



Policy 2.2.17: Diocesan Executive Council

Effective Date: November, 2025

This policy applies to Members of the Diocesan Executive Council (Lay and Clergy)

A. PURPOSE

To provide direction, expectations, and the anticipated outcomes for the exciting ministry of senior strategic 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 senior 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*) provides that strategic level of governance. The Diocesan Executive Council may also be known as the Diocesan Council or the Council of Diocesan Ministry.

C. SELECTION PROCESS FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. 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, two youth members, and four members appointed by the bishop. 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 clerical representative is elected by all regional members both clerical and lay. The lay representative is elected by all regional members both clerical and lay.
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 Council. The Region's Regional Dean or Archdeacon may also 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. In the month of December prior to an upcoming Synod, the bishop, or a senior leader of the diocese appointed by the bishop, will correspond with parish clergy and wardens to encourage them to plan for election of Synod delegates at their Jan/Feb parish AGMs, and to encourage their parish's Synod Delegate nominees to consider offering themselves for ministry, following Synod, as the elected representative for their region on Diocesan Executive Council. In all cases, it is hoped that the members selected for Council at Synod 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 from their number to serve on Diocesan Council. These two youth members are independent from, and not included as, 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, inquisitive, outspoken, innovative, and motivated persons.
7. Episcopally appointed members: A maximum of four members may be appointed by the bishop. If no vocational deacon has been elected as a member of Diocesan Executive Council from a region, at least one of the appointments made by the bishop will be a deacon. In accordance with Canon 10, the Team Lead for the Financial Management and Development Vision Strategy and Support Team (VSST) shall be appointed by the bishop as a member of Diocesan Executive Council. It would be helpful for Diocesan Executive Council to know, at the time of such appointments, the reason, rationale, or skills that such persons are to bring to Council. It would be desirable for the bishop to introduce such appointed members at their first Council gathering.

8. ORIENTATION

1. Council members, clerical and lay, 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 Council. The Orientation program will include:
 1. a schedule of upcoming meeting dates and locations;
 2. 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;
 3. a current listing of all committees, Support Teams, Diocesan Staff Agencies, Ministry Chairs, and Coordinators;
 4. a current listing, by name, of the Bishop, Archdeacons, Regional Deans, Chancellor, Bishop Office Directors, Controller, and Diocesan Staff;
 5. a listing of all Diocesan and Anglican abbreviations and acronyms;
 6. a typical pattern of a meeting, perhaps a sample or previous agenda; and
 7. a document on the file coding system.
3. The Orientation program should be delivered in person or online prior to the first Council meeting following Synod.

E. HOW A COUNCIL MEETING IS SET UP

1. The Bishop, Directors, Controller, and Executive Secretary of Synod will meet to establish the agenda prior to each Council meeting.
2. The Bishop, or their appointee, will advise Senior 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 a 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 Council, the proposed agenda item may be struck off the agenda and the Executive Secretary of Synod is to investigate why Council is being frustrated in its function and role.
5. Worship: Prior to 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 COUNCIL MEMBERS

The role of 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 and eagerly welcomed. All RSVPs must be received at least one week in advance of a Diocesan Executive Council meeting, except in the case of illness or an emergency. If it is determined that quorum will not be reached, the meeting will be cancelled or rescheduled. Quorum is met when half of the voting members plus one is present.

1. In the two years between Synods there will be approximately 10 Council meetings. Members must be able to anticipate attending most of them. 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 representation 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.
2. In addition to the preparation for, and attendance and participation at, Council meetings, it is strongly encouraged that elected Council members:
 - a. Become aware of the issues and challenges facing the other Diocesan Leaders within their Region by becoming acquainted with and meeting their Region's Archdeacon and Regional Dean.
 - b. Attend and participate within, perhaps providing a regular report to, their Regional Council meetings; and
 - c. Become aware of the issues and challenges facing the parishes which comprise their Region. Over the course of their 2-year mandate, if time and distance allow, Council members might 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 parish issues and to provide either a presentation or to speak on the work of Executive Council, or they might host a zoom or webinar with parish Wardens, or email or telephone them.