



SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME

Council Board Meeting – Minutes

September 26, 2019

4:00-6:25 p.m.

Presiding: Elizabeth Barbieri, President

Present:

- *District Council Presidents:* Dan Asahl, Jeff Bunten, Ken Gebken, Carole Johnson, Wes Karna, Ed McCarthy, Phil Schwab, Ray Suda
- *Members at Large:* John Fallah, Ellen Harshmann, Michael Kehoe, John Luth, Dan Schlafly, Jim Wilson
- *Ex Officio members:* Rev. James Cormack
- *SVdP staff:* John Foppe, Gena Bast, Ryan Carney, Denise Chachere, Debra Downey, Mike Goering, John Heithaus, John Walters
- *Guests:* Ernestine Jackson (Mid Central District), Dennis Tonkovic (St. Paul)

Absent: Judy Belford, Annette Bligh, Bob Hook, Steve Polk, Rhae Yancey, Dave Winslett

Quorum: Yes

1. Opening Prayer and Spiritual Reflection – Fr. Cormack

Fr. James Cormack led the opening prayer.

September 27 is the St. Vincent de Paul Feast Day. The incarnation of faith inspires us to look for Christ in others. This requires practice.

As an example, a woman in East St. Louis had made bad decisions. By the age of 21 she was the mother of five children, each with a different father. Nevertheless, she showed that she was very strong. You might not see the real person at first, given their situation. We should practice seeing Christ in others.

The Ladies of Charity had a saying: “It’s not the soup and the bread that are the most important. It’s your love.” Let your love come first. We have a lot to do at SVdP, but the most important is love.

2. Review of Agenda / Any Other Business

Before the consideration of the previous meeting minutes, John Heithaus has a couple introductions, and Elizabeth Barbieri has some items to discuss.

3. Vincentian Services Introductions – John Heithaus

John shared information about the new pregnancy support program. Volunteers provide hope and support to neighbors in need. In one example, a woman was contemplating an abortion. With some support, she started talking about dreams for her unborn child. This program started to build hope for her.

John introduced two new managers in Vincentian Services:

- Deacon Jim Sigillito is the new Manager of Conference Growth and Revitalization.
- Julie Komanetsky is the new Manager of Strategic Initiatives.

4. Conversation with Elizabeth/Discussion

Elizabeth Barbieri attended the National Assembly in Denver. There was a good deal of discussion refocusing on housing and homelessness. Housing is a basic building block to help neighbors. Homelessness is a root issue that must be solved. Elizabeth asks that housing be elevated to the top of the agenda in 2020. She asks John Foppe to reconvene the Housing Task Force. The effort will need a Board sponsor and work from the staff.

Board meetings have at times been somewhat jampacked. There might be a need for one or two more meetings in a year in order to cover all the material and be action oriented. Elizabeth suggested that perhaps each District President could provide a five-minute overview for others on the Board, particularly the At-Large members.

Elizabeth asks that we all lean in, consider, discuss, and give feedback.

To help Board members, Elizabeth provided each member a reduced-size copy of two books: the SVdP *Rule* and *Governance: Council and Board*.

Lastly, Elizabeth said she needs each of us as friends, open to adjust and socialize. New members can learn from those who are more experienced.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting – approval

The Board approved the modified agenda and the previous meeting minutes.

6. Treasurer's Report – Ed McCarthy/Debra Downey

a) Financials – review

The August Profit & Loss results are on target. Development and the Stores beat their revenue budgets impressively. The Stores provide more than 75% of the revenue. On the Expense side, there is more being spent in Program Services, which increases the Net Shortage. This means there is more spent for the poor

instead of the Council hoarding the funds. The Operational Reserve Ratio is well in the green, indicating that the financial situation is in a good spot.

A significant aspect of this situation is the spending from the Board Designated Fund (BDF). This sizeable fund is largely the result of a very significant bequest. The plan calls for spending these funds in a logical manner, over time, in four areas: Vincentian Services, District Funds, Strategic Initiatives, and Disaster Relief. Most of the lifetime allocation is yet to be spent.

b) FY2020 Budget – approval

The FY2020 proposed budget calls for a \$2.6 million Net Deficit, which would be funded by the BDF. Development will be challenged to increase contributions to \$1.6 million. Net sales from Stores show a higher target. The budget also reflects a shift in the funding sources. There is a request for more support from the Conferences, encouraging twinning and District matches. The Bed program will offer more twin and full-sized beds and fewer larger beds where they aren't needed. Salaries & Benefits will be up in 2020, driven in part by new positions, new wage levels from the state, and merit increases. The Council will have better rates for employee health insurance. Benefits amount to about 40% of salaries and wages.

John Foppe provided an update on the proposed Cool Valley center. The budget presently reflects a March 2020 opening, contributing \$228,000 net income for the Stores operation. At this point however the situation is not settled. The Cool Valley city council is looking for further negotiation. SVdP has a letter of intent to purchase the property but no sales contract. There is still an option to press SVdP's rights in court. Staff has continued to look at other properties, but they have not yet found another site with the location and space to support the integrated distribution/sales concept adequately. The financial impact to the budget may have to be revisited at the January Board meeting. Although the situation may take some time to reach resolution, the Staff remains optimistic this center will become a reality and help the poor.

There was a motion to form a task force to address various purchase-related decisions. It was withdrawn so the wording could be finalized, and the proposal voted in a separate process.

In the past the Stores financial performance has not shown a correlation to the overall economy, one way or the other. BDF funding in future years all depends on bequests, which are uncertain, as they relate to future life events.

MOTION: The Board approved the 2020 Financial Budget.

7. Executive Director's Report – John Foppe

a) FY2019 Strategic Progress/Ends policy – report

The Council has had a phenomenal year of growth as it executes the strategic plan. A Conference tracking and reporting system is developing well. There is good progress toward more partnerships. One example will address housing needs in conjunction with the St. Patrick Center. A good program will help Vincentians help the poor without excessive government regulation. There is notable progress in many other areas, including the St. Anthony of Padua Food Pantry, Development, Stores, Finance, Marketing & Communication, and disaster relief.

The Ends Policy report included a great deal of positive activity in the three pillars of the Society: Spirituality, Friendship, and Service.

b) Agency Scorecard – report

The FY2019 Strategic Priorities Scorecard has an overall score of 94%. Five areas score in the Exceed range, and two areas score in the Meet range. The leadership team is doing a lot of hard work very well.

c) Executive Committee Action – Artificial Contraception exclusion on health insurance

The employee health insurance started to include coverage for artificial contraception and birth control during a policy transition at some point in the past. The Executive Committee revisited this coverage with guidance from the Spiritual Advisor and voted to exclude it once again.

8. Development Report – Ryan Carney

Ryan will be speaking with the District Presidents in January regarding conference grants. Development achieved \$1.43 million in contributions this fiscal year, exceeding the \$1.35 million goal. Bequests are adding about \$550,000 to the BDF. There is a greater emphasis on planned giving, with about \$750,000 committed. There will be more focus on direct mail. Publications in the *St. Louis Review* have helped bring 600 new donors. In one notable recent case, a benefactor decided to make a large bequest to SVdP, citing the model that has delivered funds into neighborhoods for 175 years in St. Louis.

9. Human Resources – Denise Chachere

a) Employee Survey – report

The team is celebrating a very positive Net Promotor Score and the employees' strong understanding and support of the mission. The situation is much improved from years past. The Action Plan continues to drive improvement in various areas.

b) Unemployment Payment Exemption – approval

The HR department has spent a great deal of time dealing with unemployment claims from employees who were terminated for cause. The proposal would request a religious exemption from certain unemployment payments. This brought a great deal of discussion. There was a question of whether a religious exemption would be suitable in this situation, whether this approach was right. The St. Louis Archdiocese does use this exemption. There was a question of whether the lack of unemployment coverage would make it harder to attract talent. The exemption should be disclosed to new hires. It is notable that only one termination in the past three years was not for cause, and in that case the individual was offered severance to help them as they transitioned to a new job. There was a question of whether there should be a formal severance policy. This will be considered, although it was noted that each case is unique and requires judgment. Part of this issue has been mitigated in the recent past with better pre-employment assessments that have helped to lower turnover.

MOTION: The Board approved a resolution to request the Missouri Department of Labor to grant a religious exemption from the payment of unemployment insurance taxes and voluntary reimbursable claimant payments beginning on January 1, 2020.

10. Vincentian Services report – John Heithaus

a) Client Personal Identifiable Information (Social Security numbers and driver's license numbers) Policy – approval

In the past, Vincentians collected the Social Security Number, driver's license information, and other personal records from neighbors in need. This practice is no longer recommended for a variety of reasons. The new policy would be clearly communicated to the Vincentians, and affected forms would be updated. New practices will rely on visual examination of a person's identification.

MOTION: The Board approved a resolution prohibiting the collection, storage, or transmittal of personally identifiable information from neighbors-in-need.

- b) Legal Services new board member appointments – approval

The Legal Services Council is undergoing some changes in its leadership and membership.

MOTION: The Board approved a resolution designating and approving various individuals to serve as members of the Legal Services Board of Directors in accordance with the Legal Services Corporation By-Laws.

11. Governance Committee – John Luth

- a) By-laws revisions – approval

The Council's bylaws are undergoing numerous updates, driven largely by an approved new set of bylaws from the SVdP National Governance Committee. The proposed updates for the St. Louis Council have undergone various reviews and were provided to the Board with proper notice.

The discussion brought one additional revision to the proposal. In the updated Article 13, Membership of the Corporation Board and Terms of Office, the Board agreed to change the last sentence of the second paragraph from:

“Those appointed to the Corporation Board by the President may be reappointed to one additional consecutive three (3) year term by the succeeding President after receiving Corporation Board approval.”

To the following:

“Those appointed to the Corporation Board by the President may be reappointed by successive Presidents after receiving Corporation Board approval, but not to exceed six (6) consecutive years.”

MOTION: The Board approved the revised Bylaws of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Archdiocesan Council of St. Louis.

- b) New Board Member and Treasurer installations – Board Governance training, Saturday, November 2 – reminder

This will be a very timely installation and training, especially given the regular, ongoing turnover in the Board.

Elizabeth Barbieri received confirmation from the Board to add Laurie Phillips as a new At-Large member.

HOLD THE DATE: Saturday, November 2, 2019, 9:00-12:00 at the SVdP Council Office, 1310 Papin Street. The morning will begin with Mass followed by

a continental breakfast and a presentation from John Berry, CEO SVdP Georgia and member of the SVdP National Board of Directors. Please RSVP to Clair Bowe (claireb@svdpstl.org or 314-881-6035).

12. Other Business

The Disaster Recovery Committee Report and the Voice of the Poor Status Report were provided in written form.

13. Recognition of Annette Bligh and Ed McCarthy

The Board and the staff thank Annette and Ed for their years of service as Board members. The group had signed a book for each to receive as part of their gratitude.

14. Closing Prayer

Fr. James Cormack led the closing prayer.

Submitted by John Luth
SVdP Council Secretary