

St. Jerome Finance Committee Minutes Meeting of May 12, 2009

In attendance: Father David Blanchfield, Dick Vicenzi, Dan Loch, Skip Vincent, Dom Vento (parish trustee), John Kuczo, Frank Soldano, Jim Alvord, and Bob Olson (chairperson).

Fr. Dave began the meeting at 7:35 pm with a prayer for the parish and for those in need.

February 17, 2009 Minutes

Minutes of the February 17 meeting had been approved by the members via e-mail by March 29. A copy has been posted on the parish website and on the Pastoral Council bulletin board in the church hallway since April 2.

Bishop's Appeal

With 97% of its goal already achieved, St. Jerome's currently is in first place in its vicariate.

Budget Analysis: July 1, 2008 through April 30, 2009

Discussion of line items in the Profit & Loss Budget Statement from July 1, 2008 through April 30, 2009 –

- Income Entry #4000, Other Offertory Income, \$0.00 vs. a budgeted \$35,00.00. Most likely this was a mistaken entry when forecasting the budget last May (2008) for this line item, possibly due to conflation between drafts of that forecasted budget.
- Income Entry #4123, Raffles, \$0.00 vs. budgeted \$4,500.00. See following.
- Income Entries #4131, Net Appreciation, \$5,600.00, and #4180, Cemetery, \$4,200.00, vs. no budgeted amounts. These amounts are Parish Raffle income and have been miscoded here.
- Expense Budget Entry #5333, Building Repairs/Maintenance, \$60,171.07 vs. a budget of \$0.00. That the budget for #5333 is \$0.00 is due to a mistake when forecasting the budget last May (2008) for this line item due to conflation between drafts of that forecasted budget. Correction of the zero-budgeted #5333 was deemed moot at this point, the eve of submission of next fiscal year's budget. The General Ledger handout for July 1, 2008 through April 30, 2009 provided by Fr. David for the meeting completely details each expense contributing to this \$60,171.00. [See the October, 14, 2008 Finance Committee Minutes posted on the parish website, http://www.stjeromenorwalk.org/2008Finance_Minutes-10-14-08-Final.pdf, for further detail on the major repairs and maintenance expenses included in Expense Budget Entry #5333.]

- Other out-of-balance line items were explained in the posted Finance Committee Minutes for October, 14, 2008 and February 17, 2009.

Faith Direct Electronic Offertory Giving

At the October 14, 2008 meeting the attending members of the Finance Committee unanimously voted to continue with Faith Direct as the provider of electronic debiting to St. Jerome's through June 30, 2009, the end of the current fiscal year.

At this May 12, 2009 meeting, discussion of Faith Direct compared to the electronic giving service afforded by the new diocesan online software, ParishSoft, revealed concern that tasks now performed by Faith Direct would, under ParishSoft, have to be assumed by the parish. These would include parish personnel to process the electronic giving and to prepare tax forms.

In light of this, a motion was made by Dan, seconded, and unanimously approved by the Finance Committee members attending that "St. Jerome Church will continue with Faith Direct for our electronic debiting until such time as we gain further information on ParishSoft's electronic debiting and gain evidence from other parishes of the working details of ParishSoft's electronic debiting."

Parish Procedural Audit

A second parish procedural audit was conducted May 6 and 7 by the Maletta firm, a specialist in non-profit audits. They are auditing 20 of the 87 parishes in the diocese. The audit's cost was \$3,200.00, about half of the July 2007 procedural audit. This required diocesan audit assessed how well we are following the procedures of the new diocesan financial controls as issued in the diocese's Parish Administration & Finance Manual of February 2008. In July 2007 our previous procedural audit required by the diocese found us in very good compliance with the old (previous) diocesan financial controls with the exception of a few issues, all of which have been fully rectified.

At a date to be announced a full report of the May 2009 procedural audit will be given to the pastor and the Finance Committee by Maletta with diocesan officials present.

Discussion of these preliminary findings pointed to a dilemma. In order to achieve 100% compliance with the admirably perfection-seeking diocesan financial controls, a considerable amount of time and effort on the part of a dedicated individual seems to be required. If this individual were the pastor, the paperwork details would take away from his being a priest. If a parish business manager, that individual's salary would take funds away from other very worthy parish work. The parish already is paying for the services of a bookkeeper for four hours a week for budget entry to comply more fully with the February 2008 diocesan financial controls.

Other Old or New Business

Energy Audit

Parishioner John Davis has proposed an energy audit of the parish and the establishment of automatic energy-use controls to save the parish electricity and heating and cooling costs with savings of up to 20% to be realized. The attending members were not enthusiastic about the \$27,000.00 cost of such work and Fr. David pointed out that diocesan policy requires three bids for an expense of this size.

Parish Custodian

Current parish custodian Mark Marrero has had medical problems, so he is not being retained full-time. When his hospital stay ends, he will return at an hourly rate. Tony Fauci, the unemployed electrician who did our school lighting replacement at a special reduced hourly cost and who has been helping Mark with doing the church and hall floors (strip, wax, buff), now is working 25 hours a week as custodian.

Parish Raffle

Parish raffle co-chair John Kuczo reported that 250 \$100 tickets had been sold to date. 500 tickets to-be-sold are out in the hands of raffle committee members.

Fairfield County Community Foundation Grants

Dom Vento reported that the Fairfield County Community Foundation has given out \$2.1 million in grants to Fairfield County non-profits this year. Dom will contact this organization regarding a possible grant to TOTAL, our parish youth program. The Fairfield County Community Foundation is at 383 Main Avenue, Norwalk. Its web site is www.fccfoundation.org.

The meeting ended at 8:50 PM.

Submitted by:
Dan Loch, Finance Committee Secretary
June 2, 2009