

## Book of Discipline: ¶ 258.4. Finance

¶ 258.4. There shall be a **committee on finance**, elected annually by the charge conference upon recommendation by the committee on nominations and leadership development or from the floor, composed of the chairperson; the pastor(s); a lay member of the annual conference; the chairperson of the church council; the chairperson or representative of the committee on pastor-parish relations; a representative of the trustees to be selected by the trustees; the chairperson of the ministry group on stewardship; the lay leader; the financial secretary; the treasurer; the church business administrator; and other members to be added as the charge conference may determine. It is recommended that the chairperson of the committee on finance shall be a member of the church council. The financial secretary, treasurer, and church business administrator, if paid employees, shall be members without vote.

The positions of treasurer and financial secretary should not be combined and held by one person, and the persons holding these two positions should not be immediate family members.

No immediate family members of any appointed clergy may serve as treasurer, finance chair, financial secretary, counter, or serve in any paid or unpaid position under the responsibilities of the committee on finance, as described herein. These restrictions would apply only to the church or charge where the clergy serves.

The committee on finance shall give stewardship of financial resources as their priority throughout the year. It may delegate the responsibility to either a sub-group or task force that would plan, strategize, and implement ways to generate more resources for mission and ministries of the local churches and beyond. It is strongly recommended that the committee on finance, in collaboration with the church council, find creative ways to turn their congregations into tithing congregations with an attitude of generosity. All financial askings to be included in the annual budget of the local church shall be submitted to the committee on finance. The committee on finance shall compile annually a complete budget for the local church and submit it to the church council for review and adoption. The committee on finance shall be charged with responsibility for developing and implementing plans that will raise sufficient income to meet the budget adopted by the church council. It shall administer the funds received according to instructions from the church council.

The committee shall carry out the church council's directions in guiding the treasurer(s) and financial secretary.

a) The committee shall designate at least two persons not of the immediate family residing in the same household to count the offering. They shall work under the supervision of the financial secretary. A record of all funds received shall be given to the financial secretary and treasurer. Funds received shall be deposited promptly in accordance with the procedures established by the committee on finance. The financial secretary shall keep records of the contributions and payments.

b) The **church treasurer(s)** shall disburse all money contributed to causes represented in the local church budget, and such other funds and contributions as the church council may determine. The treasurer(s) shall remit each month to the conference treasurer all World Service and conference benevolence funds then on hand. Contributions to benevolence shall not be used for any cause other than that to which they have been given. The church treasurer shall make regular and detailed reports on funds received and expended to the committee on finance and the church council.<sup>10</sup> The treasurer(s) shall be adequately bonded.

c) The **committee on finance** shall establish written financial policies to document the internal controls of the local church. The written financial policies should be reviewed for adequacy and effectiveness annually by the committee on finance and submitted as a report to the charge conference annually.

d) The committee shall make provision for an annual audit of the financial statements of the local church and all its organizations and accounts. The committee shall make a full and complete report to the annual charge conference. A local church audit is defined as an independent evaluation of the financial reports and records and the internal controls of the local church by a qualified person or persons.

The audit shall be conducted for the purpose of reasonably verifying the reliability of financial reporting, determining whether assets are being safeguarded, and determining compliance with local law, local church policies and procedures, and the *Book of Discipline*.

The audit may include: 1) a review of the cash and investment reconciliations; 2) interviews with the treasurer, financial secretary, pastor(s), finance committee chair, business manager, those who count offerings, church secretary, etc., with inquiries regarding compliance with existing written financial policies and procedures; 3) a review of journal entries and authorized check signers for each checking and investment account; and 4) other procedures requested by the committee on finance.

The audit shall be performed by an audit committee composed of persons unrelated to the persons listed in (2) above or by an independent certified public accountant (CPA), accounting firm, or equivalent.

e) The committee shall recommend to the church council proper depositories for the church's funds. Funds received shall be deposited promptly in the name of the local church.

f) Contributions designated for specific causes and objects shall be promptly forwarded according to the intent of the donor and shall not be used for any other purpose.<sup>11</sup>

g) After the budget of the local church has been approved, additional appropriations or changes in the budget must be approved by the church council.

h) The committee shall prepare annually a report to the church council of all designated funds that are separate from the current expense budget.

10. See Judicial Council Decisions 63, 320, 539.

11. See Judicial Council Decisions 976.

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