

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, April 21, 2008**

Council Members in Attendance: Fr. Bill Wagner, Kathy Hornschmeier, Janet Tate, and John Duncan.

Council Members Absent: Vic Ivers, Jim Conrady, and Larry Bush.

Others in Attendance: Mike Gennett and John Convery.

The St. Thomas More Parish Council meeting was called to order by Kathy Hornschmeier at 7:08 PM EDT. Fr. Bill Wagner opened with a prayer.

Because there was not a majority of council members in attendance, all issues requiring a vote have been postponed until the May meeting.

Business Manager Report: Mike Gennett gave the report:

Finance Update – The deficit for next year continues to grow. We currently have a deficit for 2008-9 of \$53,223.090. This number will adjust once the school registrations are finalized. One of the things pushing the deficit up is the addition of employees and their families to our health care plan. There is nothing we can do about this as long as the diocese policy remains unchanged. We have to be fair to everyone that qualifies. As families lose coverage elsewhere, they enroll with us and we are then obligated to pay for their coverage if they can prove no other coverage is available. Single coverage next year is \$5,928 and family coverage will be \$13,776. Our annual costs are approaching \$200,000 a year. We are going to ask those families that we do cover to resubmit an updated letter from their spouse's employer to verify the lack of coverage. The diocese suggests we do this periodically.

Next year's budget is also impacted by one less Sunday next year. We do not know the impact at this time of Jarrod's Law. Our inspection is scheduled for May 7. The Connector project will also impact our current spending. We will have the feasibility study costs as well as continuing architect fees. These costs can be charged into the Connector Project provided we move forward into a capital campaign stage.

We need to continue to maintain good expense control and focus on the Connector project and not take on additional projects that would spread the parish too thin. Prioritized capital projects for our existing facilities can still be planned including meeting the initial needs to cover Jarrod's Law.

Our objective continues to have a balanced budget that allows for paying all our financial commitments including the parish debt. The amount due on the parish debt will increase beginning in July of 2009. The current debt is scheduled to be paid in full in April of 2020.

School registrations for next year are currently at 286 kids compared to our current enrollment of 319. We have 14 registrations on hold because they are incomplete and 11 have yet to respond. 5 children are not returning. Our enrollment projection should be around 311 children if everything falls into place. This does not include any new families that will register during the summer. When families do not register in a timely manner and complete all the registration requirements, it affects our ability to adequately plan for the next school year in advance. The school has been aggressively calling these incomplete and missing households to return/complete their registrations.

On the other hand our 2007-8 operating results look very good. We are doing better than plan and last year. Our Sunday collections are up over plan and last year. (Keep in mind that when PSR ends, Sunday Mass attendance drops and this negatively impacts our collections.) Only one family is not paying their school tuition this year which is being addressed. Our utility costs are up \$18,000 over last year and health costs are up \$9,700. Snow removal was up \$4,400. Other than these accounts, expenses are down to last year or are meeting plan. (Some areas were planned up such as school payroll.)

We need to keep in mind when we say the “results are very good” means it is prior to committing to any capital projects for the summer. This money will need to be earmarked for either this summer or next year and will include what we may be required to do once we have our Jarrod’s Law inspection on May 7. Examples of potential Jarrod’s Law requirements could include required radon testing that may cost \$3,000 or more and roof blueprints for the state to review (\$3,500 estimate). Both IHM and Guardian Angels have been told by the Hamilton County Board of Health they have to install full showers in their science classrooms. We do not know what the Clermont County Board of health will tell us on this or any other issue. We also have obtained bids to replace the roof on Heider Hall that was not completed in 1999, cleaning the interior church walls, expanding the cooling and refrigeration capacity in the cafeteria, and the parking lot may need to be sealed either this year or next. We are not without potential needs for repairs. We will call a Finance meeting once we know the impact of our first Jarrod’s Law inspection in May. We also have to keep in mind the new law prohibits work taking place when “the buildings are occupied.” That limits the window of opportunity to do any work in the school except when school is closed.

Bottom line....we are doing well financially, but we have to prioritize our needs carefully to cover Jarrod’s Law, maintain our facilities, and make the Connector Project a reality. It is important we continue to operate in the black and meet all our financial commitments. Our staff and parish needs to look at transferring dollars from other programs when we want to do something new. Requests for budget additions are always for additional dollars.

Connector Project Feasibility Study – We have been working with Cunneen to get our feasibility study completed before vacations really get underway. Our goal is to get all the data collected by mid June.

The data will be collected in two ways: confidential individual household interviews and an in-pew survey. About 60-65 households will be invited to sit down with a Cunneen representative with a predetermined list of questions about the parish. They will take place at 804 Ohio Pike in early June. These households are defined as our most active households from a volunteering and/or financial contribution standpoint. Their views will be

critical regarding the feasibility of making the connector project a reality. Many council members will be invited, for example. Fr. Bill stated that he wanted each council member to speak from the heart when they are interviewed.

The second piece will be an in-pew survey the weekend of June 7-8. There will be a questionnaire everyone at Mass will be asked to complete that did not do a face to face interview.

All the data required to get this study underway is at the consultant's office and we are just waiting for proofs to be returned for Fr. Bill's review and approval.

Connector Update - Updated architect plans for the Connector project were available for review. A commercial kitchen specialist has looked at the refrigeration and freezing capacity issues in the cafeteria kitchen. He has recommended the current system be converted to an all refrigeration system and a small addition be added that would allow for the freezer and additional dry storage. Final plans and costs should be available by next week.

Centralized Payroll System - The Archdiocese has contracted with Paycor to handle the entire payroll process diocese wide. We currently use Paycor and are 100% direct deposit. We do not anticipate any issues with this decision. Transition begins this summer. Utilizing a centralized payroll system will still allow parishes to control their own payroll, but will ensure consistently on diocese policies such as health care. Once this is complete, we may be able to offer health savings accounts, pre-tax payments on employee premiums, and potentially employee contributions towards their health care. Health care has been an exploding cost for us and hopefully we can anticipate some relief in the years to come. A centralized payroll system would help make that a reality.

Eastside Sports - this issue continues to drag on. A diocese attorney has written a contract allowing Eastside Sports to use the north back parking lot with all the terms that would protect the parish. However, the contract

has been bantered back and forth by the owner of Eastside Sports and our attorney. The biggest issue is Eastside Sports operates under two names and they want one of the names dropped. The concern is if something would happen on our property could they legally “hide” under one of their names? We are holding fast to all the requirements to protect the parish and yet be a good neighbor.

The other issue is they began using our parking lot before any contract has been signed or the insurance obtained. They have been asked to stop using the lot until we have an agreement and the insurance on file covering the parish. The diocese attorney has suggested padlocking the gate between the properties until this is resolved.

The Glen Este-Withamsville Entrance Gate will be padlocked (except when we need to open it for our use) once the work begins at enlarging the intersection at Glen Este-Withamsville & Beechmont/Ohio Pike. We do not want cars crossing through our lots as traffic backs up. This could cause an accident we do not want.

Pastor’s Report - Fr. Bill gave a brief update.

The new Music Director has been very well received. She can really play the organ and we have great expectations for the choir. She is “top of the line” and the parishioner’s response so far is they are very happy with the change.

There is nothing really new in the diocese or the deanery. Archbishop Pilarczyk is now the most senior bishop in the United States. He can retire in August of 2009. In the Deanery, we can draw down one more priest if required, but it would not involve our parish.

Rhonda Roberts and Dave McCarthy have announced this coming summer is their last Festival. They have been doing an excellent job of managing our Festival for the past 6 years. We are in need of new Festival Chairs that can begin to take over this spring as the old chairs plan their last Festival. The Festival is the major fundraiser for our parish.

New Business - John Convery updated Council on a proposed project by the Social Action Commission. The Refugees of Dafur in southern Chad are trying to build a water well. They need to raise \$1,300 to make it possible. What is happening is the refugees from neighboring Dafur are fleeing into southern Chad. They walk 20 miles to get water. This is the Sahel area which is slowly changing into the Sahara Desert. The rainfall in the area only occurs in 4 months of the year. The depth of the Chari River drops from 15 feet to 6 inches. The goal is to build a well 15 meters deep and 2 meters in diameter. The cost is \$2,000 and \$700 has already been contributed by the Comboni Missionaries. The Social Action Commission would like to solicit the various parish organizations to assist in obtaining the remaining money. The Council members agreed this was a worthwhile project and suggested Social Action go ahead with the fund raising project.

Kathy Hornschemeier suggested a follow-up regarding the story in the Sunday newspaper about seed money available to grow through projects in the parish as noted in the article. This parish is located in Kentucky.

A motion was raised by John Duncan to adjourn. Kathy Hornschemeier seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM. Fr. Bill led the group in a prayer.

NEXT MEETING - MONDAY MAY 19TH - 7 pm