



SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME

Council Board Meeting – Minutes

July 23, 2020

4:00-6:35 p.m.

All attended via teleconference.

Presiding: Elizabeth Barbieri, President

Present:

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

Absent: Michael Kehoe, Rhae Yancey

Guests: Dianne Marshak, Gary Volk, Deb Zabloudil

Quorum: Yes

1. Opening Prayer

Fr. James Cormack led the opening prayer.

2. Spiritual Reflection/Mission Moment – John Fallah

John reflected on a story of a man helping a blind woman in need. She asked, “Are you Jesus?” When was the last time someone confused you for Jesus? Jesus said that if you seek Him with all your heart, you will find Him. Darkness is the absence of light. Practice a *radical relation* with the truth. We need to be in sync with our faith.

3. Review of Agenda/Any Other Business

No additions

4. Secretary's Report – John Luth

a) Minutes of Previous Meeting – approval

The Board approved the previous meeting minutes.

b) Executive Committee actions

On June 25, 2020, the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors approved a revised FY2020 budget deficit of \$3.8 million, with \$2.8 million funded as Board Designated Fund expenses and \$1 million of remaining operational deficit being funded by the Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loan.

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

a) Q3 Financials – review

Debra reviewed the YTD Dashboard and several financial reports. As of June, the Council provided \$2.7 million in client assistance. The PPP loan will be accounted as a liability until it is forgiven, which should be before the end of the fiscal year. The rules are somewhat obscure, and there are concerns, but nevertheless there is an expectation the loan will be forgiven. Shortened Stores hours affected the financials. The Bed program's Cost of Sales is up due to COVID-related surcharges from the manufacturer. Strategic Initiatives will be re-budgeted given there will be no National Convention. Marketing costs are up \$130,000 YTD. These are accelerated costs within the annual budget.

Phil provided an Investment Report. The current balance in the Investment Account is \$7 million. It was \$9 million as of January 1. There were \$1.9 million in withdrawals plus a market decline of more than \$789,000. The Council has \$1.5 million in Treasury Bills, \$500,000 in a 2-year Treasury note, and \$3.3 million in a Money Market account. About 20% of the portfolio is invested in Catholic Value investments. This is a start to see how they perform.

The Board approved the Q3 Financial report.

b) Ballwin Store lease renewal – Debra Downey/John Walters

This store's lease is due for a five-year renewal. The monthly payment will increase \$2,187.50. This increase raised some concern among the Board, asking if there are alternatives in today's commercial Real Estate market. Moving the store has not been considered, due in part to the attention focused on the new Cool Valley store. The Ballwin store has good sales and donations. Turnover is low. There are no concerns the store will absorb the increase. This store is a showcase for National.

MOTION: The Board approved a resolution to renew the lease for the Ballwin thrift store at 13986 Manchester Road, Ballwin, Missouri.

6. Executive Director's Report – John Foppe

a) Pandemic – report

John reviewed the written report. John is grateful and proud of the team, especially considering all the challenges and unknowns. There are achievements and challenges among the Programs and Partnerships, Vincentian Services, and Finance. The Board complemented John and the staff on the great work all around.

b) Diversity and Inclusion – discussion

John reviewed his written report on “Considerations for SVdP Response to Racial Disparities.” Underlying reasons are included in the WHY statement, “To seek and serve all in need, so that people are inspired to grow closer to Christ.” We are people who should promote human dignity and foster a civilization of love. We can impact many. John outlined various possible activities that can provide the framework for an action plan. He recommends the formation of a Board Task Force to coordinate these activities and promote human dignity and flourishing. Leaders go first.

7. Housing Committee report – Laurie Phillips/ Julie Komanetsky

a) Housing Program/Partnership w/ St. Patrick Center – discussion

Laurie and Julie provided highlights of a written report. There is a considerable problem. Vincentians are looking for help. A partnership with the St. Patrick Center can be very effective. Vincentians can provide neighbors the needed coaching, mentoring, shoulder to cry on, friendship, and encouragement to take the necessary steps. The St. Patrick Center can provide processes and expertise. The partnership can provide help much faster than the government. The ultimate goals include sustainable and stable arrangements for the neighbors in need.

The report generated a great deal of discussion. Value will come from systemic change through professional support and structure. There is an urging to give the goals and evaluation processes careful attention. Individual conferences will need to decide their own financial participation. Ideally each case will have a diminishing need as time moves ahead, with neighbors heading to permanent housing. Program expenses will cover the salary for a St. Patrick Center employee. The initial pilot will be in the St. Louis area, but there is a need in all Districts. The Council will proceed in this program with eyes wide open. There is a lot to consider. There will be more to report in the September Board meeting.

8. Servware Conference database report – Gary Volk

Gary covered highlights of a written report. The Servware system is deployed in 41 conferences, with good continuing progress. This system will bring better communication among Vincentians and conferences.

9. Marketing and Communications report – Gena Bast

a) TV spots

Various spots on television, radio, and Spotify are raising visibility for SVDP. This is part of the 175th Year campaign. Kudos to Gena for a very well-run program.

10. Stores Committee report – Carole Johnson

Carole reviewed highlights of a written report. The Board approved the formation of a Stores Committee in January. The committee has met twice. The Stores are a big part of the Council's operations. There are many positives in the Store operations. Using E-bay to sell antiques and expensive furniture has brought positive results. The committee is asking for any questions, comments, or concerns.

11. Governance Committee – John Luth

a) Board survey feedback – review

John covered highlights from the printed survey results. Overall results were very positive. Board diversity and inclusiveness was one area that showed a negative Net Promoter Score. Individual participation had less-positive feedback regarding the orientation, fundraising, community communications, and strategy planning. There were many very good written comments, with frequent mention of *mission, services, need, member, district president, discussion, time, and resolution*.

To help foster discussion in the meetings, the goal is to send out a meeting reminder and draft agenda two weeks before the Board meeting. John Foppe provides all materials within his purview one full week in advance for Board members to have time to review. Let John know if you are not receiving the material.

12. Disaster Committee – Annette Bligh

This committee provided a written report. The team is working on a plan to respond to a natural disaster amid a pandemic.

13. Voice of the Poor – Dianne Marshak / Deb Zabloudil

Dianne and Deb provided highlights of a written report. There is interest in providing a low-interest micro-lending program for neighbors in need as an alternative to high-interest payday loans. The committee is looking at programs in other parts of the country. Deb works with a model program in Columbus, Ohio. The team is getting interest from some local financial institutions. SVDP would secure the loans. Proper vetting will be key to a low default rate. Participants will need to have steady income and a monthly plan. Priorities of the committee can help educate people regarding the relationship between marriage and poverty, help end systemic racism, and address affordable housing.

14. Other Business

There was an expression of support for Medicaid expansion in the upcoming election.

Thanks for the prayers for Bob Hook's son, who had a successful surgery.

15. Closing Prayer

Elizabeth Barbieri led the closing prayer.

Submitted by John Luth
SVdP Council Secretary