

Pastoral Council Minutes
March 14, 2023

Present: Fr. George Darling, Bob Siegel, Char Snoap, Debbie Macy, Rob Taber, Gina Mol, Sarah Hormuth, Steve Barton, MaryBeth O'Rourke

Absent: Jennifer Crampton

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM. Bob Siegel opened with prayer. The minutes of the January 10, 2023 meeting were approved.

Fr. George distributed copies of the Diocesan Handbook Guidelines for Parish Finance and Pastoral Councils. These guidelines were developed under the leadership of Bishop Rose, October 1, 1992. Fr. George explained that the Pastoral Council is to support the Pastor in the needs of the parish, to care for people by providing programs. The council is an advisory board. We will have to develop a new charter. The charter should include the requirements for those serving on the council. (Example: At Blessed Sacrament, they are 1) registered with the parish; 2) stewardship; 3) attend weekend liturgies.)

The following is a brief synopsis of the Handbook:

Purpose:

The pastoral and finance councils operate within a collaborative structure aimed at bringing to life the mission of the Gospel in a given community. (p. 10)

Statutes:

1. Every parish in the Diocese of Grand Rapids shall have a Pastoral Council.
2. Every parish in the Diocese of Grand Rapids shall have a Finance Council; the Finance Council is not part of the Pastoral Council but is directly accountable to the pastor.
3. Pastoral Councils and Finance Councils are to be consultative bodies which make recommendations to the pastor.
4. The pastor is to consult his Pastoral Council on matters of important pastoral and spiritual concerns in the parish. He is to consult his Finance Council on matters of important financial concerns in the parish.
5. Each Pastoral Council and Finance Council is to have a charter which has been submitted to the diocese for approval. (p. 11-13)

Responsibilities and Tasks of Pastoral Councils:

- a. Pray together, developing a spirituality and sense of prayer as individuals and as a council. The Pastoral Council is not an administrative body.
- b. Gather the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of members of the parish so as to adequately represent them when making recommendations.
- c. Study, reflect, and deliberate on the spiritual and pastoral needs of the parish, utilizing a process of consensus and discernment.

- d. Advise the pastor on the spiritual and pastoral needs of the parish as well as on the policies affecting the good of the parish.
- e. Recommend goals and objectives for the parish, both short and long range.
- f. Evaluate the accomplishments of established goals and objectives.
- g. Foster pastoral and spiritual activity in the parish and encourage involvement in various parish programs and ministries. (p. 14-15)

Authority:

The pastor, parish staff, and ministries and/or committees are responsible for implementing approved recommendations from the Pastoral or Finance Councils.

The concept of Pastoral and Finance councils differ from the Parish Council in that the Parish Council coordinated, directed, and approved all the actions of the various ministries in the parish, such as the liturgy committee, education committee, finance committee, social justice committee, and others. It was in effect an administrative board. The Pastoral and Finance Councils are to be understood as consultative bodies and are not involved in the daily operation and management of the parish. The administration and coordination of parish ministries are a function of the parish pastoral staff and leaders, both paid and volunteers, however large or small that group may be. (p. 25)

Action:

1. The Reunion Committee needs to go to the Finance Council for possible funding.
2. Our homework is to read the Pastoral Council Handbook, particularly page 30, establishing the transition to a Pastoral Council.
3. Write a new Charter.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Deborah Macy
Secretary

Reference

(Most Rev.) Bishop Robert J. Rose, Presbyteral Council. (1992) *Handbook Guidelines for Parish Finance and Pastoral Councils*, (pp. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 25). Diocese of Grand Rapids.