

**Sarnia Bluewater Roman Catholic
Family of Parishes
Finance Council Meeting Minutes**

August 29, 2022
7:00pm
St. Michael Parish Hall

Finance Council Chair: Andrew Jones

Minute Taker: Cathy Cimetta

Attendees:

Louis Guimond, Fr. Brian Jane, Andrew Jones, Chris Treftlin, Aneta Fojna, Mark Roehler, Fred Oliver, Kathryn Poole, Maurice Coulombe, Lily Wong, Cathy Cimetta, Lisa DeSena

Guest: John Barnfield

1.0 Welcome: Andrew Jones

2.0 Opening Prayer and Reflection: Fr. Brian Jane

Scripture reading Luke 14:25:33 Jesus calls us to reflect on our all to be his disciples.

Reflection: To be disciples means to seek God's wisdom and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit, so that we can respond to Jesus' call through faith. Jesus explains that there is no easy way to become of his disciples. On our journey to discipleship we must make sacrifices. Many obstacles will come our way, but we must remain committed to being his disciple. Sacrifices are difficult. Many in our Family of Parishes are feeling the sting of change. To be true disciples we need to remain committed to God's way.

3.0 Agenda Approval: Kathryn moved to approve the agenda, Agneta seconded.

4.0 Declaration of Conflict of Interest: None

5.0 Approval of May 30, 2022 Minutes – One small addition to the minutes: adding Fr Jan Burczyk as a guest at the May 30, 2022 meeting. Approval moved by Chris, seconded by Kathryn..

6.0 Financial: Louis Guimond

a. Presentation of YE results to Parishioners Debrief – Six out of the seven churches have been presented with the 2021 Financial Results and a Looking Ahead commentary. St. Benedict Parish will be the last site this weekend. The talks were done in English as well as Polish, and French. They were all well received. Some of the parishes included "After Mass Socials" where parishioners felt they could ask more questions. There was very little comments or feedback. People didn't seem surprised by the numbers as it is evident that we have just come out of a unprecedented drop in attendance due to Covid. Some highlights from each presentation:

SH: Parishioners are not happy with the bad news.

OLM: Parishioners asking "Will we close?"

QoP: Distrust still exists-> is there a secret agenda?-> What costs are being shared? On the positive side, they were happy to be open again to worship together.

STA: Lots of distrust. Participation is down 75%. Parishioners feel that things will turn around once the pews fill up again.

SJ: Probably the only parish that hasn't seen a huge decrease in attendance. Most likely due to the fact that they only have one weekend mass.

SM: One question about the sale of the Kaymar Rectory -> If proceeds remained with the Parish? Parishioners were told that because of those proceeds, the undertaking of the roof/HVAC project was able to be fully funded by funds on deposit, without having to go into a Loan position with the Diocese.

b. Statements as at July 31, 2022 – Negative results across the 6 parishes. Utilities, insurance, and Diocesan Assessment seem to be the greatest pull of our resources. Hopefully, with the lifting of the Dispensation next week, attendance will increase and our offertory will reflect the same. Comments on the year-to-date finances...

- SB & OLM have bingo income that helps their bottom line. Very little output of time by volunteers with fairly good return.
- Utilities seem to be on the rise. Is it an increase in rates or usage?
- Balance Sheet shows how much time each parish has. Once the cash resources are depleted, what happens?
- What can be done to buy more time? How can we increase revenues? We need to push the Thanksgiving Appeal this fall.
- Referring to the book, Divine Renovation -> is our focus “Maintenance” or “Mission”?
- How to engage parishioners?

c. Cost allocation Options Paper – No final decision was made on the percentage splits for the shared expenses as presented in the previous meeting’s Options Paper. The Business Administration Team was asked to come up with a clearer picture of what is being shared and how it will impact each parish. As per some of the comments received after the financial presentations, some of the smaller parishes are not comfortable with sharing expenses they have no control over. In the interest of total transparency, communication for a better understanding and fairness could be presented at the Town Hall Finance Meeting.

d. Budgeting for 2023 and Diocesan Assessment – The budgeting process will begin in October. In the past, budgeting wasn’t a focus, as parishes had more revenues than they were spending. Times have changed, and budgeting is of utmost importance for financial viability. Even the Diocese only looked at the Balance Sheet of each parish, never focussing on the revenue/expense side of operations. In its’ first Business Manager meeting recently held at the Diocese, the Administration came to realize how much of a deficit each parish is running, and that the majority of parishes are struggling financially. In a discussion around how the 2023 Assessment would be calculated in order to be fair to both the parishes and the Diocese, it was decided that the 15% of 2020’s revenues would not work (2020 being a shut-down year), so the assessment will stay status quo at the amount being currently paid.

The Diocese is facing huge financial payouts themselves with their share of 1.7m dollar to the Truth and Reconciliation Fund, and a 1 million dollar bill as their share in funding the recent Papal Visit to Canada.

7.0 Plently Presentation (August 30th): Louis Guimond

All parishes have now been set up with the Plently online giving platform. We have had a soft launch thus far, with a few parishioners using it. On Tuesday, August 30th, we will meet via Teams with the Plently group to discuss white-labelling and strategies toward a full launch of the platform by mid-September.

8.0 Operational Revenue Recovery Program Debrief: Chris Treftlin

Chris summarized the strategy undertaken to bring people back to the pews this previous spring, with St Benedict Parish being the pilot location. 2 Postcard mailings were used in May and June to a list of parishioners that were deemed “not having returned” to in person worship. Also, a large ad sign was erected on the SB lawn

with the message changed biweekly 4 times. Unfortunately, the sign took a bit of abuse from vandalism during the time it was up. Both strategies costed a total of \$_____.

The program was deemed unsuccessful as the attendance did not increase at the pilot parish. The Church as a whole has been impacted with events that factor into the desire to return to Church for many people. But all is not lost, as it seems as though supporting events make help in getting people back into our Church communities. The recent 1 Yr Anniversary mass held at St. Pat's along with the recent Potluck Dinner for our International Students held at St. Benedict Parish, both show that people are aware of Church, and perhaps we need to focus more on such events to bring people back to worship.

9.0 Strategic Planning Update: John Barnfield

John's second visit with the Council updated us on how well the Strat Planning process is going. There are 15 teams in place that cover every area of importance to the operation of our Parishes. John spends time with each team, ensuring that the objectives and goals are the focus. There are some teams that are working in silos. There is also overlap in some individual teams and their members. The Lay Ecclesial / Liturgy / Communication teams are an example where conflicts are starting to emerge. The need for COMMUNICATION is of utmost importance to make this work. Parishioners are thirsty to hear what is going on -> transparency of finances is a great example of this thirst.

Strategic Planning involves looking at all options, work through opportunities, and using key resources & processes.

Focus Groups – Every parish held focus group sessions in May to review the results of the 2 surveys that were conducted throughout the Family. Follow up sessions are planned for Oct/Nov to bring parishioners together to hear what is going on. They can be asked the all important question...."Why aren't people coming back to Church?"

Stat Planning Sessions (3 Sessions held in June) – About 40 parishioners took part in identifying the main areas of concern that should be the focus in our planning. The Top 5 were:

1/ Family & Youth – Empowerment of Family & Youth. Not enough people know what AJ and his group are doing.

2/ Liturgy Committee – No one know that the priorities are. There has been little to no communication. Focus on interconnected ness between parishes. We need to build and strengthen individual parishes.

3/ Evangelization Team – Promote faith sharing. A recent addition to the bulletin is being well received..."Did you Know..."

4/ Communication Team – Large Mandate

5/ Social Team - People are thirsty for social events! Recent success -> Family Movie Nights held at SH, International Student Potluck held at SB. Many parishes are including "After Mass Socials" on weekends.

Part of John's mandate is to invite each team to develop & communicate 2 year Objectives and a 12 Month Action Plan. What will we have achieved by the end of 2024? Two or three objective statements. Although the Finance Council is advisory, Louis proposed the question..."Do we want to change the mandate of the Council?" John is willing to help work with the group to develop these plans. Mark R stated it would be pro-active to have these objective in place for the Town Hall meeting.

10.0 Business Administrator's Report (August 2022): Louis Guimond

Report was distributed to the Council member at the meeting. It gave updates on what Louis has been working on this month, in the areas of Human Resources, Strategic Planning, Use of Technologies, and Capital Projects. In the Parking Lot (Future Discussions) were included First Aid/Defibrillator training and Task analysis of internal controls of collections. Please refer to report for details.

11.0 Open Forum: Louis Guimond

The subject of "Change of Use" of our buildings was brought up. Louis reported that the SB office space that was questioned by the Diocese, has not been made an issue. He did state that the now empty STA rectory is being considered for "change of use". Nothing yet planned.

12.0 Next Meeting Date: Monday, September 26th at 7:00pm, Location to be determined

Agenda Items to be included:

- Prepare for Town Hall Meeting
- Cost Allocation Action Paper to be decided upon.
- Strategic Planning Objectives to be discussed.

13.0 Closing Prayer: Fr Brian Jane

Business Administrator's Report

August 2022

Financial

- Plently was rolled out to all parishes
- Analysis carried out for staff compensation

Strategic Planning report

Goal #3 Achieving Strong and Connected Parishes

- *Objective #4: Finance*
 - *Developed plans in each parish to ensure financial stability & building maintenance*
 - *Financial resources represented greatly by intentional projects.*
 - *Inventory of all resources available to all.*

Use of Technologies

On-site training in Office 365 and DDMS was provided by the diocesan staff.

Capital projects

We received the engineering review of St Benedict HVAC system. The conclusion of the report is that the two HVAC systems are at end of life and should be replaced. Cost of replacement is estimated at \$300,000.

A quote for full engineering support for the renewal of HVAC systems in Hall and adjacent meeting rooms has been submitted by Collins Frazer Engineering and will be forwarded to the Diocese for approval.

Parking lot

- First aid & defibrillator training
- Task analysis of internal controls of collections
 - Collecting
 - Counting
 - Securing
 - Transporting
 - Depositing

Conte-rendue du gestionnaire des affaires

Aout 2022

Finance

- Plenty a été déployé dans toutes les paroisses
- Analyse réalisée pour la rémunération du personnel

Rapport de planification stratégique

Objectif #3 Réaliser des paroisses fortes et connectées

- Objectif #4 : Finances
 - o Élaboration de plans dans chaque paroisse pour assurer la stabilité financière et l'entretien des bâtiments
 - o Des ressources financières largement représentées par des projets intentionnels.
 - o Inventaire de toutes les ressources accessibles à tous.

Utilisation des technologies

Une formation sur place à Office 365 et au DDMS a été dispensée par le personnel diocésain.

Projets d'immobilisations

Nous avons reçu l'examen technique du système St Benedict HVAC. La conclusion du rapport est que les deux systèmes CVC sont en fin de vie et doivent être remplacés. Le coût de remplacement est estimé à 300 000 \$.

Un devis pour un soutien technique complet pour le renouvellement des systèmes de CVC dans le hall et les salles de réunion adjacentes a été soumis par Collins Frazer Engineering et sera transmis au diocèse pour approbation.

En développement

- Formation aux premiers secours et au défibrillateur
- Analyse des tâches des contrôles internes des collections
 - o Collecter
 - o Compter
 - o Sécurisation
 - o Transport
 - o Dépôt