

Parish Council Minutes

May 26th, 2009

Present: Debbie Hintz, Renee' Steger, Pat Lehman, Les Hagensick, Barb Holt, Ken Laczniak, Mary Konshak, David Brunmeier, Ellie Okunseri

Absent: Ed Schwanke, Curt Arneson, Carl Geenen

Guest: Shari Brennen

Opening Prayer – Pat Lehman led the opening prayer.

Approval of April Minutes – Mary motioned to approve the April minutes and Dave seconded the motion.

Update on Implementation of School Plan – The new school business manager signed her contract today. All three parishes agreed that she was the best candidate; she was our first choice and everyone is happy that she has joined our staff. Debbie talked about the school statues briefly. At our last meeting Barb felt that it was important to have the word “School” removed from the title and call Northwest Catholic an “Association” because she felt that the Community Education Center was being excluded in the way it was worded. Maureen, our consultant, was reluctant to change this because we have not yet determined what the Community Education Center will be. Once that is developed, the statues will be amended. Barb shared with Debbie an article about possible uses for the building.

2009-2010 Budget Review – Shari handed out and reviewed the proposed budget. Our projected parish income for 2009-10 is approximately \$40,000 less than our current year. Shari answered questions from the group and we all agreed that the budget draft, as proposed, is acceptable with an approximately \$50,000 deficit. It should be noted, however, that this is still a budget in process since we don't yet have a firm figure for our school subsidy. The figure for the school included in this proposed budget is an average of several possible formulas. We will have an agreed upon formula soon and we'll have a much better budget number after the 3rd Friday in September.

Nomination Committee – Barb put together notes on the process and will give Ken the folder for next year after Mary reviews it. A couple commented to Debbie that they did not vote because their ballots were not anonymous; they do not like having to sign their names on the ballot. What would our options be? Renee' suggested a church roster in the Granville Room with ballots being handed out after people check in. Many felt that the system in place works well; we had a record number of votes this year. It was felt that we would lose voters if we changed the system so perhaps it would not be prudent to change a system that seems to be working well for most parishioners. Debbie asked Barb to respond to this couple by asking them what their solution would be.

Parish Director Report – Debbie felt that most of what she had to discuss with us was covered in earlier conversations so she didn't have anything to add at this time.

St. Catherine of Alexandria
Milwaukee

Year-End Evaluation – Debbie asked the council to consider our work over the past year and provide comments. We felt that a lot was accomplished this year with the Faith in Our Future campaign and the school merger project. Barb felt that the agenda worked well, with the heavy issues in the beginning, a break and then the routine items last. Debbie mentioned that she had always wanted to plan a retreat for the Parish Council and perhaps include the parish staff as well. Pat thinks this would be a good idea because it would help to build the relationship between new and existing council members. Ellie agreed and felt that this should be a priority even if we have a heavy load for the year. Mary is serving her third term on the council and commented that in the past, officers were selected through discernment rather than a vote, and felt this would be good to get back to. Debbie will review the calendar for the coming year and plan a retreat day for council and staff.

Consultation for New Archbishop – Debbie posed several questions to the group to consider:

What are the “in church” issues that exist in the archdiocese that the new Archbishop will find?

Assets:

- Strong Catholic schools and many institutions of higher learning in our diocese
- The people have a spirit of collaboration
- We have an openness/acceptance of new ideas

Weakness:

- Sexual assault issue and Archbishop Weakland’s new book
- The financial shape of the diocese
- The issue of how to get people back into the pews
- Finding a way to make the faith more tangible for Catholics

What are the societal issues that exist in the ten counties of SE WI and in the state that the new Archbishop will face?

Assets:

- Midwestern friendliness
- TV shows; programming begun by Archbishop Dolan
- Radio ads inviting people to come back to church

Weakness:

- Economy
- Unemployment
- The decline of traditional faiths

On the national level, what are the issues that our new Archbishop together with the USCCB should attend to?

- Gay marriage
- Abortion issues, many Catholic hospitals will close if they have to perform abortions.
- Priest shortages, parishioners are accepting of married priests and women priests.

St. Catherine of Alexandria
Milwaukee

Committee Reports

Prayer & Worship – This group met on May 5th. They evaluated Lent, Holy Week and Easter masses. There was good attendance at all events held during holy week. Stations of the Cross had the smallest attendance but were still higher than in years past. The addition of Friday morning masses was well received. We are still in need of help at the 4:30pm mass; ushers, EMs – we still need servers for all masses. Their next meeting is Tuesday, June 2nd @ 6:30pm.

Human Concerns – St. Vincent DePaul – Les relayed a story which Carl recently shared with him about a recent home visit: The mother seemed very depressed during their visit and when he gave stuffed animal and books for the kids, this brought a smile to her face. No results for the Mother's Day rose sale. There was an article in the Northwest Connection newsletter about organ donor information. They are continuing the lunch bags for Guest House. There was a reunion of people who traveled to the Dominican Republic. They learned that the mission has been split in two with each section serving about 20,000 people. They need approximately \$8,000/mo to run the parish. The group is considering adding this project to our next giving drive. Les attended a meeting on nuclear disarmament and shared his thoughts on this issue. Next meeting is scheduled for June 8th @ 6:30pm

Finance – We have a \$127,000 deficit as of the end of April. We still have \$109,000 coming in from Choice and \$4,000 from private pay students which is decrease our deficit. The FIOF campaign has brought in \$39,000 in so far. Dave wondered if we could market the church with some of this money since it was in our plan. It seems like we need more people coming to church and the income that comes with new members. Next meeting is Tuesday, June 9th.

Christian Formation – There was no meeting – their next meeting is June 2nd.

Stewardship – This group did not meet – their next meeting is in June.

Parish Life – The group met to discuss the school celebration/parish picnic. They discussed a social event – possibly another trip to The Fireside or to see “Church Basement Ladies” in Hartford. The Chili dinner has been scheduled for October 24th – entertainment has been lined up. December 5th has been selected as the date for the Women's Evening of Reflection. Their next meeting is June 18th.

June meeting picnic – Renee will put together a menu and email everyone to sign up. The meeting will begin at 6:00 instead of 6:30.

Closing Prayer – Pat Lehman led the closing prayer.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Renee' Steger, Parish Council Secretary