

# Parish Finance Committee

## Constitution.

The Parish Finance Committee is about the life of a community of faith and as such its members should be of that community of faith. As in other matters the Parish Priest should use his discretion in the selection of qualified members from the parish.

Member should be drawn from the faith community and reflect its diversity. Where appropriate outside advice and counsel can also be engaged to obtain needed specific expertise.

The ultimate responsibility for the financial administration lies with the Parish Priest. As the juridical person responsible it is recommended that he establish a Finance Committee, which he should consult on occasion in order to avoid acting invalidly. (canon. 127:2.2; c532,c1280-1288). The Parish Priest appoints the Parish Finance Committee. (canon 537)

The Parish Finance Committee is an advisory committee assisting the Parish Priest by clarifying the issues and making recommendations so that he is fully aware of all aspects of parish finances when making any particular decision. The Parish Priest may not employ a member of the Parish Finance Committee in any capacity.

The advice of the Finance Committee may be sought both for acts of ordinary administration and acts of extraordinary administration. However the degree of consultation varies. In the administration of the parish, the Parish Priest does not need any specific authorization to carry out such acts but can if he wishes seek the advice of the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee should review the parish annual budget and parish annual report. They should ordinarily be involved in the preparation of both reports.

The Finance Committee should provide assistance in the formulation and communication of the Annual Finance Report to the faith community. (canon 1287.2.) Understandable, regular and clear communication to parishioners is the responsibility of the Parish Priest, and an important area for the Parish Finance Committee to assist. Communication keeps parishioners informed of the parish's condition, its priorities, its needs and progress on previously announced initiatives.

The Finance Committee should regularly review periodic financial reports, balance sheets, income statements, comparisons to budget as well as prior year results and cash flow analysis.

Consult on the construction or renovation of parish facilities, and rental agreements. The Finance Committee assist the Parish Priest in planning for repair, replacement or service of property and equipment to ensure the parish buildings and property are adequately maintained. Review maintenance and utility costs seeking to minimize costs through preventative maintenance, energy conservation, and the implementation of risk management programmes and recommendations.

Assess effectiveness of existing fund-raising programmes and recommend new programmes or changes to existing programmes if revenues are insufficient. Support parish and diocesan stewardship programmes.

Through the prudent advice of the Finance Committee to the Parish Priest, he shall ensure that the ownership of Church goods and all Church properties are safeguarded. Special attention is needed to ensure that adequate insurance is in place.

The Finance Committee should advise the Parish Priest on the acquisition and lease or sale or other disposable assets, without prejudice to the provision of current diocesan guidelines and regulations.

The Finance Committee should help to ensure that there are adequate supervisions and controls in place for collections and handling of cash and should also assist the parish in its fundraising programme and activities.

In accordance with Canon 532, the Parish Priest not the Parish Finance Committee represents the parish in all legal matter.

The Parish Finance Committee shall not be considered the legal owner of parish assets.

The Parish Finance Committee shall not be an employer.

The Parish Finance Committee must be aware that the Parish Priest is bound by the Administration Regulations of the Diocese of Meath.

All documents relating to the parish, its property, portfolios, inventories and finances should be stored in the parish office.

#### Representation

Members should be drawn from the community of faith and reflect its diversity. This requirement may be waived if special expertise is sought. Where appropriate, outside advice and counsel can also be engaged to obtain the needed specific expertise.

Members of the Parish Finance Committee should be chosen based on demonstrable skills or expertise in management and /or finance. Skill sets to include business, law, accounting and communications. Additional personnel with professional knowledge and experience in engineering, architecture, construction and purchasing could also make a significant contribution and should be recruited when available. Expertise can vary widely and can include business owners or executives.

#### Membership

The Parish Priest and other priest of the parish shall be ex officio members of the Parish Finance Committee. There shall be four to six other members appointed by the Parish Priest. The Parish Finance Committee should meet at least four times per year and meetings should not last more than one and a half hours. Business not completed during that period will be carried to the next meeting. The quorum for the meeting shall be half of the members plus one.

#### Officers

The officers of the Parish Finance Committee shall be a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and a Secretary.

The Chairman will preside in a parliamentary manner at all meetings and in consultation with the Parish Priest will be responsible for selecting the time and venue for meetings, preparing the agenda and any other duties so assigned by the Parish Priest.

The Vice-Chairman will have delegated responsibilities.

The Secretary will be responsible for the recording and distribution of minutes, notifying members of upcoming meetings, retaining a record of the business of the meetings and tenure of members of the Committee.

#### Conflict of Interest/Preclusion to Membership

Parish Finance Committee members owe the parish a duty of loyalty. The duty of loyalty requires the members of the Parish Finance Committee to act in the interest of the parish rather than in the personal interest of the member or some other person or organisation. In particular, the duty of loyalty requires a Parish Finance Committee member to avoid conflicts of interest that are detrimental to the parish. Any person who may have a conflict of interest in view of other services, either paid or unpaid, rendered to the parish, by the Parish Finance Committee member, the member's family or the member's business is ineligible to serve as a member of the Parish Finance Committee. No parish employee or member of the family of an employee or relative of the Parish Priest may serve on the Parish Finance Committee. Members of the Parish Finance Committee may serve in other volunteer service roles in the parish such as other committees or boards if, in the judgement of the Parish Priest, such dual service will not create conflict of interest situations. The role of the Parish Finance Committee should not be vitiated.

Confidentiality is in the interest of the common good, of utmost importance and a person who discloses confidential matters discussed at the meetings will be asked to resign from the Finance Committee.

#### Terms

Members of the Parish Finance will be appointed by the Parish Priest for fixed term of three years, and may be reappointed for a third consecutive term at the discretion of the Parish Priest. Having completed three consecutive terms a person will be ineligible for another term on the Committee except in exceptional circumstances. As the Parish Finance Committee is appointed by the Parish Priest to advise him, the term of office of the Parish Finance Committee will automatically terminate on his death, translation or resignation.