

## Parish Council Minutes

January 27, 2009

**Present:** Ken Laczniak, David Brunmeier, Mary Konshak, Renee' Steger, Ed Schwanke, Les Hagensick, Carl Geenen, Debbie Hintz, Pat Lehman, Barb Holt, Ellie Okensari, Curt Arneson

**Opening Prayer** – Ken led the opening prayer.

**Approval of November Minutes** - Mary motioned to approve the November minutes and David seconded the motion.

**Approval of December 15<sup>th</sup> Minutes** – Barb motioned to approve the December 15<sup>th</sup> minutes (see below) and Ken seconded that motion.

A special meeting was held on December 15, 2008 to discuss the recommendation that was coming from the School Study Steering Committee. All Council members were invited to attend. The meeting was attended by our officers: Pat Lehman, Barb Holt and Renee' Steger, and our trustees: Les Hagensick and Ed Schwanke. Debbie Hintz, Parish Director, and Linda Kuhn, Principal, were also in attendance. The recommendation was as follows:

The three parishes of Our Lady of Good Hope, St. Bernadette and St. Catherine of Alexandria form a single Catholic School entity by July 2009 with Our Lady of Good Hope and St. Bernadette each providing facilities for a K-8 school and St. Catherine of Alexandria providing a facility for athletics, as well as studying the feasibility of having day care and a community education center in some of its facilities.

We agreed to support this recommendation, and at the same time, expressed expectations we have for the restructuring. A document was prepared to present to the Steering Committee at their December 17th meeting. That document is entered into these minutes as an attachment.

**Update on Implementation of School Plan** – For the minutes it is noted that the December 9<sup>th</sup> Tri-Parish council meeting was cancelled due to weather. Because of the need for a more immediate decision, a special meeting of our council was then held on December 15<sup>th</sup>. (See above.) Archbishop Dolan has approved the School Study Steering Committee recommendation that the three schools, OLGH, St. Bernadette and St. Catherine be combined to form Northwest Catholic with an east campus at OLGH, a west campus at St. Bernadette and an athletic facility and community education center at St. Catherine. Maureen Gallagher continues to work with us and has been instrumental in helping us to move forward. The priests/parish director will choose the principals at the east and west campuses. They hope to have their selections made by February 15<sup>th</sup>. The archdiocese has recommended that we widen the field rather than make our selection from the three current principals. However, the decision to move ahead in that manner has not yet been made. The principals will then hire the teachers; we are hoping this will

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be done by March 15<sup>th</sup>. The principals have discussed opening the field outside of our current staff when hiring for the two new locations. Many on the parish council are opposed to this; they feel that we owe our teachers some loyalty. However, if some positions are not able to be filled by current staff, then it would be acceptable to widen the field. Registration for next year is currently going on. The teachers and principals have received their non-renewal letters. Debbie feels that St. Catherine school parents and kids are feeling the most up-rooted. There will be a meeting next week between parents and Maureen Gallagher to answer questions about the school merger. The two campus locations were chosen because they were big enough to handle the larger enrollment numbers.

The new budget for the combined schools is in process. The business managers from each parish have met twice and are working with Katie Hoeller from the archdiocesan Finance Office. The consolidation may allow us to add specialized staff. The steering committee continues to meet to discuss issues pertaining to the new school structure. Parent committees will be formed to deal with issues such as uniforms and the formation of a new H&S committee. *What will be the financial responsibility for St. Catherine?* A formula will be developed and recommended by Katie Hoeller and the business managers from each parish. *Who ultimately decides on the formula?* A special school finance committee will be formed. Formulas will be presented to pastors/parish director to be approved; they will be tweaked until all parties approve of the cost sharing formula. It was noted that savings may not be realized in the first year. Undoubtedly unemployment benefits may have to be paid to some of the teachers. Ed felt that this should be charged to Northwest Catholic, not the individual parishes. Others agreed that this would be the way to handle the unemployment benefits. Carl believes we should continuously communicate school merger information with our parishioners. As far as the community education center, Debbie wants to be proactive in getting our building utilized so that it doesn't sit empty. She has contacted Mount Mary and Cardinal Stritch to let them know it is available. Ellie's husband is at Marquette Dental School and Debbie has talked to him too about some possibilities. The goal is to serve our immediate area. *Will the religious education programs for all three parishes be combined?* Debbie noted that communication has not been the best with St. Bernadette RE students, and not due to lack of effort on Nicole's part. She also feels that our staff is too small to lose Nicole if she were to take care of the three parishes RE programs. Nicole is working on a number of activities that involve the youth from all three parishes, for both day school and RE student. Once the community education center is going, we may be able to apply for archdiocesan FIOF grant money to support programs at the center. *Why don't we just subsidize St. Catherine's students to go to St. Bernadette's or OLGH rather than offering a school?* Debbie commented that Archbishop Dolan would like every parish in the diocese, whether they have a school or not, to be supporting Catholic education and regardless of whether we combine schools with OLGH and St. Bernadette's, we would still have an empty school building. We noted that not much feedback has been heard within the parish after the announcement of the school closing. Ed noted that Debbie should be aware of monies in the athletic association and H&S committees. We don't want these funds depleted before the schools combine. Debbie noted that the athletics are already combined into one group and that all three H&S committees are discussing a

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dollar amount to be deposited into a new H&S account for Northwest Catholic. Parish Life, School Committee and Home and School will be working together to plan a parish celebration; we've had a long history of Catholic education at St. Catherine's, since the 1860's.

**Update on FIOF Campaign** - To date, \$302,306 is our current pledge amount. We have received pledges from 245 families which is 38% of our parishioners. Jack, Debbie & Renee' went to a follow up meeting. Our consultants have found that with good follow up we can achieve 95% follow through on pledge amounts. We need to meet to develop a strategy. We will be reviewing roofing prices; with the economy in the shape it is in we may get a better price than anticipated. We will need to decide if we borrow money from savings to do the roof project and repay ourselves as FIOF monies come in.

Archdiocese wide, 42% of parishes have completed the campaign with a total pledge amount of \$56 million.

**Parish Director Report** – Debbie shared an article from the Catholic Herald on the state of the dioceses according to Archbishop Dolan. Nicole is doing a great job with planning family activities. We recently had a movie night that was well attended and game night is this scheduled for this Friday. There will be a 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade dance on Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. She will continue the children's liturgy of the word during Lent. The hope is that eventually it will expand to year round. When Fr. Dick returns he is planning to incorporate the children into the mass by asking them to come around the altar during the Eucharistic prayer. With regard to the RE program, Nicole and Debbie will be meeting with Fr. Al to evaluate our relationship this year.

**Nomination Committee** – The members on the committee are Barb, Mary and David. David will chair the committee. Renee' will email David the documents saved from last year.

**Tri-Parish Council Gathering February 7<sup>th</sup>** - David, Ed, Les were planning to go and will carpool. Pat said she may be able to attend.

### **Committee Reports**

Prayer & Worship – We met on January 6<sup>th</sup> and discussed the Evening of Reflection for all ministries. The turnout was good so we decided to continue this as an annual event. We evaluated the Advent season and Christmas liturgies. Our main focus of the meeting was a review of the usher ministry. This group is in need of additional members as well as fine-tuning of the responsibilities of this ministry. Guidelines will be written. We've set a goal to form two teams for each mass and new members will be recruited and trained along with existing members. Our next meeting is scheduled for February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009 @ 6:30pm.

Human Concerns – The group met on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January. They focused their attention on Lenten giving. The recipients this year of our Lenten giving will be Guest House, Casa Maria, Daystar and Repairers of the Breach and our St. Vincent de Paul. Over the Advent season we collected \$2,450 for the food pantry. We now have plenty of money in

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our account; we are back to making home visits and distributing furniture vouchers. Last night was the meal program. 121 people were served; this is a smaller number probably due to the cold weather. February 9<sup>th</sup> is their next meeting.

School Committee – Their December meeting was cancelled due to weather. In January someone presented information from a recruitment seminar they attended. The proceeds from bingo were \$240. They will be having a Valentine craft night. Catholic schools week is this week. They have decided to continue fundraising until the end of the school year. *Will a parish council liaison be part of the new school committee?* That will need to be determined but it probably will be likely. February 3<sup>rd</sup> is their next meeting.

Finance – As of December we have a \$44,000 deficit. Our next Choice payment will be in at the end of January. David noted that if we remove the school income and expense from the budget we would be \$78,000 in the black. Their next meeting is February 10<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.

Christian Formation – Neither Barb or Ken were able to make the meeting. Their next meeting is scheduled for February 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Stewardship – They met last night. They discussed the need to find new members. Sue is leaving the committee to join the choir. Debbie felt that FIOF strategies should be incorporated into our own stewardship plan. May 31<sup>st</sup> is the annual stewardship commitment weekend. The directory and commitment form were reviewed. They will be making a few changes; the same company will be printing and mailing the booklets. Debbie will check to see if she can get samples of a new directory cover. The Stewardship Corner in the bulletin will begin in February. The monthly articles will highlight an individual from our various ministries. They discussed the possibility of moving away from contribution envelopes to EFTs or monthly statement options. Other parishes will be contacted to see if giving increased when changing to these other methods. The monthly statements would provide the parish with an opportunity to communicate to members on a more regular basis. It is also possible to do a mass email as a way to keep parish members informed. Their next meeting is February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Closing Prayer** – Ken Laczniak led the closing prayer.