

Sacred Heart –Grosse Ile  
Finance Committee meeting Minutes  
October 21, 2020

**Attendance**

Fr. Marc Gawronski  
Mark Gilroy  
Gregg Zuccker  
Ken Juip  
Gary Latendresse

**Absent**

Sue Beidlingmaier  
Dennis O'Brien

**Meeting Minutes**

- Ken called the meeting to order and Fr. Marc led the committee in prayer.
- Meeting minutes from the August meeting were declared approved.
- Fr. Marc briefed the committee on the new “Family of Parishes” (FOP) initiative by sharing that the current proposal calls for Sacred Heart-Grosse Ile, St. Cyprian’s-Riverview, St. Joseph’s-Trenton, St. Timothy’s-Trenton, Our Lady of the Woods-Woodhaven and St. Roch’s -Flat Rock to become a “Family of Parishes”. The final parishes to be included in our family will be announced in Advent. Planning, education and development of this concept will be rolled out in two phases in 2021. Phase 1 January-June, Phase 2 July-December. It is unknown whether Sacred Heart will be in Phase 1 or 2 at this time. Fr. Marc encouraged the committee and the parish-at-large to educate themselves about this new concept by reviewing the materials or the AOD website. He also allowed that one of the early steps will be the formation of a joint committee with a representative from each parish. Staff members will not be included initially but will be consulted with as needed.
- In the near term, Fr. Marc allowed that he believes his current position of leading three parishes will continue until after the first of the New Year.
- Fr. Marc then elaborated on how he sees the evolution of the FOP **Finance Committee** unfolding. Because the number of priests and church participation are certain to continue to decline, the number of masses and eventually the number of parishes will decline necessitating members to have to travel to other churches. The long-standing rule that allowed pastors to stay in their assigned parish indefinitely will end. Parishes will have an Associate Pastor or one that can and will be expected to move about as needed. The use of “moderators” to augment the Associate Pastor will also increase.
- Fr. Marc stressed the fact that parishes will have to live within their financial means and that undertaking major projects deemed uneconomic will lead to parish closures or downsizing. If the financial realities are significant, staff and program reductions will follow. This prompted a query about whether parish funds will be eventually co-mingled. Fr. Marc replied they would not.
- A discussion about the September 2020 financial results covered the fact that all are concerned with the under-budget offertory collection performance and concerns that that the continuing pandemic could negatively impact the Christmas collections due to limiting of mass attendance and the prospect of fewer holiday masses. Attendance will be augmented by opening the parish hall for the Christmas Masses. On the positive side, it was stated that sharing the cost of the Pastor, the Music Director and a Maintenance manager has somewhat offset the reduced offertory collection. Fr. Marc mentioned and the committee endorsed emphasizing On-Line Giving as a positive step to increase or at least maintain the offertory collection.

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Committee members are requested to think of ways to get this message out to parishioners and encourage them to participate prior to our next finance committee meeting.

- Fr. Marc announced that the AOD will be requiring each parish to prepare and submit a Five-Year Financial Plan using a prescribed AOD format. This will be taken up after the first of the year by the Finance Committee.
- The status of the CSA effort disclosed that the parish had pledged over 50% of the goal and that Fr. Marc has sent a letter to all who had not yet responded to the CSA. Once the CSA goal is achieved, Fr. Marc intends to send a letter to all encouraging support of On-Line Giving and the importance of Christmas Giving.
- The discussion then turned to the importance of selling or re-purposing assets to create an endowment to help secure our financial future. To that end, Gary will re-distribute the materials received from the AOD staff about the process for selling or re-developing surplus land / buildings. Fr. Marc added that we should familiarize ourselves with the Catholic Foundation of Michigan as a resource to help us properly create an endowment.
- Mass attendance was then discussed, and all agreed that the Parking Lot Masses were a big success that resulted in an increase in overall mass attendance. The result was a 35% rise in attendance from June 256 to September 348 monthly attendance averages. Unfortunately, the weather will preclude that option very quickly. However, Mass will continue to be broadcast by radio to the parking lot with communion during the pandemic. A new camera system is being installed in the sanctuary to improve streaming quality of the Mass. However, overall mass attendance continues well below pre-pandemic levels.

Christmas masses were then discussed in the context of limited seating due to the pandemic. Fr. Marc was opposed to “reserving” seats and is strongly in favor of a first come - first seated policy but endorsed having the parish hall ready for an overflow crowd using our new streaming equipment (expected to be up and running the week of 10/25). Families will be encouraged to sit together to maximize seating capacity. Further discussions will be with the Worship Commission.

- The discussion then turned to the question of tearing down the storage garage between the parish center and the rectory. Once all the tractor related equipment is moved off-site for sale, the garage will be torn down and disposed of. Gregg received a quote of \$2,800 to demolish and dispose of all remaining materials. A new storage shed will then be studied and brought to the committee by the Buildings and Grounds Committee.
- The doors in disrepair /inoperative in the parish center were discussed. A second supplier and quote is in progress. A work plan is progressing with a timeline to make repairs at the earliest possible date. Fr. Marc asked that bids be secured and emailed to all involved.
- Gary reported that Sue and LL Custom agreed that the convent repairs will commence in November.
- Ken then mentioned his intention to convene a Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting with Sue, Kim and Fr. Marc to get all up to speed on agenda items.
- Mark reported that there is no urgency to apply for loan forgiveness until after the election as the situation and rules are still fluid.
- Fr. Marc mentioned that a new phone system is set to be installed to improve functionality.

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- Minutes are expected to be read by all once published and comments/revisions submitted via e-mail prior to the subsequent meeting. Once all items are resolved via e-mail, the minutes are assumed approved and will not be reviewed for approval at any subsequent committee meetings. Please respond promptly once the minutes are published.
- There being no other topics to discuss, the meeting was ended with a prayer.

Gary P. Latendresse  
Secretary