

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, April 18, 2011**

Council Members in Attendance: Fr. Bill Wagner, Vic Ivers, Kathy Hornschemeier, Jim Conrady, John Duncan, and Neil Kamphaus, Jr.

Council Members Absent: Larry Bush, Janet Tate.

Others in Attendance: Mike Gennett, Rob Ell.

The St. Thomas More Parish Council meeting was called to order by Vic Ivers at 7:00 PM EDT. Fr. Bill Wagner opened with a prayer.

Football Field & use during JulyFest - Rob Ell asked to address Parish Council regarding use of the football field during the festival. Rob asked for clarification about parking on the field during JulyFest. He would like to see an alternative so the field is not used for parking.

Rob stated the festival committee has not been willing to consider alternatives. He noted for example that Bid'n Buy would not move to the gym. Fr. Bill stated the suggestion of getting vans from car dealers and use parishioners to drive the vans to offsite lots is prohibited by the diocese. Our insurance does not cover parishioner drivers and they must provide their own coverage and it must be documented with a coverage minimum of \$1,000,000. 15 passenger vans are also prohibited for use by the diocese and the US Catholic Conference of Bishops because the National Transportation Safety Board has ruled them as unsafe. Mike Gennett stated he was told that Murray Bros, the ride vendor, came to a festival meeting and stated if they moved to the field, it could be torn up worse than just having parking there. That was also declined as an alternative.

Mike also stated he was told last week that the 2010 layout was the final version for this year. He needed to start working on the liquor license since a neighboring parish had reported liquor control was being tough on

applications this year (theirs had been rejected twice). More time was needed to cover any bottlenecks. The final festival layout has to be submitted with the license application. Neil Kamphaus asked what was the absolute deadline for submitting the liquor license application.

Kathy Hornschemeier stated that the cost of changing the layout may be prohibitive. *(At the last festival committee meeting, the electrical costs to make the changes moving the rides to the field and redoing the entire layout were reported to be around \$10,000. There is currently no electricity out in the field).*

Fr. Bill said that council made it clear last spring that if the football field was built, it must be used for parking during JulyFest. Alternatives were open for discussion but that does not mean the decision would change. He said the decision belongs to the festival and he would not overrule the festival committee. It was too late this year to consider any changes.

Business Manager Report: Mike Gennett gave the report.

School Registrations for 2011-12 were completed on April 1. 269 children are enrolled as of today. We still have 17 children that are currently in the school that have not yet enrolled. Letters were sent to those families on Friday requesting a response by this Thursday. We don't anticipate all 17 coming back. A few are waiting to learn about job transfers and the like.

It is disappointing to note we only have 18 registered for Kindergarten. For years, we heard our Kindergarten tuition was "too high" and since we reduced it to the same price as grades 1-8, enrollment has actually dropped. On the other hand, First Grade is up and we are going to have record enrollment for Jr. High.

School Enrollment may drop from our opening number this year of 289. Enrollment has dropped slightly each year from a record high of 319 during 2007-2008. School enrollment could increase depending on the outcome of passing the West Clermont Schools levy on May 3.

Employee Benefits Open Enrollment is now underway through May 4.

The Catholic Ministries Appeal campaign is running slower than in previous years. We have 48.71% of our goal in as of April 15th. The diocese average is 59.84%. Only 7.8% of our households have responded.

The Archdiocese CFO has just asked us to participate in **the Hamilton Country Parish Recycling Initiative** even though we are in Clermont County. They are required to be used in all public events such as the Festival, sporting events, etc. More on this later.

Our budget deficit has been shrinking the past few weeks. This is very good news. A couple of factors are at play:

The Sunday collection since January 1 through April 17 is running \$8,753.11 ahead of plan and approximately \$6,000 more than last year when adjusting for the shift in the late Easter date. For the first six months of 2010-11, we were down \$17,758.34 to plan and \$27,657.06 to last year.

Our drop took place during the fall of 2010 when we did not anniversary a Stewardship campaign from late September 2009. There will be a major Stewardship Campaign beginning September 25, 2011 paid for by the diocese. It will last for nine weeks. It will be conducted via mail and from the pulpit with an emphasis on growing our electronic contributions. Parish Council members may be asked to consider speaking at some of the Masses. An important ingredient of the campaign includes parishioners who are able to speak from their heart about this drive.

The collection has also had a boost from a few parishioners that have donated anywhere from \$1,000 to \$2,500 to help make up the shortfall.

The other positive is expenses are down 5% to last year. This should improve in the weeks ahead because the 2011 festival will not be spending before the end of the fiscal year to the extent the 2010 festival did.

If we are paid back for our felony loss before June 30th, and the Sunday collection and expense trends continues, we could end up close to breaking even or even have a small surplus for the fiscal year. Of course unexpected maintenance issues are always an unknown factor.

There are some capital issues that will need to be addressed in the weeks and years ahead. The parking lot is breaking up again in the back due to the school bus traffic, but in a different area. And...we need to go on record that the church air conditioner is 31 years old this year.

A revised 2011-12 budget will be prepared and sent to finance in May. Issues affecting the budget will be the Sunday stewardship program, a cut in state aid to the school; additional costs including paying into the priest pension fund, the parking lot issues, and the school enrollment numbers.

Pastor's Report – Fr. Bill gave his update.

Archdiocese School Supt. Dr. Rigg is working on a comprehensive plan for all the diocese schools. The press reported that the diocese is looking at a centralized plan. That is not correct. No one knows what the final vision of the schools will be.

There are three vision feedback meetings scheduled. On May 3, there will be a meeting for Pastors and Principals. The May 10th meeting is for Business Managers, Finance Committee, and School Board members. Mike Gennett (Bus Mgr), Mark Barton (School), Chris White (Finance), and Joan Cardone (Finance and School) will represent St. Thomas More. These first two meetings will be held at Elder High School.

There also will be three meetings for the general public on June 7, 8, and 9.

All the meetings will discuss issues, needs, and suggestions regarding our schools.

The Communication Survey results are in. The bulletin and bulletin inserts are the number one source of communication and is viewed in a very positive light. Pulpit announcements are also viewed as very positive. A comment was made that the people who attend Mass are giving this feedback which is good since both methods are available by attending. Moving the pulpit announcements to just after the Prayers of the Faithful has been well received. Internet access and usage depended on the age of the parishioners. Older folks do not have a computer and cannot access the web sites or email. There was feedback that some reported they had no idea about various communications methods. Fr. Bill said not every method of communication is for everyone. School families would only get school information, for example. It is not available to everyone. Fr. Bill stated we are going to work on an insert about all the various communication vehicles and how to access them.

Fr. Steven Angi has been name the new Chancellor of the Archdiocese.

Regarding an update on **the Music Director position**, auditions will take place in early May. There were 10 applications received. Some were dismissed as serious candidates after an initial interview. Council members made comments that the current interim organist, Ken Blue, plays and sings very professionally.

Pastoral Region with St. Bernadette – The two Parish Councils should plan to meet in May. The initial meeting should be a “getting to know you” and discuss how to approach sharing a Pastor when that day arrives. A Pastoral Region means sharing ONE PASTOR for both parishes and nothing more. It is not a merger. The issue is scheduling Masses and other liturgical events. Issues as to where to have the Easter Vigil and Midnight Mass are examples. One Pastor cannot do two Easter Vigils.

The Councils need to decide if they are going to pick a committee to at look at the issues and make a proposal.

The goal is to make the process a friendly one, relaxed, non-threatening, and practical. The first meeting should be less structured and more social. The Councils should end up with an approach how to tackle the issues.

It was suggested that the first meeting could be off site in a private room possibly at a restaurant.

Fr. Bill stated that St. Bernadette already have a few of their children that participate in our Youth Ministry and Football program.

Vic Ivers stated he was going to contact his counterpart at St. Bernadette and see how they feel about how to handle the first meeting.

Youth Minister – Fr. Bill stated he is getting requests for a Youth Minister. Our Youth Ministry program currently is a volunteer committee like at so many parishes. Our Youth Ministry program is a collaborative effort with St. Veronica Parish and to a lesser extent St. Bernadette. The Pastor at St. Veronica wants to pass on hiring a Youth Minister at this time. We currently do not plan to proceed filling this position but may do so later when the funding and the timing are right.

Vic Ivers made a motion to adjourn. Kathy Hornschemeier seconded the motion. The Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM. Fr. Bill led the group in a prayer.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE FINALIZED ONCE VIC IVERS REPORTS BACK ON HIS CONVERSATION WITH HIS COUNTERPART AT ST. BERNADETTE. The regularly scheduled meeting is May 16th and should be held at this time.