at least (4) to (6) parishioners, who are practicing adult Catholics of outstanding integrity and knowledgeable in financial affairs and civil law.
- Smaller communities may have less members.
- All new members will be provided an orientation about their roles and responsibilities.

- Persons who are related to the pastor and council members up to the fourth degree of consanguinity (see. Appendix) are ineligible for membership (canon 492-3).
- Exceptions for relationships on the Finance Council are to be documented with rationale and approved by the Bishop.
- The associate pastor, transitional deacon, or intern seminarian if any may attend the meetings but are not voting or ex-officio members.

D. Appointment and Term

All Finance Council members will be appointed for a period of three years and may be reappointed for further terms.

- **Cessation of membership**
 - The membership of a member of the Finance Council will cease:
 - by death
 - by resignation
 - upon completion of the term

E. Accountability and Limitations

- **Accountability**
 - The Finance Committee is accountable to the Pastor and ultimately to the Bishop through the Pastor, and liaisons with the Parish Pastoral Council.
 - The two councils (Finance and Pastoral) are separate, and each has a different and specific role in the life and operation of the Parish. They should work cooperatively, but in accordance with their respective roles. The purpose of the Pastoral Council is to work with the pastor (or administrator) to set priorities for the Parish. The Finance Council works with the pastor (or administrator) to determine how to implement those Parish priorities from a financial perspective.
- **Limitations**
 - The pastor represents the parish in all legal matters
 - The salary for the priest working in the parish, and regulations regarding mass stipends and stole fees are established by the Bishop of the Diocese.

Table of Consanguinity

Showing degrees of relationships

