

#11 CANON 11: DIOCESAN COUNCIL

Moved by: The Reverend David Greenwood

Seconder: Edith Marshall

A resolution to amend Canon 11: Diocesan Council, as crafted in consultation with the Canon 11 Task Force appointed following Synod 151, 2023.

Resolved that Canon 11: Diocesan Council be amended by removing the sections with lines running through them and adding the sections that are underlined as set out below, with such amendments to come into effect by resolution of Diocesan Council with the Bishop's consent.

CANON 11: DIOCESAN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

1 The Diocesan Executive Council

There shall be ~~an~~ a strategic executive body of Synod to be known as the Diocesan Executive Council.

2 Powers

The Diocesan Executive Council shall be the representative of Synod, between the sessions of Synod, subject to the authority of the Bishop, and shall

- (a) be the final decision-making body apart from Synod itself; and
- (b) be primarily responsible for determining and interpreting diocesan policy; and
- (c) approve and exercise stewardship over the budget.

3 Role

- (1) The role of Diocesan Executive Council is to formulate and interpret policy which
 - (a) arises out of the forum of Synod;
 - (b) arises from the activities of Diocesan staff and committees; and
 - (c) ~~by generating~~ generates concepts, philosophies, and policies, which will ensure that the church maintains a stance appropriate to its responsibilities with respect to the growth of our society and the needs of both church and society for the future.
- (2) It is also the role of Diocesan Executive Council to advise the Bishop with respect to the welfare of the church.

4 Duties

The Diocesan Executive Council shall be responsible for

- (a) implementing resolutions of Synod and in its discretion referring them to appropriate bodies for implementation;
- (b) reviewing and directing the implementation of decisions of committees where approval of the Council has been sought;
- (c) receiving and reviewing communications from church and community bodies external to the diocese structure as is necessary for the Council to make recommendations;
- (d) managing any conflicts between committees that arise and cannot be resolved by the committees themselves;
- (e) appointing task forces deemed necessary to expedite the work of Council;
- (f) meeting with archdeacons, regional deans, and regional and parish leadership to pray, listen, learn, and identify issues challenging the diocese; and
- (g) the submission of a written report in summary form of all matters and activities to the next regular session of Synod.

5 Membership

~~(1) The following persons shall constitute the membership of the Diocesan Council:~~

- ~~(a) The Diocesan Bishop who shall chair, unless the Bishop appoints an alternate chair;~~
- ~~(b) The Coadjutor or Suffragan Bishop, if any; (Non-voting)~~
- ~~(c) The Chancellor of the Diocese;~~
- ~~(d) The Vice-Chancellor of the Diocese, if any;~~
- ~~(e) The Dean of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island;~~
- ~~(f) The Executive Officer, if any; (Non-voting)~~
- ~~(g) The Executive Secretary of Synod;~~
- ~~(h) The Financial Controller; (Non-voting)~~
- ~~(i) Two Regional Representatives from each Regional Council comprised of one member of the clergy and one lay person, both of whom shall be members of the Synod, with one of its two Regional Representatives to be elected by each of the Regional Councils for two consecutive terms at the session of each such Regional Council immediately prior to a regular meeting of Synod (each an "Electoral Session"), with the intent that only one half of the Regional Representatives on Diocesan Council shall be replaced at any one election.~~

— In the event that a Regional Representative elected by a Regional Council ceases to be member of Synod or that a vacancy in respect of a Regional Representative otherwise occurs, such Regional Representative shall cease to be a member of Diocesan Council and the Regional Council shall elect a replacement Regional Representative to Diocesan Council at the first session of such Regional Council occurring after the Regional Representative ceases to be a member of Synod. If the Regional representative to Diocesan Council is not otherwise a member of Synod, their name shall be certified to the Executive Secretary of Synod as a Regional Delegate to Diocesan Synod for the duration of their term on Diocesan Council.

(1) The following persons shall constitute the membership of the Diocesan Executive Council:

Voting Members

- (a) The Diocesan Bishop who shall chair, unless the bishop appoints an alternate chair;
- (b) Two regional representatives comprised of one member of the clergy and one lay person, both of whom shall be members of the Synod, elected from the members of Synod during the meeting of Synod, and formally appointed to their position on the Council prior to the end of Synod.

— In the event that an elected member is unable to continue with their duties, misses three consecutive Council meetings, or resigns from Council causing a vacancy of regional representative to occur, the Regional Council shall elect a replacement Regional Representative to Diocesan Council at the first session of such Regional Council occurring after the Regional Representative ceases to be a member of Synod. If the Regional representative to Diocesan Council is not otherwise a member of Synod, their name shall be certified to the Executive Secretary of Synod as a Regional Delegate to Diocesan Synod for the duration of their term on Diocesan Council.

- (c) Two youth delegates to be elected by the youth delegates to Synod from their number to serve on Diocesan Council until the next Diocesan Synod.
- (d) The Dean of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island;
- (e) The Chancellor of the Diocese;
- (f) The Diocesan Executive Officer;
- (g) The Executive Secretary of Synod;
- (h) A maximum of four members appointed by the bishop, should the bishop at the bishop's discretion decide to make such appointments;

Non-Voting, Ex Officio Members

- (i) The Coadjutor or Suffragan Bishop, if any;

(j) The Financial Controller;

(k) The Vice-Chancellor of the Diocese, if any, unless they are acting in the role as the Chancellor.

(2) A person may be re-elected as a member of Diocesan Executive Council.

6 Meetings

- (1) The Diocesan Executive Council shall meet regularly, in-person or electronically, for a minimum of four times annually, at such times and places as the Bishop thinks appropriate.
- (2) A quorum of the Diocesan Executive Council shall be a majority of the elected members.
- (3) In the absence of the Bishop, the Chair shall be that person nominated by the bishop of the Diocese, and failing such nomination the Chair shall be that person chosen by the other voting members of the Diocesan Executive Council.
- (4) All meetings and debates shall be governed by the Rules of Order and Procedure as defined in the Constitution of the Synod of the Diocese of Nova Scotia.
- (5) All minutes of the Diocesan Executive Council meetings, together with supporting materials (collectively the “Minutes”), shall be circulated electronically by email to members of the Diocesan Executive Council and Chairs of Standing Committees, Archdeacons, Regional Deans, Chairs of Regional Councils and, at the discretion of the Executive Secretary of Synod, to other persons (collectively the “Addressees” and each an “Addressee”); provided however that upon receipt of a written request from an Addressee, the Executive Secretary of Synod shall mail a copy of such Minutes to such Addressee.

Commentary

At the last Synod, it was moved that a working group (WG) be formed to “re-examine those Canons outlining membership and personnel (volunteer and stipendiary) required at all levels of parish and regional governance,” “to re-examine Canon 11: The Diocesan Council, and to propose canon revisions.”

The Canon 11 WG comprised current and former members of Diocesan Council, two of which were also former Executive Secretaries of Synod. Membership of the WG came from different regions of the diocese.

We explored similar canon laws and diocesan policies from other dioceses, and identified different approaches that address recruitment, an orientation program, Council meeting set-up, retention, and tasks (job description) for Diocesan Council members. We made 16 recommendations to Diocesan Council, of which they supported exploring 14 of them. We suggested that four of these recommendations would affect Canon 11 and the remainder would be better served if placed in a Diocesan policy or guideline document. The Policy/guideline document has been circulated for background information purposes and will be reviewed by an upcoming Diocesan Council. What is placed before Synod today are the minor changes to Canon 11 which will lead to the policy/guideline’s consideration and acceptance.

**Proposed Accompanying Policy 2.2.16: Diocesan Executive Council
Companion Policy to Canon 11 (2025)**

The text of this proposed policy is provided only for information. Neither debate nor discussion of the policy will be entertained at Synod. Questions and commentary may be directed to Canon 11 Task Force members or Diocesan Council members.

A. PURPOSE **for Members of Diocesan Executive Council (Lay and Clergy)**

To provide direction, clarify expectations, and outline the anticipated outcomes for the exciting ministry of senior leadership within the Diocesan Executive Council.

B. OVERVIEW

The Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island (*the Diocese, Diocesan*) is Episcopally led and Synodically governed. Our leadership rests with and through the Diocesan Bishop and their staff. The strategic governance for the Diocese is provided by the bi-annual Diocesan Synod in a gathering of diocesan clergy, elected lay representatives, and appointed diocesan staff in accordance with the *Constitution of the Synod of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island* (amended 2023). Between each gathering of Synod, the Diocesan Executive Council, (*the Council, Executive Council*) provides that strategic level of governance.

C. SELECTION PROCESS FOR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. Executive Council is balanced between lay and clerical members and is drawn from membership across the Diocese through the election of two members from each Region of the Diocese. At the expense of a minimal nimble Council, this ensures a larger membership with vision and voice into, and from, all areas of the Diocese.
2. Each Region is to elect one clerical and one lay member drawn from the membership of Synod. The election takes place during Synod with the membership of Synod dividing into Regional groups. The regional clerical representative is elected by all regional members: clerical, lay, and youth (*see C-3.*). The regional lay representative is elected by all regional members: clerical, lay, and youth (*see C-4.*). The two youth representatives to Diocesan Executive Council are not regionally based, and are elected by all youth delegates to Synod. (*see C-6.*)
3. **Clergy Members:** In selecting the clerical representative, the regional members may choose to select a newly ordained person, filled with new ideas and enthusiasm, and in order to provide a diocesan wide experience of the Church. Conversely, the regional members may choose to select an experienced clergy member who will bring a practical and experiential knowledge to Executive Council. The Region's Archdeacon or Regional Dean may be appropriate for election to this important ministry.
4. **Lay Members:** In selecting the lay representative, the regional members may choose someone with experience in a specific important employment field such as health care, small business administration, government, policy development, real estate, educational systems, or the judiciary. Conversely, the regional members may desire to consider someone who has linguistic or cross-cultural formation or someone who has experienced, or is challenged by underemployment, justice, or health care issues. Again, there may be a desire for someone who has held senior position at the parish or regional level such as a former warden, treasurer, administrator, Licensed Lay Minister, or Chair of Regional Council.
5. Six weeks prior to Synod, the Diocesan Executive Director, will correspond with all elected Synod members and parish clergy and wardens to encourage them to encourage their parish's elected Synod Representatives to consider offering themselves for further ministry as an elected regional representative on Executive Council. In all cases, it is hoped that the members selected for Executive Council will be critical

thinkers, eager, innovative, strong willed, willing to prepare and speak up, and with a strong sense of justice. Though not necessary, it would be helpful if the members selected are familiar with reading financial statements and have some knowledge of, or desire to learn about, church law, policy, and programs.

6. **Youth Delegates:** Two youth delegates are to be elected by the youth delegates to Synod to serve on Executive Council. These two youth members are independent from, and not included in the one clerical and one lay members selected by each Region. In selecting these youth delegates, it is hoped the youth delegates to Synod will select eager, forthright, and motivated persons.
7. Above all, every clerical, lay, and youth member must be inquisitive, innovative, bold, and willing to question established policy, documents, and authority.
8. Once selected and duly elected by the regional groups meeting within Synod, the names are to be provided promptly to the Executive Secretary of Synod who shall inform the Bishop, Executive Director, and Registrar. Prior to the conclusion of Synod, all elected clerical, lay, and youth members will gather before Synod to be formally appointed by the Bishop. Any new, episcopally-appointed members, if known, or members to be reappointed by the Bishop for the next Executive Council, may be invited to attend this formal appointment.
9. **Episcopally-appointed members:** A maximum of four members may be appointed by the Bishop. Members may be appointed at any time between synods, though the appointment expires at the adjournment of the following Diocesan Synod unless reappointed. It would be helpful for Executive Council to know, at the time of such appointments, the reason, rationale, or skills that such persons are to bring to Executive Council. It would be desirable for the Bishop to introduce such appointed members at their first Executive Council gathering.

D. ORIENTATION

1. Executive Council members, clerical, lay, and youth may be re-elected at Synod to a following Council. In this way, some leadership and experience will continue as Council resumes following Synod. Otherwise, new members will join Council following each Diocesan Synod. All members, coming directly from Synod will start Council with a fresh vision from that Synod, of the tasks and programs before the Diocese.
2. The Executive Secretary of Synod will ensure an up-to-date orientation program is created and delivered to new, or desiring returning, members of Executive Council. The Orientation program will include:
 - a. a schedule of upcoming meeting dates and locations;
 - b. information on the expectations of Council members concerning study of read-ahead material prior to each gathering and methods for access and logging onto the website for resources;
 - c. a copy of the most recent Diocesan Executive Council minutes;
 - d. a current listing of all Committees, Support Teams, Diocesan Staff Agencies, Ministry Chairs, and Coordinators;
 - e. a current listing, by name, of the Bishop, Archdeacons, Regional Deans, Chancellor, Executive Director, Controller, and Diocesan Staff;
 - f. a listing of all Diocesan and Anglican abbreviations and acronyms;
 - g. a typical pattern of a meeting, perhaps a sample or previous agenda; and
 - h. a document on the file coding system.

The Orientation program should be delivered in person or online prior to the first Council meeting following Synod.

E. HOW AN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING IS SET UP

1. The Bishop, Executive Director, and Executive Secretary of Synod will meet to establish the agenda prior to each Executive Council meeting.
2. The Executive Director will advise relevant staff, VSST Chairs, Task Forces, Working Groups, and other agencies whether they will be required to submit a report in support of planned issues on the agenda.
3. Required reports will be received and distributed by the Executive Secretary of Synod not less than 10 days prior to an Executive Council meeting. The minutes of the last Council meeting may be sent out at the convenience of the Executive Secretary of Synod but not later than 10 days prior to a Council meeting.
4. If a required report is not received 10 days prior to Executive Council, the proposed agenda item is to be struck off the agenda and the Executive Director is to investigate why Council is being frustrated in its function and role.
5. Worship: Prior to Executive Council gathering, a Region will be identified to lead a time of worship during the Council session. Part of Council is intended to be a time of gathering in prayer to discuss and discern the priorities and missional journeys facing the Diocese. It is hoped the worship will be times of spiritual growth, rooted in Anglicanism, insightful, and prayerful.

F. DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. The role of Executive Council is extremely important to the life and ministries within the Diocese. Council is the strategic senior body of governance within the Diocese. It is important that Council members take the time to read, study, reflect upon, and pray over the proposals sent to them as read-ahead documents. During Council their questions, suggested revisions, discussions, and guidance are sought after and eagerly welcomed.
2. In the two years between Synods there will be approximately 10 Executive Council meetings. Members must be able to anticipate attending most of them.
3. In addition to the preparation for, and attendance and participation at, Executive Council meetings, it is strongly encouraged that elected members:
 - a. At least annually, meet with their Region's Archdeacon and Regional Dean, either together as clerical and lay Council members or individually, to determine the challenges facing the clergy and parishes within the region and the Diocese;
 - b. Attend and participate within their Regional Council meetings; and
 - c. Over the course of their 2-year mandate, attempt to visit each parish within their Region at least once, to either attend a Parish Council meeting or attend a Sunday morning worship service in order to listen, learn, and discern the issues and challenges facing the parish; and to provide either a presentation or to speak on the work of the Diocesan Executive Council.