

Statutes for Parish Finance Committees



Archdiocese of Sydney

General Principles

1. It is a general principle of the Code of Canon Law that every person who administers temporal goods on behalf of a group is to consult with that group in carrying out the administration (cf. e.g. canons 1280; 492-494; 634-640). For parishes, can. 537 makes it obligatory that there be a finance committee to advise the parish priest. [In these statutes a reference to the parish priest includes a reference to an administrator and to a moderator where a parish does not have a resident parish priest].
2. The parish priest is the administrator of the assets of the parish (can. 532) and a finance committee acts only in an advisory capacity. At the same time the priest is asked to remember that it is the parishioners who have provided the assets.
3. The parish priest is, therefore, to seek prudent advice from the parishioners and should have their consensus for the major directions of his administration. He is accountable to the parishioners for the way in which he has administered the assets of the parish. The parishioners have a right to express their views and a duty to support the parish priest in his endeavours for the good of the parish.
4. Through the finance committee the parishioners are to seek to lessen the burden of the parish priest in administering parish finances, in maintaining parish properties, in planning for future capital works, in raising the necessary finances and in establishing a framework for greater shared responsibility within parish life.

Membership

5. The minimum composition of the finance committee shall be:
 - (a) the parish priest;
 - (b) his assistant priests;
 - (c) three members of the parish, elected by the parishioners or chosen by the parish priest who are of outstanding integrity and competent in financial affairs;
 - (d) a person elected from among its members by the parish council/committee, where such exists.
6. It is the parish priest who determines whether the three members mentioned in 5(c) above are to be elected by the parishioners or chosen by himself. If he decides that any or all are to be elected, he is free to decide the method of election.
7. It would be fitting that persons, whether religious or lay, who are engaged full-time as pastoral workers in the parish, be invited to be members of the finance committee.
8. The parish priest is free to add other members to the committee, if the needs of the parish require a larger number.
9. The term of office for all members mentioned in n.5(c) and (d) shall be three years. Members may be re-elected or re-appointed, but some change in the membership of the committee is to take place every three years.

Meetings

10. Meetings of the finance committee must be held at least every three months and may be held more often.
11. A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the membership.
12. One member of the committee is to act as chairperson.
13. One member of the committee is to act as secretary and shall be responsible for keeping minutes of the meeting.

Functions

14. Prior to forwarding the annual audited Parish Financial Report to the Chancery, the parish priest is to present a full copy of that Report to a meeting of the finance committee.
15. At other meetings of the committee the parish priest is to present the totals of income and expenditure since the last meeting for all accounts relevant to the Parish Financial Report, and any significant fact relating to finances.
16. Any expenditure or other act of extraordinary administration, which, in accordance with diocesan law, requires the permission of the Archbishop, must be discussed by the parish finance committee before being submitted to the Archbishop. These have been defined by a Decree dated 31 July 2015.
17. The committee must conduct a review of all parish insurances during the quarter ending 30th June.
18. The committee is responsible for ensuring that a suitable annual report concerning parish finances is made available to all parishioners.
19. At the meeting mentioned in n.14, the parish priest is also to present to the committee in writing a report of the Pastoral Revenue of the parish over the preceding twelve months. The committee is then responsible for ensuring that a suitable annual report concerning the pastoral revenue is made available to all parishioners.

Archdiocesan Chancery
Sydney

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