SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Council Board Meeting – Minutes
September 28, 2023, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Presiding: Carole Johnson, President

1. Attendance:
   - Voting members present or participating virtually included: Carole Johnson, Jeanette Aubuchon, David Little, Mary Murphy, John Stephan, Russ Struttmann, Clay Whitener, Bill Blow, Ernestine Jackson, Wes Karna, Bernie Sammons, Bill Blow, John Fallah, Dan Schlafly, Christine Novalis, Judy Belford, Lyle Gilbertson, John Fallah and Dan Schlafly
   - Voting members absent: Jeff Bunten and Yolanda Diaz
   - Ex Officio or non-voting members present: John Foppe and Fr. Dan Thiess
   - SVdP staff present: Gena Bast, John Fitzpatrick, Mike Goering, Julie Komanetsky, Steve Poppe, Eric Weible, Denise Chachere
   - Guests: Rene Lorio (incoming President of Southwest District), R.B. Clark, III (incoming President of South Central District), Sharon Steis and Joan Pisoni (2023 National Assembly Steering Committee), and Edie Varley (St Anselm Conference)
   - Quorum present: Yes

2. Welcoming Remarks and Agenda Review – Carole Johnson
   Carole recognized Mary Murphy (nominee for Catholic Woman of the Year on Sep 25, 2023) and Bernie Sammons (Missouri Citizens Award from the Missouri Catholic Conference) for their volunteer work.
   Carole reminded us that God loves the poor, and certainly God loves those who love, respect and serve the poor.
   A motion to accept the consent agenda was passed.

3. Opening prayer – Fr. Dan
   Fr Dan reminded us that God may work slowly, but he always finishes in his time. Happy Feast Day of St Vincent yesterday!

4. Strategic Ends Report – John Foppe
   - We are in good shape for FY2023 with 84% of the goals complete and the remaining 16% in progress. Of the goals in progress, almost all are 75% or more complete. As discussed with the Executive Committee in August and September, we need to delete or postpone five FY2023 goals. See Appendix 1: FY2023 Strategic Priorities

- Looking at FY2024, we need to make significant changes in the goals for Vincentian Services, which is a combined set of goals from Programs and Vincentian Formation. Changes are required in response to All Things New, based on the FY2024 budget, and based on planned department restructuring. To help us better focus on these critical efforts, we need to eliminate 24 tactical goals from the strategic plan resulting in 13 strategic goals for Vincentian Services. (The Goals are attached to the Resolution.)
- Regarding Conference credits, there was concern expressed about the difficulty in obtaining an accurate credit balance.
- There was a question raised about Goal 2-4a ("Within 12 months of the Blanke Building lease expiration, create an ad-hoc committee to review alternative locations to compare to the Blanke Building lease and make a recommendation for the best alternative") and whether it was feasible to move the Council office to Cool Valley. The Council charter requires the Council office to be located within St Louis City limits and the cost of such a move would likely be cost prohibitive.
- The Resolution to Approve the FY2024 Strategic Plan was passed.

5. Carole proposed new at-large Board Members: Brenda Vanderford, Ellen Harshman and Kenneth Patterson, and they were approved by consensus. She introduced the new District Presidents: Rene Lorio in the SouthWest and R.B. Clark in South Central. Carole also reviewed the new Committee member appointments. This list will be updated again to include the new West District President.

6. Treasurer's report – Lyle Gilbertson and Eric Weible
   - The FY 2024 budget was reviewed.
     - There was a concern raised about what the Conferences are incurring in terms of cost. However, those costs are more than balanced by the gain of offering vouchers for donated goods (clothing, housewares and furniture) at no cost up to $1M.
     - There was a question about the $1M reduction in wages and wage expense. The reduction is a combination of reduction of force, reduced hours for some employees and a change in health insurance premiums (3.5% increase in the employee share).
     - There was a question raised about the change in dental/health care costs for employees. The amount is minimal, increasing employee costs by about $5-10 per month, depending on the type of coverage they have.
     - The Resolution to Accept the FY 2024 Budget was approved.
     - The Resolution to Renew the Fenton Store Lease was approved.

7. Program Committee Update – Jeanette Aubuchon and Dave Little
   - Jeanette explained how the recent Program Committee meetings enjoyed good representation from the Districts, especially participation from Vincentians who often utilize the Council Programs. Given budgetary constraints, it was clear that Conferences consider rental assistance to be more critical than the Rapid Rehousing Program because more people can be helped.
   - Guidelines for the car purchase and repair programs available to conferences outside the St. Louis City & County area are to be tightened.
   - The Council is seeking additional sources of funding for Programs such as Missouri Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) credits.
   - Twinning and conference fund raising will become more important and program assistance decreases.

- Program details regarding the new vouchers and assessments still need to be determined.
- A letter to all Vincentians describing the new budget and programs changes will be sent tomorrow.
- The Resolution to Implement Changes in Council Programs, with some changes to start November 1, 2023 and others starting January 1, 2024, was approved

8. The Consent Agenda was approved.

9. Departing Board members were recognized, including Jeff Bunten, John Fallah, Dan Schlafly, Wes Karna and Bill Blow.

10. Carole reviewed the list of upcoming events:
    - District Presidents meeting Oct 19
    - Board training and District President commissioning ceremony Nov 11
    - Board meeting Jan 25

11. Sharon Steis provided a brief overview of the very successful National Assembly Sep 6-9.

12. Closing prayer – Fr. Dan Thiess

The Meeting adjourned at 6:07 PM

Respectfully submitted by Steve Poppe,
Executive Assistant and Council Office Manager

Appendix 1
FY2023 Strategic Priorities

FY2023 Strategic Priorities Scorecard Summary								
FOCUS AREA	DESCRIPTION	% FA COMPLETE	Wgt (%)	SUBTOTAL SCORE	# GOALS COMPLETE	# GOALS IN PROGRESS	# GOALS NOT ON TRACK	
I	Expand spirituality, friendship, service, and holiness of Vincentians in all conferences.	88%	20%	18%	21	3	0	24
II	Advance organizational capacity to recruit, form, develop and grow Vincentians, staff, and Volunteers in the spirit of servant leadership.	83%	20%	17%	5	1	0	6
III	Promote comprehensive solutions to impact quality of life issues for our Neighbors in Need, especially the underserved throughout the Archdiocese.	79%	20%	16%	11	3	0	14
IV	Expand public awareness of the Society and what it offers.	100%	20%	20%	4	0	0	4
V	Strengthen internal communications, collaboration, and friendship.	71%	20%	14%	5	2	0	7
	OVERALL # GOALS				46	9	0	55
	OVERALL %				84%	16%	0%	

Appendix 2

FY2024 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Overall approach:

1. Treats the budget as a single entity, considering all aspects of Council, District and Conference activity.

2. A paradigm shift regarding thrift store vouchers, providing greater clarity around the value of how the thrift stores directly help Neighbors in Need, strengthening the case for such community support.

3. Presents a more equitable cost share across the Society.

Vincentian Support Services:

1. Total client Program expenses (Beds, rent, utility assistance, etc...) = $2.2M, including $1.2 for cash assistance Programs and up to $1M for donated goods to Neighbors in Need (NINs)

2. Revises approach on Thrift store vouchers, providing donated goods to NINs at no cost to Conferences and eliminates the delivery fee of $45. The Council will continue to send an invoice to Conferences for purchased items (such as beds, sheets, and pillows) at cost. Removes the 20% discount on thrift store vouchers.

3. Conferences will be assessed for Conference related expenses such as annual national membership dues, insurance, Servware, etc....

4. Eliminates credits for Conference donation drives and eliminates cash payment for donations received via the blue donation bins.

5. Restarts the Car Purchase and Repair Programs in rural areas starting in January 2024.

6. Continues use of special bed vouchers to conferences.

7. Sunsets any remaining Conference credits.

8. Forgives outstanding invoices to Conferences for thrift store vouchers.

Development:

1. Development efforts to increase 4% to $2.5M.

Marketing/Communication:

1. Suspends billboard and other advertising, decreasing expenses by $150k

Human Resources

1. Significantly reduced spending, including:
    - A reduction of $1M in salary and wage expense
    - Revised employee health care benefit cost-sharing, decreasing expenses by $150k