

Constitution and By-Laws – Parish of Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church

Eufaula, Oklahoma

PREAMBLE

The Parish of Saint Paul the Apostle, of Eufaula, Oklahoma is committed to the mission of:

- ❖ Providing for the spiritual growth and worship needs of our Catholic Community,
- ❖ Spreading the Word of God by witnessing to our Catholic Faith.
- ❖ Fostering a spirit of hospitality and unity within our Parish family.
- ❖ Providing for lifelong religious education.
- ❖ Promoting peace, justice, and charity in the local and world community.

This constitution is adopted to carry out this mission.

ARTICLE ONE – ESTABLISHMENT AND DEFINITIONS

1. A Parish Council is hereby established for the Parish of Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church, and shall hereinafter be referred to as the Parish Council or Council.
2. In this document, wherever the term “Pastor” is used, it is meant to apply to the administrator appointed by the Bishop or his delegate for the Parish of Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church.

ARTICLE TWO – OBJECTIVES OF THE COUNCIL

1. This Council shall be a body consultative to the Pastor (Canon 543.2), providing leadership in seeking the mission of Christ through a fuller uniting of clergy, religious and laity.
2. The Council is the medium by which all parishioners can translate their concerns, their insights, and their talents into action for the benefit of the whole community.
3. The Council exists to provide a vision and a mission: a vision of what the Parish can be for its members and the community in which we live, and a mission to make that vision a reality.
4. The ways by which the Council fulfills its shared responsibilities are:
 - a. The formation of policy and development of programs of Pastoral activity;
 - b. Establishment of priorities among the various aspects of the Pastoral activity of the Parish;
 - c. The study of the Christian life of the community with special attention to its Christian visions, needs, and hopes.

- d. The spiritual enrichment and growth of its own membership.
5. The Parish Council does not administer the day-to-day operation of the Parish, nor is it chiefly concerned with the temporalities, except as these impinge on the overall scope and direction of the Parish.

ARTICLE THREE – COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

1. The membership of the Parish Council shall consist of:
 - a. The Pastor;
 - b. Five general members elected, discerned, or by other manner approved by the Council and Pastor, by the Parish at large, or their appointed successors;
 - c. As many as one member may be appointed at the discretion of the Pastor.
2. Members of the Parish Council shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age and a registered member in full Communion with the Catholic Church who regularly attends Sunday Mass at Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church.
3. The five general members of the Council shall each serve a term of three years, never more than three being elected in a single year.
4. The Pastor may appoint one voting member to the Council when he deems it necessary to insure the representation of the different aspects of Pastoral work in the Parish, and of the different states of life and professional conditions of the parishioners.
 - a. They shall serve for one year.
 - b. They may be reappointed by the Pastor with the simple majority approval of the Council.
 - c. No appointed member, by virtue of his/her appointment, may serve more than two consecutive one-year terms.
5. Permanent Deacons, religious Sisters or Brothers, members of the Parish staff, are encouraged to participate in the proceedings of the Council. They shall do so in a consultative, non-voting capacity.
6. Any elected member is eligible for a second but not a third consecutive term.
7. Vacancies which occur with respect to the general members of the Council shall be filled for the balance of the term from eligible parishioners by the Parish Council. The Pastor shall recommend a replacement from a list of previously nominated and still eligible parishioners.
8. If vacancy occurs with respect to the appointed member, the Pastor, with Council approval, may appoint another parishioner to serve out the unexpired term.
9. Any member of the Parish Council absent for three consecutive or two unexcused absences from general meetings shall be considered as having resigned unless the

Council specifically, by simple majority, exempts the member from the operation of this section. This clause does not pertain to special meetings of the Council.

10. Any Council member may be removed for cause by a simple majority vote of the Council.
11. Salaried Parish staff members and their family members, or individuals with a contract relationship with the Parish shall not be eligible for election or appointment to the Parish Council during the period of their employment.
12. In the case of a vacant Pastorate, the Council members who held office under the previous Pastor will assist the local Vicar and the Bishop during the interim. The new Pastor is to reconvene the Parish Council within one month after assuming his duties in the Parish.

ARTICLE FOUR – NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

1. All members of the Parish who will have reached their eighteenth (18th) birthday by the date of the election shall be eligible to vote.
2. At the November meeting, the Council shall present to the Pastor a slate of candidates for the vacancies to be filled. The Pastor shall have the authority to veto any nominations.
3. The candidates will be drawn from a list of eligible persons who have volunteered to be candidates or from persons who have been solicited to be candidates by the Council.
4. To be eligible, the candidate shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age and a registered member in full Communion with the Catholic Church who regularly attends Sunday Mass at Saint Paul Catholic Church.
5. It shall be the responsibility of the Council to publicize and conduct the election, prepare and tabulate the ballots, and inform all candidates of the results.
6. The Council Chairperson will conduct the election at all Masses during the first Sunday in December. The ballots shall be counted by two volunteers including the Council Chairperson or a member of the Council after the completion of the Mass on that day.
7. The newly elected Parish Council members will be recognized at all Masses the second Sunday in December.
8. New elected Parish Council members will be seated as the first item of new business at the general meeting of the Council held in January.
9. The newly elected Parish Council members and officers, along with the carry over members will be recognized at Masses the first Sunday in February.

DISCERNMENT PROCESS

1. In September of each election year, as an alternative to the process set forth above, the Parish Council by a simple majority vote, to use the discernment process to choose new members. Membership requirements are the same as set forth in Article Three.
2. In October of each election year, the congregation is asked to submit names of individuals as candidates for Parish Council membership.
3. Those individuals whose names are submitted (candidates) are asked to submit to the Council a statement regarding their interest in serving on the Parish Council.
4. At the November meeting, the Council shall present to the Pastor a slate of candidates for the vacancies to be filled. The Pastor shall have the authority to veto any nominations.
5. It shall be the responsibility of the Council to publicize and conduct the election, prepare and tabulate the ballots, and inform all candidates of the results.
6. The Council Chairperson will conduct the election at all Masses during the first Sunday of December. The ballots shall be counted by two volunteers including the Council Chairperson or a member of the Council after the completion of the Masses on that day.
7. The newly elected Parish Council members will be recognized at Mass the second Sunday in December.
8. Newly elected Parish Council members will be seated as the first item of new business at the general meeting of the Council held in January.
9. The newly elected Parish Council members and officers, along with the carry over members will be recognized at Mass the first Sunday in February.

ARTICLE FIVE – OFFICERS

1. Under Canon Law (Canon 536.1) and the Diocesan Norms for Parish Councils, the Pastor is the presiding officer of the Council.
 - a. The Pastor is to maintain openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit at all meetings of the Parish Council and is to foster consultation by seeking the counsel of all the members, by encouraging a respectful hearing among the members, and by responding, according to his pastoral judgment, to the expressed counsel of the members.
 - b. The Pastor is to maintain the necessary communication between the Parish Council and its Committees and other Parish organizations.
 - c. The Pastor retains veto power over any and all decisions rendered by the Council.

2. The Council, at its first meeting of each year, shall elect, by a simple majority a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary to serve for a term of one year. These officers may be elected for a second but not a third consecutive term.
3. Vacancies in the office of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, or Secretary shall be filled by the Parish Council at the meeting following the occurrence of such vacancy. These vacancies will be pulled from current Parish Council members, and will be elected by a simple majority of the Council. An officer thus elected shall continue to serve until the next regular election of officers.
4. The Pastor, by virtue of position in the Parish, shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the Parish Council.
5. The duties of the officers shall be as follows:
 - a. The Chairperson shall:
 - i. At the request of the Pastor, preside at all meetings of the Parish Council;
 - ii. Be Chairperson of the Executive Committee;
 - iii. Be ex-officio member of all committees for the Council.
 - b. The Vice-Chairperson shall:
 - i. At the request of the Pastor, preside at all meetings of the Parish Council;
 - ii. Assume all responsibilities for the Chairperson in his/her absence;
 - iii. Be a member of the Executive Committee;
 - iv. Be an ex-officio member of all committees of the Council;
 - v. Be specifically responsible in providing members of the Council with opportunities for spiritual growth and development. These programs should be designated for the benefit of the individual as well as encouraging growth of the Council as a Faith Community.
 - c. The Secretary shall:
 - i. Record the attendance at all meetings;
 - ii. Prepare and circulate to all Council members minutes of all meetings as soon as possible;
 - iii. Give all required notices of meetings;
 - iv. Perform further duties as shall be assigned to him/her;
 - v. Shall publicly display Council approved previous meeting minutes for the people of the parish.

If necessary, a recording secretary, who shall not be a member of the Council, may be appointed.

ARTICLE SIX – MEETINGS

1. Regular meetings of the Parish Council shall be held at a time and place designated by the Council.
2. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson of the Parish Council or by the Pastor. All members of the Council must be given reasonable notice to the meeting date with a minimum of a 24 hour notice of special meetings.
3. The agenda shall be prepared by the Executive Committee and forwarded prior to the regular meetings.
4. All regular and special meetings of the Parish Council shall be open to the parishioners and reasonable provisions shall be made at such meetings for their expressions of opinions, suggestions, and arguments on all items on the agenda with a time limit imposed at the discretion of the Chairperson. The foregoing shall not prevent the members of the Council from meeting in Executive Session. No vote or formal action shall be taken by the Council while in Executive Session.
5. The Pastor plus a majority of the remaining members of the Council shall constitute a quorum for consultation.
6. A simple majority of the existing members of the Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Every action that necessitates a decision shall require a favorable vote of the majority of the voting membership present.
7. While the rules of parliamentary procedure as contained in Robert's Rules of Order will define the normal proceedings of Council meetings, it is recognized that the Parish Council must rely on faith, prayer, and the Holy Spirit than on its by-laws and regulations. Therefore, it is recommended that decisions be arrived at through consensus. In the consensus process, members of the Council work to reach substantial, though not necessarily unanimous agreement on all matters of overall direction and policy.

ARTICLE SEVEN – FINANCE

1. The Pastor is ultimately responsible for the Parish finances; therefore his signature will be required on all Parish expense checks.
2. The Pastor is urged to seek the advice of the Parish Council on any expenditure exceeding the sum of \$500.00.

ARTICLE EIGHT – AMENDMENTS

1. This Constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the total membership of the Parish Council.
2. Proposals for Amendment are to be made at one meeting and voted on at a subsequent meeting of the Council.

ARTICLE NINE – RATIFICATION

1. This constitution shall become effective immediately upon ratification by a vote of two-thirds of the total votes cast by Parish members present on Sunday of the vote.
2. The election for ratification shall be held on Sunday November 24, 2013.