

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, December 15, 2003**

Council Members in Attendance: Fr. Bill Wagner, Matt Malott, Michelle Stultz, Denise Dyer, Duane Bradley, Vic Ivers, Bob Brennan, and Ray Neltner.

Others in Attendance: Mike Gennett, Julie Hawkins, Rhonda Roberts, Carl Lamping, and Jerry Cain. Tom Bockenstette of the PTO was a special guest.

The St. Thomas More Parish Council meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM EST by President Ray Neltner. Fr. Bill opened the meeting with a prayer.

Reports were received in advance of the meeting from the Education Commission, Worship, DRE, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Festival, PTO, Julyfest, Youth Ministry, and St. Vincent de Paul.

(If a report was filed by a group in advance and no issues were discussed during the meeting, there is no mention of that organization's report in the minutes.)

Minutes of the Previous Meeting: The last meeting was held on Monday, November 17th. Ray asked if there were any questions regarding the minutes. Mike Gennett reported he had not received any feedback. No one offered any changes.

Duane Bradley made a motion to accept the minutes as originally written. Denise Dyer seconded the motion. The motion carried 7 to 0.

Finance Update: Mike Gennett gave the update.

The 2004-5 budgeting process will begin very soon. A five year budget was done last year and the budget for next year will only have to be adjusted to reflect current operating conditions. Key issues that will have to be taken into account are:

We have been informed that health care costs will rise another 15% next year. Not only are our costs rising, but more employees are joining the plan as they lose health care from other sources. Our monthly health care costs are now equal to one Sunday collection.

The school enrollment size and tuition will have to be set soon. Some diocesan schools have already set tuition increases anywhere from 10% to 30%.

Bingo revenue continues to fall. We have a new team in place and hopefully a turn around will be forthcoming.

Sunday collections remain flat to last year and below plan.

In next year's budget, we have to get serious about our debt. Monthly payments are going to be planned. We must start to treat this like a car payment or home mortgage. Our future is being hindered if we do not seriously plan to reduce the debt on a regular basis.

We also need to look at ways to reduce expenses without hurting programs and seriously affecting staff.

Fingerprinting. All employees and any volunteer who works with children a minimum of three hours or more than once a month will have to be fingerprinted. Valid driver's license or state photo ID required.

The Archdiocese mobile fingerprinting unit will be here to complete criminal background checks as required by the Decree on Child Protection. Additional opportunities to receive Child Protection Certification will also be available. (Fingerprinting - Friday, January 23, 2004, from 11:00 am until 8:00 pm *(time correction from the meeting)* and Saturday, January 24,

2004, from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm. Child Protection Classes – Friday, January 23: 2, 4, and 6 pm; Saturday, January 24: 9:30 am, 12:00 Noon, and 2:00 pm.)

The fingerprinting will take place in the School Library and the Child Protection Certification classes will be in Conference Room B and C.

This processed is required to meet the standards as set forth in the new Archdiocese Decree on Child Protection. Only those volunteers who are certified and pass a criminal background check will be able to book facilities and/or work with children when the policy goes into affect June 30th, 2004. The cost of the program is \$15 for residents of Ohio who have lived in the state for 5 years or more. Anyone not living in Ohio for the last five years will also have to have a FBI background check. This will cost another \$34. Detailed letters about the program will be sent to all employees and organization heads around January 1.

In other parishes, procrastination has been a problem. Many don't show up thinking they have plenty of time to be checked prior to June 30th. In reality, there are no remaining open dates for the Archdiocese mobile units to go anywhere between now and June 30th. Mike Gennett asked that everyone put out the word not to procrastinate on getting this done. It also takes a couple of months to get all the information processed.

Michelle Stultz stated that at least one third of the fingerprinting may come back as invalid. We need to be aware of that problem they see at Children's Hospital. Jerry Cain stated you get the word at the time of the process if the fingerprinting is good. Carl Lamping suggested not sending the letters out by certified mail in order to save money. The letters should also go out by the end of December. It was suggested that each employee and organization head email or phone in they have received the letter.

Carl also asked about how much money should be budgeted. Mike Gennett said it is tough to determine because you don't know how many people have lived in Ohio 5 years or less and would need to have the more expensive FBI background check. There will be a sign up sheet for each volunteer to note what organizations they work with. The costs will be prorated based upon the organizations listed.

804 Ohio Pike - The closing on the property at 804 Ohio Pike is scheduled for Tuesday, December 16, 2003. The Archdiocese has loaned the entire amount to the parish. Our debt level is now \$1,207,500.00.

Deacon's Report: Jerry Cain reported the Music survey is back and is being reviewed. The report will be shared with the Music Director and then shared with Parish Council at a future date.

The men's CHRP weekend is January 31-February 1, 2004.

Youth Ministry - Bob Brennan reported the Youth Ministry group was unable to stay overnight on their trip to Appalachia. However, all items were delivered on December 14.

Seniors - Fr. Bill reported the Senior luncheon was scheduled for Wednesday, December 17. They had 18 confirmed for lunch.

Council Old Business - Denise Dyer reported that her Mother made and shipped a St. Thomas More ornament to St. Peter in Chains Cathedral for their Christmas tree.

Duane Bradley reported the coffee and donuts are ready to return in January. (He passed out a four page document to everyone.) Parish Council was taking the first date on January 18. Announcements will be forwarded to Michael Thomas and bulletin information to Leslie Molitor. Fr. Bill suggested signs at the entrances to the church stating "coffee and donuts today". He suggested the tripods could be used. Jerry Cain said he planned to use the Greeters to inform everyone once that program was up and running.

Duane reported a new vendor has been selected: Krispy Kreme. Mike Gennett will prepare a check in advance for the event. Duane will confirm the final amount and get it to Mike prior to the first event in January.

Council New Business – The issue of the Boosters and PTO planning a Monte Carlo night was discussed.

When Mike Gennett had learned of the event, he asked that Parish Council approve the event. The reason was charitable gambling is controlled by the State Attorney General's office. A new gambling law went into affect on July 1 that is much more sophisticated than in the past.

Our parish license states we may have two gambling events in a full calendar year for four days or less in duration. Currently, the Festival uses one of the two slots. If any organization wants to use the other slot, then council needs to approve it and understand there are no other gambling events permitted. Also, if pull tabs are sold, a special license is now required. All financial records of the event must be kept in the Parish Finance Office and would be reported to the Attorney General's office next year. We also have to report all dates and times in advance to the Attorney General's Office. Our 2004 license application is due this week and if the event is to take place, it must be reported.

Duane Bradley made a suggestion that 30% of the profits from a Monte Carlo event be applied to the parish debt. No further comments were made and this was not part of the final motion on the matter.

Vic Ivers made a motion that the Boosters and PTO may use the second gambling slot on our license. Matt Malott seconded the motion. Council voted 7 to 0 to allow the two organizations to have a Monte Carlo night.

Tom Bockenstette stated the event will not be held January 24th. He thought everything had been approved and they just do not have enough time to get ready. A new date will be forthcoming. *(Fr. Bill has since stated that the event may not be scheduled during Lent which in 2004 is February 25 through April 10.)*

Matt Malott asked who changed the parish Internet site. Mike Gennett said he did the work. The suggestion for the change came from Jerry Cain. Fr. Bill stated it was made to become more welcoming as a community.

Pastor's Report - Fr. Bill stated that was not a lot of new things to report.

The Pastors have all been invited to the Vatican Exhibit at Cincinnati Museum Center on Monday evening, December 22.

He leaves for school in San Antonio on Friday, January 9, and should be back in town on Sunday, February 1.

Fr. Bill expressed he hoped we did not have snow on too many Saturdays and Sundays this winter. It is very costly to the parish.

A stewardship organization has been contacted on how to raise our Sunday collections by 10-15%. The Finance committee will be looking at this. (Michelle Stultz stated there needs to be some sort of coordination between Finance and Parish Council. She was interested in knowing how they were going to address the debt. She feels there is a disconnect between Parish Council and the Finance Committee.)

Futures Project - The next Parish Council meeting on January 12 would not be a traditional meeting. Instead of having the organizations and the usual agenda, only council would meet will selected Pastoral Staff members. Two pages of suggestions were passed out. Duane Bradley proposed each council member prioritize their choices and then tabulate the ones that had the combined interest of all council members. Ray Neltner said he would send out the list and ask the council members to respond. Jerry Cain would be asked to attend and other staff members might be as well depending on the items selected.

The next meeting is Monday, February 9, at 7:00 pm in the Library. This date will be confirmed. The council only meeting will be Monday, January 12, 2004, at 7:00 pm in the Library.

This meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM. Fr. Bill closed the meeting with a prayer.

