



SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME

Council Board Meeting – Minutes

July 29, 2021

1:00-4:15 p.m.

This meeting was held at St. Bridget of Kildare, 223 West Union Street, Pacific, Missouri. Some attended via teleconference, as indicated.

Presiding: Elizabeth Barbieri, President

Present:

- *District Council Presidents:*
Dan Asahl, Judy Belford, Jeff Bunten, Bruce Gallion, Ken Gebken, Ernestine Jackson, Carole Johnson, Wes Karna, Ray Suda
- *Members at Large:*
Ellen Harshmann, John Luth, Bernie Sammons, Phil Schwab; *via teleconference:*
Dan Schlafly
- *Ex Officio members:*
Fr. Mark Pranaitis; *via teleconference:* Dave Winslett
- *SVdP staff:*
Gena Bast, Denise Chachere, Debra Downey, John Fitzpatrick, Mike Goering, Julie Komanetsky, Steve Poppe, Barry Schoedel

Absent: Jeanette Aubuchon, Bill Blow, John Fallah, Michael Kehoe, Rhae Yancey, John Foppe

Guests: Debbie Ahart, Jim Bornholdt, Carolyn Hanneken, Ginger Karna, Loretta Kipper, Tom McQuiggan, Sue Riemann, Frank Stockell, Kathleen Suda

Quorum: Yes

1. Opening Prayer

Elizabeth Barbieri led the opening prayer.

2. Mission Reflection – Fr. Mark Pranaitis

We deal with many changes of heat and cold, back and forth. When it comes to our spirituality, we need to make up our minds to follow the Lord more closely. We pray that we will work together to make the world more of what the Lord wants it to be.

The Board, Staff, and guests participated in an exercise to share their personal answers to the question, “Why do you care?”

3. Motion to approve the Consent Agenda

- a) Minutes of Previous Meeting
- b) Stores Committee report
- c) Voice of the Poor Committee report
- d) Disaster Committee report
- e) Governance Committee report
- f) Development Committee report

The Board approved the minutes and various reports by consensus.

4. Decisions to be made

- a) Treasurer’s report – Debra Downey and Phil Schwab

The Council is very blessed with strong revenue from Development and the Stores. Investments are doing very well, above margins.

The Bed program continues to be placed on hold, as approved by District Presidents, in order to help focus more on rent and utility support. There have been variances in payroll due in part to challenges to reach full staffing in the Stores in the past. Employees are opting more to family coverage benefits than they have in the past. There is now more of an impact with outside services, including the partnership with the St. Patrick’s Center. Some repairs at Stores had been delayed from 2020. The eviction moratorium ends next week, and its impact is not yet known.

There was some discussion regarding a proposed \$20,000 for a facilitator for Strategic Planning. Some felt that is a relative sizeable amount of funds that perhaps could be better used for other purposes. Perhaps there is enough talent in-house or from those who could volunteer such a service. On the other hand, a hired professional might provide better quality, particularly in getting everyone’s input and dealing with conflicts. The upcoming Strategic Plan will be more of an iteration as opposed to starting from scratch, so perhaps a service could be scaled down accordingly. The Strategic Planning Steering Committee, Finance Committee, and Staff can take these thoughts under advisement as the next proposed budget is developed.

The total investment portfolio is \$7.4 million. That is comprised of \$3.8 million in Board Designated Funds (BDF), \$1.4 million in three endowments, and \$2.2 million in the Investment account. The BDF is as liquid as possible in anticipation of upcoming spending. The Investment account is 100% in equities in order to bring the overall portfolio to about 50% in equities and 50% in fixed income. The equity investments are about 67.5% Catholic-based investments, which have performed well this year, better than the S&P 500. The Board should keep in mind that based on the current

spending rate, if there were no additional significant bequests, the BDF funds will be depleted in about 2.5 years.

The Board approved the FY2021 Q3 Financial statement by consensus.

5. Information for Board Members

a) Executive Director Strategic Progress report – Julie Komanetsky

Julie reported on behalf of John Foppe.

The First Letter of Peter says that we should each use the gifts that we have received. John has built a talented and skilled leadership team that is using their various gifts.

The Stores are doing very well with continued strong sales. The Cool Valley location is processing donations from several stores and supporting more stores as they add staff. There have been challenges in finding qualified staff, but the HR operation is using various strategies to address the need. There are various options under consideration for the Lemay Store. The Marketing & Communications operation is doing a great job in supporting various other departments in various ways. Development is doing very well. Finance has a small team but is doing a lot to support Neighbors in Need, Stores, and payroll. Steve Poppe supports the operations in various ways. Barry Schoedel is very effective in supporting IT operations. The Program and Partnership team is focusing on a variety of needs, including the end of the eviction moratorium, the pregnancy support initiative, and Rapid Rehousing, which has provided support to 16 families.

There were questions about COVID vaccinations. Vaccinations can be encouraged if neighbors have questions during a home visit. Vaccinations are strongly encouraged among SVdP employees but not required. The vaccines have been promoted more broadly through e-mail and other channels. There were also ideas about possibly providing incentives, such as perhaps store credits. It is notable that of the approximate 300 employees at SVdP, about 25 individuals have been COVID positive at some point.

There is an issue with the Legal Services. Due to a clerical error, this operation was set up as a private foundation instead of a legal charity. The IRS has revoked its tax-exempt status. The Legal Services operation has had limited use. Its board will be checking with Catholic Charities and other avenues as it develops recommendations for how to proceed.

b) Thrift Store bathrooms – Fr. Pranaitis

Restrooms in buildings under the control of SVdP (Thrift Stores) are now labeled with a “Restroom” sign as single-occupancy restrooms, fitted with locks for privacy and safety.

c) St. Joseph Hill Infirmary presentation – Wes Karna

Wes provided an overview of the West District and introduced several of its leaders.

Wes presented an overview of the St. Joseph Hill Infirmary property. There is discussion that it may be offered as a donation to SVdP. Perhaps it could be developed to help address homelessness and the lack of affordable housing. This beautiful site includes various buildings among 30-40 acres of property. Unfortunately, some of the buildings are in disrepair. Issues include a leaking roof, water damage, and asbestos. Renovation costs could be considerable. The costs to operate a shelter for the homeless are unknown. There may be need for a permanent staff. There may be an opportunity to partner with the St. Patrick's Center to talk about operations, how to transition families, and many other dynamics. Perhaps there could be revenue that helps offset operating costs by renting the space as a retreat house or for conferences.

One idea is to determine if the site could be acquired on short order, take time to evaluate the future prospects, but then sell the property if it didn't all work out. On the other hand, there is an understanding that the existing owners are interested in donating the property only if it will in fact be used to help others, not just sold to turn a profit.

There was consensus that Staff could work with a committee of various experts to look further. In several ways this could be similar to the task force approach that was taken to evaluate the Cool Valley acquisition and development. It should involve a business case, operational considerations, risks, and mitigation steps that may be needed. An evaluation should also consider the prospective recipients, whether those offered these accommodations in northwest Jefferson County will likely be open to using them.

6. Other business

Please continue to pray for John Foppe as he is recovering from surgery.

Fr. Pranaitis will be celebrating Mass at St. Genevieve Parish in St. Genevieve, Missouri, at noon on August 12.

7. Prayer

Elizabeth Barbieri led the closing prayer.

Submitted by John Luth
SVdP Council Secretary