



SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME

Council Board Meeting – Minutes

January 23, 2020

4:00-6:25 p.m.

Presiding: Elizabeth Barbieri, President

Present:

- *District Council Presidents:* Jeff Bunten, Ken Gebken, Carole Johnson; via teleconference: Robert Lees (on behalf of Dan Asahl), Jeanette Aubuchon, Bill Blow, Bob Hook, Ernestine Jackson, Wes Karna, Ray Suda
- *Members at Large:* John Fallah, John Luth, Laurie Phillips, Dan Schlafly, Phil Schwab; via teleconference: Michael Kehoe, Rhae Yancey
- *Ex Officio members:* Dave Winslett
- *SVdP staff:* John Foppe, Gena Bast, Ryan Carney, Denise Chachere, Debra Downey, Mike Goering, John Heithaus, Julie Komanetsky, John Walters
- *Guests:* Dianne Marshak

Absent: Judy Belford, Ellen Harshmann, Rev. James Cormack

Quorum: Yes

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Opening Prayer and Spiritual Reflection – John Heithaus

John led the opening prayer.

In a reading from Matthew, John the Baptist was in prison. Jesus told disciples to tell John about Jesus' miraculous works. When we find difficult situations, we should not doubt Jesus' presence and think it all depends on us. We must remain spiritually rooted.

3. Review of Agenda / Any Other Business

Due to the weather situation, presentations from Tamara Kenny and Wes Karna were tabled to a later meeting.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting – approval

The Board approved the previous meeting minutes.

5. Voice of the Poor update – Dianne Marshak

a) 2020 Legislative Expansion

Dianne reviewed the Voice of the Poor Committee's written Recommendations on 2020 Legislative Priorities and Related Works of Interest.

This work is coordinated with other organizations. The recommendations are following the positions of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops and the US Voice of the Poor Committee Council. The committee is working closely with the Missouri Catholic Conference and Catholic Charities. Amber Walsh is an attorney who is reviewing proposed bills to identify how they relate to these priorities.

There was a fair amount of discussion on this subject. Campaigns to gather petition signatures will require some training, organization, and a great deal of work. The committee sent a couple Letters to the Editor, but they have not yet been published. There was a question of how Medicaid benefits would be funded, whether they would be revenue neutral. There were mixed feelings about the use federal tax dollars. There was a question of what impact some legislation could have on those who remarry and on families. Personal visits to legislators in Jefferson City could provide impactful advocacy. Amid these concerns and possible actions, the committee needs the support of the Board.

MOTION: The Board approved the Voice of the Poor Committee's Recommendations on 2020 Legislative Priorities and Related Works of Interest.

b) VOP Committee Charter - approval

MOTION: The Board approved a resolution to establish the Voice of the Poor Committee Charter.

6. Treasurer's Report – Phil Schwab/Debra Downey

a) Q1 Financials – review

Debra and Phil provided highlights from several prepared financial reports. Revenues are favorable as compared to budget. A \$1.5 million bequest, made possible in part by various relationships developed over the years, is helping in this regard. Stores revenue and other contributions are also helping. The added revenue allows for additional program services. A better shared cost allocation with the conferences is now in place. There has been a growing use of conference store vouchers, which supports sales and fosters better relationships.

There was a bit of discussion on the Operational Reserve Ratio. Although its 53% three-year average is close to the red zone, it is still in the green and in a good place. A yellow indicator would suggest hoarding, while the red could indicate a growing

need that calls for more funding. This sort of indicator could be useful for conferences if developed from the CAR reports.

The investment portfolio was valued at \$9.4 million last year. Now it is \$9.2 million despite a \$1.73 million drawdown. It had a 17.36% return.

MOTION: The Board approved the financial report.

b) Audit Committee Charter – approval

This new committee will provide important financial oversight. Bill Kruse will be the chair. Laurie Phillips and Pat Lyons will be members.

MOTION: The Board approved a resolution to establish the Audit Committee Charter.

7. Executive Director’s Report – John Foppe

a) Cool Valley Purchase – approval

Following previous Board approval and a taskforce’s unanimous recommendation, there is now an option to proceed with the purchase of this property. Several steps have brought the original \$1.5 million sales price down to \$1.375 million. There would also be up to \$240,000 of build out expenses and about \$200,000 of roof repairs in the first year. If all proceeds as planned, the trucking operation would be in place by March, by-pound sales under way by May, and the Distribution Center in place this fall. There is a positive relationship with the City of Cool Valley. There are no municipal restrictions. Annual \$15,000 PILOT payments will help the city. A peak 40-60 new jobs will help the local economy. The overall operation will be very supportive of the Stores program throughout the region.

MOTION: The Board approved a resolution authorizing the Executive Director to sign the purchase agreement for the property located at 1225 S. Florissant Road, Cool Valley, Missouri for the cash amount of \$1,375,000.

b) Q1 Strategic Progress – report

John Foppe covered highlights of this written report. John reports that he is humbled by the volume of work in support of the strategic goals. He lauds all who are involved. A thank-you letter from the St. Anthony Food Pantry expressed gratitude for years of past support and thoughtful assistance in their transition to a new business structure.

The Board packet included information on the 175th anniversary of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in the United States. There is a great deal of activity planned

for this year. Cardinal Dolan will be in town to help celebrate this milestone. There will be much more information to follow.

HOLD THE DATE: The St. Louis Spring Assembly 2020 will be on Saturday, March 14, 2020, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., at St. Louis University High School, 4970 Oakland Avenue. Father Paul Hoelsing, Vice Rector for Formation at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, will be the keynote speaker. Admission will be free. Mass will be celebrated. Breakfast and lunch will be offered.

8. Development Report – Ryan Carney

a) Q1 report & Board annual responsibilities & appeal packet

Ryan reviewed the written Development Report. There is positive direction in major gifts, direct response, grants, and planned giving. A recent \$1.5 million bequest is very significant.

Ryan also discussed the packet provided to every Board member. Each person is kindly asked to provide timely response with their annual personal gift, Board matrix survey, Conflict of Interest Questionnaire, and affirmation of the Board Member Job Description and Performance Expectations.

b) Conference Grant Policy revision – approval

This is a commonsense update to the policy. It still constitutes a legal agreement, but the revision provides a more decentralized, subsidiary approach. The update also includes some minor changes to the terminology for the sake of consistency.

There was a question about existing conferences receiving their own grants. By this policy, that should not happen. Grants should follow various levels of review and approval, including the Council Office.

MOTION: The Board approved a resolution updating the District and Conference Grant Program. The update included a requirement to include the district president in the review and approval.

9. Vincentian Services report – John Heithaus

a) Crisis Pregnancy Support Initiative resolution - approval

Women who are pregnant can face financial concerns. They might need emotional and other types of support. Conferences might not be able to respond fast enough. This initiative is intended to help address this need.

There was a question of whether this program amounts to too much mission creep in that it might not involve person-to-person contact. This program does not replace

work of the conference; it supplements that work. It moves selected Vincentians to the role of Life Coordinators, to help the pregnant women and mothers directly.

MOTION: The Board approved a resolution to form a Crisis Pregnancy Support Initiative. It included replacing the phrase “encouraged to volunteer” with “recruited and trained to function.” It also included support after birth.

10. Housing Taskforce update – Laurie Phillips

The Housing Taskforce was formed in October. It held two meetings so far. The team is looking at a pilot program to bring about systemic change. It will involve education and planning. Selected Vincentians would have heavier involvement, working with case workers and neighbors who fit the program. The arrangement would rely on a decentralized network throughout the area. In a limited number of months, the partnership ideally would help the neighbor become self-sufficient and avoid chronic dependency. It would bypass relatively long backlogs that some agencies have. The pilot would start in one area, perhaps involving a \$300,000 annual investment to help 20-25 households. Then it can expand from there.

This is an initial report. More will come in the April update.

11. Disaster Committee – John Heithaus

a) Charter – approval

Annette Bligh has been leading this effort. There are many examples of how this group has responded quickly to provide aid to neighbors affected by disaster.

MOTION: The Board approved a resolution to establish the Disaster Committee Charter.

12. Stores report – John Foppe

a) Store Committee Charter – approval

The Council is very fortunate to have a strong Stores operation. The voucher program is very effective. Vincentians are very well involved. Board engagement and oversight are very important.

Judy Belford would chair this new committee. The committee should look at the operation and provide advice, support, and oversight to ensure that the program is helping neighbors in need, making recommendations to the Board as appropriate.

MOTION: The Board approved a resolution to establish the Stores Committee Charter.

13. Secretary's report – John Luth

The Board has taken three actions by unanimous written consent since the last meeting:

- Homeless and Housing Resolution, with unanimous vote as of October 25, 2019
- Twinning to the El Paso Council, with unanimous vote as of November 12, 2019
- Automobile Allowance, with unanimous vote as of November 22, 2019

To date, there have been several nominations for the next three-year term of the Board president, which starts October 1. Elizabeth Barbieri is the only individual who has submitted the required Autobiographical Statement and Platform Statement. Nominations are closed as of February 1. The District presidents will then be asked to solicit feedback from their conferences before their vote on March 12. Elizabeth and any other applicant will address the presidents and entertain questions. Even if there is only one candidate, the process still requires a yes/no vote.

14. Other Business

All packets will be mailed to Board members who were not able to attend in person.

15. Human Resources – Denise Chachere

a) Employee Handbook – approval

This update is addressing a variety of concerns. It includes a Severance policy to address an earlier request from the Board.

There was a question of whether the standard of conduct policy would be too vague, leading to arbitrary and inconsistent actions among local leaders. Denise stated that the coordination through the central group, coupled with specific potential infractions, has worked in very large organizations, and it would work for SVdP.

MOTION: The Board approved changes to the Employee Handbook.

b) Executive Session

The Board entered an Executive Session to review the performance and salary of the Executive Director, John Foppe. The Board voted to give him a salary increase.

16. Closing Prayer

Elizabeth Barbieri led the closing prayer.

Submitted by John Luth
SVdP Council Secretary