

# PARISH COUNCIL BYLAWS

## ST. FRANCES CABRINI CONGREGATION West Bend, Wisconsin

### Article I: NOMINATION AND SELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS

**Section 1:** At each annual selection, one-third of the members shall be selected for a term of three years to fill the vacancies caused by the members whose terms are due to expire.

**Section 2:** At least 60 days before the annual selection of new members, the chairperson shall appoint a Selection Committee of at least four members, two of whom are Council members. The Selection Committee's responsibility is to manage all aspects of the selection process including:

**a) Education of Parishioners:** Parishioners are educated through bulletin and pulpit announcements about the Council and the selection process for at least two weeks. They are asked to give prayerful consideration to nominating parishioners or themselves for the Council.

**b) Nomination:** Nomination forms are made available at all liturgies on a designated weekend. Parishioners are invited to write down the names of persons they feel have the essential characteristics of a Council member.

**c) Notification:** Persons whose names were submitted by parishioners are contacted by Selection Committee members to inform them of their nominations and of the required orientation. At least 30 days before the date of selection, the Selection Committee publishes in the parish bulletin the names of those who have agreed to continue in the nomination process. Additional nominations are acceptable if submitted in writing to the Selection Committee within ten days after the designated weekend.

**d) Orientation:** The Selection Committee plans the local orientation session and requires nominees' attendance at a local and archdiocesan orientation. The Council Chairperson will lead an orientation session prior to or after the discernment selection process.

**e) Acceptance:** Those who feel called to serve as Council members accept nomination and participate on the final slate of nominees. The Selection Committee endeavors to insure that the slate of nominees is representative of the parish community. In no event shall any persons be deemed nominated unless the Selection Committee receives an expression of willingness to serve. If a member of the Selection Committee becomes a nominee, that person ceases to be a Selection Committee member.

**f) Final Slate of Nominees:** The Selection Committee may require nominees to submit biographical information and their statement of parish vision to the Selection Committee for distribution to all nominees and existing Council members.

**g) Facilitation:** The Selection Committee facilitates the actual selection process and informs the parish of the results.

**Section 3:** The selection of new members of the Council shall be by discernment. In the context of prayer and with the help of a facilitator, the nominees who are best suited to serve on the Council at this time are discerned. Council member attendance at the discernment for new council members is especially important. They are asked to support the discernment process and the 'Team' concept in asking the Holy Spirit to influence our effort to guide us in obtaining dedicated and committed parishioners for Parish Council.

## **Article II: VACANCIES AND REMOVALS**

**Section 1:** Any member of the Council may resign by filing a written resignation with the pastor and the chairperson.

**Section 2:** At any meeting of the Council, any at-large member may be removed for good cause by consensus or by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the Council. Any member whose removal has been proposed shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting. Good cause includes missing two consecutive meetings without good reason and without notification to the chairperson, physical or mental incapacity, or failure to perform duties as a Council member.

**Section 3:** A vacancy among the at-large members shall be filled by one appointed to serve the remainder of the term. The chairperson will make appointment, with approval of the Council. Consideration should be given to previous nominees.

## **Article III: OFFICERS**

**Section 1:** Selection of officers of the Council shall be by discernment from among and by the Council members present at the annual transition meeting. Offices shall be filled in the following order: chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary.

**Section 2:** At the transition meeting following the annual selection of Council members, newly selected members join the existing Council for the purpose of selecting Council officers for the following year.

**Section 3:** No Council officer may serve more than three consecutive 1-year terms in any one office.

**Section 4:** The pastor and council officers shall serve as the Council's Executive Committee. Together they develop the council agenda and ensure that a portion of meeting time is spent in prayer. The agenda is submitted to Council members at least 1 week before the meeting and published in the parish bulletin the weekend before the meeting.

**Section 5:** The chairperson:

- a) Is aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the Council and communicates these to the Council, committees and parish community.
- b) Organizes/coordinates activities and work of the Council. Develops and maintains an annual Council calendar consistent with the parish calendar.
- c) Leads the Executive Committee.
- d) Coordinates the formation/education for Council members, utilizing the parish staff and offerings at the district and archdiocesan levels.
- e) Facilitates Council meetings by helping the members work together, participate fully in discussions and decision-making through consensus. Also may conduct parish meetings.

- f) With the pastor, monitors implementation of all Council recommendations and decisions.
- g) Ensures that a Parish Council budget is established and communicated to the Finance /Administrative Services Committee.
- h) Is an ex officio member of all standing and ad hoc committees of the Council.
- i) Assists the next chairperson in understanding the Council's history, responsibilities and resources. Transfers all Council materials to the new chairperson.
- j) Serves as the parish representative to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council district assembly, unless delegated to the vice-chairman.
- k) Orients candidates to the Parish Council prior to the discernment process.
- l) Performs duties consistent with the office as the Council may direct.

**Section 6: The vice-chairperson:**

- a) Conducts meetings in the absence of the chairperson.
- b) Becomes chairperson in the event of vacancy.
- c) Performs duties consistent with the office as the chairperson or as the Council may direct.

**Section 7: The secretary:**

- a) Oversees the accurate recording of the minutes of each meeting and sees to it that the minutes and the agenda are made available to the Council members, committee chairpersons, and the pastoral staff. Provides a condensed report of the meeting for publication in the parish bulletin.
- b) Takes attendance at meetings and records absences.
- c) Maintains the official list of all Council and standing committee officers and members and their terms, the list of all ad hoc committee chairpersons and members and keeps these lists current with regard to addresses and phone numbers.
- d) Updates the Archdiocesan "Extranet" whenever a change in membership on Council occurs. This is done on-line. The Council secretary works with the parish web administrator to keep the archdiocesan registry current.
- e) Reports to the Council all communication. Handles correspondence for the Council, including agendas, minutes, notification of regular and special meetings, notes of thanks, etc.
- f) Performs such duties consistent with office as the chairperson or Council may direct.

## **Article IV: MEETINGS**

**Section 1: Regular** meetings of the Council shall be held at such time, place and date as the Council may designate. Prayer shall be an integral part of the meeting.

**Section 2: The agenda** shall be developed in advance of the meeting by the pastor and council officers based upon the proposals from committees, liaison reports, the parish council annual calendar, strategic plan or mission goals, ongoing needs and concerns of the parish. Parishioners may submit items for consideration to any council member one week before the meeting.

**Section 3: Advance notice** of the time and place of the meetings of the Council shall be published in the parish bulletin, and all members of the parish shall be entitled and welcome to attend as observers. The Council may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the Council may announce.

**Section 4: Special Meetings.** Notice of special meetings shall be given to all members within a reasonable time before the meeting, stating its time, place and purpose. No other business than that stated, as the purpose shall be conducted at that meeting.

**Section 5: Closed Session.** When a question arises at a council meeting that relates to a person's right to privacy, the council may request the absence of visitors for that portion of the meeting. The content of the closed session is not part of the formal minutes of the meeting and is not made public.

**Section 6: Absence.** Notification of intended absence should be given to the Council Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson or Secretary before the meeting.

## **Article V: STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Section 1: Purpose.** Each standing committee implements the Council's priorities and goals in its own areas of responsibility in the collaborative spirit of working together to accomplish the parish's stated mission. All committee work leads to building a faith community, proclaiming the Word of God, calling people to prayer and motivating people to serve others.

**Section 2: Scope.** All committees are accountable to the Council. Committees make decisions in their areas of responsibility following the principle of subsidiary, which means making decisions at the most appropriate level in the parish committee structure.

**Section 3: Functions.** The basic functions of each council standing committee are to:

- a) Identify needs of the parish within its areas of responsibility and in keeping with the parish mission.
- b) Establish priorities among the needs and communicate how these needs can realistically be addressed and where inter-committee/inter-parish collaboration might be effective.
- c) Formulate long-range and short-term goals and objectives.
- d) Research and investigate options to implement goals.
- e) Submit the proposed programs to the Council for support.
- f) Communicate with the pastor and pastoral staff about the implementation.
- g) Maintain communication with the parish concerning programs, encouraging active support and involvement.
- h) Maintain communication with the respective archdiocesan offices and agencies for guidelines and resources.
- i) Provide on-going formation of committee members in its areas of responsibility through workshops, study, spiritual formation, etc.
- j) Determine budget priorities in the area of the committee's responsibility and make recommendations to the Council through the *Finance/Administrative Services Committee*.
- k) Periodically evaluate existing programs and activities.
- l) Provide the council with regular, oral or written reports of the work of their committees.

**Section 4:** The descriptions of the individual standing committees of the Council are:

- **Finance/Administrative Services**
- **Human Concerns**
- **Evangelization and Faith Formation**
- **Parish Life**
- **Pastoral Care**
- **Prayer and Worship**
- **School**
- **Stewardship**

**Finance/Administrative Services:** This committee makes recommendations to the Council concerning all aspects of parish stewardship, financial and budget matters, personnel, maintenance of parish facilities and properties, and fundraising for the parish. The activities and

recommendations of this committee are firmly rooted in the biblical concept of stewardship. The committee works closely with the Council and is supportive of all other committees. This committee does not decide priorities for the parish -- that is the responsibility of the Council. The pastor and trustees are ex officio members of the Finance/Administrative Services Committee.

**Human Concerns:** This committee discerns needs of persons in the parish and wider community, especially the poor, and identifies resources to meet those needs enlisting the active cooperation of parish members. This committee fulfills the justice dimensions of scripture and our church tradition acknowledging that every Christian is called to service and to work for justice, including Respect Life efforts. The committee's scope of responsibility is two-fold: 1) to meet immediate needs; 2) to work for changes in the structures of society, which are oppressive. Committee members are not responsible to do all of the committee's work but rather to involve others in actively accepting the responsibility of their baptism. The committee supports parishioners already involved in service, advocacy, justice education, and empowerment of people. This committee works with community groups and other parishes to help solve related problems. They keep parishioners aware of issues relating to justice, peace, hunger and homeless persons on local, national and international levels so that appropriate Christian action on such issues can be determined.

**Evangelization and Faith Formation:** The role of this committee is to develop within the parish awareness that the parish community has the responsibility for promoting the educational/formation aspect of the mission of the Church. Christian/Lifelong Faith Formation is a lifelong process aimed at personal conversion and growth in faith. This committee is advisory to educational administration in the design, implementation and evaluation of the total Christian educational/formation programs in the parish, which include: sacramental preparation, RCIA, adult and family ministry, youth ministry, school ministry and child ministry.

**Parish Life:** Provide a clearing house and communication center for parish social organizations such as scouting and service oriented groups such as Christian Women; provide overall coordination of activities that seek to enhance parish community life through social gatherings and other events; development and oversight of the parish communication network.

**Pastoral Care:** Coordinate the pastoral care of parish members; provide for visitation of hospitalized, homebound and nursing home residents, and bereavement ministry; provide for regular sacramental ministry to the sick; develop other pastoral ministries of support and compassion, healing and recovery.

**Prayer and Worship:** This committee nourishes and gives direction to the liturgical aspect of parish life. They provide opportunities for parishioners to deepen their faith through a variety of prayer experiences and liturgical celebrations. They identify the spiritual needs of parishioners and maintain an on going program of education and training for liturgical ministers.

**School:** This committee along with the priest(s), principal and director of religious education is dedicated to the promotion and welfare of Catholic education; responsible for identifying and expressing the educational goals and objectives of the parish community; compiles bylaws to define its mode of governance and operational procedures subject to the approval of the Council.

**Stewardship:** With Stewardship as a way of life, committee members coordinate activities and formation that lead to a greater understanding and practice of stewardship of time, talent, and treasure; develop and direct processes to identify and recruit parish leadership; disseminate information on continuing formation opportunities for parish leadership.

**Section 5:** All standing committees operate under a set of common Standing Committee Guidelines established by the Council and reviewed by the Council every five years. Each committee chairperson

shall meet with the Council at least once a year. A committee is able to make decisions only if a quorum is present which means a majority of its members. There may be majority and minority reports presented to the Council if agreement cannot be achieved.

**Section 6: Committee Officers.** The chairperson of each committee shall be discerned by and from the committee members, based on competence, leadership ability and knowledge of the committee's area of ministry. The term of office for the chairperson is one year. Other officers determined by the committee, e.g. secretary, are selected in a similar manner. Neither an employee of the parish nor an *ex officio* member of the council shall be eligible to be an officer.

### **Article VI: AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

The Parish Council may amend the Bylaws by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the members at two consecutive meetings of the council.

Date of Approval by the Parish Council: \_\_\_\_\_

Add PC approval date.
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Date of Approval by the Archdiocese: July 11, 2007 NW

Date of Most Recent Amendment: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Next Full Review: \_\_\_\_\_