

Parish Council Elections

When are elections held?

Elections are held at the January/February Annual Meeting of Members of the Parish Council (*Constitution and Bylaws*, Part XV and *National Manual of Policy and Procedures*, p.84)

Annual Meeting of Members

The Annual Meeting is open in person to CWL members, spiritual advisor, and guests.

An Annual Meeting of Members requires a minimum attendance of **10%** of all members of the council.

The following is included on the business agenda:

- Report of CWL activities given by the president
- A final report on the financial statements for the year (refer to Resource #609-Appendix 3 for an example). This report is sent to members 21 days before the parish annual meeting
- The receipt of a report from the review of the finances
- Other motions as necessary to the activities of the council
- Reports of other officers in oral or written form and
- The election of officers

Who is Eligible?

- ❖ All members who have paid their membership fee for the current year, except for associate members, are eligible to hold office at the parish level subject to the provisions of C&B Part XVI, Section 1(a).
- ❖ A member shall hold only one office at a time at the level concerned.
- ❖ If a member has been removed from office, her existing eligibility is forfeited.

Term of Office

1. The term of office for elected officers shall be two years.
2. The **President** automatically becomes the **Past President**
3. An elected or appointed officer shall serve but not exceed one full term in the same office, except the chairpersons and treasurers who may be elected to a second term. A chairperson shall be assigned a different standing committee to chair in her second term. The treasurer is eligible for a second term in that position (for a total of 4 years).
4. If the time served by an appointed officer is more than one year, it shall be considered a full term.

Positions to be elected

1. President (if no elected Vice-President)

2. Vice-President (must be elected and not appointed). An appointed member can do the responsibilities but cannot become president at the end of the term
3. Treasurer (knowledge of finances is required)
4. Secretary (some knowledge and ease with computers is helpful)
5. Standing Committee Chairs: 3 to be elected (Faith, Service and Social Justice). Not elected to a particular standing committee but appointed to one by the president after the election.

Nomination and Election Committee Timelines

November

- ❖ At the regular November meeting prior to an election year, a nominations and elections committee, consisting of three experienced members of the council concerned, shall be appointed by the parish president in consultation with the spiritual advisor. **The chairperson of the committee shall not be a candidate for office.** She shall be prepared to conduct the elections at the parish meeting when elections will be held. The role of chair of the nomination committee is usually filled by the past-president.
- ❖ Where there is a vice-president, she must be contacted by the chairperson to affirm her willingness to assume the office of president. A signed letter of affirmation by the vice president is required before starting the eligibility list.
- ❖ If the office of vice-president is vacant, nominations should be sought for the office of president.

December

- ❖ At the December meeting, the chairperson of the nominations and elections committee shall post the list of all general members of the parish council, the names of the present executive officers and their eligibility for nomination.
- ❖ The chairperson shall have nomination forms available for distribution to all members. In addition, the committee, in consultation with the executive, shall determine whether a nomination form should be: (1) mailed to all other members, (2) emailed and mailed as necessary or (3) distributed at the church.
- ❖ Any member may submit a nomination form. A member may be nominated for more than one office. All nomination forms must be signed by the chairperson of the committee.
- ❖ Nomination forms shall be received by the committee within three weeks of the date of the December meeting.
- ❖ All members nominated shall be contacted by the nominations and elections committee to determine if they are willing to stand for the office(s) for which they are nominated. In making such contact, no

reference should be made to the number of nominations received or the names or persons submitting the nominations.

- ❖ The committee shall seek nominees for any office where no nomination or acceptance of nomination has been received by the deadline date inscribed on the nomination form.
- ❖ Any member accepting nomination must submit a Pastoral Letter of Good Standing (Form #553) to the chair of the Nomination Committee. After review of the form, it is returned to the nominated member.

January/February (Annual Members Meeting)

- ❖ The president shall appoint a member, who is not a candidate for office, to be secretary of elections
- ❖ The president remains in the chair to preside over the annual meeting of members, which is still in session and ask all other officers to leave the head table. It is suggested to use the rite of election found on pages 19-20 of the Ceremony booklet. A simple prayer may be substituted if the spiritual advisor is not present.
- ❖ At the request of the president, the chairperson of elections provides a brief overview of the election procedure.
- ❖ Prior to the actual election, the committee shall prepare to display a complete list of offices and the names of the candidates for each office. This list is kept in confidence until time for its posting.
- ❖ At the parish level, the elections committee may request candidates to speak for a short time (approximately two minutes) about their objectives and experiences.
- ❖ After the Candidates' List is posted at the beginning of the election procedure, the chairperson introduces the candidates for office.
- ❖ When a vice-president has served a two-year term, she automatically becomes president. The voting will commence therefore, with the office of vice-president and continue in the order outlined in Part XI, Sections 1 – 3. Where the office of vice-president is vacant and there is no vice-president to become president, voting will commence with the office of president.
- ❖ For positions where only one candidate has accepted nomination, the president will ask for a motion that the candidate be declared elected.
- ❖ For officer positions where more than one candidate has accepted nomination, the members vote by secret ballot. Ballots will be handed by the committee and counted by the committee. The results are passed to the president to announce. The successful candidate is the one who receives the majority of votes. The number of votes received by each candidate may be announced.
- ❖ For election of standing committee chairs the chair will announce three positions are required. If only that number of candidates is listed, the

president will ask for a motion to declare all these candidates elected. If there are more candidates than positions, there will be a secret ballot, and members will be asked to list only sufficient names to meet the positions open. The successful candidates will be chosen from those who have received the highest number of votes, to fill the required number of positions. Names are announced alphabetically.

- ❖ **If all positions are not filled, nominations from the floor on election night are not acceptable. Members may offer to fill vacant positions and the new president may appoint that member or another member to take on vacant positions, after discussing this with her new executive.**
- ❖ The outgoing president will introduce the new executive.
- ❖ The nominations and elections committee is dissolved. The meeting is adjourned by the outgoing president. All ballots are destroyed by the election committee, and the spiritual advisor.
- ❖ The new executive will schedule an executive meeting as soon as possible after their election. Installation can be held at a convenient date.

References:

Resource# 604 *CWL Constitution and Bylaws* (2023)

Resource # 615 *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* (2024)