

Diocesan Council Meeting Minutes | January 22, 2020

Present:

Bishop Knisely, Ms. Sherry Bailey, Rev. Ed Beaudreau, Rev. Dennis Bucco, Ms. Kim Cabral, Mr. Jay Candon, Mr. Joel Gardner, Mr. Scott Hovanec, Rev. Scott Lee, Rev. Al Marcetti, Rev. Johanna Marcure, Mr. Jim Segovis, Ms. Olive Swinski, Rev. Joyce Thorne and Rev. Jennifer Zogg.

Staff: Rev. Canon Dena Cleaver-Bartholomew.

Absent:

Mr. Toby Field, Mr. Robert Fye, and Rev. William Locke

Staff: Mr. Dennis Burton.

The meeting opened at 6 pm.

Opening Devotion was led by Rev. Joyce Thorne.

Due to an unexpected conflict, the DIT Presentation will be rescheduled.

Presentation – Creation Care Task Force

Rev. Jennifer Zogg offered an update on the work of the Creation Care Task Force. The task force has met several times. There has been fruitful conversation aimed at finding ways to help parishes be better stewards of creation. These conversations have centered around: Education; Energy Efficiency; and Political Advocacy.

The task force could engage a presenter to lead a half-day educational program around creation care for parishes in the diocese. However, it was noted that the task force was created as a result of an unfunded and unrequested resolution at the 2018 diocesan convention and therefore, there are no funds to support special events. It was also noted that the original task force chair, Rev. Dr. Anita Schnell, has since departed from the diocese and the task force now has a new chair. The task force members collectively wonder if there is a shared sense of interest within the diocese around something in particular which they should be focusing their attention and they asked that Diocesan Council offer them ideas/direction as to what they would like to see the task force do.

Bishop Knisely offered that a lot of different downtown organizations and colleges are already in conversation about creation care and suggested the possibility of bringing them together for a symposium. He then wondered whether such a symposium would be well attended. It was felt that if there were going to be tangible action steps as a result of a symposium it would be more attractive to potential attendees. There was also conversation about the different ways our parishes could be helpful in the event of a disaster if they had generators on their campuses. Among the possibilities mentioned

were providing food, water, heat, and electricity for charging electronic equipment. These suggestions will be brought back to the task force for discussion.

The December 18, 2019 Diocesan Council Minutes were approved.

A motion to approve the consent calendar was moved, seconded and approved.

Treasurer's Report | Mr. Jay Candon

Variance reports continue to show positive results, showing approximately \$300,000 in revenues over expenses. Episcopal Charities met its \$60,000 fundraising goal and saved money in 2019. The CDC grants allowable for 2019 were not all made but may still be made. Approximately \$50,000 of the 2019 surplus was a result of ECC's successful gala event. The bottom line for the 2019 Apportionment Surplus is expected to be \$112,000/\$113,000. The surplus is non-restricted income.

There was conversation regarding the actual cost per camper at ECC (\$600) versus the charge per camper (\$300) which generates a loss of \$300/per camper. Raising the question: If we are losing \$300/per camper, what would happen if we increased the number of campers? Would more campers mean more expenses and therefore more cost, or would more campers lessen the cost per camper? It was suggested that answers to such questions: *What is the required camper to counselor ratio?* and *Do the fix costs stay the same?* would be helpful in determining whether increasing the number of campers is a viable way to reduce the amount lost per camper.

Action Items: Bishop Knisely will reach out to Mr. Dennis Burton to look more closely at the math. Rev. Scott Lee will raise this issue with the ECC Board.

It was reported that the finances for Hallworth House are clear. It was also noted that a complete update on Hallworth House would occur later in the meeting.

It was noted that San Jorge needs more help and that there is some concern there may not be enough time to get them the help needed. Council was informed that San Jorge requested that their 2019 apportionment debt be forgiven. The Commission on Finance/Program & Budget committee decided to record their unpaid apportionment of \$7,044 as bad debt for 2019. There was discussion about the cultural competence needed in addressing the needs of San Jorge and how the finance team would be addressing the needs in their work with San Jorge. Council was assured that the right people would be brought to the table. Ms. Olive Swinski offered her expertise and experience in working with diverse groups of people.

Action Item: Mr. Dennis Burton will reach out and be in conversation with Ms. Olive Swinski.

It was noted that the Commission on Finance/Program & Budget committee is currently working on budget forecasting and developing a better system for applying for and awarding grants.

Staff Reports:

There were no questions regarding the Staff Reports included in the package of materials for the meeting.

Discussion Items:

— February 15th Workday

The Workday Committee continues to meet and work out ideas for Diocesan Council's upcoming workday. Ideas being developed include:

1. Video: Adaptive Leadership & Change followed by small group conversations.
2. Exploring Diocesan Council's responsibilities.
3. Finding interesting ways to 'get to know each other.'

Council members were encouraged to be attentive to their emails from the sub-committee. Workday will run from at 9:00 am to 12:30 pm with lunch from 12:30 pm to 1:00 pm. Council's February meeting will begin immediately following lunch at 1:00 pm.

— 2019 Apportionment Surplus

A motion was approved that the entirety of the 2019 Apportionment Surplus be put into a new fund for diocesan capital improvements to address the needs recommended by the Finance/Program & Budget committee with any surplus being referred back to Diocesan Council.

— Grants & Loans

A new grant/loan model is being developed in which parishes would be directed to a Grants & Loans page on the diocesan website. There they would input information regarding their proposed project. The information would then be sent to the appropriate committee: Finance, CDC or Diocesan Council. These committees would then make decisions regarding the grants/loans. It is hoped that this new process once completed will take the guess work out of applying for grants and loans. It is anticipated that the new process will be rolled out during the Resources Presentation at our upcoming Diocesan Leadership Day.

— Update on Hallworth House

A Board Meeting was held at the beginning of January. A breakeven budget for 2020 was presented. It is not clear that all the Board Members understand all the assumptions in the budget. Census currently at 93%. The consultants who prepared the report on Hallworth House were asked to reword parts of the report. The rewording will not change the numbers of the report, but rather reframe the premises of the report. Mr. Dennis Burton will be presenting the rewritten report at Hallworth House's next Board meeting.

It was reported that \$2.2 million remains after the losses of 2019. It is estimated that the cost to close the facility in a dignified Christian manner would be \$1 million.

Bishop Knisely reported being hopeful about the upcoming board meeting going well. He commended the staff members of Hallworth House, particularly Stephanie Igoe, Hallworth House's administrator, for her competence. And he recommended that a year be given to re-set relationships and fully explore whether Hallworth House can become a viable institution.

Bishop's Time

Bishop Knisely offered some background about the letters SOSc after his name noting that they stand for the Society of Ordained Scientists. He spoke about his upcoming plans for this summer serving in the Diocese of Manchester prior to attending the Lambeth Conference. He noted that he will be meeting with other dioceses from Africa and England as part of his discernment process aimed at forging a relationship with another diocese. In light of these conversations, Bishop Knisely shared with Council that he would like to defer a recent request from the Bishop of Tanzania for \$3,500 to pay for a beekeeper until he is able to have conversation with him at Lambeth about whether the Diocese of Rhode Island and his diocese might forge a partnership. Bishop Knisely noted that Rev. Della Wager Wells of Emmanuel, Newport, will be at the Lambeth Conference as part of her work with the Archbishop of Canterbury. Her work with the Archbishop includes developing diocesan relationships. The Bishop believes she will be helpful as our diocese moves forward in developing a relationship with another diocese.

Bishop Knisely noted that it is his expectation that priests in the diocese attend retreats and other such clergy gatherings. He will be sending an email detailing his expectations to the priests of the diocese. In addition, a Priest's Handbook is being created. He hopes the handbook will be ready for distribution at the upcoming Presbyter's Retreat in March and that the book will be helpful to both priests and parishes.

Updates were given on the following:

- Solar Project: Project continues to move forward. Tax credit secured. National Grid continues to use stall tactics.
- St. Paul's, Wickford: Built in 1704 the church needs substantial capital repairs: there is a mold problem and the roof is no longer structurally sound. Monies from St. Paul's endowment fund will be used for the remediation of the mold and the repairs to the roof.
- Edward Homes: Mr. Dennis Burton is working on the numbers and developing a plan to paint the buildings every five years, one per year. The intent is to return the use of the buildings to their original purpose: To house elderly Episcopalians; retired Deacons; and some clergy families where children are desolate. The diocese will be ending leases to begin necessary maintenance repairs in order to effectuate the change in use.

Bishop Knisely called Council's attention to the film *Lost in Providence* which is being shown around the state as a joint project of Signs of Providence and Homes RI. Given the content of the film, he wondered what kind of housing might be provided for the elderly population living in their cars in the city.

- Cathedral Renovation Project: The process of building a team of individuals with the necessary expertise to develop a strategic plan for the entire block owned by the Diocese is underway. Currently the lower level of the Cathedral is in use. Would like to use the Cathedral as a resource. The following questions need to be addressed: *What would it cost to get back into the Nave? What are we going to do with the Cathedral without placing an undue burden on the parishes?* Bishop Knisely reminded Council how far we have come in restoring the Cathedral since his arrival as our Bishop eight years ago. He noted that we do not have an estimate to repair the ceiling in the Nave as 'real' estimates cost money. It was also noted that, depending on cost, the ceiling may not look exactly as it once did, but that after the ceiling was repaired the Nave would be useable and safe. We will be hearing more about Cathedral repairs and renovations in 2020.
- Marketing Program: New Director of Communications, Ms. Kristin Knudson-Groh is working out very well. Website is updated, Facebook and Instagram are active. Looking at doing podcasts. Upcoming meeting set to begin looking at a marketing plan for the diocese. *What would it cost? What would it look like?*

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.