

Diocesan Council Report October 2020- January 2021

Submitted by H. Gordon

Since our last Deanery Assembly, Diocesan Council met in October and December 2020 and just completed its annual retreat last weekend (January 15-16, 2021). Newly elected members' terms start after Convention. In October, we wished farewell to members whose terms were completing. In December, we welcomed new members to the Council. I have just begun my second 3-year term thanks to you re-electing me at our spring Assembly.

A refresher (with thanks to Lynn Smith who provides an overview to Council each January at our retreat):

Diocesan Council

- supervises the business and financial affairs of the Diocese;
- administers and carries on the work of mission and church extension, Christian education, social service and work with youth of the church; and
- performs other work and duties as may be committed by the Diocesan Bishop or by Convention.

Diocesan Council serves as the Convention when the Diocesan Convention isn't in session.

1. Budgetary Responsibilities

Our Diocesan Mission Strategy provides priorities for the Diocesan Budget.

The Diocesan Mission Strategy identifies and prioritizes all Diocesan programmatic and administrative activities in sufficient detail to guide the allocation of resources by the Convention, Diocesan Council, and the Bishop.

All expenses in the Diocesan Budget must be for purposes listed in the Diocesan Mission Strategy. The Budget must not be a deficit budget (expenses cannot exceed Income in the Budget).

If the Budget needs amending between sessions of Convention, that is a function of Diocesan Council – as long as the new expenses conform to the Mission Strategy and sources of income are identified to cover the amount of the expenses.

The Treasurer and Council bear the responsibility for preparing the next year's budget for vote at the next Diocesan Convention.

During the year, Council receives regular reports from the Treasurer on the current status of income and expenses and the preparation status the next year's budget.

2. Liaison/Communication Role

As part of its membership, Council has 2 representatives from each Deanery, one lay and one clergy. We serve as your liaison with Council – both sharing information from Council with you and taking issues you wish to hear more about back to Council.

We also serve on committees of Council; we hear reports from committees and ministries and we liaise with others.

So here is a quick round up of activities we have undertaken at our meetings in October, December and January:

This fall, Council disseminated a Pandemic Financial Impact Report Form for every congregation to complete and submit. Your submitted form provides data that allows Council to help assess the needs incurred by congregations because of the pandemic. To date, a substantial number of surveys have been received. If your parish has not yet submitted this report, Please Complete It ASAP!

We heard treasurer's reports about the 2019 audit, year-to-date financial statements and the status of parish assessments. We also voted on assessment payment schedules and assessment adjustments as recommended by the Assessment Coordinating Committee. At our retreat last weekend, we heard a very preliminary End-Of-Year financial report for 2020. When comparing EOY reports at this point in prior years, we are in a better place than other prior years.

Reports were presented by the Racial Justice Commission, Mission Strategy Committee, our representatives on the Provincial Synod, and the Concord River Deanery.

A review of the Assessment Formula is being undertaken. Council has approved the creation of a new committee to work on this. The timeframe to complete this complicated task is short. The Treasurer has requested that the committee report to Council at its March meeting so Council can take a final vote in April and we meet the canonical deadline of notifying parishes by May 1 of the formula to be used for the 2022 assessment. Our deanery is well-represented. Both our co-conveners and I have been appointed to serve on the committee.

You may notice a lot of mentions about the Diocesan Mission Strategy.

Our Convention reviews, amends and approves our Diocesan Mission Strategy at least once every five years. We will be doing this review/approval at our upcoming Convention in November 2021. So there is a lot of activity around engaging with the Mission Strategy at all levels of Diocesan life. The Mission Strategy Committee (our own Andi Taylor is a member of this committee) recently sent parish leadership and clergy a document with suggestions how to include some discussion on the Mission Strategy Engagement at your Annual Meetings. At Council's retreat, we also participated in this exercise. It is a stimulating activity that can generate good discussion. I recommend you find a way to include this activity in your Annual Meeting or other gathering in the near future.

The Parochial Report for 2020 (due by 1 March 2021) is requiring more/different information than previous years. There are sections on 2020 Worship during the Pandemic and Narrative sections to complete. Pay attention to the Average Sunday Attendance Instructions and Questions and Answers.