

How to Develop a Parish Council Manual of Policy and Procedure

Focus: to explain how to prepare a policy and procedure manual.

Number of Facilitators: one

Materials needed: samples of existing policy and procedure manuals may be displayed

Information sheet(s) for distribution:

Approximate Run Time: 30 minutes

Why is a policy and procedure manual needed for parish councils?

When new officers and standing chairpersons are elected, a policy and procedure manual will provide them with information that promotes continuity. The manual is a useful tool for all members to clarify established and agreed-upon council practices. Which charities does the parish council support? How many people are sent to annual conventions? Who receives sympathy or mass card? All these matters can be covered in a policy manual.

What examples of manuals are available?

Diocesan or provincial councils' policy manuals can be useful in determining which items would be most relevant at the parish council level. Review established policy manuals to build a framework for a new manual.

Where to start:

- A brief history of the council and a statement of goals would be a good introduction.
- Procedures
- President appoints an ad hoc committee, usually composed of three past presidents; chairperson could be the organization chairperson or a member of the group minutes of council general meetings for past six years are made available to the committee date set for completion of task (three to six months)

Draft manual presented to parish executive for review/approval followed by presentation to members at a general meeting – requires motion/second/approval; copies should be made available to members.

The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Content examples:

1. meetings - executive, general (place, time, day)
2. policies as established by motions or long-standing traditions
3. on death of CWL member or immediate family members (husband, son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother)

4. mass intentions (monthly or other)
5. presentation of going-away gifts to CWL members iv. honorariums/travel allowance/gift to guests
6. remembrances for members who are ill, hospitalized, celebrating wedding anniversaries or other special occasions
7. presentation of Maple Leaf Service Pins (procedures, criteria, ceremonies)
8. council responsibilities on parish site (altar, kitchen, supplies or other)
9. safekeeping arrangements for council historical records (location/updates)
10. preparation and presentation of council budget
11. paid expenses for voting/accredited delegates to diocesan convention (travel, hotel, meals)
12. paid expenses for members or delegates to other conventions – provincial and or +national (travel, hotel, meals)
13. funeral luncheons
14. on-going commitments, e.g., diocesan seminarian fund, annual scholarships, gifts (first communion, confirmation), annual parish project, save-a-family plan, etc.
15. gifts to pastor/associate pastor/parish worker
16. on-going special events sponsored by the council
17. solicitation of gifts/advertising from outside sources
18. petty cash or advances for elected officers
19. travel and/or allowable expenses for other meetings, especially for the council president

All parish councils have unique priorities; what is important to one may not be addressed by others.

It is important to address the particular needs of the parish council within the policy and procedure manual.

Can you think of other items to add to the list above? Gather suggestions.

Regular review and revision will enhance the manual's value and usefulness.

See also Resource Manuals on the National Website:

www.cwl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Smores-for-posting-to-website.pdf

and

www.cwl.ca/resources/catch-the-fire/