



STATUTES  
OF THE  
PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL  
  
DIOCESE OF ERIE

1. Mission.

1.1 To serve as a consultative body to the Diocesan Bishop.

2. Responsibilities.

2.1 To assist the Diocesan Bishop in the governance of the diocese according to the norm of law, in order to promote the pastoral welfare of the portion of the People of God entrusted to him (cf. c. 495 §1).

2.2 To elaborate general pastoral orientations for the diocese.

2.3 To study particular issues raised by the presbyterate and/or to refer particular questions, issues, and concerns to other duly constituted, competent, consultative bodies.

2.4 To address pastoral concerns that extend beyond diocesan boundaries.

2.5 To give the Bishop informed counsel concerning the following acts:

2.5.1 to convoke a Diocesan Synod (cf. c. 461 §1)

2.5.2 to erect, suppress or make innovations in regard to parishes (cf. c. 515 §2)

2.5.3 to review or revise the mandate for pastoral councils in every parish (cf. c. 536 §1)

2.5.4 to give permission to build a church (cf. c. 1215 §2)

2.5.5 to permit an existing church to be converted to profane use (cf. c. 1222 §2)

2.5.6 to impose a diocesan assessment for needs of the diocese on public juridical persons subject to the Bishop (cf. c. 1263)

2.5.7 to impose an extraordinary and moderate tax for grave needs on other juridical and/or physical persons (cf. c. 1263)

2.6 To establish in a stable manner the group of pastors as proposed by the Bishop, the members of which will assist the Bishop in questions of the removal of pastors. (cf. can. 1742)

3. Membership.

3.1 Members *ex officio* by episcopal appointment

3.1.1 Vicar General

- 3.1.2 Regional Episcopal Vicars
- 3.1.3 Vicar for Clergy
- 3.1.4 Chancellor (provided that the Chancellor is a priest)

### 3.2 Members by election as Vicars Forane

- 3.2.1 All Vicars Forane

### 3.3 Members directly appointed by the Bishop

- 3.3.1 The Bishop will freely appoint up to three (3) members, according to his own prudent disposition.

### 3.4 All members are voting; there are no non-voting members.

### 3.5 The duration of membership of all members shall be coincident with the duration of the terms of the Vicars Forane, so that the entire Presbyteral Council is reconstituted every five years.

### 3.6 Prior to the expiration of the five-year term, membership expires with:

- 3.6.1 the cessation of office, upon which the new holder of office will complete the remainder of the term
- 3.6.2 by resignation for a legitimate reason, upon its acceptance by the Bishop

## 4. Officers

- 4.1 The Diocesan Bishop, though not a member of the council, presides at all meetings. The council cannot be convened in his absence.
- 4.2 The officers are the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary.
- 4.3 No member shall hold more than one office simultaneously.

## 5. Eligibility and Term of Officers

- 5.1 The Vicar General, Regional Episcopal Vicars, Vicar for Clergy, and Chancellor are not eligible to be elected as officers. All other members are eligible for election.
- 5.2 The Presbyteral Council runs on a year beginning July 1 and ending on June 30.
- 5.3 Officers of the Presbyteral Council are elected for a term of one year, renewable once. To serve again after two consecutive years in the same office, a one-year hiatus from that office is required.

## 6. Nomination and Election of Officers

- 6.1 Nominations and election of officers will take place in the period between July 1 and the first meeting of the year. To begin the process, the Vicar General will call for nominations for all offices, specifying the manner and time frame within which to place nominations.

- 6.2 Once nominations are closed, the Vicar General will contact all those nominated, and then circulate a ballot, normally by email or other electronic means, with the names of all those who agreed to be listed as candidates for each respective office.
- 6.3 Election will normally be by email or other electronic means. The Vicar General will tally the votes, as confirmed by the Chancellor, and then communicate the results to the council members.
- 6.4 Should an officer resign for a legitimate reason, the Bishop will appoint a replacement for that individual to finish out the term.

## 7. Responsibilities of the officers

- 7.1 The Chair will direct each meeting and have such duties as determined by the Diocesan Bishop and by the council membership.
- 7.2 The Vice-Chair will direct meetings in the absence of the Chair and have such duties as determined by the Diocesan Bishop and by the council members.
- 7.3 The Secretary will be responsible for council minutes and records.

## 8. Meetings

- 8.1 The council will hold four regular meetings annually and will hold additional meetings whenever convened by the Diocesan Bishop.
- 8.2 Preparatory Phase
  - 8.2.1 In advance of each meeting, the Vicar General will set the agenda in consultation with the Chair, the other Vicars, and the Diocesan Bishop.
  - 8.2.2 Any member is always free to propose that something be added to the agenda.
  - 8.2.3 The Vicar General will see to it that the agenda along with preparatory materials are sent to the members in advance of each meeting.
  - 8.2.4 The Vicar General or the Chancellor will see to it that the minutes of each meeting are made available to all members of the presbyterate.
- 8.3 Procedures
  - 8.3.1 Two-thirds of the total council membership shall constitute a quorum.
  - 8.3.2 Meetings shall be conducted and concluded by parliamentary procedure.
  - 8.3.3 Motions, which are always consultative except where otherwise provided for by law, are approved by a simple majority.
  - 8.3.4 Upon the request of any member, a secret ballot shall be taken provided the request has the support of the majority of those present.

8.3.5 Meetings will ordinarily be held in person. In the event of necessity or noteworthy advantage, the council may conduct a meeting by any electronic means that allows for live discussion.

## 9. Committees

9.1 There are no standing committees.

9.2 The council is free, with the consent of the Bishop, to erect *ad hoc* committees whenever it seems prudent or necessary to do so.

## 10. Amendments.

10.1 Any amendment to this constitution will be ratified following a two-thirds approval of the council and final approval of the Bishop.

## 11. Cessation of the Presbyteral Council.

11.1 When the Diocesan See is vacant, the council will cease to exist and its functions fulfilled by the College of Consultors (cf. c. 501 §2).

11.2 Should the council fail to fulfill the functions committed to it for the good of the diocese or gravely abuses it, the Diocesan Bishop can dissolve it, after first having consulted the Metropolitan Archbishop of Philadelphia (cf. c. 501 §3).

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