

## Minutes of the Zoom Finance Council Meeting – April 17, 2024

The Finance Council of the Divine Grace Parish met for a regular monthly meeting via Zoom on Wednesday, April 17, 2024. The meeting was called to order by Joe Ennis with an opening prayer by Father Jim. Father asked at this time that we keep Father Mark's family in our prayers as his father passed away.

Those in attendance: Father James Wehner, Peter Boyer, Jay Cortez, Felicia DiNardo, Joe Ennis, Daniel Jenkins, Chelsey Knapton, Licia Lentz, Frank Lordi, Kate Maseth-Ready, Michael Powell, Frances Tartal, Andrew Welch.

Excused: Jamie Shearer, Amy Behum

A. Brief Reports and Updates:

1. Father Jim gave an update on our banking situation. It was decided to move the accounts to NexTier Bank, from WesBanco. Father Jim stated he is extremely pleased with how smoothly the transition is going. The process is ongoing, and Father said he hopes it will be completed by the end of May.
2. Father Jim gave an update on the St. Agatha property. Initially, we had an asking price of \$395,000. In the past, we have had several "offers" that fell through. Father said about two weeks ago, an individual called the Diocese direct to make an offer of \$100,000, which is 25% off what we are asking. IF they do make a formal offer, it is the responsibility of the Finance Council to review and offer opinion. While Father is not happy with the \$100,000 "offer" he said the reality is we are losing money on the property. Father noted the property is not on the market on the usual venues...MLS, etc. Daniel asked what the reasoning for that is. The reason is that we cannot discriminate on ANY offers. If someone wanted to turn the facility into an abortion clinic, we cannot prevent that. Father cited the situation with the former St. John the Baptist Church in Lawrenceville, whereby the buyers initially stated they were going to use it for a brewery. They then reneged and turned it into a pub. There is a brew vat where the Tabernacle used to be. We don't want to go through that again. Father mentioned that the Diocese uses Howard Hanna Real Estate.
3. Father Jim gave an update on the Communication position. Father has in place a team for the selection process: Seminarian Erik Pintar, Jamie Shearer, Jason Gawaldo, and Angela Maloney (who performed the analysis/audit of our Communication Department as it currently stands.) The team has narrowed it down to four applicants. We should have this new Director in place in four to six weeks. Father will wait until this person is on board to ascertain whether the current employee has the skills necessary to be a Digital Media Specialist, a position recommended by Angela in the audit process. If not, then the Communication Director will look to hire that person.
4. Father Jim and Joe gave an update on the Appeal. We currently have \$350,000 vs the \$455,000 goal, so we are running a little behind. It was noted that this is only April, and that this is the cash number, not pledges. While we are behind there, John Greci told Father Jim that our Offertory is up 15% from last year.

B. Action Items:

1. The minutes of the March 20, 2024 were approved by Kate Maseth-Ready, and seconded by Joe Ennis.
2. Father Jim and Joe reviewed the 2024 Finance Statements through March. Everything looks in good shape except for a Religious Education \$50,000 variance. This is because we went up to two secretaries from one. All else is in the black. Again noted that the Offertory is up 15%.
3. The 2024-2025 Budget is currently in the works. Last year, Frank simply took all expenses and divided by twelve months, which was okay, as he was a part-time employee and we did not have a Finance Manager in place. John Greci will be doing a month to month analysis and have a draft ready to present to Council at the next Finance Council meeting. The draft needs to be in to the Diocese by the end of May. Father asked that Andrew Welch and Amy Behum advise and work with John during the process. The budget needs to be approved and sent to the Diocese by the end of June. For the first time, we will have a budget that reflects the month to month reality. Joe Ennis asked that John Greci be at the next meeting. Father has confidence that if Andrew and Amy work with John and oversee, it will be ready for Finance Council Approval. Andrew mentioned that he spoke with John Greci today. Father did mention that about 80 to 90% of expenses are fixed costs. New staff, utilities, insurance, have increased approximately 3%. Capital expenditures, e.g. paving, roof, etc. are outside the budget. Francis asked if the Offertory would be phase or straight line, as she noted we have increases and decreases and should be reflected in the Offertory per month. Andrew noted we are now in the black even with unfilled positions. Father Jim commented that we might be breaking even, but he wants to see where we stand balance wise, and not be careless with money. Father said he needs to see what staffing looks like in the budget. Temporalities and Spiritual Committees have needs they would like addressed on the campus...new roof, new organ at St. Ferdinands, etc. They have a list of fifteen items. Ministry and Outreach have limited resources, so at the end of the day, not \$500,000 in the black, as there are enough needs out there.
4. The Rizert Hall analysis was presented by Daniel Jenkins. He said in the prior three years, it has a \$16,000 operating deficit, not including insurance, maintenance staff, etc. The facility sits on one-half acre in Evans City. Realtors have suggested listing at \$200,000, but maybe \$150,000 to \$160,000 is more realistic. We receive \$12,500 per year for a lease from the Butler Council of Aging. We need to be mindful of future capital expenditures. Father asked if perhaps Butler County would want to buy it. Father said the question becomes do we want to alienate the property or find a use for it ourselves. Father noted that the facility is the result of a lot of peoples' money up there, and we have to respect that. The fact is, the hall is \$700 a month in the red. Can we go to the county with a lease increase? Kate mentioned that may be a segway to ask if the County would like to purchase it. Daniel asked if perhaps we may want to "goodwill" it to the County (free) He was met with a resounding no from Council members.
5. Peter Boyer stated he needs direction as to how to proceed with MyCatholicwill.com. The Diocese has pages on development of wills, and has offered to come out to give us a presentation. Father Jim said he feels this should be under one umbrella, and table this topic until over the Summer when we delve into Development/Stewardship. Peter asked for



a time frame commitment of late Summer or Fall. Father stated this should be our next "Big Think" regarding Stewardship/Development and to have the Diocese come in to meet with us.

Kate mentioned a non-agenda item regarding the Festival. This year, we are making a greater effort to attract higher end sponsors; Jamie Shearer has a team in place for this project: Jamie Shearer, Judy Shearer, Steve Carpenter, Kate Maseth Ready. We are asking employed members of all Councils to either ask their employers to sponsor, or to give the team the name of the appropriate person to contact. A plan is in place to send letters, brochures, calls, and in person visits.

Andrew asked about the miracle Father DJ witnessed with the baby that was born stillborn. Father DJ was there to offer his prayers; the parents were not Catholic. After Father DJ performed the prayers, the baby came alive. All involved said that this was medically impossible. Father said that should be a reminder to us of the Light of Christ during this Easter Season

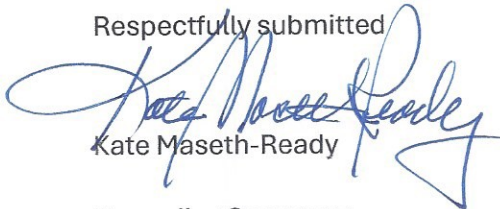
Father noted Holy Redeemer is on schedule; there are eleven contractors on the site. He is hopeful for a Father's Day completion. Father said Holy Redeemer looks like a brand new church!

#### NOTABLE COMMENTS OR ASSIGNMENTS FOR FOLLOW-UP

There being no further business, Father Jim offered a closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 P.M.

The next regular meeting of the Finance Council will be held on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at the Holy Redeemer Campus at 6:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted



Kate Maseth-Ready

Recording Secretary

Approved



Joe Ennis

Vice Chairman