SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME

Council Board Meeting – Minutes

September 24, 2020

4:00-5:50 p.m.

This meeting was held at the Cool Valley Facility, 1225 South Florissant, St. Louis, Missouri. Some attended via teleconference, as indicated.

Presiding: Elizabeth Barbieri, President

Present:

- *District Council Presidents:* Dan Asahl, Bruce Gallion (proxy for Bob Hook), Ernestine Jackson, Carole Johnson, Wes Karna, Ray Suda; *via teleconference:* Judy Belford, Bill Blow, Jeff Bunten, Ken Gebken
- *Members at Large:* John Fallah, Ellen Harshmann, John Luth, Bernie Sammons; Phil Schwab; *via teleconference:* Michael Kehoe, Laurie Phillips, Dan Schlafly
- *Ex Officio members:* Rev. James Cormack; *via teleconference:* Dave Winslett
- *SVdP staff:* John Foppe, Ryan Carney, Denise Chachere, Debra Downey, John Heithaus, Julie Komanetsky, Steve Poppe, John Walters; *via teleconference:* Gena Bast

Absent: Jeanette Aubuchon, Rhae Yancey

Quorum: Yes

1. **Opening Prayer**

   Fr. James Cormack led the opening prayer.

   The reflection was on wisdom. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" We should not be too self-absorbed. God is faithful.

2. **Review of Agenda/Any Other Business**

   No additions

3. **Secretary's Report – John Luth**

   a) Minutes of Previous Meeting – approval

      The Board approved the previous meeting minutes.

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

a) FY2021 Financial Plan Summary and Year-end Financial Forecast – review

Debra provided highlights of the report. The forecast is on target. Forgiveness of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan is in the FY2020 forecast.

The Board approved the Q3 Financial report.

b) FY2021 Budget – approval

The 2021 forecast anticipates a high demand for Vincentian Services and an increase in Disaster relief. There will be more support for Districts and Conferences. Payroll will have a $125,000 added cost from minimum wage increases. The Stores will have some Capital expenditures. The plan anticipates strong income from the Development and Stores programs. In net, the 2021 budget will have a $2.9 million deficit, funded by Board Designated Funds (BDF), per policy. Operations are projecting a $34,800 overage.

The Finance Committee has reviewed the plan thoroughly.

There were several questions about the plan. Expenses from the Housing program are not yet in the budget. That would be funded by BDF. The 26 employees mentioned in the report will be a mix, some for the outlet store and some relocated from existing stores to the Processing Center.

There was a question why BDF dollars are accounted separately. The BDF dollars come from bequests, which are uncertain and can vary significantly year to year. The BDF is a special account used to help fund various programs. The District Presidents and certain committees determine how to allocate the funds.

Investments are somewhat liquid so they can be readily available to fund programs on short notice. Catholic Value investments are 12% of the portfolio and performing in line with the market.

RESOLUTION: The Board approved the FY2021 Financial Budget.

c) St. Ann Store lease renewal – Mike Goering

This store is very viable for the future. It is strong financially and growing. It is advancing the mission with vouchers, and it is strong in donations. It is in a very good location. There is strong leadership and a good team. Increases in the lease expense will be covered by income.

RESOLUTION: The Board approved renewal of the lease for the St. Ann Store located at 10585 St. Charles Rock Road, St. Ann, Missouri.

5. Executive Director's Report – John Foppe

a) FY2020 Ends Policy/Pandemic report

John reviewed the written report, highlighting achievements and challenges across the departments. In 2020 we are experiencing an epic year. There have been 875 COVID-related requests and nearly 4,000 disaster food vouchers. Julie and the team have been busy responding. Home visits remain on hold, which is raising concern that some may lose their focus. The future effects from evictions are unknown, and the Council is monitoring the situation. Vincentian Services continues to offer programs for growth and development despite losing in-person contact. The $1.2 million PPP loan helped cover expenses while the Stores were closed. Marketing & Communications is doing well to execute its strategy for the 175th Anniversary campaign. Frequent communication is helping to maintain stakeholder input. Development has had another record year. Appreciation goes out to the donors. The Stores operation has reopened ten stores following various safety protocols. Sales remain strong. Recruitment has continued to be a challenge, but turnover remains within the goal. Human Resources is doing an admirable job despite changing regulations.

b) FY2020 Strategic Scorecard

The FY2020 Strategic Priorities Scorecard should have a correction. The Overall score is actually 86%, not the 74% shown. Leadership is very satisfied considering the challenges in place.

There were several questions about the report. Donations at the parish level are captured in the CAR reports. Although some Conferences always struggle financially, many have healthy balances. There are grants and other funds available to help. The CDC does have authority to prohibit evictions temporarily, citing the public health risk. There are various stipulations involved. Within the staff, more than half of the promotions are for female and minority co-workers. The United Way is following new criteria and rules. The effect is unknown at this time.

Overall, the Board expressed congratulations for strong results. Achievements are amazing. The leadership team should be commended for responding above and beyond.

6. Housing Committee report – Laurie Phillips/ Julie Komanetsky

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

Laurie reviewed highlights of the proposal. The program will be responding to issues that Vincentians are seeing. It is intended to bring sustainable change. Providing rent is relatively easy, while case management and ongoing support can be much more challenging. Vincentians have provided a lot of input to the development of this program. They will be connected to neighbors in need with coaching and mentoring. St. Patrick's Center will provide the case management, job development, and related support. The $80,000 for case management would cover one staff person, along with transportation, benefits, phone, computer, and various administrative expenses. This is a one-year pilot to make sure the program works. The first year would require zero financial support from the Districts. Conference financial support for rent and utilities is the sort of assistance that would happen anyway, but the proposal reflects it tapering off during the year for individual cases.

There was some generally positive feedback, and Board members had a few questions. The projected average of just over $11,000 per family across a three-year period would seem like a low cost to get someone established. A pilot could fail due to financial challenges or external factors. While the program is starting in the St. Louis area, the goal will be to expand it to rural areas that have need. This first year will be an opportunity to monitor the need throughout the Council. Numbers in the three-year projection can change. There is a notable expense for case management because the program is looking to move beyond direct assistance that Vincentians can offer on their own. Most Vincentians have limited knowledge about all the available services. Case management can help address that aspect. The National Council promotes systemic change, and collaboration such as this can help. The goal is to help neighbors in need move out of poverty.

RESOLUTION: The Board approved the Rapid Rehousing Program Pilot and instructed the Council Office to orchestrate a Memorandum of Understanding with St. Patrick Center for the first year in the amount of $240,000.

7. Marketing and Communications report – Gena Bast

a) TV spots

The goals include increased general visibility, donations, and shopping in Stores. There are spots on radio, television, streaming services, and social media.

The Board recognizes these are very good communications for the Society.

8. **Stores Committee report – Carole Johnson / John Walters**

   This was a written report.

9. **Disaster Committee – Annette Bligh**

   a) Committee Charter revision

      The committee had provided a written report.

      There was discussion that there are sometimes multiple requests for aid. The committee should be able to approve the allocation of BDF funds up to certain limits. There was a feeling that a committee chair should not be able to approve expenditures alone, and the Executive Director should be part of the process, as provided by existing policy.

      RESOLUTION: The Board approved a revised Disaster Committee Charter. It included provisions for Disaster Fund expenditures also to be pre-approved by the Executive Director.

10. **Voice of the Poor – Dianne Marshak**

    This was a written report.

11. **Other Business**

    Fr. Cormack will be transitioning off the Board. A great deal of gratitude goes to Father for all his spiritual guidance and dedication over the years. The prospective new Spiritual Director is from Kenya. He has not yet arrived in the United States. Pending his arrival and the Archbishop's appointment, he would move to this role. He is hoping eventually to bring SVdP programs back to Kenya.

    Bob Hook is finishing his term as President of the Festus District. Thanks to Bob for all his contributions and leadership.

    Best wishes to Fr. Cormack and Bob Hook. The Board gave small gifts to both.

    John Foppe and Elizabeth Barbieri will be meeting with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

12. **Closing Prayer**

Submitted by John Luth
SVdP Council Secretary