

MEETINGS OF PARISHIONERS

The policies and procedures for conducting meetings of parishioners are included in Diocesan Canon 13. This document is a summary of the information contained in the Canon. In all cases, if there is a difference between this document and the Canon, the Canon is to be considered correct.

There are two types of meetings of parishioners. The first type is the “Annual Meeting of Parishioners” that is held once a year to conduct the business of the parish as specified in the Canons. The second type is the “Special Meeting” which can be held at any time to conduct business that arises between annual meetings.

Notice

Proper notice must be given prior to any meeting of parishioners. Written notice is to be provided following the form outlined in Paragraph 50 of Canon 13 (page 41) and communicated to the parishioners using such methods as the Parish Council shall decide. Notice must be provided at least 10 days before the date of the meeting (including two Sundays) and notice shall be given during every worship service on the two Sundays preceding the meeting (par. 49).

Calling and Chairing the Meeting

The Annual Meeting of Parishioners must be held within 60 days of the end of the calendar year. Special Meetings can be held at any time as decided by the Incumbent or at the written request of five Parishioners (par 45, 48).

Meetings of Parishioners are chaired by the Incumbent or, if requested by the Incumbent, one of the Wardens. If the Incumbent is unable to chair the meeting, then the Bishop or the Bishop’s delegate chairs the meeting (par 55, 56)

Quorum

The quorum for any properly called meeting of parishioners is the number of parishioners that attend the meeting.

Eligibility to participate

In order to vote at a meeting of parishioners, a person must be a Parishioner who is at least 16 years of age and must sign the declaration contained in Paragraph 52 of Diocesan Canon 13. A Parishioner is a person who is baptized and either (a) regularly attends worship and receives communion in the Parish or (b) otherwise receives the administrations of the Clergy of the Parish (Canon 1, Par.14).

Parish Officers

The officers of a Parish are the following: the People’s Warden, Lay Members of Synod from the Parish (at least one of whom shall be a member of the Parish council), Parish Council members of such number as determined by a Meeting of Parishioners, the Incumbent’s Warden, and, if established by the Parishioners, either an Assistant People’s Warden, or an Assistant Incumbent’s Warden, or both (par. 1, 2, 3). There must be a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 20 Parish Council members (par. 30). We recommend a total of 6 members.

To be eligible for election as a Parish Officer, a person must have been a Parishioner in the Parish for at least 12 months. To be a Warden, the person must be at least 21 years old and to be a member of Parish Council or a Lay Member of Synod, the person must be at least 18 years old (par 4).

The term of office for Parish Officers is two years unless the Parish has decided on a different term of office. However, Parish Officers continue in their position until their successor is elected or appointed (par. 5, 6).

All Parish Officers must sign the declaration contained in Paragraph 9 of Canon 13 that reads as follows:

I, name, declare that I will faithfully and truly execute the office of name of office in the Parish of name of Parish to the best of my skill and ability and keep confidential all information that comes to my knowledge solely as a result of my holding the office, unless in the course of my duties it is prudent and appropriate to disclose the information.

Note that the number of Lay Members of Synod permitted is governed by the “Average Sunday Attendance” as recorded on the Statistical Information form and according to the following table:

Average Sunday Attendance	Number of Lay Members of Synod
Up to 40	1
41 - 100	2
101 – 150	3
Over 150	4

Licensed clergy are automatically Synod members.

Agenda – Annual Meeting

The following is a list of agenda items that must be included in a parish’s annual meeting (not necessarily in this order – see par. 47):

- Opening Prayer
- Call to Order
- Approval of Minutes of previous Annual Meeting and any intervening Special Meetings
- Report of the Incumbent
- Presentation of the Parish Financial Statements for the previous financial year with the report of the Accounts Examiner
- Consideration and Adoption of a Parish budget for the ensuing financial year
- Election of Parish Officers to replace elected Parish Officers whose terms have expired or are about to expire
- Consideration of motions
- Appointment of a Parish Accounts Examiner for the ensuing financial year
- Closing Prayer

Note that “substitute” lay members of Synod are not elected. If an Elected Lay Minister of Synod is unable to attend a convention of Synod, then the Parish Council can appoint a substitute lay member of Synod from among its own members. Alternatively, if there is enough time, the Parish could hold a Special Meeting of Parishioners to elect a replacement.

Also, the annual parish budget is “adopted” by the parishioners – not “approved.” The approval of the annual parish budget is specifically given to the Parish Council. Paragraph 32 c) iii), which is in the list of duties of the Parish Council, specifically states “to ensure the preparation of the annual Parish budget and to approve such budget prior to the presentation thereof to Parishioners for adoption.” Thus, the annual budget must first be approved by the Parish Council and then adopted at the annual meeting. This process implies that the parishioners cannot make changes to the budget (since Parish Council approval would then have to be given to the changed budget prior to the adoption of the budget at the annual meeting). Instead, the parishioners have the power to defeat the motion to “adopt” the budget. The Parish Council would then have to decide whether to proceed with the budget that it had approved (but was not adopted by the congregation) or to have a new budget prepared for approval by Parish Council and adopted at a subsequent special meeting of parishioners.

Agenda – Special Meeting

The following is a list of agenda items that must be included in any special meeting:

- Opening Prayer
- Call to order
- Consideration of the business of the meeting
- Closing Prayer

Local Variation

Canon 13 allows a Parish to institute variations in the provisions of the Canon provided that the variations are approved by a meeting of parishioners and the Diocese's Legislative Committee (par. 60).