

IV. THE PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

The norms relating to parish finance councils have been mandatory in the Archdiocese since 1986; the following ones replace those currently in effect.

Article I

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNCIL

1. In accordance with the prescriptions of canon 537, a parish finance council is to be established in each parish and mission of the Archdiocese of Ottawa.
2. However, in those cases where a mission is entrusted to the parish priest of a neighbouring parish, he shall, in consultation with the Archbishop, decide whether a separate council is to be set up for the parish and the mission, or whether one council shall function for both.
3. The council is to function according to the following norms which are hereby promulgated in accordance with the prescriptions of canon 537.
4. An exemption may be requested from the Archbishop in the case of a very small parish or mission, allowing them to have one council for both pastoral and financial affairs. It is important that, in such cases, the council have different minutes for the parts of the meeting which deal with temporal and pastoral issues respectively.

Article II

THE ARCHBISHOP

5. In the diocese, the Archbishop is legally responsible for the administration of all ecclesiastical goods that come under his jurisdiction. He has a right of control over these goods and must exact a rendering of

accounts.

6. In conformity with the law, the Archbishop is assisted by the Episcopal Vicar for Administration, who fulfills the role of finance officer of the diocese, the diocesan finance council, and the college of consultors.
7. The Archbishop may delegate to certain persons a share in his responsibilities in matters relating to administration. Such delegates have full authority to carry out their duties within the scope of their mandate.

Article III

THE PARISH PRIEST (OR PARISH ADMINISTRATOR)

8. In the present statutes, any reference to the parish priest also includes the priest appointed as parish administrator for the time being.
9. The parish priest is the personal representative of the Archbishop in the parish. He has the obligation to administer the parish in conformity with diocesan regulations. In this sense, he is the "president" of both the pastoral and the finance councils in his parish.
10. In carrying out his duties, the parish priest is assisted by a parish finance council, composed of competent and dedicated persons. He is an "ex officio" member of this council.

Article IV

THE PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

11. The parish finance council is composed of the parish priest and at least three other members, one of whom is selected as chairperson and another as

vice-chairperson. A secretary is selected who could also be the vice-chairperson.

12. The parish finance council, through its parish priest, is accountable to the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Ottawa in whose name title to diocesan and real property is vested. Such accounting shall take place through the office of the Episcopal Vicar for Administration.
13. The members of the council are to be well acquainted with the civil, canonical and diocesan regulations relating to the temporal administration of parishes.
14. Any member who serves on the finance council must promise before the council to administer the goods of the parish in accordance with the applicable regulations.

Article V

MEMBERSHIP ON THE COUNCIL

15. Unless other provisions are made, the members of the parish finance council can be elected by the parishioners at a meeting duly called for this purpose or appointed by the parish priest in consultation with the existing Finance Council.

16. The parish priest, after consulting with the elected members, may appoint additional members to complete the membership on the council as required.

17. To be eligible to be elected or appointed a member of the finance council, a person should be a Catholic, registered in the parish or mission. Any exception to this norm must be discussed beforehand with the Episcopal Vicar for Administration who can grant permission for such an exception.

18. Members are elected or appointed for a three-year term, renewable once. They retain their office even if the parish priest changes in the interim. It is preferable, for sake of continuity, that terms be staggered. In this way, there will be a regular rotation, but without a complete turnover of members.

19. Before the election, if there is one, a nominating council, designated by the parish pastoral council, shall propose the

names of possible candidates.

20. When required, notice of the impending election is to be made in due time to the parishioners, and especially to the members of parish associations.

21. Members of the parish finance council cease holding their office once their successor is elected or appointed and assumes the functions.

22. In the event that an elected or appointed member cannot complete the term of office, the council shall appoint a replacement to fill the unexpired portion of the mandate. Unless the unexpired portion of the mandate is for more than two years, this appointment does not affect eligibility for subsequent election or appointment to the council.

23. A member of the council, whether elected or appointed, may be removed from the council for cause, by a majority vote of the other members of the council, after prior consultation with the Episcopal Vicar for Administration. Recourse against this decision may be made to the Archbishop or his delegate.

Article VI

Responsibilities

24. The parish finance council, in conjunction with the parish priest shall

- a) attend to the temporal affairs of the parish: revenue, expenses, loans, investments, bookkeeping, repairs, constructions, contracts, sales, purchases, employee relations, salaries, etc., in accordance with diocesan regulations and policies; however, the bookkeeper need not be a member of the council.
- b) establish, according to the principles governing sound administration, the administrative guidelines for the temporal administration of the parish;
- c) prepare and approve the annual budget and publish

the latter at the same time as the annual financial report; the council shall select the more appropriate means to enable the greatest number of parishioners to be informed as to the contents of the budget and the financial report, as well as of the overall financial situation of the parish. While the finance council establishes fixed and variable expenditures for the parish, once it has set aside funds available for pastoral work, it is not to decide further. Such responsibility lies with the parish priest and the pastoral council;

- d) prepare, in accordance with diocesan regulations, the annual financial reports to be submitted to the diocesan administration;
- e) designate one of its members to sit on the parish pastoral council as a full member of this council and accept one member of the pastoral council as a member of the finance council; (it is not necessary for them to attend every meeting. They must only exchange information as required).
- f) attend to the proper maintenance of the buildings;
- g) administer the goods of the parish in conformity with the civil, canonical and diocesan regulations pertaining to the temporal administration of parishes.

25. For any decision of the parish finance council to take effect, the parish priest, because of his assigned responsibilities, must be in agreement.

Article VII

MEETINGS

26. The parish finance council shall meet regularly and, if need be, hold special meetings.
27. It shall meet at least every three months to review its activities to date and establish its priorities or

adjust its estimates for the following trimester.

28. The absolute majority of the members of the council shall constitute a quorum for meetings. The chairperson has a casting vote in the case of a tie. Normally, the parish priest does not vote, as he receives the advice.
29. With the consent of the chairperson, other persons may be invited to attend portions or all of a meeting of the finance council.

Article VIII

MEMBERS

30. The *chairperson*, with the secretary, and after consultation with the parish priest, prepares the order of business; other duties of the chairperson include chairing the meetings, and reporting to the parishioners on the financial situation of the parish.
31. The *vice-chairperson* fulfils the same duties as the chairperson in the absence or incapacity of the latter.
32. The *secretary* calls the meetings, prepares the order of business with the chairperson, attends to the bookkeeping and keeps a record of the proceedings of the meetings.
33. The other members are available for those particular duties within their sphere of competence as are entrusted to them by the council.