

Notes on Meetings of the Parish Corporation

Except as noted otherwise, section references are to Canon Six: <https://nb.anglican.ca/legislation>

In these notes PC means Parish Corporation. Incumbent means a minister (clerical or lay) whose licence from the bishop uses that precise designation, and it includes a cleric licenced as Rector.

Who Calls? There must be at least 6 regular PC meetings per year [4(2)], and usually there are several more. The Incumbent consults the Wardens in calling them [5(k)], but normally the initial meeting of the PC agrees on a regular monthly meeting date, time and place, so that each meeting need not be called specially. Where there is no Incumbent, the Wardens call meetings, except that when a parish is vacant the Archdeacon may choose to summon a PC meeting [4.1(1)]. At any time the Bishop may summon and chair a meeting of the PC [1(4)]. Nothing prevents meetings via zoom or conference call so long as due notice is given to all members. There are no PC “meetings” by email.

Who Chairs? The Incumbent chairs meetings of the PC [5(h)]. If there is a shared incumbency, one of them does so. If the parish’s ministry is led by a non-Incumbent (*e.g.*, priest-in-charge, layreader-in-charge), that person is not a member of the PC but may attend its meetings and, if chosen by the PC, act as chair [1(3)]. In any other case, the PC chooses a chair, presumably one of the Wardens, except that when the Bishop has summoned the meeting the Bishop may chair [1(5)], and when a parish is vacant the Archdeacon may choose to act as chair [4.1(1)].

Who attends? In theory, PC meetings are members-only. Typically, PC members pass a motion or reach an understanding that parishioners are free/encouraged to attend meetings, but occasionally PC business will need to be conducted *in camera*.

Quorum/Voting: Synod legislation is silent on the question of PC quorum, leaving it to the first meeting of the PC to pass a motion setting the quorum. In the absence of such a motion, quorum is presumably 50% plus one of total voting membership. The Incumbent may vote on motions and, in the case of a tie, has a second vote [5(i)]. A non-Incumbent – even if chairing -- has no vote [1(3)], nor does the Bishop or an Archdeacon who happens to be chairing [1(5); 4.1(2)]. The Parish Treasurer and the Vestry Clerk have no vote unless they were among the

people elected as Vestry members by the Annual Meeting. There is no proxy or email voting.

Vacancies: Where the position of Warden or Vestry member becomes vacant (by resignation, death, departure from the parish, incapacity, neglect or abandonment of duties), the PC chooses another voting member of the parish to complete the term in question [2(3)]. Where a deficiency in the number of Synod delegates/substitutes arises, the PC fills the vacancy [Constitution, 4(6)].

Vestry Clerk: The PC (not the Annual Meeting) appoints its Vestry Clerk [4(1)(h) & 8(1)]. Where this involves a new Clerk taking over, what arrangements have been made for the parish minutes, correspondence and other files to be transferred to the new clerk? Is it time to ship older records to the Synod Archives? Are liability insurance policies being retained permanently or sent to the Archives? Unless the person appointed Vestry Clerk was elected as one of the Vestry members at the annual meeting, s/he may not make motions or vote at PC meetings. The PC may by motion dismiss the Vestry Clerk although, if the Clerk has an employment contract, there may be legal consequences in doing so.

Parish Treasurer: The PC (not the Annual Meeting) appoints the Parish Treasurer [4(1)(h) & 9(1)], who need not be a member of the parish. The Treasurer cannot be of the same household as any other parish financial signing officer [9(1.1)]. Unless the person appointed Treasurer was elected as one of the Vestry members at the Annual Meeting, s/he may not make motions or vote at meetings of the Parish Corporation. The PC may by motion dismiss the Treasurer although, if the Treasurer has an employment contract, there may be legal consequences in doing so.

Parish Advisory Committee: The two Wardens are members of the PAC *ex officio*. The PC appoints three other members annually, one of whom must be a member of the Vestry [Canon Seven, 2(3)]. The other two appointees may be any voting members of the parish, but at least one should be between 16 and 35.

Conflicts of Interest: At the first PC meeting and as often as needed, the PC reviews Canon Six's conflict of interest provision: "4(2.1) No member of the Parish Corporation, Vestry Clerk or Parish Treasurer shall be present during the Corporation's discussion of any matter or motion concerning which that person, or an immediate family member, or a member of the same household has a direct financial or material interest."

Other points for the first and other meetings of the PC:

- Are members aware of each of the trust funds of which, as members of the PC, they are now trustees, and of the spending restrictions on those funds?
- Have all PC members filed a Police Record Check with the Vestry Clerk?
- Have all PC members completed Safe Church training?
- Do all PC members receive the weekly **Diocesan e-News**?
- Does the PC own a Facebook page or website? Is there a PC motion authorizing it? Who has the password? What would happen if the manager dropped dead or started posting insanely? How could the parish take down the site? Has the PC a web content policy?
- Does someone operate an unofficial Facebook page or website that looks to the public like it's a PC website? How many people have passwords? If criminal, defamatory or scandalous material appeared there, how would the PC escape legal liability? How can the PC bring this site under its control or insist that the owner post a disclaimer?
- Are parish cemetery maps and cemetery rules posted on the Parish website? Are the names of the cemetery managers there?