

Parish Council Operational Procedures
Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Version 3.2 (Adopted 4-18-2016)

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I. MISSION STATEMENT

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a Roman Catholic faith community. Centered and formed by the Eucharist, we seek to learn and to live the Gospel and to lovingly grow through service to one another and to all God's people.

II. NAME

These operational procedures guide the Parish Council for the parish community of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Harris Hill, Williamsville, New York.

III. PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

A. The purpose of the Parish Council is to provide a structure which will enable all within their Parish community to enter in frequent and meaningful communication with each other in order that community objectives may be brought to successful fruition for the ultimate good of the Parish and of the larger Church community.

B. Responsibilities of the Parish Council are to:

1. formulate Parish goals in light of the Mission Statement, ministries and parish community into a strategic plan.
2. prioritize and approve the tasks, programs and plans developed by the ministries to ensure conformance to the strategic plan.
3. provide channels for effective communication between the Parish Council and
 - a. the Parish Ministries,
 - b. the Parish Community,
 - c. the Lay Vicariate Council.
4. serve as the primary consultative body making recommendations to the Pastor. When the parish is without a pastor or a parish administrator, the Parish Council in conjunction with the Trustees and the parish staff will be a managing entity for the parish.

IV. STRUCTURE OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

A. Eligibility

All registered members of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary who are not lay employees or immediate family members of lay employees of the parish are eligible for membership on the Parish Council. (Immediate family members of lay employees includes person residing in the same household, or, mother, father, son or daughter whether or not residing in the same household.)

B. Members of the Parish Council are:

1. The Priest(s) and other pastoral staff assigned to the Parish
2. Seven to nine (7 - 9) Members reflecting the demographics of the parish community.
3. The Parish Representative to the Lay Vicariate Council.
4. The priests and pastoral staff serve as ex-officio members.

C. Terms of Membership on the Parish Council:

1. The Priest(s) or Diocesan Religious Administrator and pastoral staff will serve for the duration for their diocesan appointment.
2. Parish Council members serve for two years up to a maximum of four consecutive years.
3. Terms of parish council members shall commence on the first day of September immediately following the date of the member's appointment to the council and shall run for a maximum of four (4) consecutive years thereafter.

D. Selection of Members:

1. Following the announcement by the Parish Council Vice-Chairperson, candidates for Members will submit their names or consent to having their names submitted for selection in writing to the Parish Council.
2. A standing sub-committee, chaired by the Parish Council Vice-Chairperson, will review and interview prospective members of the council.
3. If there are more candidates than openings, the council will determine selection procedures.

E. Attendance:

1. Members of the Parish Council attend all regular and special meetings of the Parish Council. Any member absent for two consecutive meetings, without prior notification to the Chairperson of the Parish Council or the Pastor, shall be contacted by the Parish Council Chairperson about their intent to continue as a member of the Parish Council. Absence from one additional meeting, without notification, may result in removal from the Parish Council by action of the Council.
2. Absence from four regular meetings in a council year may result in termination.

F. Removal:

Every effort should be made to resolve conflicts in a manner that shows respect and consideration for all concerned. In the unlikely event that such efforts meet with failure, consensus from the Parish Council is required to remove any member or officer of the Parish Council. The person shall be given the opportunity to be heard if they so desire.

G. Leadership of the Parish Council:

1. The Parish Council shall select from among its members the following:
 - a. Chairperson
 - b. Vice-Chairperson
2. The selection of officers will take place at the first regular meeting of the new Parish Council following September 1. If the expiration of terms would result in there being no Chairperson, the outgoing Parish Council shall designate a Chairperson to function until the election of officers takes place.
3. The officers of the Parish Council are to be elected for terms of one year. The officer cannot serve in the same position for more than two consecutive years. However, under special circumstances as determined by the Pastor, the Pastor may seek unanimous approval from the Parish Council to continue the Parish Council Chairperson for one additional year.

H. Responsibilities of the Parish Council leadership

1. Chairperson:
 - a. The Chairperson shall chair all Parish Council meetings.
 - b. Contacting any member absent from two consecutive meetings without prior notification to the Chairperson of the Parish Council or the Pastor, to determine the member's intent.
2. Vice-Chairperson:
 - a. The Vice-Chairperson chairs meetings in the Chairperson's absence.
 - b. The Vice-Chairperson attends to other responsibilities designated by the Council.
 - c. The Vice-Chairperson shall succeed to the office of Chairperson should the Chairperson become unable to continue in office or if the office becomes vacant. In the event the Vice-Chairperson becomes the Chairperson of the Council, a new Vice-Chairperson shall be selected for the remainder of the term.

I. Secretary

1. A Secretary, who is not a member of the council, will be appointed to perform the general secretarial duties of the council to include:
 - a. Coordinating communication of the Council.
 - b. Preparing the agenda and keeping minutes of all regular and special meetings and seeing that agenda and minutes are distributed and published.
 - c. Assuring the records of the activities of the Council is kept.
 - d. Providing summaries of the Parish Council meetings for presentation to the parish membership (via the bulletin and web site).
 - e. Maintaining a permanent hard copy record of all proposals presented to the Parish Council and recording the ultimate disposal of such proposals.
 - f. Making necessary arrangements for all meetings of the Parish Council.
 - g. Maintaining an official list of members of the Parish Council.
 - h. Being responsible for maintaining a current copy of the Parish Council Operational Procedures.
 - i. Keeping a current attendance record of all Parish Council members.

J. Meetings of the Parish Council:

1. Parish Council meetings shall be held regularly at the discretion of the pastor and council leadership. Regular meetings are typically the first Monday of the month.
2. Meetings should not normally exceed two hours.
3. Special meetings of the Parish Council may be called by the Pastor, the Chairperson, or by request of three members of the Parish Council, on two days notice to each council member. The notice shall include the time, place and purpose of the meeting.
4. Meetings of the Parish Council shall be open to all parishioners. A period at each Council meeting will be designated by the Chairperson for participation by parishioners. In an instance where particularly sensitive issues (e.g. personnel matters) will be discussed, the Council may choose to meet in a closed session. A majority of the Council members present, with the agreement of the Pastor, may decide to move in closed session.
5. The agenda for all meetings shall be prepared in advance and distributed to the council. Any member of the Parish Community may request an item for placement on the agenda. New items to be considered for the agenda should be given in writing to the chairperson at least two weeks prior to the Parish Council meeting.
6. To assure adequate study, in-depth consideration or discussion, a decision should not normally be made at the same meeting at which the matter was presented. However, a majority of the council members present may decide to make an immediate decision on any matter.
7. A simple majority of the voting members of the Parish Council, in office at the same time, shall constitute a quorum for all meetings of the Parish Council. No decisions shall be made without a quorum present.
8. The Parish Council should discern by way of consensus. Members strive to reach substantial though not necessarily unanimous agreement on all matters of direction and policy.
9. The Pastor must ratify the decisions of the Parish Council before they become final.

V. **AD HOC COMMITTEES:**

The chairperson of the Parish Council may appoint special committees to serve and advise the Parish Council, subject to the approval of the Parish Council. The membership of these committees is not restricted to those who are members of the Parish Council. The Chairperson of an ad hoc Committee, upon the discretion of the Parish Council Chairperson and approval of the Parish Council, may be any member of the parish.

VI. **AMENDMENTS:**

- A. Any portion of these Operational Procedures may be amended by way of consensus of Parish Council members. Such action by the Council shall not take place at the same meeting at which the proposed amendment was presented. Adequate opportunity for members of the Parish to be heard pertaining to the proposed amendment shall be given them.
- B. Any Parish Council member may sponsor a proposed amendment to these Operational Procedures. The proposed amendment shall be submitted in writing to the Chairperson and Secretary at least two weeks prior to the regular Parish Council Meeting.

VII. **APPENDIX:**

- A. Council members serving at the time these Operational Procedures are adopted shall retain the terms that were already in place.
- B. The Operational Procedures of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary are available to all Parishioners upon request from the Parish Office. They are also available on the Parish website.
- C. List of Ministries.