

Hope Lutheran Church Nanaimo Policies

Our Mission: To live Christ's teachings and share them with others,
to nurture and strengthen spiritual growth to embody Christ in the world.

B – 002 Council Meeting Guidelines

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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy provides general guidelines on the council meetings of Hope Lutheran Church in Nanaimo.

2. PRINCIPLES

Hope Lutheran Church Council meetings shall be structured so as to make them as effective and useful as possible.

3. APPLICATIONS AND PRACTICES

3.1. Meeting Framework

There must be a set framework for council meeting agendas. Meetings have bookends. The council has prior knowledge of the content. Meetings start on time. They end on time. The council should be scrupulous about following its own Constitution and Bylaws.

3.1.1. Framework

A framework should be chosen and used routinely for every council meeting.

Example:

- Old Business
- Minutes
- Correspondence
- Committee reports
- New Business et cetera

3.1.2. Agenda

The agenda should be available to those attending the meeting one week prior to the meeting so they can be prepared to address the items. Agendas are to be posted publicly **one week prior** on the congregation bulletin board (See A 2, 3.3 d)

When there is no business in one section of the agenda format, it should still be included so that this can be noted.

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Correspondence, for example, should be placed on the agenda, even if it is known that there is no correspondence to cover. Correspondence will be routinely checked at the meeting and its lack recorded in the minutes.

Note: There is no right agenda framework formula. Hope Lutheran Church Council needs to adopt and use one that meets our needs.

3.1.3. Inclusion of items on the agenda

The chair should be contacted two weeks before the planned meeting to include items on upcoming agendas. This routine is to be followed. No individual's or group's pet project can be allowed to usurp the progression of the agenda. Items must fit into the categories established for inclusion.

Extraordinary items, at the discretion of the council, require a special meeting for discussion.

3.1.4. Record keeping

There should be a routine established for keeping records and for publishing and distributing information and reports.

3.1.5. Standard Orders

The established routine for dealing with and processing council business is called Standard Orders. These are vital for establishing and keeping order in council affairs. This prevents the co-opting of council by special interests and special interest groups. It keeps meetings on track. It is clear what is in order and what is not. Meetings start and stop and go as planned. Members need to help one another to follow the order that is established. This is critical to having an effective council.

The council needs to publish the Standard Orders. It should be common knowledge that there is an agreed upon process. It should be clear what it is.

3.1.6. Motions

The council must deal with that which is. Motions should not be entertained without clarification of who will be affected first. How a job is going to be done must be specified before an action is started. How something is going to be paid for must be clear. Minimum criteria for action plans are who, how, when how much. Things that cannot be done should not be taking up council time.

3.1.7. Executive meetings

Executive meetings and in camera meetings are not open to the larger congregation and minutes of those meetings will not be published.

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3.2. What Are the Ethical Requirements of A Council Member?

Avoid communication problems, especially triangulating.

Note; Triangulation is a method of handling disagreement. Two parties that have a disagreement get a third party involved. The disagreement is not resolved to the satisfaction of both the parties in the dispute. The third party is blamed for the on-going problem.

3.2.1. Unethical behaviour

Our guideline is from Matthew 18. Offensive ethical behavior is confronted first one to one, then several to one, then council to one, then congregation to one. Finally, the unrepentant offender is excommunicated.

Disagreements on the ethics of a given situation should be solved on a one-to-one basis as much as possible.

3.2.2. Confidentiality

Discussion of items of business and information that deal with people should be limited to as much as possible outside the council setting. Council work should be conducted in a way that minimizes damage to members' reputations and interests.

3.3. Confidentiality

Meeting minutes should not identify Council members with the comments made or positions taken.

Information identified as confidential by the chair is to be treated as such.

Discussions that are held "in camera" are considered confidential. No minutes will be taken except for motions passed and decisions made.

In communications outside of Council meetings, members may convey content, of discussions and decisions made but not identify the comments and positions of individual members.

Personal information gained while conducting Council business is to be held strictly confidential.

All documentation, in the form of minutes, reports and parties to whom reference is made may access correspondence.

3.4. Conflict of Interest Guidelines

If a Council member may be specifically affected by a decision made by Council, or expects to receive financial or other tangible benefits from the decision, or is the immediate relative of such a person, he/she shall abstain from discussion and from voting on that decision,

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If a Council member is the member of staff of a congregation or organization that may be specifically affected or expects to receive tangible benefits by a decision made by Council, or is the immediate relative of such a person, he/she shall abstain from discussion and from voting on that decision.

Any Council member engaging in political, or lobbying/advocacy activity should make every effort to ensure that he/she is not perceived as representing the Council.

In communications within and outside the congregation, Council members should not present themselves as representing the Council unless authorized to do so by the Council.

4. REFERENCES

From February 11, 1995 Council meeting with Bishop Marlin Aadland. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 from BC-Synod confidentiality and Conflict of interest guidelines Appendix I.