



CLERGY PERSONNEL BOARD POLICIES AND FUNCTIONS

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

I. **General**

- A. The responsibility to act as a minister of reconciliation and hope is shared by all priests and is a ministry we are called to share with one another in a graced way.
- B. Priests are expected to serve the Lord joyfully. It is important, therefore, to be content with one's assignment and happy with one's work. This is an important criterion in all priestly personnel work.
- C. Priests are expected to grow and mature in their work. It is the function of the whole presbyterate, particularly the Personnel Board, to call one another to this growth and to support one another in the pain and discouragement this may involve.
- D. Members of the board are responsible for and accountable to their fellow priests as brothers. Each priest is encouraged to maintain fraternal contact with his representative on the board. Board members are expected to initiate contact with each member of his constituency at least twice a year.
- E. Discussion within the board and the conversations with individual board members are confidential.
- F. All priests are to share in a sense of accountability for service to the entire diocese and not see their ministry confined to one geographic area or one special work for their entire priestly ministry in the diocese. The authentic good of the people of God and the universal Church must be the broad perspective guiding personnel placement decisions.
- G. The fundamental attitude of the priest must be one that conveys a readiness and willingness to allow his skills and abilities to be engaged in the service of God's people wherever needed or requested.
- H. Recognizing that stability and maturity amidst a parish community or a particular office become effective over time, there should be sufficient time for growth to occur and creativity to develop.
- I. A change of assignment provides opportunity for a priest to renew his pastoral energies as well as allow a parish community to experience the freshness of new pastoral and spiritual insights and creativity. It also permits different pastoral experiences and charisms to be shared throughout the diocese.



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II. **Specific Policies Regarding Assignment and Transfer of Priest Personnel**

- A. The initial assignment of newly ordained priests will be recommended to the bishop by the board in collaboration with the diocesan director of priestly formation as well as the newly ordained priests.
- B. In September of each year priests and those to be ordained will be given an opportunity to complete a form indicating whether or not they are desirous of reassignment.
- C. In the process of recommending assignments to the bishop, it will be difficult to announce what parishes or positions are or will be vacant. More often than not in a diocese as small as ours most of these expected vacancies become more or less common knowledge. When a priest has asked for reassignment every effort will be made to discuss with him the options within the diocese to provide him with the type of reassignment that will be most agreeable to him. However, there may be instances when a priest desiring reassignment may be asked to remain in his present assignment, or again there may be situations in which a priest who has not asked for reassignment will be asked to undertake another position in the diocese where his talents and gifts are needed.
- D. Consultation with a priest desiring to be reassigned will involve dialogue between the board and the priest and dialogue between the priest and the bishop whenever it is requested.
- E. When a community accustomed to a resident priest no longer has a resident pastor, these points will be considered:
 - 1. Proximity to priestly service elsewhere;
 - 2. Parish population doesn't warrant full-time person;
 - 3. Existing or available resources (Full-time sister or lay person);
 - 4. Catholic School or number in religious education program;
 - 5. Effect on priest personally by being unduly isolated.
- F. Retired priests are encouraged to serve in some capacity in the diocese at least on a part time basis. The Personnel Board will offer assistance to priests seeking to serve as a supply priest. Effort also should be made by the retired priest to make known his availability to provide priestly service.



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III. **Guidelines for the Personnel Board in Recommending Clergy Appointments**

The board attempts to be flexible; it learns by experience and constantly tries to eliminate problems as it faces new challenges. In most cases it is a matter of knowing who is available, the needs of the parishes in the diocese, the gifts and abilities of the individual priests, the short-range and long-range needs of communities, and the needs of the region and the diocese in general.

IV. **Tenure**

- A. New assignments generally will take place on July 1st of every year (see guidelines on activity timeline).
- B. On occasion, appointments will be made when the bishop believes sufficient need exists for an appointment to be made outside of the general sequence of assignments.
- C. While it is presumed that the bishop and the personnel board will thoughtfully consider all applicants for a position, the bishop may appoint whomever he believes is best suited for a position.
- D. The bishop and the personnel board will do the best they can to fill an open position as soon as possible.
- E. When necessary, a parochial administrator may be appointed so that more time is available for application, discernment and selection of a pastor.
- F. Terms of appointment
 - 1. The term of office for a pastor is six (6) years, (policy approved by NCCB, November 14, 1983).
 - 2. The normal term of office of a parochial vicar is three (3) years.
 - 3. The terms of office for a parochial administrator is three (3) years (a priest normally will not be appointed as pastor until after his fifth year of ordination).
 - 4. The term of office for a sacramental minister is three (3) years.



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5. Religious order priests are appointed to parishes to serve terms of office according to the contractual obligations between the bishop and the religious superior of the priest.
 6. An appointment to a diocesan office (e.g., vicar forane, judicial vicar, etc.) will be for a period of time indicated in the terms of the letter of hire, job description, canonical stipulations or at the judgment of the bishop.
 7. A priest may request a transfer and/or change of assignment at any time during his term of office.
 8. All terms are renewable.
- G. A pastor is required to submit his resignation from his office to the bishop when he has reached 75 years of age.

Rev. 4/12



**CLERGY PERSONNEL BOARD
POLICIES AND FUNCTIONS**
Appendix A – Activity Timeline/Guidelines
Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 14, 2001

To: All Diocesan Priests and Pastoral Administrators

From: Most Rev. Anthony M. Milone
Bishop the Diocese of Great Falls – Billings

Re: Update to “Policies and Functions of the Clergy Personnel Board” of the
Diocesan Policies, Guidelines, & Norms Manual

Please find attached to this memorandum a document which is to be appended to the above stated Policy (Number 25 in the Manual). It is entitled “Activity Timeline Guidelines”, and is the fruit of much discussion at recent Personnel Board meetings. It was presented at the Presbyteral Assembly Business Session on September 18, 2001 and was approved by those in attendance.

This document replaces and expands upon the present Policy’s II. B., namely, “Specific Policies regarding Assignment and Transfer of Priest Personnel.” The “intent form” will be issued in September from now on, not November.

This policy is being shared with Parish Life Coordinators as a suggested pattern to use when it comes to **retirement**. Although it has no bearing on the CBA, it gives consistency to the pastoral patters surrounding retirement.

This cover letter is to remain part of the “Activity Timeline” document. The policy comes into effect July 1, 2002.

I emphasize that this is a guideline, no more and no less. Flexibility is always part of the Personnel Board policy. I thank those who had a hand in preparing this document and for the willingness of all of you to approve of this helpful tool.



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Appendix A – Activity Timeline/Guidelines
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REGARDING ASSIGNMENTS:

First week of September:

Letter of intent is mailed to all active diocesan priests.

September 30:

Deadline for response to vicariate representative.

October Personnel Board Meeting:

Review of responses to letter of intent.

January Personnel Board Meeting:

Review of correspondence about letter of intent, discuss applications, etc.

Review information from the planning committee.

March Personnel Board Meeting

Goal: to finalize assignments by means of dialogue between the Bishop and Priests.

First week of May:

Publish assignments.

REGARDING RETIREMENT:

July 1, one year prior to retirement:

Notify the bishop and the clerical benefit association board

First week of September:

Notify the personnel board by means of the letter of intent

January 1 of retirement year:

Announce retirement to parish



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Appendix B – By-Laws & Election Procedures Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

Membership

This group is advisory to the bishop according to the policy guidelines:

- One eligible priest from each of the five vicariates
- The Minister to Priests or Vicar for Clergy (*ex officio*)
- The Vicar General (*ex officio*)
- Chancellor (*Committee on Planning ex officio*)

Officers

The board members choose a chairman and a secretary as needed; normally the terms of the officers coincide with and terminate with their terms of service on the board.

Meetings

The group gathers as needed at the request of the bishop. The schedule of activities serves as a guideline. Normally the first meeting of the season is held in conjunction with the fall presbyteral assembly.

Terms of Office

The five vicariate representatives are elected to a two-year term on a rotating basis. Representatives can serve for two consecutive terms, but may be eligible to serve again after an interval of two years' absence from the board. The term begins in November. If a member moves to another vicariate during his term, he completes it, and then a vicariate election is conducted for a new member from the absent vicariate.

Eligibility

Priests who are active (including active pensioners), incardinated, and living within the borders of the diocese are eligible for election. Active diocesan priests living outside the diocese turn in letters of intent, as appropriate. Extern priests may be requested to turn in letters of intent, but do not participate in the same fashion as incardinated priests and are not eligible for membership. Retired and disabled priests are not eligible.

Elections

Elections are held during the fall presbyteral assembly as needed. Those who vote are the same as those who are eligible for membership. All eligible voters cast ballots for all vicariate openings. The ballot is prepared, as needed, by the secretary. The ballots are counted by the chairman, who announces the new members at the assembly business session.

Effective July 1, 2002
Revised November 18, 2008
Revised April, 2012