

VESTRY MEETINGS

Canon 19 of the Diocese of Huron sets forth in detail matters pertaining to the function of Vestries. This summary is intended only for the guidance of persons who may be unfamiliar with the customary procedures.

1. It is important that a January date for the annual vestry be set (and publicized according to the provisions of the Canon 19, page 34, item 3A) for a time which will leave ample opportunity for the results of its decisions regarding budget, elections, apportionments, etc., to be forwarded to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Diocese by January 31st.
2. Some parishes hold their annual vestries immediately following their main Sunday morning service. Others choose a week-night on which to hold a parish supper which is followed by the annual vestry.
3. Most parishes maintain a special book which is signed by everyone in attendance at the vestry meeting. This ensures an accurate record of persons present.
4. At the appointed hour the incumbent, who chairs the meeting, will open proceedings with prayer. Prior to this, however, he or she, in consultation with the churchwardens will have carefully prepared the agenda to make sure it covers as succinctly as possible all facets of parish activities. If possible, it is helpful for those present to have a copy of the agenda.
5. The first item on the agenda must be the election of a vestry clerk who will record the proceedings so that all items discussed and decided upon will be recorded for posterity.
6. Paramount among the various reports submitted to the annual vestry will be that of the incumbent. In some instances the incumbent will present his report in lieu of a sermon on the Sunday of/or prior to the vestry meeting.

7. Other reports will fall into one of two major categories. These are:
 - a) reports from the various parish organizations, and
 - b) those from the churchwardens, with particular reference to financial obligations.
8. It is recommended that reports from parish organizations be printed for distribution at the vestry and that they be recognized, appreciated and adopted in one single all-encompassing motion of acceptance. Otherwise the presentation of successive reports can result in tedium.
9. The churchwardens reports and their presentation of the budget for the ensuing year (including acceptance of diocesan commitments) should occupy a major role on the agenda for discussion and adoption.
10. Churchwardens reports will inevitably include audited financial statements. It is customary to express thanks to the auditors and to appoint (or re-appoint) them for the coming year.
11. It is advisable that careful preparation for the nomination be given beforehand to the election and/or appointment of such officials as churchwardens, deputy churchwardens, delegates to Diocesan Synod, alternate delegates and members of the Parish Council.
12. Following conclusion of the vestry, the following should be promptly mailed to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Dioceses:
 - a) the certificates of election naming churchwardens, delegates to synod and alternates,
 - b) a statement of trust funds (if any),
 - c) a statement of parish expenditures from which the following year's apportionment will be compiled,
 - d) bishop's statistical returns.

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