



SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME

Council Board Meeting – Minutes

April 23, 2020

2:00-3:50 p.m.

All attended via teleconference.

Presiding: Elizabeth Barbieri, President

Present:

- *District Council Presidents:* Dan Asahl, Jeanette Aubuchon, Judy Belford, Bill Blow, Ken Gebken, Bob Hook, Ernestine Jackson, Carole Johnson, Wes Karna, Raoul Robichaux (on behalf of Jeff Buntten), Ray Suda
- *Members at Large:* John Fallah, Ellen Harshmann, Michael Kehoe, John Luth, Laurie Phillips, Dan Schlafly, Phil Schwab, Rhae Yancey
- *Ex Officio members:* Rev. James Cormack, Dave Winslett
- *SVdP staff:* John Foppe, Gena Bast, Ryan Carney, Denise Chachere, Debra Downey, Mike Goering, John Heithaus, Julie Komanetsky, John Walters

Absent: None

Quorum: Yes

1. Opening Prayer

Fr. James Cormack led the opening prayer.

It is important to remain hopeful in difficult times. Now more than ever, I need to do my best and give the best I can. I leave it in God's hands.

2. Review of Agenda/Any Other Business

No additions

3. Secretary's Report – John Luth

John provided a written review of the various actions that the Board and the Executive Committee have taken since the last meeting.

The Board approved the previous meeting minutes.

4. Finance Report – Phil Schwab/Debra Downey

a) Investment Policy revision regarding BDF – Approval

Phil reviewed proposed changes to the policy. The majority of the Board Designated Funds will now be invested in a conservative short-term portfolio. This approach will reduce the risk of loss given that the Council may have to sell a portion of the portfolio on relatively short notice. There is also an interest to eliminate the use bond funds, switch to a ladder bond portfolio, and discuss the Catholic Values approach to investing.

MOTION: The Board approved the Investment Policy dated April 23, 2020.

b) 2nd Quarter Financials – Approval

Debra reviewed the financials for the quarter ending March 31. The investment portfolio took a hit this quarter. Program Services provided \$2 million so far this fiscal year. There have been 2,378 conference store vouchers in the first six months, which was outpacing last year's volume. Stores were running ahead of budget through the second quarter, but April will have no revenue. Contributions were running ahead of budget by more than \$400,000.

Presently, the Operating Reserve percentage equals about 1.5 months of Operating Expense.

The Paycheck Protection Program is now funded for \$1 million. Most of that amount will go toward employee salaries and wages. It must be spent in eight weeks. After six months the loan will be forgiven.

The approach for the next six months will have to shift. There will be more of a focus on food assistance, utilities, and community services.

MOTION: The Board approved the financial report.

c) Audit – Approval

Debra reviewed highlights of the audit. The auditors found that the Society's financial statements present the financial position fairly and in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The comparative statements for 2018 are consistent with previously audited information.

Although this year's audit found no material weaknesses, it did identify two deficiencies. The auditors recommended a project to dive into the method of accounting for the conference credits. The result will be that the accounts should be easier to reconcile between the conferences and the Council office. There was

also a recommendation to value donated Store inventory at the time of receipt. This latter item will be alleviated with the new centralized processing.

MOTION: The Board approved the Consolidated Financial Statements and Independent Auditors' Report for the Year Ended September 30, 2019, by Anders CPAs + Advisors.

5. Executive Director's Report – John Foppe

This past month included approvals to spend \$250,000 in Disaster Funds plus \$50,000 in rural areas to help with more urgent needs. A combined \$132,000 has been distributed to date. Food pantries continue to operate, but there are some supply and accessibility issues. Stores remain temporarily closed. They are not receiving donations other than what people leave in the blue donation boxes. Construction for the Cool Valley Thrift Outlet has begun, with a targeted opening in early June. Development includes a \$2 million pledge from a major donor, to be spread over ten years, and increased direct mail activity. A new television spot provides the Society good visibility to the community for its mission and fundraising. The pandemic has brought a great deal of new activity for Human Resources and Finance as well. Conferences are reporting new needs mostly due to job loss. Conferences receive coaching from various sources, including regular outreach from Vincentian Services.

6. May Plan – John Foppe

It is very inspiring how Vincentians are trusting in Divine Providence and keeping their commitment alive.

Operations in May 2020 will pivot to respond to shifting demands of the Society and the community with subsequent stages of the pandemic. St. Vincent de Paul is an essential business. The greatest underlying challenge is to balance our neighbors' needs versus potential risk to people's health and safety. The plan includes many details across the departments, all moving forward with various changes. A phased reopening of the Council Office starting May 4 will include various criteria and responsibilities. Changes to conference meetings, home visits, and other activities will come in time, given various criteria.

The phased-in reopening of the Stores by May 4 received a great deal of discussion and some pushback. Some on the Board questioned whether that would be too soon. There was concern that masks and gloves might not be worn properly. Testing and screening would be of concern. Different information sources sometimes conflict as to the extent of infection. There was a request to see more detailed data.

Various detailed activities address the concerns. The health and safety of everyone involved is of paramount concern. A Thrift Store Health and Safety Opening Plan includes various steps to keep employees and customers safe, all based on CDC guidelines. The Council office is monitoring Health Department information daily. There will continue to

be guidance from government agencies, other non-profit partners, and the National SVdP. It is recognized that the number of cases must come down in the Metropolitan area, particularly in St. Louis County, before local stores reopen. Stores employees continue to demonstrate strong dedication as they prepare for an overwhelming call for help from neighbors in need. The plan outlines steps to take if anyone becomes infected. If need be, any part of the operation can be pulled back on short notice.

John Foppe is taking all these concerns under advisement. Flexibility and careful deliberation are key. John will provide weekly updates and weigh all aspects before he proceeds with reopening. For now, the tentative plans remain low-key. There will be a public announcement only once the Stores are reopened.

MOTION: The Board approved the Council Operational Plan Through May 31, 2020.

7. Other Business

This coming Sunday, April 26, is the Feast Day of our founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam. Fr. Cormack will celebrate a special Ozanam Sunday Mass via livestream at 9:00 a.m.

It was noted that 175 years ago, newly formed Vincentians were dealing with a cholera pandemic. They prevailed in doing the Lord's work, and we will as well.

8. Closing Prayer

Fr. James Cormack led the closing prayer.

Submitted by John Luth
SVdP Council Secretary