



## PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING

Catholic Diocese of Erie, Pennsylvania

Thursday, October 3, 2024

Virtual via Microsoft Teams

1:00pm

### **Members in Attendance in Person:**

Most. Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, Very Rev. Michael P. Ferrick, V.F., Very Rev. V. David Foradori, E.V., Rev. Brandon M. Kleckner, Very Rev. John P. Malthaner, V.F., Rev. T. Shane Mathew, Rev. Ian McElrath, Very Rev. Jeffrey J. Noble, V.F., Rev. Msgr. Joseph J. Riccardo, V.F., Very Rev. Nicholas J. Rouch, V.G., Christopher Singer, Rev. Msgr. Richard Siefer, E.V, Very Rev. Richard C. Tomasone, V.F.

**Members Excused:** Very Rev. Andrew Boyd, V.F., Very Rev. Chris Hamlett, V.F., Very Rev. Robert Horgas, V.F., Rev. Matthew Kujawinski, Very Rev. B. LaMounte Sayers, V.F.

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 by Bishop Persico.
2. Review and approval of minutes of August 8 Meeting
  - a. Fr. Rouch noted a spelling correction was needed at 3.b.1 (advisor→advisory)
  - b. A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made Msgr. Siefer and seconded by Foradori. The motion carried unanimously.
3. New CSA Goal Formula
  - a. Pat Barron presented a proposed new formula for calculating parish CSA goals.
  - b. Background
    - i. Priests have expressed concern about the calculation of CSA goals following mergers.
    - ii. The current formula uses average of parish income over 3 years to calculate the parish goal.
    - iii. Pat Barron has created a new formula which uses only 2 years of parish income to calculate the parish goal.
  - c. New Formula
    - i. Parish income = Two-year average of offertory
      1. Less:
        - a. 80% of Catholic School support
        - b. 70% of net religious formation expenses
        - c. \$2,500 standard deduction

- ii. Parish income *divided by* total diocesan offertory = percentage of \$4.235 million that parish will pay
  - iii. Notes
    - 1. Bequests and change of investment value are not counted as income for the purpose of calculating CSA goals.
    - 2. The finance office uses “caps”/ “constraints” in case a parish sees a large increase or decrease in offertory year over year; the purpose of this is to prevent major fluctuations in the CSA goals of all parishes.
- d. Consequences of Change
  - i. Parish goals will reflect current parish income more accurately.
  - ii. Parish goals may change (up or down) more dramatically each year than when using a 3 year average.
  - iii. If a new formula is implemented for 2025:
    - 1. About 44 parishes would see their goals increase.
    - 2. About 39 parishes would see their goals decrease.
- e. Discussion
  - i. Msgr. Riccardo accepted the rationale behind the new formula but noted that the formula still does not account for increases in insurance premiums and utility bills experienced by parishes that have been merged
  - ii. Fr. Rouch asked if it would be advisable to temporarily move to a 2 year formula and then go back to a 3 year formula
    - 1. Pat noted that a 2 year formula helps parishes experiencing changes “put the past behind them more quickly” and that changing the formula twice might not be advisable.
  - iii. Fr. Noble made several comments:
    - 1. He suggested that the Diocese use Ministry Platform to help parishes reach out to younger parishioners who are active but do not contribute to the financial support of the parish.
    - 2. He also noted that parishes have relied on CSA overages to help meet their expenses but that those overages are becoming smaller and smaller each year.
    - 3. He further noted that the Presbyteral Council has continually pointed out that the Diocese must reduce its \$4.235 million CSA goal.
    - 4. Finally, he wondered if parishes with significant savings might be asked to find some way to use those savings to help cover CSA costs.
  - iv. Fr. Mathew
    - 1. Does not believe this new formula should be described only as a response to parish mergers since it simply makes the formula more responsive to year-over-year parish income regardless of merger status or not.
    - 2. He noted that, in order for CSA goals to make sense to anyone, a parish goal needs always to be presented

alongside the Diocesan total offertory, since a parish could see a decrease in income over years but an increase in its CSA goal if other parishes experienced more significant drops in income over the 2 year period.

3. Finally, in line with Msgr. Riccardo's comment, he noted a formula which is truly responsive to mergers would need to account for increased utilities, insurance premiums and property costs experienced after a merger.

v. Bishop Persico

1. Noted that the proposed new formula will be shared with the Diocesan Finance Council.
2. He also observed that the Diocese has not increased its total \$4.235 million CSA goal in 8-10 years.

4. Closing Remarks

- a. Bishop Persico thanked the members of the Council for their work over the last 5 years in service to brother priests and the Diocese.
- b. A new Presbyteral Council will be constituted later in October.
- c. New College of Consultors
  - i. Once the new Presbyteral Council has been constituted, the Bishop must constitute a new College of Consultors; until then, the current College remains in place.
  - ii. He reminded the Council that the current Consultors are:
    1. Fr. Allen
    2. Fr. Ferrick
    3. Fr. Kleckner
    4. Fr. Kujawinski
    5. Fr. Rouch
    6. Msgr. Siefer
- d. The Bishop may need to speak with the consultors next week about the alienation of property; Fr. Rouch will send them an email.

5. Adjournment

- a. The meeting was adjourned by Bishop Persico at 1:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Fr. Ian McElrath