

ST. SEBASTIAN PARISH COUNCIL BY-LAWS

Mission: *We, the people of St. Sebastian Parish, Roman Catholics committed to grow in holiness through the Eucharist and prayer, witness our faith through life-long learning and teach Gospel values according to the example of Jesus Christ*

Article I. Governing Law

Provisions contained in the Code of Canon Law, specifically sections 511 and 536, and the guidelines of the Catholic Dioceses of Cleveland shall govern this body at all times.

Article II. Purpose

- A. The purpose of the parish council is to serve the parish and to assist the pastor in providing leadership to the parish so that the community may effectively carry out the mission of the parish.
- B. Parish council shall be mission focused in all of its activities. It shall address issues in the following areas: Spiritual leadership, community service, and pastoral planning. Other areas can be identified through discussion and consultation with the pastor.
- C. The parish council serves as a forum for deliberations and a disseminator of information to unite the parish community (pastor, parish staff, committees and parishioners) in expressing its collective wisdom and in achieving its stated mission.
- D. Parish council shall make decisions based upon consensus of its members following thorough study and open discussion of issues.
- E. Parish council makes suggestions and recommendations to the pastor which may be accepted, rejected or revised.

Article III. Duties and Responsibilities

- A. Parish Council shall be comprised of twelve (12) parishioners and the pastor. Each member shall serve a term of three (3) years. Parish Council shall discern and elect not less than four (4) parishioners to serve each year.
- B. Each parish council member is expected to attend the monthly meetings and to participate fully according to their talents and abilities.
- C. Each parish council member, possibly excluding the 3 officers, shall be assigned through a discernment process to represent several of the parish commissions, so that all parish commissions are represented.
- D. Parish council members shall serve 1 year or more as a representative to their assigned parish commissions and report any important updates at the council meetings.
- E. If a parish council member is unable to complete the three (3) year term due to unexpected circumstances, the parish council member must notify the chairperson as soon as possible prior to the next monthly council meeting.
 - i. The chairperson is responsible for overseeing the nomination and discernment process in order to fill the vacancy. The chairperson may ask the remaining members of parish council to nominate new candidates for discernment and election or select a replacement from the most recent group of nominees. The elected replacement shall serve the remaining term of the vacancy. An elected replacement that fulfills the vacated term for eighteen (18) months or more shall be considered to have served a full term.

Article IV. Member Qualifications

- A. Parish Council members must be Catholic and registered parishioners of St. Sebastian Church.
- B. Parish council members must demonstrate a commitment to the parish community and personal spiritual growth.
- C. Parish council shall strive for a membership representative of parish demographics (i.e. gender, race, age, mass attendance, parish school affiliation, etc.).
- D. Parish council members shall be nominated, discerned and elected according to Article VII - Nominations.
- E. Parish council nominees shall not have completed a term of eighteen (18) months or more in the previous three (3) years.
- F. Parish council members commit to serve a three (3) year term starting July 1.

Article V. Officers

- A. The officers shall be the chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary.
- B. The officers are discerned and elected by the members of parish council.

- C. Officers' terms commence July 1st. The vice-chairperson is elected to a two year term serving as the vice-chairperson in the second year of the term and assuming the chairperson position in the third year. The secretary may serve two (2) consecutive one year terms.
- D. In the event of a vacancy in an office, an election shall take place to fill the vacancy at the next parish council meeting.
- E. An officer can be removed from office for exceeding authority or circumventing the consent of parish council. A minimum two-thirds majority vote is required to remove an officer.

Chairperson

- A. Conducts each meeting of parish council.
- B. Holds the power to call for a vote during parish council meetings.
- C. Sets up a meeting agenda and arranges the meeting location and time. The chairperson shall send a copy of the upcoming meeting agenda at least two (2) days prior.
- D. Calls special parish council meetings when necessary.
- E. Appoints special committees, subject to approval of parish council.
- F. Serves on the nomination committee.

Vice Chairperson

- A. Conducts parish council meetings in absence of the chairperson.
- B. Assumes duties of the chairperson if the chairperson resigns or is otherwise unable to fulfill the duties of office.
- C. Assumes the duties of chairperson for one (1) year term upon the expiration of his term as vice chairperson.
- D. Serves on the nomination committee.

Secretary

- A. Records the minutes of parish council meetings.
- B. Maintains an official record of the approved minutes by parish council.
- C. Secures agreement from another parish council member to record minutes if unable to attend a parish council meeting.
- D. Minutes will be posted on the parish website within a reasonable amount of time after the final approval by the parish council. The pastor shall review and may edit the minutes prior to posting.
- E. Conducts correspondences of the parish council as directed by parish council.
- F. Assists nomination committee as needed to correspond with parish council nominees during nomination, discernment, and election process.

Article VI. Structure

Parish council shall work with and report on the activities of all the many parish commissions to the pastor. These commissions develop policies and plans for specific areas of parish life. The commissions are divided into 4 general areas.

WORSHIP – To include the committees which address the liturgy and music

SPIRITUAL LIFE – To include committees which address the spiritual and faith formation

PARISH LIFE – To include committees which address the social and athletic activities of the parish

SOCIAL JUSTICE – To include committees which address social issues and community outreach

Article VII. Meetings

- A. Parish Council meetings are normally held on the fourth Thursday of each month, unless otherwise scheduled by the chairperson.
- B. There shall be a minimum of ten (10) meetings per year.
- C. The quorum of the Parish Council shall be a simple majority.
- D. All parish council meetings shall begin and close with prayer.

- E. The members of parish council shall conduct business by consensus. In the event of an impasse, the chairperson may call for a majority vote.
- F. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the chairperson or by written request to the chairperson by three (3) members of parish council.

Article VIII. Parishioner Attendance at Parish Council Meetings

- A. Parish council will convene an executive session if requested by four (4) members of parish council. No vote can be taken in an executive session.
- B. Parish council meetings are open to all parishioners except when parish council calls executive session for scheduling purposes only, parishioners who wish to address parish council must submit a written request to the chairperson at least one (1) week prior to the meeting.
- C. Each speaker will be allotted five (5) minutes. However, the chairperson retains the discretion to grant additional time.
- D. At the request of parish council; parish staff, leaders of parish organizations and representatives of parish committees shall brief parish council.
- E. The chairperson of the finance council can be asked at certain times to brief parish council on the proposed budget before it is finalized.
- F. Any parishioner, parish committee, parish group or organization may request that an issue(s) be placed on the parish council meeting agenda.

Article IX. Nomination Process

- A. In January a Nomination Committee will be formed to oversee the nomination process. The Nomination Committee will include the chairperson, vice chairperson, and three other parish council members.
- B. Nominations shall be solicited through announcements at the Masses, nomination cards in the pews, the pastor's letter in the parish bulletin, parish website and other possible means by the end of February; before Lent if possible.
- C. Nominations can be accepted in writing to the parish council via email, online, or by completing a nomination form. Self-nomination is encouraged.
- D. All interested nominees shall complete a questionnaire and participate in an interview with the Nomination Committee.
- E. Through discernment, the Nomination Committee shall select the four 'best -fitting' interviewed candidates. If a consensus can't be reached, a vote shall be taken.
- F. Either at a specially called meeting or at the regular May meeting, the Nomination Committee will present the candidates for final discernment.
- G. The four selected candidates shall be notified by the end of May of their selection. An alternate candidate will be selected if one declines.
- H. All interviewed nominees not selected shall be called and thanked for their time and willingness to serve.
- I. The four selected candidates shall be thanked and invited to the traditional June pot-luck meeting which includes all members, even the outgoing ones.
- J. The July parish council meeting begins the new cycle, whereby the new members replace the outgoing members.

Article X. First Adopted on April 8, 1991

Article XI. Amendment Dates: October 7, 1991; August 2, 1993; September 12, 1994; December 14, 2000; October 7, 2003; March 1, 2004; January 27, 2005; February 26, 2009; September 19, 2013; February 20, 2019; June 25, 2020