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

Council Board Meeting – Minutes

January 27, 2022

4:00-6:40 p.m.

This meeting was held at the Provincial Office of the Congregation of the Mission, 3701 Forest Park Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri. Some attended via teleconference, as indicated.

Presiding: Elizabeth Barbieri, President

Present:

- *District Council Presidents:*
  Judy Belford, Jeff Bunten, David Little, Ernestine Jackson, Carole Johnson
  via teleconference: Jeanette Aubuchon, Bill Blow, Bruce Gallion, Wes Karna, Russ Struttmann, Ray Suda
- *Members at Large:*
  Ellen Harshman, Saralou Hendrickson, John Luth, Bernie Sammons, Phil Schwab
  via teleconference: John Fallah, Michael Kehoe, Christine Novalis, Dan Schlafly
- *Ex Officio members:*
  John Foppe, Fr. Daniel Thiess
- *SVdP staff:*
  Debra Downey, John Fitzpatrick, Mike Goering, Steve Poppe

Absent: Dave Winslett

Guests: Fr. Pat McDevitt, Kelly Pingleton

Quorum: Yes

1. **Welcoming remarks – Fr. Pat McDevitt**

   Fr. McDevitt welcomed everyone to the Provincial Office. He introduced his executive team. They moved to the Midtown area this past year in order to be more visible and engaged in the community and the Church. They want to listen to and partner with others. They are open to change in order to find something creative and new.

2. **Introduction of Spiritual Advisor (Fr. Dan Thiess) – Elizabeth Barbieri**

   Elizabeth welcomed Fr. Thiess, who is becoming the Board's new Spiritual Advisor.

3. **Opening Prayer – Elizabeth Barbieri**

   Elizabeth led the opening prayer.

4. **Spiritual Reflection: Fr. Thiess**

   We learn through life's situation. Scripture was fulfilled when Jesus taught in the synagogue, saying that God "has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor." We have learned from St. Vincent, Frederic, and Rosalie to reach out to others and bring good tidings to the poor. We should give of our time, our talent, and our treasure. We should be humble, listen, and be of service. We should give thanks for the gifts we have received. It is a privilege to be with the poor.

5. **Motion to approve the Consent Agenda**

   a) Minutes of Previous Meeting
   b) Voice of the Poor Committee report
   c) Disaster Committee report

   The Board approved the minutes and reports.

6. **Decisions to be made**

   a) Introduction and approval of new Board members (Saralou Hendrickson, Christine Novalis, and Fr. Thiess) – Elizabeth Barbieri

      The Board accepted these new Board members by consensus.

   b) Treasurer's report – Phil Schwab and Debra Downey

      This was Debra's last Board meeting. Her last day at the Council office will be February 25. She is leaving for personal reasons. Debra feels a special connection because she and her family were neighbors in need when she was a teenager. Now she is moving onto the next chapter of her life. She will be missed.

      Debra covered highlights of the written financial reports. The first quarter was better than expected financially despite uncertainties. Neighbors in need are receiving additional funding from the government and other sources. The Stores and Development programs are stepping up to the challenge. The Bed program has returned. Conference vouchers are running very strong. All of FY 2021 had just over 2800 vouchers, but the first quarter of FY 2022 alone has had over 1100 vouchers. The business is doing well financially.

      Phil covered highlights of the investment portfolio. *These are updated numbers that Phil provided after the meeting.* UBS Wealth Management manages the four main investment accounts, which total $7.54 million in value. A portion of the portfolio is for BDF, Board Designated Funds. These funds are restricted. They are to be spent to further our mission and are allocated per Board policy. The intent is to spend these funds relatively quickly, with $1.7 million budgeted to be spent on the poor this year. This amount is relatively liquid in order to provide timely access. About 75% of the equity investments are Catholic Value investments. An example is the Ave Maria Growth Fund. This percentage is maximized within the need to diversify the portfolio. The Investment account and the two Endowment accounts have had annual returns of 12-13%. The BDF account has had an annual return of 1.07%. The return for the latter was low because the funds are invested mainly in short term liquid investments.

The Board approved the Treasurer's report by consensus.

c) Development Committee report – Jeff Bunten and John Fitzpatrick

Development dollar amounts were in the printed materials. Development is ahead of budget. Thanks go to the committee and the Board. Time is finite; giving it is incredible. Sharing the good news of the Mission in an authentic message is worth a lot. We also need people's treasure. In the Board members' packets is a letter asking for Board member donations. The goal is to get 100% participation as a sign of solidarity. There is a request to provide three names of prospective donors, individuals or groups. There is also a request to consider an estate gift. Gifts can be designated for a particular program.

John Fitzpatrick thanked Debra Downey for all the assistance she has provided. John mentioned that 87% of donors don't check into details of the organization. They mostly give based on personal relationships.

The Board approved the Development report by consensus.

d) Stores Committee report – Carole Johnson and Mike Goering

Thanks to everyone for their interest in the Stores. Board members are encouraged to shop, volunteer, and donate. The Stores are part of a special works program. The printed reports highlight the value from the Stores, their people, and the funds they help provide. The first quarter sales are higher than plan and higher than the same period last year. Vouchers are up in volume and in value. Neighbors in need receive vouchers from Vincentians and use them to receive goods at the stores. Donations are also up considerably. The operation is short of staff with the pandemic, yet the team is doing a phenomenal job. The Stores have been closed on Sundays and have had shortened hours due to the smaller staff size. There may be interest to have the Stores always closed on Sundays as part of Catholic values. Another effect from the reduced staff size is that the Cool Valley store has not been fully operationalized. It is encouraging however to see an uptick in employee applications.

The Board approved the Stores report by consensus.

Lemay Store: The Lemay Store has been strong in various metrics. Its existing property location is being sold, and SVdP must move out. Although spacious, it has limited access and visibility. A new proposed location will be much better on those latter two aspects. Family Thrift Center is presently at the new location and is leaving on its own volition. The SVdP store will provide shoppers a better experience. Fixtures that are currently in the Family Thrift location will be replaced with fixturing moved from the existing SVdP Lemay store. The Finance Committee has vetted the proposed lease arrangement.

RESOLUTION: The Board approved by consensus a resolution to lease the Lemay store, which is moving to 2500 Lemay Ferry Road, St. Louis, Missouri.

e) Resolution to form a committee to host the 2023 National Assembly – John Foppe

The Board has already approved a proposal to host the National Assembly. The time is approaching to organize the effort. Staff can provide support. This request is to establish a steering committee with Board engagement. Ellen Harshman volunteered to help lead such a committee. This will be a reboot of previous work that involved Anne Kirwan, David Little, and others, particularly several from the Queen of All Saints conference. The upcoming program would not be as large as originally envisioned given that this will not be the 175th anniversary. As the host Council, our work will include liturgy planning, shuttling guests, and hosting a Friday social event. This program will be funded by Board Designated Funds, of which one-third are for strategic initiatives such as this.

RESOLUTION: The Board approved by consensus a resolution establishing the Steering Committee for Hosting the 2023 National Assembly.

f) Governance Committee report – Ellen Harshman

Ellen covered highlights of the written report. The committee has been very busy. The Board survey provided a lot of feedback, particularly highlighting the need to understand better how one should do the job of a Board member. There is a lot of material to help build that understanding. Most is available on-line, such as the Governance videos, and some is available via hardcopy, such as the Governance booklet. An upcoming Governance Seminar will cover Vincentian charism, Governance policies, and Board duties. There will be hand-outs and a quiz to help build understanding. There will be breakfast beforehand and a lunch right after.

SAVE THE DATE: Please plan to attend the Governance Seminar on Saturday, February 19, with breakfast starting at 8:30 a.m. and the program at 9:00 a.m., at the SVdP National offices, 66 Progress Parkway, Maryland Heights.

The Board approved by consensus the Governance report.

g) Strategic Planning Steering Committee report – Ellen Harshman

The Strategic Planning is a work in progress. The written steering committee report, progress report, and draft 2022-2025 plan cover a great deal of activity. Kelly Pingleton helped assemble much of this material with input from Board members and many others. Various items are yet to be reviewed by the Finance Committee. Various minor details, including target dates, can be adjusted. A lot of activity will come from the working groups. Thanks to everyone for their engagement in this process.

RESOLUTION: The Board approved by consensus a resolution approving the draft 2022-2025 Strategic Focus Areas and Strategic Objectives.

7. Information for Board Members

a) Executive Director Strategic Progress report – John Foppe

John covered highlights of the written Q1 Strategic Progress Report. There are a lot of hard-working people bringing exciting results. The team is off to a great start. Highlights are numerous, including: processing over 250 Council Program requests; expansion of the Rapid Rehousing program; support of the Disaster Committee's efforts in Farmington, St. Mary, and Defiance; a forging relationship with St. Louis County Homeless Outreach and area conferences; facilitating the formation of two new conferences; reaching the goal for 139 conferences with ServWare licenses and implementation; 101 Ozanam orientation and Home Visit workshops; Website improvements; a great start in Development, with 345 new donors; good support from the Cool Valley processing center; good planning for the Lemay Store relocation; completion of year-end audit fieldwork; good marketing exposure through Fox2News and the 100 Neediest Cases campaign, among others; 245 annual performance reviews; annual compensation adjustments for market and merit; and transition to a new Human Resource information system. The updated Strategic Plan will be a big area of focus for the future.

8. Other business

Thanks for the Christmas card sent from John and Elizabeth. It was pointed out that although the picture on the back had a mix of men and women, it did not depict racial, ethnic, or age diversity. It is good to be sensitive to people's perceptions when sending materials.

9. Closed Executive Session

The Board entered an Executive Session to review the performance and salary of the Executive Director, John Foppe. The Board voted to increase his compensation package.

10. How did it go?

The consensus was that the meeting went well; we did our best.

11. Closing Prayer

Fr. Thiess led the closing prayer.

Submitted by John Luth
SVdP Council Secretary