

St. Jerome Finance Committee Minutes Meeting of September 15, 2009

In attendance: Jim Alvord, Father David Blanchfield, Angela Carey, Bill Groener, Jerry Holdridge, John Kuczo, Dan Loch, Bob Olson (chairperson), Dick Vicenzi, and Skip Vincent

Fr. David began the meeting at 7:30 pm with a prayer for the parish and for the work of the committee.

July 21, 2009 Minutes

Minutes of the July 21 meeting had been approved by the members via e-mail by August 8. A copy has been posted on the parish website and on the Pastoral Council bulletin board in the church hallway since August 12.

Contributions to Education and Hope

Fr. David reported that the parish had received an unrestricted gift of \$101,000.00 from the estate of Sal Defeo. Fr. David proposed that \$10,000.00 of the Defeo gift be given by the parish to *Education and Hope*. He further explained that another parishioner has pledged to donate a second \$10,000.00 to match the parish's gift.

Julie Coyne's *Education and Hope* ministry with children in Guatemala is an official parish ministry, sanctioned by the Pastoral Council. Five donors provide 58% of the foundation's funding. Fr. David was most impressed with Julie's work when he visited Guatemala in July. At the weekend Masses of September 12-13, Barbara Holdridge, who also travelled with the parish group to Guatemala, had spoken at all the Masses about the trip and subsequently a parishioner had written the *Education and Hope* foundation a \$5,000.00 check.

A motion to donate \$10,000 from the DeFeo gift to *Education and Hope* was made by Bill Groener, seconded, and unanimously approved by the Finance Committee members in attendance.

Sal Defeo \$101,000 Bequest to the Parish

Jerry Holdridge and Dom Vento (who was not in attendance) proposed the remaining \$91,000.00 of the bequest be put into a future expansion fund, especially in view of the need for a new church foyer and the diocesan policy requiring that 50% of a building project be in the bank before the diocesan building committee approves a project.

A motion to this effect was made by Jim Alvord, seconded, and unanimously approved by the Finance Committee members in attendance.

Proposal for Energy-Saving Church Lighting Renovations

Parishioner John Davis presented plans for installing energy-saving lighting in the church. There are three sets of lights on the church building ceiling: large fluorescent arrays that shine upward, individual recessed lights facing down, and five spotlight sets that shine onto the sanctuary. Replacing these hard-to-reach ceiling lights requires erecting large scaffolding over the pews and has been difficult, time-consuming, intrusive, and expensive. It costs the parish approximately \$8,000.00 yearly to replace church ceiling lights.

Mr. Davis proposed a range of measures, which would be energy-efficient and cost saving in the long run, potentially cutting the church ceiling lighting energy costs by two-thirds:

- Conditional logic lighting controls and sensors which will detect occupancy and motion
- Replacing the old T12 magnetic ballast fluorescents with modern T8 electronic ballast LED fluorescents
- Replacing the old high wattage lumens spotlight sets with modern, high-output, low wattage lumens fluorescent spotlight sets.

The cost for the work could be upwards of \$30,000.00 (\$22,000 for the lighting controls and equipment and \$5,000-\$8,000 for the electrician). Mr. Davis revealed he is not building any profit into the cost of his proposal and that his electrician would work for a reduced rate, favorable to the parish. Also, this renovation may require replacing the spot and recessed fluorescent lighting fixtures (separate from replacing the bulbs that go into the fixtures), which would mean separate initial costs of upwards of \$18,000.00.

Mr. Davis additionally proposed placing the hot water heater (for the school building water taps, not for the heating system) on a high-tech nighttime-off controller synchronized to the US Naval Observatory Master Clock. This would stop the constant recirculation of hot water to the taps.

Fr. David added these important points to the discussion:

- CL&P may pay up to 40% of an energy-saving renovation.
- The electrical renovations should include a genuine on-off panel, not breakers, for church lighting. Right now, we use the breakers in the sacristy as on-off switches for the in-church lighting, an unwieldy, clearly undesirable, and potentially unsafe practice. Some people tape open several of these breakers which defeats their purpose. Mr. Davis estimated an electrical panel in the sacristy for the church lighting would cost another \$5,000-\$8,000.
- The immediate issue is that almost half of the church lighting is out, a problem that might leave the church in the dark for the 4:30 pm Saturday and 6:00 pm Sunday Masses as the daylight hours grow shorter.

Extended discussion of the church lighting and of Mr. Davis' proposal ensued. Major points and actions were these:

- The diocese requires three bids for work costing over \$5,000.00. That means the parish needs three bids for the lighting controls and equipment and three bids for the electrician.
- Fr. David will ask a parishioner with experience in crafting competitive bids to draft a bid for electrical renovation in the church so that the three bids can be obtained.
- For the immediate problem of the burnt-out lighting in the church ceiling, attending members suggested using an articulated-arm lift to reach the ceiling bulbs or buying a 40-foot ladder to reach them and asking the custodian (who is a licensed electrician) to change the ceiling bulbs. As there were significant issues with each of these ideas (access for the lift, safety on the ladder), neither prevailed over the usual erecting of scaffolding over the pews.
- John Kuczo offered to research a lower cost scaffolding rental, which would enable our custodian to replace the burnt out lamps at a dramatically lower cost than in previous years.
- Regarding the separate idea of installing a high-tech, nighttime-off controller on the hot water heater for the water taps, Jerry Holdridge proposed using a less expensive department store electric timer, even if it would have to be reset if the power goes off.

Procedural Audit Findings

Just prior to the Finance Committee meeting, Fr. David received the draft report and the findings and recommendations of the second parish procedural audit that was conducted May 5 and 6, 2009 by the Maletta firm, a specialist in non-profit audits. Fr. David shared with the attending members of the Finance Committee copies of the draft report and of the findings and recommendations, both of which the auditing firm had sent to Bishop Lori and Deacon William A. Koniers, Diocesan Parish Finance Services Director.

The auditing firm made 16 Findings and Recommendations. The first related to the previous first diocesan procedural audit of July 2007 and referred to the need for a written response and action plan from the parish to the Findings. Of the other findings, most involve painstaking record-keeping and/or fastidious authorization requirements. Eleven already have been acted upon or are in the process of being complied with. The remaining findings await further elucidation from the diocesan representatives who will be meeting with the pastor and the Finance Committee at an as-yet unspecified date to review the auditor's findings.

Quarterly Budget Analysis

Two weeks before the meeting Fr. Dave mailed all Finance Committee members for their examination, copies of the July and August 2009 Fiscal Year Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual Statement and of the June 30 and

August 31 Balance Sheets. Copies of all three financial documents will be attached to the Final Minutes, and this addresses the diocesan procedural auditor's Finding #2.

The one item of note was Income Budget Item #4123, Raffles, an unbudgeted \$20,000.00, which is offset by Expense Budget Item #5353, Bingo & Raffle Prizes, also an unbudgeted \$20,000.00. The winner of the parish car raffle on June 6, 2009 cashed in the car. The parish received the \$20,000 (#4123) and immediately disbursed that \$20,000 (#5353) to the winner.

The meeting ended at 8:50 PM.

Submitted by:

Dan Loch, Finance Committee Secretary

October 15, 2009

Addendum:

In accord with the diocesan procedural auditor's findings and recommendations of May 6, 2009, attached to these minutes are:

- The July through August 2009 St. Jerome Parish Profit & Loss vs. Actual statement
- The St. Jerome Parish Balance Sheet as of June 30, 2009
- The St. Jerome Parish Balance Sheet as of August 31, 2009

Annual financial reports to the parishioners and the accompanying pastor's letter can be found on the parish web site at

<http://www.stjeromenorwalk.org/html/finance.html#FinancialStatements>.

Minutes of Finance Committee meetings can be found at

<http://www.stjeromenorwalk.org/html/finance.html#MeetingMinutes>.