

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
Monday, April 20, 2009**

**Council Members in Attendance:** Fr. Bill Wagner, Vic Ivers, Kathy Hornschmeier, Larry Bush, Janet Tate, Jim Conrady, and Neil Kamphaus, Jr.

**Council Members Absent:** John Duncan

**Others in Attendance:** Mike Gennett.

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.

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

The latest projection for this year's budget shows a \$97,446 deficit. This number will continue to fluctuate (hopefully lower) in the remaining 10 weeks of the year. The operating deficit less the capital projects is about \$11,000.

By design, we have not finalized next year's budget. An Excel spreadsheet has been completed with all the budget lines that will allow easy entry of the anticipated tuition and approved financial aide dollars along with the final payroll and benefits. We will move swiftly once we get closer to the end of May. Teacher contracts will be late and we will be asking for their patience and fast turnaround.

We did not receive any assistance from the diocese regarding the soaring health care costs. The Business Managers were told the Diocese Health Care Committee rejected both employee contributions and tier pricing as "justice" and "morality" issues. The committee is heavily weighted with school principals. The vote was 10 to 2 to make no changes to the program and to pass on a 5% increase. The Archbishop accepted their recommendation. Their decision may cause a different issue in some

locations that could eventually force job eliminations to continue to pay for health care. (Our health care costs are projected to be \$227,000 next year if there are no changes to our staffing levels.) There clearly are “side affects” to this recommendation.

Through today, we have 270 confirmed registrations in the school for next year. There are another 23 potential and incomplete registrations outstanding. This would place the number for next year at 293 which is 22 fewer students than when school opened last September. We are now seeking new registrations. A few facts regarding the registrations to date:

- We are losing 39 students when our large 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates. So far, there are only 20 new Kindergarten children enrolled. This is where the biggest change is occurring.
- The numbers for second grade and eighth grade are currently lower than the other classes. The eighth grade for next year has been a small class all along and all but 2 from this year’s 7<sup>th</sup> grade have registered.
- The rest of the classes are already over 30 students each.
- Returning students for next year’s fourth and sixth grade are the largest classes.

In order to retain our entire school staff for next year, we need more registrations. Two of our teachers have informed us they are not coming back next year. This may help to keep the operating expenses in check.

We are not making any final decisions on the budget for next year until late May when we know the actual numbers at that time plus the West Clermont levy renewal will be behind us. The West Clermont renewal levy needs to pass for the good of our community.

There are a few things being tossed around in Washington that could have a negative impact on the parish if they become law. They include:

- Cap and Trade (a 35-50% energy tax on electricity utilizing fossil fuels such as coal to generate electricity)

- Taxing as ordinary income employer paid health care premiums for employees (this could impact each employee in additional Federal and state taxes from \$1,000 to \$5,000 *more* each year if implemented). The latest discussion is there may be a salary cap that excludes those whose earnings under a set ceiling. Otherwise, this would severely penalize our employees
- Card Check (Employee Free Choice Act)
- Reducing charitable contribution deductions on higher income households

We were told at the last Business Managers meeting there is no stimulus money for faith based schools other than some additional Title I and Title II money for schools (poverty and handicap).

Lastly, the environmental duct cleaning company recently cleaned the ducts in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade modular classrooms. After the workers completed their work, they made the comment they only found a normal level of dust in the ducts.

There really is nothing new regarding this matter. The report issued by Fr. Bill on March 13<sup>th</sup> to the school families on Ed-Line and presented to Parish Council on March 16<sup>th</sup> has not changed. We have had a number of professional companies and individuals look at this issue and all have concluded there is nothing of concern in the building. Our fourth grade registrations for next year are our second largest class so far!

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

The Connector Building project has been put on hold for one year. A survey was conducted of the Leadership Group involved in this project and no one wanted to launch a capital campaign at this time due to the economy. We do need to keep the parish aware of this need. The project is more than just classrooms.

A school survey is underway. Every school family has been personally invited to complete an on line survey regarding our school. Through

today, 67 school families have completed the survey. The survey may be completed through the end of the month.

Fr. Bill stated he continues to be optimistic about the parish. The Easter collection was \$4,000 higher than last year.

The Easter music was just splendid this year!

Fr. Bill stated a parishioner is pressuring him to freeze wages. A final decision has not been made. We need to see where school registrations are at the end of May.

Fr. Bill stated he is getting concerns about the paper and recycling bins. The issue is the materials are not being picked up and they spill over. Mike Gennett stated we are having problems with both companies to pickup the materials. The paper company continues to report their trucks are broken and Rumpke insists they pick the recycling up and yet the bins remain full...and when they do come, they leave half of the materials in the bin. If they can not resolve this issue, we may have to look at discontinuing the programs. The amount of money we receive is minimal. The pick up service in both cases is currently poor. The Rumpke program was a deal with other area parishes to get a reduced rate on trash pickup.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade class is going to Washington this week.

School registrations are down at other locations. Sunday collections are down at many parishes. Ours remain up. Our Catholic Ministries Appeal is over 75% of goal. Many parishes are still below 50%.

**Around the Deanery**.....St. Ann's in Williamsburg has asked the diocese for a loan to shore up their building. The diocese declined the loan since they are no longer loaning to parishes at this time. Fr. Frank Klamet, Pastor of St. Benignus in Greenfield died over the weekend.

No new business was reported.

Kathy Hornschemeier made a motion to adjourn. Jim Conrady seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM. Fr. Bill led the group in a prayer.

The next scheduled meeting is Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. This meeting will be held if there are any agenda items. Council will be notified in advance about the status of the meeting.