

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

Monday, February 10, 2003

In Attendance: Fr. Bill Wagner, David Lees, Jerry Cain, Vic Ivers, Duane Bradley, Ray Neltner, Peggy Fangman, Dee Archer, Matt Mallot, Peg Fischer, Rhonda Roberts, Michelle Stultz, Linda Young, Carl Lamping, and Mike Gennett.

Absent: Barbara Schmidt (excused), Darline Foltz, Diane Brennan, and Bob Guenther.

The St. Thomas More Parish Council meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM EST by President David Lees. Fr. Bill opened the meeting with a prayer.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: David Lees briefly reviewed the minutes of the December 9th meeting. No comments were made regarding the minutes. The minutes of the meeting stood as written.

Linda Young reported she is not getting any correspondence through the new Yahoo email address. Matt Malott said he would check to be sure her email address was included. (Matt found that Linda's address had fallen off, but was now fixed as of February 11.)

Reports filed in advance of the meeting were not discussed. Other than Linda Young, everyone said they had received and read the reports. Those reports are not included in this document since they have previously been communicated.

Deacon Jerry Cain: Fr. Bill introduced Jerry Cain as the new Deacon/Pastoral Associate at the parish. Jerry gave a brief history of his background that included his ordination in 1990, his service at St. Saviour Parish since 1991, as well his experience on the Archdiocese Worship

Commission. Jerry was also one of the instrumental leaders in bringing Christ Renews His Parish to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. His background is going to be very valuable to St. Thomas More.

Finance Report: Mike Gennett gave the Finance Report. The presentation was four fold:

- 1) A graph chart was passed out showing our revenues compared to our expenses for the first 7 ¼ months of the fiscal year. On a normal basis, our incoming revenue does not cover our expenses. In only two months of the year our income far exceeded our expenses which was July (tuition collection) and November (Festival profit and State admin cost reimbursement check). Expenses were impacted this year by the modular buildings project.
- 2) The response to Fr. Bill's letter regarding the Sunday collections was weak. 8 families requested their collections be processed through direct debit to their checking account and 5 other families requested monthly payment to their credit card.
- 3) A recap of the expenses regarding the Modular Building project was passed out. The project's total cost will be approximately \$129,000.00. The end result is we now have four additional classrooms and three state offices. The buildings passed and received Clermont County certification for use on January 17.
- 4) A five year budget is being planned for the parish. The budgeting process is challenged by the following issues: reduced Sunday collections, the possibility of the mandatory subscription cost to the Catholic Telegraph which could initially cost \$19,500, our ongoing issue of paying on the outstanding debt, dramatic increases in benefits costs, the potential impact of any costs regarding implementation of the new Child Protection Decree, increases in the Teacher's salaries to bring them to scale, the reduction in script sales through the PTO, and a sizeable school tuition increase.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the school tuition rates. David Lees felt that a 9% increase as recommended by the Education Commission may not be high enough. Other issues besides the increase

were put on the table that included at what rate do you start to lose families due to the increase in tuition? Plus, an effort is going to be made to market the school and fill seats in those classes that are below the maximum. Fr. Bill pointed out the final rate increase is going to be decided by the Finance Committee.

Principal's Report: Peg Fischer gave the report. The response to the new family's breakfast was very good. Open enrollment for current families for school year 2003-4 begins on March 1.

Mrs. Fischer also gave the results of the AOC Parent Satisfaction results and the OCSAA survey. An in-house survey is being worked on by the Education Committee.

Fr. Bill pointed out that the "word on the street" was the school was a good place to go and things have changed over the past few years. Ray Neltner reported that when he registered his daughter at McNick High School he was told the students they get from St. Thomas More are very well prepared for high school. The high school said, "they are clearly doing something right there."

Mrs. Fischer also passed out a copy of the new Marketing brochure that was prepared by Amy Stricker of the Marketing Committee.

Mrs. Fischer reported that weather permitting the move into the modular classrooms is scheduled for this Friday, February 14.

Deacon's Report: Jerry Cain gave a brief update on a couple of topics. His report follows:

MARRIAGE MINISTRY:

Pre Marriage Preparation has been caught up to date for all Parishioners being married this year. Celebration of Marriage: set to be held Feb.15th.

WORSHIP COMMISSION: Lenten schedule of liturgies has been planned:

**LENTEN SCHEDULE
2003**

ASH WEDNESDAY:

Masses 8:30am (school) 11:30am 7:30pm

FRIDAYS OF LENT: Way of the Cross 7:00pm

MARCH 11: Lenten Evensong (Del) 7:00pm

MARCH 19: Lenten Presentation (Becky) 7:00pm

MARCH 24: Parish Communal Penance Service 7:00pm

APRIL 2: Lenten Evensong (Bill) 7:00pm

APRIL 8: Lenten Evensong (Bill) 7:00pm

Besides a special presentation of Christ's passion on March 19th we will be having Lenten evensong on three evenings during Lent. These are new additions to what we have done in the past.

C.R.H.P.:

On the date of this meeting we will have completed the 5th segment of formation for the men under the leadership of Duane Bradley. Pat Miller is the Spiritual leader for the women's formation. Both groups are working hard in getting out the word about CRHP and inviting participants to come to the May 3-4 (women) and May 17-18 (men) weekend retreat. All seems to be going very well.

Booster's Report - Carl Lamping gave the update and promised a written report would be issued shortly.

St. Thomas More would be the host of the Big East Finals. There are plans to have three baseball teams this spring. Summer leagues are also being planned. The gym has been booked through the summer at the Parish Office.

The Boosters also plan to pay to resolve the sound problems in the gym. Sounds panels will be installed and paid for by the Boosters.

Fr. Bill brought up there were some concerns surfacing about no place to park during the 4:30 Saturday Mass due to the gym being in use. David Lees had said the Council had passed a resolution there would be no sports during Masses. Fr. Bill said he made an exception for Saturdays and this might have to be revisited.

Scouts: Even though the Scout report had been filed, Dee Archer said the Scouts want both sides of the marquee during Lent to advertise the Fish Fry. No comment was made regarding this request. Dee then asked for at least one line on each side of the marquee.

Bingo Party: Darline Foltz's report stated she wanted to have a party for the Bingo workers to thank them for their efforts. A request was made for \$600. Mike Gennett stated the funds should come out of the Bingo account. Vic Ivers made the motion to approve the funding for the party. Duane Bradley seconded the motion. The vote was 7 to 0 to approve a maximum of \$600 for a party.

Michelle Stultz asked that scripts be used to fund the party. Everyone agreed that this method must be used and funds come from the Bingo account.

Julyfest/Parish Office: Michelle Stultz and Rhonda Roberts gave an update on the Festival. (Please see report issued in advance of the meeting). The team was complimented on all the hard work they have accomplished. They also reported they were waiting to hear from Joe Kidd Dodge regarding a car for the Festival.

David Lees reported that Parish Council will be taking over the booth that Gene Miller had last summer. The booth would be staffed by council members and feature Parish Information for all those at the Festival. The request was made that everyone should email Duane Bradley with their thoughts.

Security Update: Mike Gennett gave an update on the Security project. Five vendors responded to the RFP (Request for Proposal) that was prepared by Carl Lamping, Duane Bradley, and Matt Malott: NorCom, Vector, Sonitrol, Mr. Lock, and Andy Halvorson. An onsite meeting was held with the five vendors and they were given detailed plans of the grounds and buildings.

Nor Com declined to file a bid citing “they didn’t have time” and Andy Halvorson cited he had “run into a brick wall”.

Bids were submitted by Vector, Sonitrol, and Mr. Lock. The committee was not happy with the bids and asked Sonitrol and Mr. Lock to further answer the questions cited in the RFP. Vector’s first bid price was prohibitive. The additional information had just been received and not reviewed by the committee. A meeting was set to review the information and an update will be filed at the next meeting.

Mike Gennett also cited he wanted to slow the project down for two reasons: we need to see how the budget for next year plays out and we couldn’t install a system until summer anyhow. Installation now would cause a lot of confusion in the middle of the school year.

Matt Malott reported that John Breitenbach told him he heard that Council was looking at a security system. John stated he can break into any door anywhere in the parish with little or no effort.

Fr. Bill reported that John Osterling found a man in the Sacristy during the Saturday 4:30 Mass on February 1 looking for money.

Communications Update: Ray Neltner updated the group on the communication project. Please note the attached document detailing the communication proposal. Two major points were made:

- 1) Each report for the Parish Council meeting should be filed on the “St. Thomas More Parish Council Committee Report” form effective immediately. A copy of the report is on page two of the attachment to these notes. This form should be filed in everyone’s computer. Mike Gennett said he would also place a copy on the web site on the

“Parish Staff” page. Just click on the form name and it will pop-up. The form should be copied and then pasted to a Word document.

- 2) There are three open items: getting the bulletin boards updated in the back of church, having space in the bulletin on those weeks there is a third page available, and more space in More About Us.

Point two opened up the conversation about cooperation from the Parish Office regarding these needs.

It was also stated that the most recent minutes would continue to be posted on the parish web site.

A motion was made to accept Ray’s proposal and Council voted 7 to 0 to accept it in full.

Parish Census Update: Vic Ivers gave the update. Only 26 questionnaires were returned. The top issues returned include addressing the debt, expanding the school, more social opportunities, and continuing to upgrade the facilities.

Since the return rate was so low, other avenues were discussed including a possible “Town Meeting” to discuss the state of the Parish.

Deanery Meeting Update: David Lees attended a recent Deanery meeting on the Priest shortage. Currently, there are 227 parishes in the diocese with 221 priests. In a few years, there will be less than 100 priests to cover these parishes provided there are no premature deaths or retirements. Discussion took place as to which parish would cluster together to address the matter. No major decisions were made.

Fr. Bill pointed out that St. Bernadette has now agreed to begin to discuss the clustering issue.

David Lees said he would continue to attend these meetings in the future.

Pastor's Report: Fr. Bill reported that the "little pink house" next to the Rectory was going to be available for sale. John Trautman had called earlier in the day to report the woman who lived there was moving into a retirement home. John thought the property could be bought for maximum of \$70,000. The parish was being given first opportunity to purchase the property. There is no telling what could happen if sold to someone else.

Duane Bradley made the motion to move forward to see if we can get the property. It was cited that we need to think long term rather than just thinking about our current financial situation. Linda Young seconded the motion. The proposal was that two members of Council, David Lees and Matt Malott, would work with the Finance Committee to explore the purchase. The vote was 7 to 0 to move forward as noted.

Fr. Bill reported he is still on alert and there is no news. If he was called up, he could be gone anywhere from 9 months to 2 years. He said there was one of two possibilities regarding the parish if he was activated: (1) a temporary administer could be appointed or (2) a Priest-professor at the seminary could just come in for Mass and the sacraments. The later choice was his preference. No decision has been made who would be in charge of the parish on a day to day basis. That would be deferred until he knew more about his status.

Amy Stricker made a few comments regarding the school marketing program. Everyone thanked her for her effort.

David Lees proposed a tour of the modular buildings, but that was postponed because it was so icy.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 PM. Fr. Bill led the group in a prayer.