

# DIOCESAN COUNCIL GUIDELINES

Revised, July 17, 2003

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## Membership and Structure

Council is a body of elected lay and clergy representatives who serve between meetings of Diocesan Convention to oversee the program of the Diocese.

1. The First Vice-President is appointed by the Bishop and is Chair of the Council meetings.
2. A Steering Committee is appointed by the Bishop and meets prior to a meeting to set the agenda.
  - 2.1 Council members receive the agenda and any pertinent information prior to a meeting.

The agenda allocates a specific time limit for each agenda item.

Council members may place items on the agenda by contacting the Steering Committee.

3. An Executive Session may be called as needed.
4. Election schedule (one clergy and one lay representative; one clergy and one lay alternate):  
2003, 2006, 2009, etc. Regions 2, 5, 8  
2004, 2007, 2010, etc. Regions 3, 6, 9  
2005, 2008, 2011, etc. Regions 1, 4, 7

## Council acts in accordance with these guidelines:

5. The Council may decide to send to committee or task force an issue that requires intense small-group involvement.
  - 5.1 When such a task is delegated, Council clearly defines the issue, assigns a date(s) to report back, and develops an evaluation process for that task.
  - 5.2 If the committee/task force members need clarification or input from Council before the report date, they are to contact the Steering committee for agenda time.
  - 5.3 When a committee/task force makes recommendations or provides information:
    - 5.3.1 After adequate discussion, Council is to accept or reject the recommendations or send the matter back to the committee.
    - 5.3.2 Council is not to rehash the work of the committee.
6. Council does not revisit previous decisions; rather, if a previous decision is found to no longer be desirable or workable, Council considers a new decision to reflect the new approach.
7. Council conducts its meeting following Roberts Rules of Order, as led by the Chair.

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## Individual members act in accordance with these guidelines:

8. Members read in advance materials and are prepared to discuss them. Time is not allocated for reading them during the meeting.
9. Members speak from experience using “I” statements not generalizations about folks “out there” and clarify when speaking on behalf of individuals not present.
10. Members are specific in stating verified facts or citing names; not sharing anonymous information.
11. Members check out assumptions regarding others’ meaning, intent, or motive.
12. Members ask questions for clarification and have the right to say “I don’t know” and “I don’t understand.”
13. Members do not dominate the conversation, repeat, or filibuster.
14. Members do not argue with differing views; rather, they honor them as valid for that person.
15. Members share feelings and opinions as well as ideas.
16. Members deal with areas of conflict in a respectful manner.

## Council Decision-making

17. The usual mode for decision-making is consensus or compromise. When an issue is contentious, it is the chair’s prerogative to invoke a decision-making procedure (e.g., negotiation, voting with use of resolutions).
18. Before Council has reached a decision on an issue, members are to use discretion when discussing it outside of Council.
19. Once Council has made a decision, individual Council members are expected to stand behind it. When questioned about a decision, they should be able to explain what happened and why, although they are free to express their opinion about the decision.
20. In the context of the meeting and in the Meeting Minutes, clarify what the decision is, who is responsible for carrying it out and the timeline for reporting back to Council.
21. Issues are clarified as to whether they are workable problems or dilemmas. Council should focus its efforts on workable problems.

21.1 **Dilemmas** to be managed are those objective facts of life that have not and will not change significantly over time and that form the basic foundations of the ongoing situation.

**Workable problems** are those issues that can be addressed with change strategies aimed at effecting some movement toward some desired different condition.

~~22.~~ 22. In acting as elected leaders, Council and its individual members are expected to make decisions based on good information and judgment. Decisions may be deferred to a future Council meeting. ~~28. Before Council reaches a decision on an issue, use discretion when discussing it with others outside of Council.~~

~~29. Once Council has made a decision, you are expected to stand behind it. When questioned about a decision, be able to explain what happened and why.~~