



Catholic Diocese of
Saginaw

Diocesan Norms for the Establishment of Parish Pastoral Councils and Parish Finance Councils

**Promulgated and effective immediately on September 17, 2025
by Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw**

2025



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

**HIS EXCELLENCY
MOST REVEREND ROBERT D. GRUSS
By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See
BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF SAGINAW**

DECREE

On the Promulgation of Norms for Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils in the Diocese of Saginaw

Preamble

According to the Code of Canon Law: "After the diocesan bishop has heard the Presbyteral Council, a Pastoral Parish Council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity" (c. 536§1).

The Parish Pastoral Council possesses only a consultative vote and is governed by the norms determined by the diocesan bishop.

After having heard the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Saginaw, I hereby decree the following as particular law for the Diocese of Saginaw.

Every parish in the Diocese of Saginaw is to have its own Parish Pastoral Council. All members of the Parish Pastoral Council are to be parishioners of the parish and in good standing with the Catholic Church (c. 536 §§1-2). Each Parish Pastoral Council is to be under the direction of the pastor.

Furthermore, the Code of Canon Law stipulates that there is to be a Finance Council in each parish, which is governed by the norms issued by the diocesan bishop and in accordance with universal Church law. In this council, the Christian faithful, selected according to these norms, are to assist the pastor in the administration of the goods of the parish (c. 537). The Finance Council is a consultative body in matters pertaining to parish finances, assisting the pastor in both ordinary and extraordinary acts of administration.

The Parish Finance Council carries out its functions without prejudice to the rights of the pastor to represent the parish in all its canonical affairs and to administer the good of the parish according to the norms of law (c. 532).

In order to ensure compliance with the Code of Canon Law, and to provide for the effective establishment and functioning of the Parish Pastoral Councils and the Parish Finance Councils in the Diocese of Saginaw, I hereby promulgate the following diocesan norms.

I, **Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss**, Bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw, by virtue of my pastoral authority and in accordance with the Code of Canon Law, hereby decree:

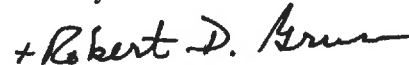
DECREE

1. The attached revised norms for the Parish Pastoral Councils and for the Parish Finance Councils are hereby promulgated as particular law and are binding upon all parishes within the Diocese of Saginaw.
2. These norms shall take effect immediately upon their promulgation.
3. All parishes must establish and determine their membership and conduct their work in conformity with these norms.
4. Every parish is hereby required to revise its parish bylaws in conformity with the diocesan norms, and such revisions shall be completed no later than December 31, 2025.
5. All prior diocesan norms or policies in conflict with these norms are hereby abrogated.

Everything I have decreed must be observed in all its parts. Anything else to the contrary notwithstanding, even if worthy of particular mention, may not be carried out following the promulgation of this decree. I establish that it be promulgated by way of publication on the website of the Diocese of Saginaw.

Given on this Memorial of St. Robert Bellarmine, the 17th day of September in the year of Our Lord 2025, at the chancery of the Diocese of Saginaw.

Sincerely Yours in Christ



Most Reverend Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Saginaw



Reverend Alberto E. Vargas, JCL. JV.
Chancellor

Table of Contents

DECREE	1
Diocesan Norms for the Establishment of Parish Pastoral Councils	4
PREAMBLE	4
ARTICLE I: The Name	4
ARTICLE II: Purpose and Mission	4
ARTICLE III: Membership	5
ARTICLE IV: Limitations of Authority	5
ARTICLE V: Loss of Membership.....	5
ARTICLE VI: Officers	6
ARTICLE VII: Meetings	6
ARTICLE VIII: Other Committees	7
ARTICLE IX: Commissions-Guidelines	7
ARTICLE X: Commission Membership	8
ARTICLE XI: Change in Administration.....	8
ARTICLE XII: Dissolution of the Council.....	8
ARTICLE XIII: Approval.....	8
ARTICLE XIV: Amendment.....	9
ARTICLE XV: Review and Revision.....	9
ARTICLE XVI: Enactment/Promulgation	9
APPENDIX: Canonical References – Canons 511-514	9
CONCLUSION.....	9
Diocesan Norms for the Establishment of Parish Finance Councils	11
PREAMBLE	11
ARTICLE I: The Name	11
ARTICLE II: Purpose and Mission.....	11
ARTICLE III: Membership	13
ARTICLE IV: Limitations of Authority	13
ARTICLE V: Loss of Membership.....	13
ARTICLE VI: Officers	14
ARTICLE VII: Duties/Responsibilities	14
ARTICLE VIII: Meetings.....	15
ARTICLE IX: Other Committees	15
ARTICLE X: Annual Parish Financial Report	15
ARTICLE XI:Change in Administration.....	16
ARTICLE XII: Dissolution of the Council.....	16
ARTICLE XIII: Approval.....	16
ARTICLE XIV:Amendment.....	16
ARTICLE XV: Review and Revision.....	17
ARTICLE XVI: Enactment/Promulgation	17
APPENDIX A: Confidentiality Agreement.....	17
APPENDIX B: Canonical References – Canons 1281-1288.....	18
APPENDIX C: Recommended Consultation.....	18
CONCLUSION.....	18



Catholic Diocese of
Saginaw

Norms for the Establishment of Parish Pastoral Councils

2025

Diocesan Norms for the Establishment of Parish Pastoral Councils

PREAMBLE

According to the Code of Canon Law: “After the diocesan bishop has heard the Presbyteral Council, a Pastoral Council is to be established in each parish; the pastor¹ presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity” (c. 536§1).

Therefore, having heard the Presbyteral Council and having judged it opportune that a Pastoral Council is to be established in each parish in the Diocese of Saginaw, I hereby promulgate the following norms for the establishment of Parish Pastoral Councils in all parishes in the Diocese of Saginaw.

ARTICLE I

The Name

- A. This *consultative* body shall be known as the Parish Pastoral Council of [parish name], within of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saginaw.

ARTICLE II

Purpose and Mission

- A. The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to serve in an advisory capacity to the pastor. “This Pastoral Council possesses a *consultative* vote only and is governed by the norms determined by the diocesan bishop” (c. 536§§1-2).
- B. The council assists the parish in promoting pastoral activity in the parish.
- C. The council supports the parish in fulfilling the pastoral mission of Jesus Christ, which includes:
- Promoting Catholic worship and identity
 - Supporting religious education and Evangelization
 - Fostering stewardship and service
- D. The council provides advice and guidance in building a community of disciples who recognize their baptismal call.
- E. The council engages in pastoral planning, including measurable goals and timelines.
- F. The council assists in creating a vision for the parish in alignment with diocesan and pastoral priorities.
- G. The council promotes unity in the parish through living Gospel values.

¹ Whenever the word “pastor” appears, the titles parochial administrator, rector, and director of parish life may be substituted.

ARTICLE III

Membership

- A. The council shall be comprised of six (6) to nine (9) members and shall not exceed nine. The minimum and maximum number of members shall be stated in the Parish Pastoral Council Bylaws.
- B. The membership shall be comprised of both *ex officio* and selected members of the parish. Depending upon the needs of the parish, *ex officio* membership shall not exceed one-third of the total membership of the council.
- C. *Ex officio* membership, appointed by the pastor from among the parish staff, may include, but is not limited to, the director of catechesis or youth ministry, the bookkeeper, the administrative assistant, or other leadership positions directly related to pastoral ministry.
- D. At least one member of the Parish Finance Council is appointed to the Pastoral Council.
- E. Terms of office, processes for appointments, and related procedures shall be set forth in the Parish Council Bylaws.
- F. The Bylaws shall state the number of members to be elected to the council and the number of members to be appointed by the pastor.
- G. The method of election shall be stated in the Bylaws.
- H. Members of the council nominated by the parishioners and appointed by the pastor, shall serve for a specific term as defined in the Parish Council Bylaws.
- I. To qualify to serve as a member of the Pastoral Council, the person must:
 - 1. Be a practicing Catholic.
 - 2. Be in full communion with the Catholic Church.
 - 3. Lead a life of faith that is in harmony with the teachings and laws of the Catholic Church.
 - 4. Be a member of the parish, that is, the person must reside within the territorial boundaries of the parish or is registered with the parish.
 - 5. Be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
 - 6. Be not bound by any canonical penalty.

ARTICLE IV

Limitations of Authority

- A. Matters concerning the pastor are addressed directly with the bishop; the council has no authority in pastoral appointments, discipline, or oversight (c. 532).
- B. The council serves for advisory purposes only.
- C. Employment decisions rest exclusively with the pastor, in accordance with diocesan policies.
- D. The council do not engage in the administration of the parish.
- E. Day-to-day administration of parish matters is the responsibility of the pastor.

ARTICLE V

Loss of Membership

- A. Membership ends through term completion, resignation, relocation, scandal, leaving Church, excommunication, or death.

- B. A new pastor may remove or replace members, but not before six (6) months into the assignment.

ARTICLE VI

Officers

- A. The pastor presides over all council meetings and convenes the meetings.
- B. The council shall have a chairperson, vice-chair, and a secretary, appointed by the pastor from its membership, for a term not to exceed three (3) years.
1. **Responsibilities of the Chairperson**
 - Prepare the meeting agenda in consultation with the pastor and distribute the agenda at least one day prior to the meeting.
 - Facilitate meetings to promote participation, discussion and consensus.
 - Maintain official list and terms of council members.
 - Ensures that council meeting minutes are maintained and made available to members.
 2. **Responsibilities of the Vice-Chair**
 - Facilitates the meetings in the absence of the chair.
 - Assist the chair as necessary.
 3. **Responsibilities of the Secretary**
 - Keep accurate meeting minutes and attendance records.
 - Note unexcused absences and report to the chair (3 unexcused absences in 12 months).
 - Manage council correspondence.
 - Ensure that approved meeting minutes are provided to the parish business manager/bookkeeper so that a complete record of the council's activities is maintained in the parish.

ARTICLE VII

Meetings

- A. The pastor presides over all the meetings of the council.
- B. The meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be convened by the pastor only.
- C. The council meets 4-6 times per year; remote participation is permitted if necessary.
- D. A quorum shall consist of the pastor and a simple majority of the members. This norm also shall be stated in the Parish Pastoral Council Bylaws.
- E. The parish business manager/bookkeeper serves as a resource to the council and is accountable to the pastor.
- F. The Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Council shall meet jointly at least twice annually.
- G. These meetings shall not exceed two (2) hours.
- H. Minutes should be filed in the parish office; approved minutes should be posted in the church vestibule.
- I. Special meetings may be called by the pastor as necessary.
- J. Final decisions are made by consensus; each member has one vote if a vote is needed.

- K. Any deliberation or decision reached by a Parish Pastoral Council that is not presided over by the pastor are to be considered invalid and therefore, null and void.

Sample Agenda

- Call to order
- Roll call/attendance (6 of 9 members)
- Opening prayer
- Approval of minutes
- Ordering of agenda
- Old business
- Reports by director of religious education, bookkeeper, etc.
- Commission and Committee Reports: corrections of written committee report in addition to the monthly reporting schedule as follows:
 - Liturgy/Worship: January, September
 - Stewardship: March, September
 - Christian Service: May, November
- Financial update
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Pastor's comments
- Calendar: next meetings, agenda items
- Closing prayer
- Adjournment

ARTICLE VIII
Other Committees

- A. Committees may be *ad hoc* or permanent, with defined terms.
- B. Pastor may establish committees to assist the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Council (e.g., building, grounds, cemetery, etc.).

ARTICLE IX
Commissions-Guidelines

- A. Standing commissions are meant to assist the Pastoral Council in pastoral activities.
- B. Commissions implement diocesan and parish priorities.
- C. Staff may be appointed by the pastor to work with commissions in specific ministry areas.
- D. Major new programs or changes require Pastoral Council review and pastor approval.
- E. Commissions provide written reports to the council; schedule is outlined in the sample meeting agenda.

ARTICLE X

Commission Membership

- A. The number of commission members can range from 6-9, following the guidelines listed in the Parish Pastoral Council membership guidelines, but the range can be adjusted to meet the needs of the commission.
- B. Selection of commission members may be by appointment, selection or lot, election, or a combination of these methods. Terms of office shall coincide with the Parish Council terms from July 1 to June 30.
- C. Listing of Parish Commissions:
 - Parish Christian Service Commission: outreach, visitation, direct assistance.
 - Parish Education/Formation Commission: school, catechesis, diocesan resources.
 - Parish Liturgy/Worship Commission: liturgical planning, formation, ministry recruitment.
 - Parish Stewardship Commission: invite parishioners to assume stewardship role by
 - Establishing an annual Parish Stewardship Educational Program.
 - Motivating and educating parishioners to share their time and talents.
 - Organizing seminar programs on wills and one-time gift giving opportunities.

ARTICLE XI

Change in Administration

- A. In the event that the pastor dies, resigns, or is transferred, the Finance Council will cease to function unless called upon to do so by the Regional Vicar (who will preside during the interim period).
- B. A new pastor may confirm or appoint new members within six months.
- C. Appointments must follow diocesan norms with prudence and effectiveness.

ARTICLE XII

Dissolution of the Council

- A. The Council may be dissolved by the pastor for grave cause, with prior diocesan bishop approval.
- B. Rationale must be provided to the diocese before dissolution.
- C. Arbitrary dissolution or removal may result in loss of expertise.

ARTICLE XIII

Approval

- A. Bylaws shall be drafted by the pastor in accordance with diocesan norms and approved at the parish level.
- B. Approved copies are filed in the parish office.

ARTICLE XIV Amendment

- A. These diocesan norms may be amended only with the approval of the diocesan bishop or his delegate.
- B. Proposed new amendments must be discussed at a council meeting.

ARTICLE XV Review and Revision

- A. Parish Bylaws should be reviewed and updated every four years or as needed, in consultation with the diocesan bishop or delegate.
- B. These norms support effective parish operation and should not restrict it.

ARTICLE XVI Enactment/Promulgation

- A. These diocesan norms are issued under the authority of the diocesan bishop. They shall become effective on the date of promulgation by the diocesan bishop.
- B. All parishes in the Diocese of Saginaw are to observe these norms, unless otherwise determined by the diocesan bishop.
- C. These norms shall be promulgated by publication on the diocesan website. A copy shall also be filed in the diocesan archives for reference.

APPENDIX Canonical References – Canons 511-514

Canon 511 – Pastoral councils may be established to study and advise on pastoral matters.

Canon 512 – Members are selected for their faith, morals, and prudence; they represent the diversity of the parish community.

Canon 513 – Councils serve for a defined term; they cease when the term ends unless reconstituted.

Canon 514 – The council is consultative only and presided by the pastor; it cannot act independently.

CONCLUSION

The Diocesan Norms for the Establishment of Parish Pastoral Councils' Bylaws conclude with Article XVI. The norms are to be observed in all parishes of the Diocese of Saginaw, unless otherwise determined by the diocesan bishop. These norms have been approved and promulgated by the diocesan bishop, as confirmed in a separate episcopal decree.



Catholic Diocese of
Saginaw

Norms for the Establishment of Parish Finance Councils

2025

Diocesan Norms for the Establishment of Parish Finance Councils

PREAMBLE

The Code of Canon Law mandates that each parish is to have a Finance Council. This council, governed by universal law and by norms issued by the diocesan bishop, enables members of the Christian faithful chosen according to these same norms to assist the pastor² in the administration of parish goods (c. 537). At the same time, the council carries out its mission without prejudice to the pastor's right and duty to represent the parish in all canonical matters and to administer its goods in accordance with the law (c. 532).

These norms are intended to guide the Parish Finance Councils in their work with integrity, transparency, and accountability, always in service of the mission of the Church. In fidelity to both diocesan policies and civil law, the norms outline the structure, responsibilities, and ethical standards that shape the life and work of Finance Councils throughout the diocese.

Therefore, in order to ensure compliance with the Code of Canon Law and to foster good stewardship of the temporal goods entrusted to the Church, I hereby promulgate the following norms for the establishment and operation of Parish Finance Councils in all parishes of the Diocese of Saginaw.

ARTICLE I

The Name

- A. This *consultative* body shall be known as the Parish Finance Council of [*Parish Name*], within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saginaw.

ARTICLE II

Purpose and Mission

- A. The purpose of the Parish Finance Council is to serve as a consultative body, exercising a consultative capacity in matters of parish finances and assisting the pastor in both ordinary³ and extraordinary⁴ acts of administration, in accordance with canon 537 of the Code of Canon Law and diocesan norms.

² Whenever the word "pastor" appears, the titles parochial administrator or rector and director of parish life may be substituted.

³ "*Ordinary administration*" means the acts relating to business and financial affairs, including the day-to-day operations of the parish; the payment of outstanding indebtedness in the ordinary course; the hiring and payment of reasonable compensation to employees necessary or desirable for the orderly operation of the parish in agreement with the policies of the diocese; entering into contracts and agreements regarding routine maintenance, provided that no contract or agreement will commit or oblige the parish for an expenditure in excess of the minimum without the prior review of the expenditure by the Parish Finance Council.

⁴ "Extraordinary administration" are those acts whose monetary value exceeds the minimum limits set by the diocesan bishop or whose purposes lie outside the ordinary or daily fulfillment of the mission of the parish, such as alienation of property or the expansion of a church building.

- B. The council serves in an advisory capacity, assisting the pastor in the financial administration of the parish according to the norms of law.
- C. The council advises the pastor in acquisition, administration, leasing, and alienation of the parish goods according to the norms of law.
- D. The council reviews the parish budget, proposed budgets for extraordinary expenditures, receipts (including offertory collection summaries), allocations for expenses not included in the approved budget, financial statements, and the annual year-end report of income and expenditures that considers trends in Mass attendance and parishioner growth or decline.
- E. Under the guidance of the Diocesan Finance Office, the council assists in preparing and communicating the annual financial report to the local ordinary and to the parish community, as required by canon 1287 §§1–2.
- F. As advisory to the pastor, the council assists the pastor by reviewing the parish's financial condition, including periodic financial reports, internal controls, and procedures, and offers recommendations for sound stewardship.
- G. The council shares its expertise and experience to support parish governance.
- H. Consultation within the council is central to decision-making by sharing information, listening, contributing to discussion, and promoting consensus.
- I. The pastor or director of parish life is to be present at all council meetings.
- J. If the pastor acts contrary to council recommendations, an explanation must be provided to the council.
- K. The pastor is to seek the advice of the council in planning long-range financial and business practices of the parish.
 - 1. The pastor is to consult with the council regarding money that can be usefully set aside for the purposes of the parish (1284 §2, 6°).
 - 2. The stable patrimony consists of the goods that enable the parish to fulfill its mission. The council assists the pastor to ensure that the stable patrimony (property and assets) entrusted to the parish is maintained and protected with the appropriate practices according to diocesan norms (1284 §2, 1°).
 - 3. The council also assists the pastor to ensure that the means used to protect the parish patrimony are civilly valid (1284 §2, 2°).
 - 4. Acts of extraordinary administration are those acts whose monetary value exceeds the minimum limits⁵ set by the diocesan bishop or whose purposes lie outside the ordinary or daily fulfillment of the mission of the parish, such as alienation of property or the expansion of a church building.
 - 5. The minimum limits of expenditures for the Diocese of Saginaw are defined by the diocesan bishop on a periodic basis.
 - 6. The pastor is to seek the counsel and/or consent of the council in the event of extraordinary acts of administration, careful to observe the diocesan guidelines⁶ and limits.

⁵ The minimum limit pertains to any transaction with an amount set periodically by the bishop in which the pastor is required to consult with the Parish Finance Council. Currently, the minimum is \$25,000.00.

⁶ An example of diocesan guidelines is preserving parish property. The bishop also must provide consent for certain decisions, such as to sell property or to close a church.

ARTICLE III

Membership

- A. The council shall be comprised of 5-7 members.
- B. Members are appointed in writing by the pastor.
- C. Council members shall serve a three-year (3) term that is renewable once.
- D. After two terms, a member must wait at least one year before reappointment.
- E. Terms are to be staggered to avoid unnecessary turnover with new terms beginning on July 1 of each year.
- F. To serve as a member of the Parish Finance Council, the person must:
 - 1. Be a practicing Catholic in full communion with the Catholic Church.
 - 2. Lead a life of faith that is in harmony with the teachings and laws of the Catholic Church.
 - 3. Be a member of the parish, that is, the person must reside within the territorial boundaries of the parish or is registered with the parish.
 - 4. Be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
 - 5. Be not bound by any canonical penalty.
 - 6. Have expertise in financial affairs or in civil law.
 - 7. Known integrity.
 - 8. Relatives of the pastor up to 4th degree are excluded (brothers, sisters, cousins etc.).
 - 9. The council may consult resources and persons, including former members.
 - 10. The business manager/bookkeeper serves as a resource.
 - 11. Parish employees, their immediate families, and the pastor's family may not serve simultaneously (spouses, siblings and parent/adult.). This restriction applies to all official roles, voting and non-voting positions, and even advisory participation in council meetings.
 - 12. Retired parish bookkeepers may serve only after one year's post-retirement.
 - 13. Members may resign in writing; the pastor may remove a member for just cause.

ARTICLE IV

Limitations of Authority

- A. The council serves in an advisory capacity only. It does not have authority over personnel matters.
- B. Employment decisions rest exclusively with the pastor per diocesan policies.
- C. Concerns about the pastor are addressed directly with the bishop or his delegate; the council has no authority to intervene in pastoral appointments, discipline, or oversight.
- D. The council does not engage in the administration of the parish.
- E. Day-to-day administration of parish matters is the responsibility of the pastor.

ARTICLE V

Loss of Membership

- A. Membership ends by term completion, resignation, relocation, scandalous behavior, leaving the Church, excommunication, canonical penalty, or death.

- B. The new pastor may remove or replace members, but not within the first six months of appointment.

ARTICLE VI

Officers

- A. The pastor presides over all council meetings and convenes the meetings.
- B. The council shall have a chairperson, vice-chair, and a secretary, appointed by the pastor from its membership for a term not to exceed three (3) years.
1. **Responsibilities of the Chairperson**
 - Prepare the meeting agenda in consultation with the pastor and distribute the agenda at least one day prior to the meeting.
 - Facilitate meetings to promote participation, discussion and consensus.
 - Maintain official list and terms of council members.
 - Ensures that council meeting minutes are maintained and made available to members.
 2. **Responsibilities of the Vice-Chair**
 - Facilitates the meetings in the absence of the chair.
 - Assist the chair as necessary.
 3. **Responsibilities of the Secretary**
 - Keep accurate meeting minutes and attendance records.
 - Manage council correspondence.
 - Note unexcused absences and report to the chair (3 unexcused absences in 12 months).
 - Ensure that approved meeting minutes are provided to the parish business manager/bookkeeper, so that a complete record of the council's activities is maintained in the parish.

ARTICLE VII

Duties/Responsibilities

- A. Assist the pastor in preparing the annual budget according to diocesan norms.
- B. Examine annual accounts of revenues and expenditures.
- C. Advise the pastor on acquisition, administration, contracting, leasing or alienation of parish temporal goods.
- D. Advise the pastor on extraordinary administration, including parish investments, annuities, contracts, mortgages, or loans exceeding diocesan thresholds.
- E. Provide expert opinions prior to petitions for ordinary and extraordinary acts.
- F. Review parish indebtedness and assist the pastor in fulfilling his obligations.
- G. Assist in preparation and communication of annual financial reports.
- H. Consult on funds to be set aside for parish purposes.
- I. Assist the pastor in ensuring parish stable patrimony (Can. 1284 §2,1°).

ARTICLE VIII

Meetings

- A. The pastor presided over all the meetings of the council.
- B. The meetings of the Parish Finance Council shall be convened by the pastor only.
- C. The council meets 4-6 times per year; remote participation is permitted if necessary.
- D. A quorum shall consist of the pastor and a simple majority of the members. This norm also shall be stated in the Parish Finance Council Bylaws.
- E. The parish business manager/bookkeeper serves as a resource to the council and is accountable to the pastor.
- F. The Finance Council and Pastoral Council shall meet jointly at least twice annually.
- G. These meeting shall not exceed two (2) hours.
- H. Minutes are to be filed in the parish office.
- I. Special meetings may be called by the pastor as necessary.
- J. The Council collaborates with parish commissions/committees on financial matters.
- K. Final decisions are made by consensus; each member has one vote if a vote is needed.
- L. Any deliberation or decision reached by a Parish Finance Council that is not presided over by the pastor are to be considered invalid and therefore, null and void.

Sample Agenda

- Call to order
- Roll call/attendance
- Opening prayer
- Approval of minutes
- Ordering of agenda
- Old business (financial reports, proposed budget)
- Financial updates
- Unfinished business (if any)
- New business (projects, goals)
- Pastor's comments
- Calendar: next meetings, agenda items
- Closing prayer
- Adjournment

ARTICLE IX

Other Committees

- A. The pastor may establish committees to assist the Parish Finance Council and the Parish Pastoral Council (e.g., building, grounds, cemetery, etc.).
- B. Committees are formed from parishioners appointed by the pastor.

ARTICLE X

Annual Parish Financial Report

- A. The pastor is to review the Annual Financial Report to the Diocese with the council prior to its submission. The report shall be signed by the pastor, the business manager or bookkeeper, and the finance council chair. Requirements of the Diocesan Finance Office include:
1. Parish accounts reporting
 2. Government reporting compliance
 3. Employee benefits and salaries confirmation
 4. Compliance with diocesan financial policies
 5. Accounting for donations and contractors
 6. Compensation for clergy and religious
 7. Reporting indebtedness, capital campaigns, rental income, legal issues, endowments
 8. Proof of insurance

ARTICLE XI

Change in Administration

- A. In the event that the pastor dies, resigns, or is transferred, the Finance Council ceases to function unless called upon to do so by the Regional Vicar (who will preside during the interim period).
- B. A new pastor may confirm or appoint new members within six months.
- C. Appointments must follow diocesan norms with prudence and effectiveness.

ARTICLE XII

Dissolution of the Council

- A. The council may be dissolved by the pastor for grave cause, with prior diocesan bishop approval.
- B. Rationale must be provided to the diocese before dissolution.
- C. Arbitrary dissolution or removal may result in loss of expertise.

ARTICLE XIII

Approval

- A. Parish Bylaws shall be drafted by the pastor in accordance with diocesan norms and approved at the parish level.
- B. Approved copies are filed in the parish office.

ARTICLE XIV

Amendment

- A. Diocesan norms may be amended solely by the diocesan bishop.
- B. Proposed new amendments must be discussed at a council meeting.

ARTICLE XV

Review and Revision

- A. Parish Bylaws should be reviewed and updated every four years or as needed, in consultation with the diocesan bishop or his delegate.
- B. These norms support effective parish operation, not restrict it.

ARTICLE XVI

Enactment/Promulgation

- A. These diocesan norms are issued under the authority of the diocesan bishop. They shall become effective on the date of promulgation by the diocesan bishop.
- B. All parishes in the Diocese of Saginaw are to observe these norms, unless otherwise determine by the diocesan bishop.
- C. These norms shall be promulgated by publication on the diocesan website. A copy shall also be filed in the diocesan archives for reference.

APPENDIX

Appendix A – Confidentiality Agreement

Appendix B – Canonical References – Canons 1281-1288

Appendix C – Recommended Consultation

APPENDIX A

Confidentiality Agreement

- A. Members must keep all matters confidential until officially publicized.
- B. Members must act in a manner supportive of the parish and pastor, avoiding disparaging comments.
- C. Conflicts of interest must be reported immediately; resignation to be offered if necessary.
- D. A Confidentiality Agreement must be acknowledged and signed by all members and committees.

Sample Confidentiality Agreement:

For the (*parish name*) Finance Council:

It shall be the obligation of the Parish Finance Council, and any sub-committee(s) to subscribe to the following:

While serving and thereafter, members shall keep confidential all matters of record or reference, whether or not communicated or discussed in meetings or among those serving, until such time as such matters are officially publicized.

Trust, sensitivity, and candor shall be observed.

Members shall always speak and act, inside and outside of the Parish Finance Council or its committee meetings, in a manner supportive of the parish and the pastor. While honest and healthy reflection is respected, comments of derision or embarrassment to the parish shall be avoided.

If any conflict of interest, whether real or perceived, should arise the member must immediately inform the pastor, and if the pastor determines, offer his or her resignation from the parish finance council.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, on the ____ day of, _____ 20__, the Reverend _____ Pastor of (*parish name*), has adopted the foregoing Code of Conduct and Confidentiality, which shall be signed by the members of the (*parish name*) Parish Finance Council and its committees.

APPENDIX B

Canonical References – Canons 1281-1288

- A. The Parish Finance Council and its members are guided by Church law in administering parish goods.
 - 1. Pastors must act within ordinary administration limits and obtain proper approval for extraordinary acts.
 - 2. Clerics and lay administrators must fulfill duties in the name of the Church.
 - 3. Inventories of parish property must be accurate and maintained.
 - 4. Donations for piety or charity are allowed only within ordinary administration limits.
 - 5. Employment practices must respect Church and civil law, including just wages.
 - 6. Annual financial reporting to the bishop and when appropriate, to the faithful is required.
 - 7. Pastors may not initiate or contest legal action in the name of the parish without written permission from the bishop.

APPENDIX C

Recommended Consultation

- A. Ordinary administrative acts below diocesan thresholds must be reported.
- B. Recommended areas for consultation: Parishes are encouraged to consult the diocesan offices, in addition to the pastor, when considering matters of significant financial or administrative importance, including but not limited to:
 - 1. Management of parish funds and banking
 - 2. Hiring/training/evaluating business staff
 - 3. Other ordinary administrative acts that are below the threshold for extraordinary acts

CONCLUSION

Diocesan Norms for the Establishment of Parish Finance Council Bylaws conclude with Article XVI. They are to be observed in all parishes of the Diocese of Saginaw, unless otherwise determined by the diocesan bishop. These norms have been approved and promulgated by the diocesan bishop, as confirmed in a separate episcopal decree.



Catholic Diocese of
Saginaw

Office of the Chancellor
Phone: 989-752-1971

Catholic Diocese of Saginaw, 5800 Weiss Street, Saginaw Michigan 48603