

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COUNCIL MEETING - February 19, 2025

The Finance Council of Divine Grace Parish met for a regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at Saint Gregory's School Library. The meeting was called to order by Jamie Shearer, Chair, with an opening prayer by Father Jim.

Those in attendance: Father James Wehner, Jamie Shearer, Amy Behun, Jay Cortez, Felicia DiNardo, Joe Ennis, Daniel Jenkins, Frank Lordi, Kate Maseth-Ready, Frances Tartal, and Andrew Welch.

Staff attending: Seminarian Chris Baker, Deacon Don Pepe, and John Grenci

Excused: Peter Boyer, Chelsey Knapton, Licia Lentz

A. BRIEF REPORT AND UPDATES:

1. St. Gregory's organ funding and restoration: We currently have cash in hand of \$228,000.00 towards the cost of \$575,000.00. So far, 3,000 pipes have been removed for restoration. Father Jim will be meeting with possible donors. A sixth grader at St. Gregory School donated \$100.00. There is a QR code for pledging for online giving and is being "advertised" in the bulletin.

2. Form A – Sale of St. Agatha School: We have submitted the Form A to the Diocese. They will be setting up the contracts. The realtor will work with the buyer; we anticipate closing in May. The offer was for \$192,000; a fee of 6% is assessed by the realtor. We are also waiting to hear about the proposed \$1.1 million tax assessment that we challenged.

3. The rectory projects at St. Ferdinand's have been submitted and approved; we replaced 20 custom windows. Some were badly leaking, and all were original to the house circa 1950's. So direly needed.

B ACTION ITEMS:

1. The minutes of the January 15, 2025, Zoom meeting were read and approved, with a motion by Joe Ennis, second by Amy Behun and passed by a unanimous voice vote.

2. Review of Finance Statements through January 2025 by Father Jim reflected that we continue to be in excellent financial shape. We have added staff which has created an over budget position, as well as electrical expenses for the harsh winter, and snow removal expenses ...we saw three inches of snow from the past Friday-Saturday days, and safety comes first. Father noted that Jason Gawaldo is now in charge of all Faith Formation Programs and Emma Sbados administrates the children's Faith Formation Program. Rose McGinley will now coordinate the Parish census. We will be in need of an assistant youth ministry director in Ellwood City. The group at St. Ferdinand's has met with great success

with 30 to 50 attending each Monday. Kate Maseth-Ready asked about staff salary increases, and there was a discussion of merit/vs across the board increases. We discussed the need for more Human Resource attention to these matters, such as job descriptions, performance appraisals, etc. Felicia DiNardo and Licia Lentz will be working on further developing clear systems as we move forward. John Greci mentioned a 5% increase across the board would cost approximately \$60,000.00. Father Jim noted that we are continuing to grow our parish, and he is especially pleased with the youth programs focusing on keeping youths and families involved in our Faith.

3. My Catholic Will.com – update by John Greci. The cost to our Parish for this service will be \$1,700.00 a year. There will be no cost to our parishioners to use the online tool. John has had ongoing discussions with the co-founder of MyCatholicWill.com, and is convinced that this is a good program and that the program will serve us well. John has been given the “go ahead” and the information will appear in the bulletin, as well as in flock notes.

4. Parish Appeal 2025: Frances Tartal has written the “script” for Finance Council members to present the weekend of March 1st, and 2nd at all campuses and all masses.

Not on the agenda, but Deacon Don, at the request of the Finance Council, presented a rough draft of a five-year plan. He recommended that we establish a reserve fund and set aside money each year for capital improvements that are needed on our campuses. At the St. Ferdinand’s Campus, a complete renovation at Oldenski hall will run around \$5,000,000. There are monies in the Church Alive Fund to offset some of the cost. He noted that funds contributed in excess of the annual Parish Appeal assessment remain at the Parish; and is why it is important we get active participation for the Appeal.

C. BIG THINK:

1. Budget building Timeline and assignments: We will continue to discuss and start to gather information to submit the budget in a timely fashion to the Diocese.

2. Ritzer Hall: Ritzer Hall is costing the Parish \$20,000.00 a year to maintain. The question becomes, do we sell the property, as we are not in the business to rent property. Father Jim said he would like to have a town meeting to assess the feelings should we continue to move forward with a sale.

3. Father Jim would also like to have a town hall meeting at the St. Ferdinand’s Campus to discuss the ” Church Alive” Funds, and the renovation of Oldenski Hall as well as other expenditures.

D. MOVING FORWARD (FUTURE MEETINGS):


1. Stewardship Initiatives

At this point, Council went into Executive Session for discussion.

There being no further business, Father Jim offered a closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

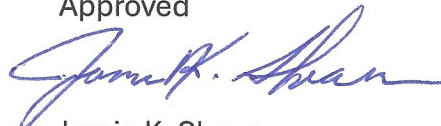
The next regular meeting of the Divine Grace Parish Finance Council will be held on Wednesday, March 19th, 2025, at the St. Ferdinand's Campus.

Respectfully submitted:



Kate Maseth-Ready
Recording Secretary

Approved



Jamie K. Shearer
Chair