

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
Monday, January 21, 2013**

**Council Members in Attendance:** Fr. Bill Wagner, Vic Ivers, Kathy Hornschemeier, Larry Bush, Jim Conrady, Sam DeBonis, and Janet Tate.

**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 6:57 PM EST. Fr. Bill Wagner opened with a prayer.

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

The 2012 tax contributions letters have been printed and will be mailed before the January 31 deadline.

Finance is meeting this week to review the first six months of the year and review the first budget draft for 2013-2014.

We continue to move forward on the new diocese accounting system, Parish Soft. All the organization bank accounts are now included in the system. Just their total income and expenses are now posted. Organization Treasurers are not entering any information since the firewall has not been installed blocking their access to other accounts. The reason the diocese wants all organizations included is for transparency plus they want to see what the total income and expenses are in a parish.

**Budget 2012-2013 Update** -Here is the best projection at this time how just the parish and school may end up for the year including some of the variances to plan:

Planned deficit:	(\$16,739.73)
Handicap Ramp (not in the budget):	(\$60,834.39)
Library Overage (July 1 on-not in the budget):	(\$13,525.71)

**Estimate – June 30, 2013 with capital projects:** (\$34,100.40)

**Estimate – June 30, 2013 operating only:** + \$40,259.70

I expect these numbers to improve during the next six months. We are doing a good job of controlling our operating expenses. On the other hand it is tough to project as of today we might save more money if we have another mild winter or if there are any unforeseen maintenance emergencies.

*Specific Comments:*

The Sunday collections continue to do better than plan. We were running behind plan until the Sandy Hook shootings. Coupled with Catholics Come Home, church attendance has increased during December as have the collection. Many parishes report a decrease in the donations the second year after the stewardship campaign. We are not seeing this as of now.

The state reimbursement rate per child is coming in higher than budgeted. We don't always get any changes communicated regarding this amount. Anyhow, it is good news.

One household has donated \$13,500 to pay on the parish operating debt principal. This is an "in and out" transaction. With this donation, we are projected to reduce the principal debt this year by \$93,500.00. The debt principal continues to drop. Since 2000, it has dropped by two-thirds.

We have had two teachers out on long term sick leave that increases the sub teacher expense. You continue to pay a teacher if they have sick time accrued that is out ill plus a sub.

Regarding the Library, the PTO was asked to consider another donation to the parish this year to help offset the cost of this project. They were also asked to review the cost of any future projects in advance of committing. The library project was way down the pike before any reality was brought in to the discussion. PTO feels that this might be a hard sell to raise money since the Library work is already completed.

The liability insurance overage was refunded when many parishes complained about the nearly 70% cost increase without prior notice. However, the diocese has stated it will happen next year due to all the stealing going on in the diocese. It is in our budget for 2013-14.

The cafeteria is hard to judge how it is going to come out this year. We had a good profit for the first four months of the school year. Vickie Ditchen does a first class job.

But we are concerned about the Federal government's new impact on healthy school lunches. We served 10,735 lunches from the start of school last year up to Christmas compared to 8,596 this year for a 20% decrease. We were mandated to raise our price from \$2.25 to \$2.55. More and more children are opting out of the hot lunch. This is true everywhere not just at our school. The amount of paperwork and reporting to the government as to what we are doing is time consuming and overbearing. We are getting more and more mandates. One recent mandate was if a family is on food stamps, the kids automatically get free school lunches. More children in our school were reported to us as eligible. (We do get reimbursed for this.) We had no families qualify for free lunches through the financial background check system. I don't know what the future holds for the cafeteria and nor does anyone else.

Speaking of government, the Ohio legislature passed a law in August mandating that all PTO and Booster organizations that have annual income of \$25,000 and more file a financial disclosure report with the Ohio Attorney General's Office each year. Both of our organizations easily exceed this threshold. We are waiting for specific direction from the diocese. This is something I would have to help the organizations with. We would not expect them to do this on their own. Dealing with government bureaucrats is not always easy. I handle the festival license filing. We already have our 2013 festival license from the Attorney General's office.

**2013-2014 Budget** - The first draft budget submitted to finance is a very slight surplus. There are no job or program eliminations planned at this time. The new budget does not solidify until the school registrations are finished so we know how many students to budget for. This budget proposes a very small price increase in school tuition fees for next year.

**Obama Care financial impact on St. Thomas More** - Based upon some preliminary numbers, Obama Care will potentially impact the parish in a number of ways beginning in July of 2014:

- The Patient Centered Out Come Research Fee (PCORI) begins at \$1 per participant in 2014 and rises to \$2 per participant from 2015-2019. I assume it means participants in the plan. Not costly, but will run \$44 to \$88 per year.
- The Transition Reinsurance Contributions Tax is due July 2014 at \$63 per covered participant. We currently have 44 participants in our health care plan and the fee would be \$2,772.00 per year
- But even more alarming, based upon current criteria, our health insurance plans are a "Cadillac" plan as defined by Obama Care. That means each single plan

will be taxed or penalized \$537.60 a year and each family plan will be taxed or penalized \$393.60 a year. Who pays this tax, either the employee or the parish is not known at this time. There is also time to adjust the plan so the excessive charge on generous health care plans does not apply. That could mean raising deductibles and other out of pocket costs to the employee. However, deductibles cannot exceed \$2,000 for single coverage and \$4,000 for family coverage under the law. In network deductions are currently \$350 for singles and \$700 for families. (Out of network are \$700 and \$1,400).

We really won't know how this plays out for a while. None of these projections are final and are just an estimate based upon current data.

**Diocese common buying** – this process continue to move slowly. A survey is currently underway throughout the diocese as to the level of interest in such a program. Utilities and contribution envelopes may be the first major areas that are tackled.

**Security** – we continue to have discussions regarding security especially after the Sandy Hook tragedy. We are going to look into card readers on the doors once again. We got a price on this project 10 years ago and it was cost prohibitive because of the number of doors involved. The PTO is willing to help raise money if we can find a program that works and makes sense from both an operational and financial standpoint. More on this in the future.

**Electricity** – A presentation was made to the Business Manager last week about the future of electricity. The Obama Administration continues to “address” coal fired generating plants. Plants are scheduled to close in the near term and no new permits are being granted. It is anticipated that there will be an electricity shortage which will drive up the prices in the years to come. We will need to look at changes to a number of things that will help to drive down usage and thus the cost. Duke Energy has some financial assistance. This is something we need to look into and it might be a project for the second Business Manager when he or she comes on board.

**Virtus update** – We have certified 192 individuals so far certified in the new class. 31 are pending and waiting for the class date or may be a duplication in the system.

Effective March 1, the diocese has announced that anyone that falls 3 or more Virtus bulletins behind will automatically be suspended from volunteering or working with children. In order to become certified again, the individual must re-take the Virtus class before they can return. Employees would not be paid if suspended. However, as

whole, we are doing quite well in keeping up with the classes. I have been contacting the pastoral staff member when one of their employees or volunteers are behind with their bulletins. They have quickly worked with them to get the classes up to date.

We still understand there will be a re-fingerprinting requirement beginning in July for anyone whose fingerprints are five years and older. We have budgeted for this in next year's budget.

**Diocese auditors** – The diocese has hired a parish CPA auditor who will eventually have a staff. The plans are to audit every parish every 3-5 years. For now, parishes will be audited upon request and when a Pastor or Business Manager leaves. The cost of this program is paid by the diocese. The audits will track money that comes in and out. They auditors will send a written list of solutions if issues are found. The audit will look at the following areas: 1-4 payrolls, the Sunday collections, disbursements, and vendor audits. Based upon what is found in these initial reviews, further in depth audits could take place if problems are found. The diocese auditors also want to conduct audits of organizations such as the Boosters and PTO.

Sam DeBonis said he was asked if the **Christmas Flower donation totals** were ever published. Mike said the total (\$2,467.2) is noted in the January 6<sup>th</sup> bulletin and the In Memory list was put on the parish web site last week.

It was also asked how **the Fenwick Club collection** did. A total of \$1,256 was donated and the parish will renew its membership for 2013.

Another question was how **the new handicap ramp** was received by the parishioners. Only positive feedback has been received. One person thought it cost too much but thought it turned out great. We accepted the lowest bid and the work was done by a parishioner's construction company. A lot of work went into the project and if you were here every day you could see what was going on. It also had to be ADA compliant.

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

**The Archbishop has appointed** Fr. Bill to a third six year term as Pastor of St. Thomas More. In addition, Fr. Bill was appointed Dean of the St. Martin Deanery for another four years.

**The Catholic Ministries Appeal** campaign will be underway soon. This year, there is an in-church appeal added to the fund drive. The diocese would like key parishioners to give a talk at the Masses. Fr. Bill envisions two from Parish Council and two from Finance. A script will be available. Janet Tate said she would be happy to give one of the talks. The diocese has raised the overall goal by 20%.

**The athletic initiative** continues to be developed. The objective is to have standardized rules for all locations governing sports. The level of sports participation varies around the diocese. Cincinnati, for example, is very competitive while the northern counties are more casual. The initiative should be on the Archbishop's desk for his approval by early summer.

The **Catholics Come Home** campaign continues to run on TV.

Our **RCIA** is doing well...we have another large group preparing to come into the church.

The **CRHP** Women's group already has 12 for their February retreat. Men's is coming at the end of that month.

The **Respect Life Vigil** was much better attended this year.

**Ken Blue** is on a leave of absence. **Sean Connolly** has been the sub. He lives in Northern Kentucky and works at Covington Latin. Sean is an excellent musician who also can sing. The feedback regarding Sean's talents has been excellent.

At the end of the meeting, there was a general dialogue on how the new accounting system was going in the diocese.

Jim Conrady made a motion to adjourn. Larry Bush seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, at 7 PM.