

Epiphany Parish Leadership Council Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: May 12, 2009, 8:30 p.m.
Location: Meeting Room
Attendees: Robert Breitbach, Amy DeRaad, Eric Gunderson, Bernie House, Mike Kraft, Mike Lentz, Bob Mueffelman, Greg Mueller, Alan Savage, Tim Sullivan, Emey Vaillancourt, Fr. Zehren, Mary Zielinski
Minute Taker: Mary Beth Ineson

I. Open Mic

- Kandice Barnes – 15614 Kumquat St NW, Andover
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She came to this group a couple of months ago because she was concerned about the issues that were going on with the school. Since that time a lot of changes have taken place, and she wanted to return to acknowledge some of the good things she is seeing. She has been pleased with some of the initiatives that show that the staff has heard our concerns and are doing the best that they can. She was pleased that the recent school surveys did target specific grades and specific subjects and really identify what we are doing well and where we specifically are seeing challenges. The recent implementation of the parent advisory committee she hopes will serve parents and children. It will remain to be seen whether parents will take advantage of it. She is very thankful to the parents who have participated. She is also excited to see a marketing committee being established and thinks it is a wonderful idea. While she doesn't know if exit interviews are being conducted, she does know that when her daughter failed to turn in her registration for next year on time, Father Zehren approached her and asked where Bailey was going to school next year. She responded here at Epiphany. She wanted to thank very sincerely Fr. Zehren, Mike Lentz, and Jane Carroll for taking the time to hear our concerns and to show good faith efforts in implementing some of our ideas. There are still several issues that need to be resolved, and it will not happen overnight. But with an open mind, open heart, communication between staff and parents, and lots of prayer, she has faith our school will survive. On another note, she also wanted to express appreciation for the incredible change in the music program here at Epiphany. To the liturgy commission, thank you for making that happen. Finally want to express my sincere gratitude to everyone on the commission and the volunteers of this parish. We are blessed in this Parish to have so many wonderful people serving God and each other.

II. Minutes from April Meeting

Minutes approved as amended.

III. Commission Reports

- Finance - Alan Savage

It has been a great pleasure working on the budget subcommittee this year with Joel Jacobs, Debbie Hawkins, Jeff Kierney, and Mr. Lentz. Alan distributed the proposed budget that has been approved pending changes in June. We will make the final recommendation in June because we know there are potential changes between now and June, and we want to make recommendations based on the best information possible. The summary of what was discussed and the highlights of the budget were reviewed. Our goal was to present a balance budget and we have done so again. We have taken a modest or conservative approach to the amount that we are expecting in

Sunday contributions at \$2.7 million, which is an 8% decrease. We are projecting a school enrollment of 525 students, which is our actual enrollment right now. We did ask the program and ministry budget not to increase their spending. Seven people have volunteered to partake in the reduction plan or the rule of 75. This will result in 5.0 FTE's being cut, a mix of full-time and part-time staff. There will be a second round of consideration for the school depending on enrollment. We do not have those final numbers. He was very pleased to announce that we are budgeting for the full \$517,000 assessment to be paid. The capital improvements requested by John Awalt was \$150,000, and we have reduced it down to \$50,000. There are four capital improvements that are each about \$16,000. We are asking that we mirror the air-handler units and the way we raised money for those. The budget does call for reduction in the long-term debt. The parish subsidy to the school will go from 23.8% to 26.2%. We felt as a subcommittee that it is important to take a small increase per year toward the parish subsidy. The utility and maintenance costs are not a part of this subsidy. The actual cost of educating a student is not here, but it is also more than the \$900 or \$1000 that is published. The parish budget does not include any additional cemetery expansions. Those have been completed. There are additional saving opportunities such as renegotiating leases and contracts, specifically the copier lease. We did not budget anything for the senior housing development. Should there be movement within this budget, it would be the responsibility of the audit subcommittee to determine where to adjust. Our current line of credit is between \$500,000 and \$600,000. It is reported to be closer to \$500,000. The audit subcommittee reported that our current fiscal year is in very good, healthy condition. Our revenues are at about 77%, so they are higher than budgeted amounts. Our expenditures are on pace if not a little bit lower. Our current fiscal year has done very well. We have many thanks to many parishioners for their support.

There was a \$100,000 gift to the parish to improve the school. A small subcommittee has been created to address how those funds will be used. He distributed the weekly deposits. We are on week 45 and are currently \$122,849 under budget. We are predicting that if we maintain a \$50,000 weekly average that we will meet our budget for the year, income versus expenses.

Bob Mueffelman – attended the Finance Commission meeting this evening.

- Stewardship - Greg Mueller
We started our assessment of stewardship here at Epiphany. We gathered our thoughts. We will wrap these thoughts into themes, and the themes will be used to support the strategic plan that was put together two years ago. We ended a very quick review of the activities at the committee level. Sister Marion presented a summary of a book she had read "Best Practices in Parish Stewardship". She has given the book to Father. Also spent time going through the Stewardship Renewal Weekends in Fall 2009 for the 2010 year.
- Liturgy – Amy DeRaad
We talked about the expansion of the usher ministry with the greeter component. Discussed the structure of our Commission and how that will be changed over the next year. We will remain a commission but will be meeting seasonally to address the liturgical needs of the Parish. We will be sharing that with our new members next month and talking about how that will look for us. Talked about preparing an article for the Parish newsletter regarding the greeter ministry expansion. Discussed the hospitality on the weekends. Challenged each of the commissions to take a weekend to assist Chuck

and Rhonda Dillon. Need a minimum of 5 people at each Mass, but 6-8 is better for the 8:45 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Masses.

Eric Gunderson – Attended the Liturgy Commission this evening. Tomorrow is the feast of our Lady of Fatima. In the evening, there will be Mass followed by the rosary the intentions are for all of our Epiphany families who are suffering from illness, the lost loved ones, financial concerns, and people who are in their family that have fallen away from their faith, we encourage them to come back to the faith. If you are unable to attend, please join your prayers and attentions with these.

- Community Life – Emey Vaillancourt

Springfest needs volunteers for Friday evening for parking lot and Saturday evening as well. We discussed the possibility of a picnic this summer in July. It does not look like we will be able to have it at Epiphany but are looking at an outside venue. We are looking at having a Viking football party on November 1st for the game against Green Bay. We need to check to see if the gym or cafeteria is available, so more information will be available at the next meeting. Alan Savage would like a copy of the expectations of Viking party plans to make sure it is legally cleared.

- Education – Mary Zielinski

We discussed the discernment process and are in need of two positions to fill. We discussed the current staffing and enrollment at the school. The accreditation status was discussed. The Accreditation team was very positive in their comments to us. (See the April 30 Star Lights newsletter on Epiphany School's website for details) The official formal report will be coming the end of May, early June. Talked about the summer Faith Formation programs. There are many programs this summer for all ages. Discussed the marketing plan and the strategic plan. We put together a listing of all our major accomplishments this year. She challenged the other commissions to do a summary of all our their accomplishments this year and share them with the commission chairs.

- Pastoral Care and Outreach – Bernie House

We worked on the thank you notes for the non-parishioners that visit our church and write a check. The note is composed. It is very brief and may be able to fit on a postcard. Bernie will be sending it to Greg Mueller and Sister Marion for their approval. We are hoping to implement this by the end of June. The calls have increased for the food shelf and general help for utilities and housing.

- Operations - Mike Kraft

We spent the entire meeting going through the details of the facility plan and comments. They are being categorized and will continue to do that in their June meeting. A second June meeting is planned to tie this up.

IV. Budget and Staffing – Mike Lentz

We need to provide a commitment to the ministries of the parish. When times are tight, we rely more heavily on our volunteers. In our school budget, it is not unusual that 70% of budget is staffing dollars. Therefore, you inevitably end up with staffing decisions. Seven people took us up on the volunteer reduction program. Two are on the school side, and five on the parish side. On the parish side, we will need to hire to make up for that. On the school side, we did not receive enough to make up for where we need to be. We will have to do some additional work. Round one was the voluntary reduction, and round two would be a reduction in force. With enrollment at the level it is, we have identified four grades that will go from three sections to two sections. Kindergarten currently has 47 enrolled, which is two nice classes. However if more enroll, we will need to add additional

classes. Last year we added two additional teachers in August. We will have people that leave for other opportunities, but we are currently looking at a reduction in force by four or five additional people (full-time equivalents types within the school, teaching staff, specialists and administration). We have been communicating with some of the employees and are hoping to complete all of it by June 1st so they can communicate before we announce. We can then do appropriate farewells. There may be one or two commissions affected by staff reductions. The budget reviewed this evening accounts for the reduction in staff and the \$90,000 that will be paid back in severance for the volunteer reduction program. We want to maintain and do not want our classes more than 27 and less than 16. We want to provide sacramental ministry. We do not want to jeopardize our ministries.

V. Usher Ministry: Greeting – Amy DeRaad

Last summer, when the Liturgy commission began meeting, we discussed ideas to increase and embrace the spirit of hospitality as part of the liturgies at Epiphany. The idea came up of a greeter or hospitality ministry. This was tabled for a few months. Over the past several months, that has been building into a need to extend a warm and welcome greeting to those attending Mass. However, did not want to create a new ministry. We decided to expand the usher ministry with a greeter ministry. We want to expand their spirit of hospitality. We want to encourage people (especially families) to greet people into our parish at the main points of entry into the Church. Amy's family participated at the 5:30 p.m. Saturday Mass. It was very well received. The functions are holding door for people, welcoming them to Mass, offering a form of greeting (handshake, smile). Everyone was pleased and surprised. We are encouraging families to sign up for a Mass a month to offer this welcome.

VI. Discernment Update – Mike Lentz

Sixty members were called forth, nominated during our discernment process. This evening was our first discernment meeting. One person showed up. The second meeting is next Tuesday evening. We should have Terri Willaert distribute the list to the Council so they could help remind the people as you see them. One suggestion was to not have them on the same night (both Tuesdays). Also, the letter did not have the time for the meeting. After next Tuesday's meeting, we will have a better idea how we need to proceed. Another idea is to have the commission chairs speak at Mass on Sunday to educate the parishioners.

VII. Adjournment/Closing Prayer

The meeting was concluded at 9:20 p.m. The next Parish Council meeting will be Tuesday, June 9, 2009, at 8:30 p.m.