

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
Monday, April 19, 2010**

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

**Council Members Absent:** Janet Tate.

**Others in Attendance:** Mike Gennett, Lori Knight (PTO), TR O'Brien (Boosters), Diane Brennan (Youth Ministry), and Brigitte Gentile (Girl Scouts).

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 Update:**

A discussion took place regarding installing a football field on the north lot behind the gym. The purpose of the field is to allow the merged St. Thomas More & St. Veronica football teams to practice and play their games.

The field would run east to west and would cover part of the softball field. Currently, there are no STM teams using the softball field. *(Three teams coached by parishioners from other organizations are using the field. All the necessary insurance and agreements have been provided.)*

An email regarding numerous discussions and questions regarding this project had previously been sent to all council members for their review prior to the meeting.

In order to install the field, part of the playground needs to be moved. The playground was built in 2007 after extensive fund raising by the PTO. The

swing set and the two benches need to be shifted to the south/southwest side of the playground or west of the dome. Kathy Hornschemeier asked if the field could be moved 90 degrees to run north and south in order not to impact the playground. It was stated the football field would not fit in that space.

The Boosters asked for access of the field beginning in May to prepare it for football. A bulldozer would be brought in to grade the field and seed it. 5500 gallons of water would be used to start growth of the grass. Delaying it to summer would mean dry weather and little chance of getting a new field underway. Work on the field should only take one to two days. UT zoning permit is not required since no structures are being built but a county grading permit is needed.

The Boosters stated they were responsible for the installation cost and it could be as high as \$8,000 for everything. An application for a grant has been submitted to the Marvin Lewis Foundation.

In the long term, the Boosters see adding stands and a scoreboard that could possibly be donated by a soft drink vendor. A portable concession stand will be available for games this year.

It was asked how many kids are participating in the football program with St. Veronica. About 50 STM kids compared to 21 in the past. Combined with St. Bernadette, about 120 kids could be in the new St. Thomas More-St. Veronica football program. One of the additional benefits about the merger that was pointed out is the new field is close to everyone. Neither location has to drive to distant fields for practices and games.

Regarding the moving of the swing set and benches, the group felt comfortable paying the playground vendor to move the swing set and the benches provided they guaranteed their installation (*which the vendor did the following morning*). The reconfiguration of the playground (railroad ties and mulch) would be done by the Booster volunteers. The bid was passed out for review.

Vic Ivers made a motion to vote to move forward on the project as discussed. John Duncan seconded the motion. The vote was 6 to 0 to move forward with Jim Conrady abstaining.

**Organization Reports** – Two organization reports were made.

**Girl Scouts** – Brigitte Gentile gave an update.

The Girl Scouts is comprised of 13 leads, 29 adults, and 85 girls from Kindergarten to grade 7.

We have more volunteers at the younger grades. Keeping everyone motivated as the girls get older is sometime a challenge.

It is also important the scouts achieve balance. Our scout unit is not pro-choice even though the girl scouts as an organization are. Fr. Bill stated our girl scouts cannot attend any events that are pro-choice oriented.

The girl scouts have participated in the scout Sunday and have issued Family of God and Love Faith medals. The scouts participate in the St. Vincent de Paul food drive; cookie sales, A Caring Place, and Eyeglass turn-ins.

The progression begins in Kindergarten/First Grade with the Daisies and runs up currently through the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Girl Scout activities can continue on into high school.

**Youth Ministry** – Diane Brennan gave the update.

Diane stated as Youth Minister she also coordinates with both the Boy & Girl Scouts. The Youth Ministry performs many services.

Bible Camp is held each summer and is for 4 year olds and up. Service to the youth really begins at their baptism because they make baptismal garments. 5<sup>th</sup> graders and up can volunteer to work at Bible Camp.

The Youth Ministry is for 6<sup>th</sup> grade up to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The group is named ROC which means Rely on Christ. The goal is to allow the youth to have a closer bond with Christ. They have Bible Study and read Sunday's word from the Lectionary. At least 30 youth come to each meeting.

The Youth Ministry also has Rosary Makers and the Sewing Ministry. The Food Kitchen is another group which cooks for the homeless and needy.

The Youth Minister acts as a role model for younger kids. The issues our kids face are the same as well as for other kids. They can bring their friends to the meeting. This allows them to come some place where they are free to talk.

The goal of the Youth Ministry is to offer stability. They can always come home if they have been away.

When asked if the Youth Ministry has a dream, the response was to build a Habitat for Humanity project. The kids loved painting 804 when it was bought. They also did a great job painting at the Geiger House.

**Business Manager Report:** Mike Gennett gave the report.

Council has previously expressed concern with the recycling bins in the back lot. We have recently observed people depositing their trash on a regular basis in our bins. We have opened the trash bags and found names and addresses. Letters have been sent to their homes asking them to stop the practice. We also had a mattress and boxed springs dropped off two weeks ago off the maintenance staff had to dispose of. Signs have been placed on all the bins that they are for parish and school use only.

July Fest still does not have an operational co-chair for this summer. This continues to be a concern.

There are no significant changes to report for this year's budget. Next year's budget will be updated and sent to Finance in May based upon the school registrations for next year.

Through April 19<sup>th</sup>, this is where school registrations stood:

260 are firm and 4 more are in a pending status for a total of 264. Only one new registration has been received since April 5.

We show another 23 that have not registered for a grand total of 287. We only had 2 new students last year after all the registrations were processed in April. Subtract 3 that are very unlikely to return. **We need to look at 286 as the highest number or** down 10 or more from this year. And this counts on the holds and missing registrations coming through! The number could be less.

Here are some more specific numbers:

**Not returning** – We know of 5 that are not returning for a variety of reasons. All the IHM Kindergarten families are gone as they are each year. But we have no new incoming IHM students because they now have Kindergarten.

**On Hold** -8 – these include those waiting for job transfer information, trying to sell their house, or are in the process of being tested.

**No response to date - Highly Unlikely to return** – 3

**No response to date - currently in school and not yet registered** – 13.

**Known financial aid request** – 20 families or 37 students applied – Recommended rewards stand at \$37,418 with only half processed. We more than likely will not be able to afford (exceeding \$70,000) to help at the suggested need levels **if** this trend continues.

We registered no new students for Kindergarten this week. The current number of 21 is disappointing since we lowered the price. First grade only has 18. Currently we only have one more student in Jr High for next year. Class sizes from grades 2-8 range from 27 to 34.

At best, it looks like a flat (or more likely less) teaching staff next year with potential cuts in non-payroll such as instructional expenses, cafeteria, and latch key since the number of students continue to drop. There are some corresponding savings in these non-teaching areas.

A question was asked as to why our school was not a Blue Ribbon School. Fr. Bill responded that the school board passed on this concept a few years ago. A lot of work is involved in setting it up.

It was also asked if there have been any more questions about adding school staff prior to knowing the actual registrations numbers. There has been nothing stated recently and we plan to maintain the same timing as in the past. We have to know our income so we can pay our obligations.

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

Our Lenten Parish Mission next year is April 10-11-12. Fr. Tim Schehr from the seminary will be featured.

The Archdiocese is making more and more advances on how we handle our money and procedures.

We need a new Mass coordinator for the 4 PM Mass and we need Ushers for the Sunday Noon Mass.

The diocese has hired a new school superintendent. His primary goal is to look at the future of all our schools and be more creative.

The regions in the Deanery are being redrawn. Many feel they will not work as currently designed. So much time has already been spent on the previous structure. This is really a Pastor issue.

Archbishop Schnurr is working hard on vocations. He is having Andrew Dinners and is making progress.

St. Veronica has a new Pastor effective July 1. He is Fr. Del Staigers and is coming in from Dayton. Fr. Bill has a long standing working relationship with Fr. Del from St. Andrew's in Milford.

Fr. Bill stated he is currently doing a number of Confirmations in the Deanery.

**New Business** – John Duncan stated he would like to see if we can do something with Radio 740 AM. Maybe we can invite them to Sunday Mass to talk about their radio station. Other suggestions would be to link

to their web site, promote their station in the bulletin, or even ask for posters for our bulletin boards. Mike Gennett said he would look to see what can be linked from our web site to theirs.

A motion was made to adjourn. The vote was 7 to 0. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM with a prayer.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 17<sup>th</sup>.