

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, September 12, 2005**

Council Members in Attendance: Fr. Bill Wagner, Vic Ivers, Michelle Stultz, Duane Bradley, Doug Young, Kathy Hornschemeier, Jim Conrady, and Janet Tate.

Council Members Absent: Ralph Bedel, John Duncan

Others in Attendance: Mike Gennett.

The St. Thomas More Parish Council meeting was called to order at 7:11 PM EDT by Fr. Bill Wagner who opened the meeting with a prayer.

New members were welcomed and acknowledged: Doug Young, Kathy Hornschemeier, Jim Conrady and John Duncan who was out of town.

Election of Officers: The election of officers was postponed to later during the meeting since not all members were present at the beginning.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting: The last meeting was held on Monday, May 16th. Fr. Bill asked if there were any questions regarding the minutes. Mike Gennett stated there was no feedback. Fr. Bill made a motion that the minutes be accepted as written. Vic Ivers made the motion and Duane Bradley seconded it. The minutes were approved.

Mike Gennett told the new members that the minutes are initially sent only to those who attend the council meeting. Each member is to review the minutes for any potential changes at the next meeting and then the final version is posted on the Internet. Feedback should be sent to Mike via email before the next meeting. Each request is then presented to the group for approval before any modification is made. Draft copies of the

minutes are not to be forwarded or shared with others. Copies of previous Parish Council minutes may be found on the web at <http://www.sttm.org/parishstaff.htm#Parish%20Council%20Minutes>

Business Manager Report: Mike Gennett gave the report.

Fiscal 2004-5 results – Mike passed out a two page flyer that showed the financial results for the past year. A copy of the report follows:

Income: The parish had an operating surplus of \$21,121.58 during the past fiscal year. This was achieved by an increase in the Sunday collections by \$47,336 or 6.9% from the previous year. This was a result of our direct mail campaign in 2004. The Festival profit dropped due to the stormy weekend. There was no Bingo income in 2004-5 compared to previous years. PSR/CCD fees dropped \$2,978.22 to plan and took place at the end of the fiscal year due to a very slow pre-registration period for 2005-6. We have seen an improvement this fall.

School income increased \$89,205.77 or 13.5% due to increased tuition fees and a modest increase in enrollment from 2003-4. There was no delinquent tuition at the end of the school year 2004-5. We are blessed with one of the few growing schools in the diocese.

Our cafeteria also had a record profit. Our school's latch key profit was used to offset some of the additional payroll costs of the school teachers.

We deferred \$82,178.44 to fiscal year 2005-6. This included the mandatory Catholic Telegraph subscription to the Archdiocese since the program was under review at the end of the fiscal year. We also deferred the donations for the summer capital improvement project. Some of the income was received at the end of the year, but the remaining donations and all the work was completed and paid in 2005-6. The capital work totaled nearly \$75,000. Our church was structurally repaired; we replaced two roofs, and repaired the parking lot. A donation was also made for the new Gather Comprehensive hymnals and deferred to 2005-6 when the actual selection and purchase were made. By not deferring this income, we would have exaggerated earnings in 2004-5 and had a large deficit in 2005-6. In reality, neither result would be accurate

Expenses: Both the parish and the school did an excellent job of controlling expenses this past year. Combined expenses were \$77,987.89 less than our plan. All of our bills were paid as they became due during the year.

We paid \$51,581.55 on our debt to the Archdiocese which was \$11,581.55 more than in the previous year. However, \$6,000 of this amount was from the Boosters and \$2,000 was from the PTO. The revised debt now stands at \$1,118,383.45. No payments were made on the interest during the year. The interest increased by \$82,407.00 and currently stands at \$366,311.52. The total debt is growing at a faster rate than we have been paying. This clearly can not continue. The total debt and interest due the Archdiocese stood at \$1,482,229.97 on August 31, 2005. The diocese has asked for a serious plan to address our debt and interest which the Finance Committee is preparing.

Health insurance cost us \$125,583.88 or \$32,323.20 more than in the previous year. Health care *could* exceed \$170,000.00 this year and remain a major challenge not just for us, but the entire diocese.

\$6,832 was spent on structural repairs to Heider Hall.

Challenges for the Future:

Our major challenges for the future include, but are not limited to:

- Getting serious about our debt and interest. This is seriously impacting the long term needs of the parish. This will be a very difficult process as we continue to fund all the expenses to run the parish. The Archdiocese wants a serious plan from us.
- Containing the growing costs of our school and along with our ability to pay for the growth without negatively impacting tuition fees.
- Continuing to address our infrastructure issues. We will continue to keep our facilities in good order as our funds allow.
- Our Sunday collections have been weak during the summer. We will be closely monitoring our income as it relates to our expenses.
- Health care costs and energy costs since we heat with natural gas.

Archbishop's Letter – Fr. Bill discussed a letter he received from the Archbishop regarding debt and past due bills for 112 parishes. He stated all of our bills have been paid over the years. However, we owe nearly \$1,500,000 in debt and interest. Finance is currently working on a plan to submit to the diocese to help increase our payments. We will have to pay more and hopefully the return of Bingo will help us to accomplish that.

2005-6 Budget Highlights - A presentation was made regarding the budget for the current year which was approved and modified by the Finance Committee last winter.

The 2005-6 budget is not balanced and was finalized based upon enrolling 307 students in the school which did happen. The deficit was \$27,535.40 and was also based on the need for a successful capital campaign and transferring a surplus from 2004-5.

Key points regarding the Budget

Income:

- Sunday Collections – We have one less Sunday next year because Christmas is on a Sunday. This will negatively impact income by \$13,000.00.
- PSR fees increase by \$5 per child
- School Registration fees rise from \$175 per family to \$200 per family. There is no change to the Kindergarten registration fee.
- Tuition increases by 8.1% across all levels.
- The cafeteria lunch fee rises from \$1.75 to \$1.95. All of our neighboring parishes were charging \$1.95 in 2004-5.

Expenditures:

- Salaries increased by 2% to 4% depending on where the employee is within their pay scale, etc.
- Non-payroll expenses are generally planned flat and adjusted for any known increase or decrease.
- Our property insurance premiums are increased by 5.8%. An appraisal was just completed by the diocese.
- The Archdiocese has informed us our Workers Compensation costs are doubling in 2005-6.
- Our health care costs are increasing another 17%. We also continue to add employees and employee families to our plan as they lose coverage elsewhere. The Archdiocese health care task force recommended no changes to the plan. We are the last diocese to offer 100% fully paid health care insurance for full time employees.
- The Worship Committee planned to purchase new hard bound hymnals next year. The money has been saved this year for this expenditure.
- A major Parish Mission will be held in November. This budget has been increased to support the event.
- Our assessment to the diocese will increase due to our increase in our Sunday collections.
- The budget allows only for payment on our debt based upon the actual amounts donated through the Debt Reduction and Vision 2000 collections. Without any change, our total due to the Archdiocese will have a net increase of \$30,000 from accruing interest.
- The school added a second junior high teacher which was partially funded by a private grant since the funds were not fully available

- Capital funding is back into this budget. This includes funds for repairs of the parking lot, roof repairs and replacement at the Parish office and the maintenance garage, and structural repairs to the church. These are major repairs that could not be deferred much longer.
- The profits from the school latch key program will continue to be used to fund the school's expenses.

Since the budget was prepared, the following trends have developed:

- Our Sunday collections are down 7% to last year. If this rate does not turn around, we will drop \$60,000 this fiscal year. Mass attendance dropped beginning June 1 from 30-35% of all registered households to 25-28%. We do not know of any reason for this trend.
- We heat all of our buildings with natural gas. Since Hurricane Katrina has hit, there are warnings that natural gas costs could increase by 71%.
- We are under increasing pressure from the Archdiocese to pay more on our outstanding building debt and interest. All of our bills have been paid and we do not owe anyone including the diocese except on our principal and interest. This will have to be a serious effort that will include some parish funds and any bingo income. We paid our Catholic Telegraph bill last week.
- PSR registrations have been slow in coming and are down (numbers thru Sept 11 are not known).

Sunday Collection distribution - a one page report was passed out and discussed regarding all active households and how they contributed to the Sunday collections in the past year. No conclusions were reached. This particular report showed that 40.48% of our registered households did not contribute anything to the parish in the past year. There was some

discussion regarding the “Amount Given” fields. Mike Gennett stated the fields can be set any way you want. The report passed out was the factory settings, adjusted in a few cases. Fr. Bill said this report would be on the agenda at the next Finance meeting.

Election of Officers: Fr. Bill said it was time to elect Parish Council officers. He stated that the duties of the President of Parish Council includes appointing committees, planning the meeting agenda, as well as some ceremony duties that include the Rite of Election for RCIA and “face time” for some big parish events. He felt a President and Vice-President needed to be elected. He stated that Mike Gennett acts as the Secretary (non-voting).

Nominations were opened. Kathy Hornschemeier nominated Vic Ivers for President. Michelle Stultz seconded the nomination. The vote was 7 to 0 to name Vic Ivers the President.

There was a discussion a Vice-President was also needed to carry out Council’s duties in the absence of a President. This position had been vacant the past two years. Kathy Hornschemeier’s name was then placed in nomination for Vice-President. The vote was 7 to 0 to name Kathy Vice-President.

Council Retreat: The issue of planning a council retreat was tabled for the time being. It was discussed this might be something to plan over the winter months. Those who participated in the 2002 retreat thought it was worth while doing. The 2002 meeting included all the organization heads, staff employees, and council members.

Coffee & Donuts: A discussion took place regarding the problem to get the event organized each month. Many members mentioned that a “czar” or “leader” is needed. Duane Bradley pointed out it is the same few people who show up each time. Michelle Stultz recommended that other things should be looked at. Kathy Hornschemeier stated maybe each organization should choose a date and promote their organization on that Sunday.

Michelle Stultz said the dates were changed last year to accommodate some of the organizations. Mike Gennett stated that the parish staff was not aware of the date changes so nothing had been done on our end to ensure the event was supported. Two different date lists were being used.

For now, the issue was tabled. Coffee & Donuts is currently not planned for this year. Fr. Bill stated he wanted to see something happen the weekend we pass out the 2006 Sunday envelopes and our parish photo directory. Mike Gennett stated he thought Peg Fischer was planning an 8th grade breakfast on Sunday and wine & cheese would be served on Saturday.

Pastor's Report: Fr. Bill gave his report.

The Pastor at Guardian Angels had contacted him that the Sisters of St. Joseph Convent in Louisiana had been destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. He was wondering if there was any interest in our parish helping to raise money for them. The Sisters of St. Joseph had served St. Thomas More for many years. After a discussion regarding who do you choose to help, it was decided a bulletin announcement would be made regarding this specific cause.

Fr. Bill stated that Bingo is back. We had 77 patrons the first night and cleared \$818. This was more people than we had at the end of our old Bingo in January of 2004. However, there are a number of start-up costs that have to be absorbed. Hopefully we will be making money at this event by January that can be used to help pay on our debt.

Catholic Social Services had been contacted about the availability of our home at 804 Ohio Pike, the Thomas More House. Our home is ready to go and we would like to help someone including possibly a hurricane victim.

The new hymn books are in! The cost was 90% paid by a donor. Our dedication effort will also bring us some revenue.

The parish photo album is at the printers. We hope to get a proof around October 1 and plan to release the book in November. Fr. Bill thanked

Ralph & Sandy Bedel for their effort. He also stated that Mike Gennett laid out the book and helped to prepare it for the printers. The entire process was very technology driven. Everything had to be put on a cd-r, page by page. Digital photography was used through out the process. Mike stated we could not have accomplished it without all the work Duane Bradley did behind the scenes over the years to help bring us to the excellent technology state we now enjoy.

Besides the photo directory, the latest edition of the Guidebook is about to be finished and sent to the printers this week. It should be in the homes by late October to early November.

The special collection for victims of Hurricane Katrina was over \$12,100.00 with money and supplies still coming in. This was an unbelievable, generous second collection. Fr. Bill stated we are also working closely with the Matthew 25 Ministries.

There will be a new cover for the bulletin soon. If you don't like the new cover or have other comments, please send them in to the Parish Office.

We will be clustering with Holy Trinity in Batavia to share a Pastor in the longer term. Final approval should be coming from the Archbishop soon.

We will have a Vocations Committee and will be headed by Michael Thomas. This is a requirement of the Archdiocese Futures Committee.

The discussions between St. Thomas More and St. Bernadette regarding our schools have been postponed for a year. A new Pastor is at St. Bernadette and he wishes to get his feet on the ground before something of this importance is discussed and planned.

Our old Glory & Praise hymnals will be going to St. Maximilian Kolbe in Liberty Township. We recently obtained their old altar. Fr. Bill stated he would like to get it refinished and use it here. This altar is better than our current one. Kathy Hornschemeier pointed out we need to be careful not to offend the parishioners who made and donated our current altar.

The staff had a Vision Day recently. Fr. Bill stated the group discussed Evangelization in our parish....that is bringing someone closer to the Lord.

Fr. Bill stated he was asked by the Boosters to kickoff their new season. He was pleased he was asked to be there.

The Parish Mission is scheduled for November 13-16. John M. Schweisthal of Good News Ministries will be conducting it. He is highly recommended from other Pastors. In fact, he has been asked to return for a second engagement at other locations because of the good job he did.

Open Discussion: Kathy Hornschemeier stated the Worship Aides are not clear in relation to the new hymnals. The responsorial song is missing and the scripture readings are not posted. She asked if the scripture readings cycle (A, B, or C) be clearly posted and beside the name of the Sunday.

Michelle Stultz stated no one knows the scripture readings are in the hymnals. The hymnals need to be marketed. She suggested maybe Margaret Osinski could discuss the new hymnals 5 minutes before each Mass. There has to be a way to make the process easier.

Duane Bradley thanked Vic Ivers and Kathy Hornschemeier for “stepping up to the plate” to be the new council officers.

Next Meeting: - Monday, October 17th at 7:00 PM.

There was a brief discussion regarding the parish organizations and their involvement with Council. Vic Ivers said he wanted to think about their role and their reports for the future. Fr. Bill stated their involvement needs to be brief so council can get their work done.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 PM. Fr. Bill ended the meeting with a prayer.

No reports were filed and therefore, nothing follows. Mike Gennett did report that both the Boosters & Elizabeth Ministry wanted to file reports

and/or make presentations tonight. They will probably ask to be on the October 17th agenda.