

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
Monday, June 15, 2009**

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

**Council Members Absent:** None

**Others in Attendance:** Mike Gennett, John Convery, Tom Candelaresi, and Andrew Nelson.

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.

**Special Presentation** – Tom Candelaresi and Andrew Nelson made a special presentation representing the Men’s CRHP group. CRHP has been working on a special project and wanted Parish Council’s feedback. The goal of the project is to build the many parts of the parish as a whole.

The presentation materials follow the end of the minutes.

After the presentation, the following comments were made:

- Kathy Hornschemeier suggested inviting Archbishop Schnurr to do a Theology on Tap at the parish. He is a big draw and would attract younger people.
- Larry Bush said the key marketing strategy has to be one on one.

- Vic Ivers said his thoughts were the group can not get hung up on the plan. They can not try to do everything at one time. A good start will be a combination of one or two pieces. More drill down is needed.
- Mike Gennett reported a new parish web site is being developed and hopefully will be on line before the end of the summer. The current web site is outdated technology and has too much on each page. The vendor we are using is in the church web site design business and has designed IHM's and St. Dominic's. Mike added that volunteers maintaining web sites has not been successful at other parishes. Volunteers have jobs and other responsibilities and the timeliness in updating web sites has been an issue resulting in outdated web sites. Many in the meeting disagreed with that assessment.
- Mike also reported that many email addresses were captured on the school registration forms this year and just need to be added to PDS, the parish data base system.

Vic Ivers stated it appears council was giving consensus to this project.

Fr. Bill said we must look for success in little pieces. The committee needs to appoint a liaison with Council. Neil Kamphaus was appointed since he is both on council and the CRHP team. He also stated the School Board, PTO, and the parish staff needs to be brought on board. If any communication needs to be made to Parish Council before the next meeting, an email is to be sent to Mike Gennett for forwarding to Parish Council.

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

We had our **Jarrod's Law audit** in the school on May 19<sup>th</sup>. We did very well except some cleaning supply products were found not to be fully out of the reach of children in a few classrooms. We were also asked to order an additional science chemical storage cabinet to further separate some items. The inspector noted we had done a very good job in trying to meet the numerous standards now set by the state.

The **2008-9 deficit** will still be approximately \$98,896.58 mostly from the various capital projects (parking lot repairs (\$28,274.20), sound system update (\$15,188.77), and new cafeteria freezer (\$43,252.22). Our operating deficit should be around \$12,181.39. However, we are hopeful the over all deficit will be less and depends on last minute, year end invoices to be turned in by the staff. The final number will also depend on how much tuition money due in July is received in June. The operating deficit has dropped from earlier projections and can be attributed to the increase in the school registration fees and good expense control by the staff.

The **2009-10 budget** submitted to finance on June 2 currently has a deficit of \$28,513.01. This is the most difficult economic environment we have faced in many years. Taking some risk along with very tight controls plus everyone's cooperation to ensure spending remains under control is critical. This deficit will change as school registrations hopefully increase and expense reductions are also worked out.

Finance agreed to re-review the budget in August after the results of JulyFest are known as well as the results of our school families scheduled to pay their tuition in full by July 15<sup>th</sup>. There is now the potential the deficit for next year could be higher and we need to be very cautious.

Some of the highlights of next year's budget include:

- The 2009-10 budget is based upon the projected school enrollment of 293, a decrease of 7% (hopefully we can enroll more new students over the next two months):
  - Each grade from 1 to 7 have too many students for just one homeroom teacher so two teachers are planned for each of these grades.
  - The biggest enrollment issue is we lost 39 students with our large 8<sup>th</sup> grade class and have not had a similar number of new students enroll so far.
  - Based upon the current number enrolled in Kindergarten, we will combine the all day and ½ day Kindergarten with one teacher. There is one aide for the morning when both groups are in class.

- There is one teacher just for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade since only 21 have enrolled. This has been a small class from the outset.
  - Two teachers have opted to leave on their own accord. We are partially replacing some of their hours. We plan to have one less teacher and two less aides next year unless additional students enroll justifying additional teachers and staff. (The school is adding a part time Jr. High Spanish teacher.)
- All salaries for both parish and the school are frozen at 2008-2009 levels. This includes pension, workers comp, unemployment insurance, and FICA.
  - There are no capital projects planned in the budget. In the event of a major maintenance emergency, we will have to utilize our savings.
  - The debit and interest payments to the diocese are scheduled to increase by \$20,000 beginning July 1, 2009. However, we froze the debt and interest payments at the 2008-9 levels. We believe we can continue to make the current level of payments at this time. This may be an area we have to take a hard look at with the diocese down the road.
  - Sunday collections are planned flat with one less Sunday (52 v 53) in 2009-2010. We have seen a slight softening in our collections the past few weeks but it appears to do more with lower summer Mass attendance compared to a year ago.
  - We are counting on the Festival profit to return to \$60,000 or higher and reverse last year's drop. Bad weather or a low level of spending due to the economy could impact the results.
  - School family financial aide requests were a record amount. We have approved a more affordable amount with an emphasis on helping those truly in need. We granted aide only to those families based on proven financial need as recommended by Private School Aide Service and a review of each family's regular Sunday Mass attendance at St. Thomas More. As usual, we have some high income families that do not qualify that no doubt are disappointed.

We had a few families in the need of aide but never attend Sunday Mass at our parish. They were not assisted. In the past few years, we received \$9,000 from the Knights of Columbus for financial aide. They are not offering any assistance this year.

- There is no cap and trade tax on electricity in the budget if it becomes law. On the other hand natural gas futures are low at this time. Utilities are planned as flat. There is still too much unknown about pending climate legislation at this time. Could be an issue that has to be faced down the road.
- The risk of some tuition defaults and a reduction in Sunday Mass attendance loom as a larger issue this next year. Other locations have seen more of an impact that we have to date. We only have one family still owing tuition and they have agreed to pay us in June. Our Sunday collections continue to run ahead of last year. We have been very fortunate.
  - There are outstanding balances for tuition, latch key, and the cafeteria totaling \$2,067.01. 84% of this amount is due by just three families. All those involved have been notified that their final payment is past due.
- We have some interest quirks affecting our budget....the ODOT maintenance fee for ours top light is increasing from \$500 a year to \$3,000. This is an unrealistic increase and we have filed our concern with the state. *(Update...the fee has been reduced to \$750 based upon an agreed traffic flow study in the original contract.)*
- As previously reported, we received no assistance from the diocese regarding the ever growing health care costs for our employees. Since July 1, 2008, we have added six employees to our plan because they lost insurance through other sources. Our monthly premiums are currently \$19,643.19 a month.
  - One additional issue we are watching is the debate over health care in Washington. If health care premiums are taxed as ordinary income (without any minimum salary cap) this

would result in a major burden for some of our teachers. Federal and state taxes could rise from \$1,000 for a single employee plan to \$5,000 for a family plan.

- The Bush tax cuts are scheduled to expire in January 2011. Without some modification from Congress, this could further negatively impact our staff.

**An update from the last meeting.**...we discussed the re-cycle bin issue at the last meeting. The paper vendor, Abitbi, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in April. They were having their own internal issues. The pickup issue seems to be resolved and they do not owe us any money.

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

An on-line school survey was conducted in April. 100 school families out of a potential 206 took the survey. The task force working on the survey continues to meet and a report will be made to the school committee in late summer. Overall, the positive responses were very high. Negative comments were made, but the percent that felt negative about an issue were very low.

The lay employee pension fund, like many pension funds, is in trouble. A plan is being worked on to address the issue. The priest pension fund is also having financial issues.

The priest shortage is very real. Seven were ordained in May and there are only two more next year. More pastoral regions are being implemented as the priest shortage becomes a reality. There are cultural issues when foreign priests are brought in. All religions are having problems in attracting young people to the ministry. Many do not want to make a life long commitment to anything or anyone.

No new business was brought up.

Vic Ivers asked for a motion to adjourn. John Duncan made the motion and Fr. Bill seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM with a prayer.

**THE NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21.**

# St Thomas More Project Renew



# Goals

- † **To create an environment that encourages all to become an active part of our community**
- † **To increase participation in ministries**
- † **To develop communications strategy**
- † **To celebrate our parish members**
- † **To grow our faith within the parish**
- † **Keep the local community from driving by**
- † **To reach out to the community**
- † **To improve attendance at Sunday Mass**

# **Mission Statement**

**We invite all to share, grow and live our faith  
through ministry, prayer and fellowship  
and to strengthen our Christian community  
through the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic church.**

# Recommendations

## Social Events

- † **Emphasis on Parish Picnic**
  - **Concert, Games, Guest Speaker (Committee to call)**
- † **Celebrate the Faithful (members over 25 yrs)**
  - **Mass & Recognition Dinner-Dance**
  - **Have sponsor with gift/carnation from youth**
- † **Volunteer Recognition Night**
  - **Dinner - Speaker - Dance**
- † **Young Adult Socials (20's & 30's)**
- † **Parish Family Movie Nite**
  - **Free popcorn & Soft drinks**
- † **Parish Campout**
- † **Parish Talent Show**
- † **Improved Fish Fry**
- † **5k Run Fundraiser**
- † **Dinner with a Saint (Monthly)**
  - **In conjunction with Confirmation class**
- † **Event Socials Fundraisers used for all events**
  - **Mardi Gras, Halloween, October Fest, St. Patrick's Day**
- † **Concerts for Teens- Young Adults**

## **Ministry Events**

- † **Lunch with Fr. Bill (Michael serves)**
  - **Personal invite 10/20 parishioners to have lunch & talk to Fr. Bill**
- † **Ministry Info Booth @ Julyfest**
  - **Staffed by full-time group, answer question, sign up**
- † **Lecture Series (Faith based)**
- † **Bring a Friend to Church Sunday**
  - **Name tags, Social after each mass**
- † **Parish Retreat**
- † **Class Rosary in Church (monthly)**
  - **Each class takes a turn leading**
- † **Class stations during Lent (weekly)**
  - **Each class takes a turn (grades 3 – 8 including PSR)**

## **Ecumenical Events**

- † **Planned Parenthood Joint Demonstrations**
- † **Socials**
  - **Rotate monthly**
  - **Each pastor/minister rotates speaking at another Church**
- † **Joint project**
  - **Food Pantry, Clothing Drive, etc.**
- † **Join Hands Day**
- † **Twinning Parish**

# Communications Plan

## Communications

- † **Announcements read by Father or Deacon**
- † **Ministry of the month tied into Homily**
- † **Sign board out front available to all ministries**
- † **Collect email addresses and proactively invite to various parish functions**
- † **Allow self selected alerts to be sent from events calendar on the web**
- † **Establish parish phone outreach to extend personal invites (not One Call)**
- † **Dinner with Father at a parishioner's house**
- † **Establish Father's Council**
- † **Need to establish customer service strategy**
- † **Highlight parishioners', Fathers', Students' & Graduates accomplishments...Visually (pictures) and editorially**

## Website & Technology

- † **Website(s) needs a complete redesign and enhancements**

# Implementation Plan

- † **Develop and Implement Strategic Plan**
  - **Parish Council as oversight committee**
- † **Committee to do 1:1's**
  - **Need 50-100 people (CRHP Continuation Project)**
  - **Approximately one hour**
  - **Complete information sheet**
  - **Get to know family, Invite them 'IN'**
- † **Implement Events and Ministries**
- † **Create Tech group to work on website**
- † **Form Communications committee to formalize plan**