

**The Church of St. Mary**  
**Finance Council Minutes**  
**Tuesday, September 17, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Fr. Matthew, Mark Maloney (Trustee-Treasurer), Francie Peterson (Trustee – Secretary), Todd Wentworth (Business Administrator), Leon Breun (pastoral council liaison), Angie Dotty, Janet Schiltgen, Ron Kirscht, and Fr. Dan

ABSENT: Craig Olson, and Tom Klecker

Angie D. called the meeting to order at 4:47 p.m.

Todd W. led us in the opening prayer.

The minutes of the July 30, 2024 meeting were approved as presented.

There was one addition to the agenda under Old/New Business “0. Financial Institutions”

**STANDING BUSINESS**

1. Financial Reports were presented by Todd.
  - Regular sacrificial offerings for July were \$4k favorable to budget and for August were \$18k unfavorable. Year to date offerings are \$14k unfavorable or 4.8% to budget and \$22k behind last year (however last year had 1 more weekend of activity).
  - Significant variances in revenues and expenses were reviewed and discussed.
    - We are down 10 students in the school compared to plan, in large part due to parents deciding to enroll their kids in another school, but they did not inform St. Mary’s. As a result, we were unable to tap into our waitlists as those parents already committed with only a week or two until the start of the school year.
  - The parish paid out over \$12k in cooler/freezer expansion related subcontractor costs in July & August.
  - \$4800 (after \$5000 deductible) was received from our property insurance to cover costs to repair damages to our HVAC system as a result of lightning last fall 2023.
  - Francie moved to accept the financial reports as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ron. Motion carried.
2. Fr. Al Ludwig Benevolent Fund was reviewed. There are no current requests.
3. Facilities Update:
  - The school kitchen cooler-freezer project is complete. Final accounting of the project should be available at the October meeting.

- Church diamond shaped windows – Kevin Becker and Todd continue to work with the HGA architects to identify possible long-term solutions.
  - New permanent crucifix - we have heard back from the Diocesan Building Commission. They recommend that we move toward a suspended crucifix rather than hanging on the brown wall in the sanctuary. We are to keep the building commission informed of our findings as to possibility of suspending the crucifix from the sanctuary ceiling and how does our proposed crucifix relate to the simple but dignified style of the statue in the back of our church. Todd will work with experts, as needed, to assist in making a determination about being able to hang the crucifix in the sanctuary; Fr. Matt will request written approval from Bishop Neary; Janet has agreed to help research the possibility of using her lifts for the project.
  - We received \$4800 from insurance for power surge issues last fall. We were also approved for a new roof on the rectory due to hail damage in the amount of \$33,000, before our \$5000 deductible.
4. Stewardship – We are in the middle of our annual stewardship renewal. Details of the renewal were shared with the council.
  5. Parish Outreach – Committee has not yet met. Howe there have been some minor fundraisers for Life Connections, San Juan Lucas mission in San Juan Mirador, Guatemala, and for the Gutierrez family (Mexico) (extended family member of one of our employees) whose house was destroyed by fire and some members of the family died as a result of the fire.
  6. Parish Raffle – we sold 4,601 tickets, 91 fewer than last year. The Grand Prize winner chose the cash option, but did visit Juettner’s.
  7. St. Mary’s Catholic Foundation – no report, will update in October
  8. St. Mary’s School Trust Fund – No Report, council asked how often they meet. The answer was they meet inconsistently, a few times throughout the year. Recommended that they meet at regular quarterly intervals.
  9. Pastoral Council Update – Fr. Matt provided update from the diocese on ACC work. The diocese has spent the last year meeting with all parishes and ACCs, gathering data from all parishes, and working with consultants to understand our diocese and its parishes. We 131 parishes and 29 ACCs. There are 110k registered Catholics, down from 150k in 2000. There are 29 Catholic schools, 55 active priests. The ratio of priests to parishes is the 4<sup>th</sup> worst ratio in the country. That is a lot of buildings per the # of priests we have serving. The growth and expansion of the Latino population appears to have leveled off. Next steps for the diocese are to determine what to do with this and all the other information they have learned this past year.

#### OLD/NEW BUSINESS

1. The review of financial institutions was tabled until the October meeting.

2. Fair Rental Value of parish provided housing was reviewed. Janet moved to accept the calculation as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mark. Motion carried.
3. A parishioner came forward with the idea of donating a vintage boat to the church to raffle off. Todd stated he reached out to Kim Larson, MN State Gambling Division rep for Douglas County to confirm the limitations of our gambling permit. We do not have room under our \$50,000 annual limit to hold another raffle, so that cannot be an option. The council suggested that if the parishioner would like to make the donation, that they sell the boat and then can donate the cash proceeds after the sale. Todd will reach out to the parishioner.
4. Todd informed the council that the diocese will perform Agreed Upon Procedures at St. Mary's November 21.
5. Todd informed the council that the Board of Education met Tuesday morning, Sept 17, and had discussions regarding the actions and concerns previously brought forth by the finance council, specifically, tuition rates (parishioner vs nonparishioner), consideration of a partial or fully nonrefundable registration deposit, ideas to raise an additional \$65k of annual revenue and support as identified in the 2024-25 annual plan, and consideration of requesting subsidy from parishes whose kids are attending St. Mary's school, yet those parishes receive the Catholic education support as part of the Bishop's Appeal process.
6. An idea was brought up about providing a QR Code available for convenience for people to make an offering. Especially the younger generations use the QR codes regularly and would be a good opportunity for guests and visitors. Several options to consider were shared including, put the QR code in the back of the bulletin where the sponsorships are, included on the inside back where the financial update is reported, put laminated cards in the pew hymnal shelves, create bookmarks for the hymnals that include the QR code and nice stewardship verbiage, paste similar info in the hymnal. No official proposal was made.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Todd Wentworth