

2020 Parish Council Feedback on Constitution

Survey Taken:

May 2020

Scope:

Sections and Articles in Constitution that refer to Parish Council qualifications, appointment, dismissal, responsibilities, and ministry participation.

Survey Participation:

Nine council members participating: Stephany, Susan, Bob, Jennie, Meredythe, Bertie, Tonya, Remo, Sharon

Three council members did not respond: Rosa, Oscar, Norma

Question and Feedback:

Personal decision on how long you would like to stay with the 2020 parish council - - for a term beginning January 2020 and ending in one year, ending in two years, or ending in three years.				
	Mbrs Prefer to Resign Dec 2020	Mbrs Would Stay	No answer given	Mbr Qualify for Dismissal
Intention as of June 2020	4	4	1	3

Question and Feedback:

Regarding Parish Council Membership and Responsibilities as Outlined in Current Constitution By-Laws

	<i>Strict</i>	<i>Appropriate</i>	<i>Too Lenient</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Minimum requirements are person must be a parishioner for at least two years and must have served on a parish ministry team for one year, or given similar active service to the parish. Exclusions for clergy and staff and spouses of clergy and staff.	2	6	1	see below

Requires clarification (excluding all clergy and staff or only "paid" clergy and staff?) Extend the requirement from two to five years. "Parishioner" in the bylaws has the same definition and meaning as "registered member" in Article 4.

Question and Feedback:

Are responsibilities of parish council members reasonable?

	<i>Strict</i>	<i>Appropriate/Reasonable</i>	<i>Too Lenient</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Attend the Parish Council retreat during Council term		9		
Attend and participate in all monthly Council meetings or notify Moderator in advance.		9		Requirement to notify moderator of agenda items prior to meeting date. Requirement to attend Parish Council sponsored & community events.
Review and approve Council minutes prior to each meeting.		9		
Serve on a Parish Ministry team during the Council term.		9		
Serve a three-year term	2	7		Change to 2 yr term
Removal of Council Member: Absence in excess of three meetings per year, including retreats. Removal of a Council member requires a 2/3 vote of the Council.		9		Requirement to submit written resignation is not enforceable and should be reviewed, perhaps deleted or modified.

PARISH COUNCIL SUGGESTIONS FOR PLACING NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

ANONYMOUS SUGGESTION #1

Prior to September, laity is notified of required qualifications and description of the job as a member of the Parish Council. Volunteers are encouraged to notify the existing Parish Council moderator. Deadline for notifications is announced.

Qualifications include:

- Must be a parishioner for at least two years and must have served on a parish ministry team for one year, or given similar active service to the parish.
- Exclusions for clergy and staff and spouses of “paid” clergy and staff.
- Commitment to parish council is to do the work involved during tenure (attendance at monthly meeting and retreat, review of meeting minutes, adherence Robert’s Rules of Order during the meetings, possibility doing of five to ten hours of council business per week, availability for communication/discussion with community, other parish council members, or clergy council outside of monthly meetings).

The Pastor and/or Clergy Council will make a careful and critical examination to ensure that the candidates are suitable for membership on Parish Council. This review should be based on loyalty, trustworthiness, capability and on factual information, given the volunteer passed the “qualification test”.

Prior to the October Council meeting, the reviewed list of volunteers (from the Pastor) shall be presented to the laity for voting at a quarterly Community meeting in November. All vetted volunteers are presented to the laity for voting.

Voting is to take place during a Community meeting in which a quorum of “Saint Matthew members” are present. Votes are counted during the meeting and announced. Candidate(s) with most votes are offered the open council seat(s). In event of a tie, a second vote is taken to break the tie between the two candidates earning the most votes.

First meeting of new council takes place in December. During this first meeting existing and new council members nominate and vote for the new “Parish Council Chairperson”. (Suggestion made here is to change name of council leader from “moderator” to “chairperson” because the definition of both terms indicates that “moderator” is inappropriate for duties required of Parish Council leader.)

Definition “moderator”: an arbitrator or mediator; a person who moderates an Internet forum or online discussion.

Definition “chairperson”: The chairperson for a meeting is the person who has been appointed as the highest ranking officer at the event. The chairperson for a meeting presides over the event to ensure that participants are following the conventions of the meeting.

ANONYMOUS SUGGESTION #2

The definition of a member (versus a parishoner) needs to be included in the Constitution.

Parish Council determines number of seats available, length of terms, job description, and desired skill-sets to work on upcoming PC projects.

The Business Manager provides a list of eligible members (according to the definition). The Pastor and Moderator approve the list.

Personal written invitations (from the Pastor) are sent out to eligible members, followed up with a phone call from PC to determine interest and availability.

A roster of candidates is formulated and a ballot is prepared.

An annual meeting is held and votes are cast and tabulated during the meeting. New PC members are announced at the end of the meeting.

Dates need to be established for each of these steps, and announcements may be made in the bulletin, etc.

ANONYMOUS SUGGESTION #3

A democratic process for new Parish Council members is a good way to implement rules and communicate fairness in the process and transparency. Prior to September, the Parish Council will compile a list of all parishioners who meet the eligibility requirements to serve on the Parish Council.

In the church community announce elections and requirements to run. The Pastor can also promote and reach out to members from a list of qualifying church members to run for election. The interested members can be given a month to announce if they are willing to enter the election.

The current parish council and Pastor can review qualifications prior to making the official election nomination announcement. A voting guide should be created with all nominated individuals with background, reason to enter Parish Council and how they will be contributing to the mission.

Once election period opens, all church members can vote after Sunday mass. Voting is to remain open for 2-3 weeks only on Sundays. If the elected members for some reason cannot continue with role during term, the next highest voted member has the option to serve in the Council with current Parish Council 2/3 vote.

ANONYMOUS SUGGESTION #4

Qualifications for participation on Parish Council will be clearly communicated to the laity. Exclusions from council membership will also be communicated. Those excluded from Council service are the spouses, partners and immediate family members of parish staff and salaried parish clergy. Keyword here is "salaried". If a person is NOT on Clergy Council and is a spouse of a clergy member who is not paid, that person is eligible for membership on the council.

Upon completing a single term, members are NOT eligible to be nominated again. Members who have completed a "term" could be nominated for another term, after being off the Council

for at least one year. No exceptions, which includes the completion of another member's term who left the council prematurely.

If an existing council member leaves prematurely, that vacancy is filled through election. The term of that vacancy is remaining length of the departing member's term. Once that "remaining length" expires, the person must depart from the council for at least one year before re-applying for a seat on the council.

There should be an Eligibility Requirements Form created and presented to the community. Open nominations from the community should be offered. If, needed the parish council can assist with names. Timeframe: Maybe the first Sunday in October and allow 2 weeks for names to be submitted by the 3rd Sunday of October. This will allow time for review and ballots to be created.

Pastor shall review and remove any names that are not eligible. Timeframe needs to be established. One (1) week.

By October 31st or last Sunday in October. Names are to be presented to the community and full community vote is taken the following Sunday first Sunday in November. Ballots can be handed out at the church and or sent via email to church members. A process needs to establish for voting. A Timeframe is required to complete a timely election.

The top four vote getters (church members) shall join the Parish Council at the first Parish Council meeting in November and in December if one is held.

The First Sunday in February all Parish Council Members need to be introduced to ALL Members of the Community. An announcement on the parish website, our Facebook and Community Facebook.

ANONYMOUS SUGGESTION #5

Candidates for the Parish Council could prepare a bio statement for the laity to review. In this way, the laity would be part of the selection process, could consider each candidate's qualifications, spirit, and viewpoints, and then make an informed vote during election.

ANONYMOUS SUGGESTION #6

Nominations for candidates can be solicited from the congregation and provided at a Parish meeting. I recommend this in addition candidates proposed by the council.

While it is appealing to have council members elected by simple vote of the congregation, I think it is still best to have the council selected from the candidate list (after Pastoral review).