



Communicating During Transition August 2022 – July 2024

Preamble

Beginning with the first set of official parish council elections in early 2023 and continuing until July 31, 2024 when the last council (Ontario) changes its executive structure to mirror the newly adopted *Constitution & Bylaws*, executive structures will be in a state of transition that will disrupt the communication and reporting lines between levels.

Nature of Inter-Level Communications

Inter-level communications happen for many reasons:

- A level has information/knowledge to share
- A level has suggested actions/projects/programs to promote
- A level has an inquiry that requires an answer
- A level has a situation that requires resolution
- A level has a reporting requirement

The existing communications system relies heavily on counterpart-to-counterpart transmission of information. With the disruption in traditional communication lines, an alternate process for communications must be available during the transition period.

Example of the Issue

Each executive member connects through other levels with the contact information for the member at her level who is her counterpart.

Using the communications standing committee and the interlevel example of National (2023) ↔ Manitoba (2024) ↔ St. Boniface (2023) ↔ Mary, Mother Parish Council (2024) to illustrate the problem, the existing protocol would look as follows:

- August 2022 to April 2023: Communications ↔ Communications ↔ Communications ↔ Communications
- April 2023 to August 2023: Communications ↔ Communications ↔ Secretary ↔ Communications
- August 2023 to January 2024: Secretary ↔ Communications ↔ Secretary ↔ Communications
- January 2024 to June 2024: Secretary ↔ Communications ↔ Secretary ↔ Secretary
- June 2024 and onward: Secretary ↔ Secretary ↔ Secretary ↔ Secretary

The importance of the secretaries at every level to maintain updated contact lists for their executives and providing them immediately following any election would be critical for the traditional communication lines to continue effectively. It also assumes that a national/ provincial/ diocesan/ parish officer would always know who she could expect direction and advice from and who would be making inquiries of and reporting to.



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The ability for the traditional communication lines to function effectively is fraught with the potential for human error, including:

- Lack of immediate sharing of executive listings every time a position changes
- Lack of knowledge of the executive structures of other levels (e.g. a diocese executive would need to know the structure at every point in time of the multiple parish executives under its charge)
- Confusion over what information would be appropriate to send to which position, particularly in the case of the new faith, service and social justice committees
- Pre-existing communication challenges between the levels

Communications Solution

The League will rely on dual communications with the council president and council secretary to receive, review and forward communications coming from other levels. These two positions exist in both the old and new structure, making them the ideal candidates for receiving all information.

Choosing both positions instead of just the president or the secretary ensures that the pre-existing challenges of communicating between levels will be partially eliminated, as while one may not receive a communication, the other one may.

The advantages of the proposed system including ensuring the president is fully informed, secretaries have an opportunity to grow into their communications role under the new structure, and they have greater control over projects, programs and workflow based the unique charism of their council executive.

Summary

The national communications protocol will contribute to a chaotic disruption of communications during the transitional period when councils, at their next election, adopt the new executive structure.

To address the chaos,

- Counterpart to counterpart communications will be eliminated during this transitional period in favour of communicating through the presidents and the secretaries.
- Communications received by the president and secretary, after conferring, will be fanned out to their executive or to the next level, as is appropriate to their unique council needs and structure.

The change to the communications process, while in force until August 2024, can be evaluated at the end of the transition period. If the process is proven to be beneficial in increasing the effectiveness of communications and member awareness, it may be considered for a permanent change to the League's communication method.