

Church of St. Paul – Comfrey, MN
Administrative Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 30, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. – Church Social Hall

Present: Fr. Mark Steffl, Matt Grausam, James Rathman, Matt Eischen, Dale McMullen, Marianne Schotzko, Judy Augustin, Jim Schwab, Nellie Richter – Secretary
Absent: Denice Evers, Connie Kelly, Darrell Platz
Guest: Richard Callanan

Meeting opened at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Rathman. Fr. Steffl led group in prayer.

Introductions were done by all present. Fr. Steffl talked briefly about himself. He assured everyone he is here to help all of the parishes in our AFC. As the only priest in our AFC who does the Latin Mass on Sunday at St. Mary's, he won't be able to be at St. Paul's due to mass time conflicts.

Agenda additions: 1) Richard Callanan 2) LP/Fuel oil heating contracts with Farmward 3) Parish Letter.

Reorganization of Officers: Officers now are James Rathman – Chairman, Matt Eischen – Vice-Chairman and Nellie Richter – Secretary (non-Council member). M/S/C McMullen, Eischen to keep officers as they are. Minutes from June 11, 2020 Administrative Council Meeting, June 29, 2020 Administrative Council Meeting with Church Dinner Committee and others, and July 8, 2020 email/phone call for vote to authorize Fr. Steffl as a signer on parish financial accounts were read. M/S/C Eischen, McMullen to approve all minutes as written.

Eischen had a question on priest mileage for special masses (in regards to 6/04/20 mass that was for CCW intentions and Fr. Andy asked CCW to pay his mileage). Grausam stated that mileage should be paid by parish. Fr. Steffl agreed that any mass that is open to the public should have the parish pay for priest's mileage.

Richard Callanan, referring to the June 11th Administrative Council Meeting Minutes and the discussion on choosing Peschges/Suess for roof replacement on church, rectory and garage, asked if anyone contacted Brandon Carter Construction to let him know that he wasn't selected for this project? McMullen stated that he would contact Brandon tomorrow. Callanan also stated his disappointment on the lack of approach of the Council after Frs. Steffl and Perez made an initial contact regarding Fr. Perez living in Comfrey at the rectory. He feels no effort was made to extend the red carpet to have a priest live in our community, and Morgan is very happy to have Fr. Sam live there. Fr. Steffl commented to this that it was decided to have Fr. Sam live in Morgan due to his being able to help with parishes to the north of Morgan.

Another item Callanan brought up was that Schotzko asked a question at the last meeting that he had asked 3 years ago regarding bulletins, and was supposed to be answered at this meeting by Grausam. Grausam responded that that particular question was somewhat answered at the June 11th meeting and that the advertisers (back page of bulletin) pay for the printing of the bulletins and not the parishes. Callanan said that if they are indeed 'free bulletins', why are we paying St. Mary's \$110/month? Grausam answered that LPI finds advertisers and bills them, which covers the printing costs of the bulletins. The cost allocated to the parishes is for Joan Windschitl's time in putting the bulletin together each week. The cost of bulletin is prorated per month: \$772 – St. Mary's, \$182 – Morgan, \$117 – Comfrey and \$94 – Leavenworth. Callanan responded that he feels it is irresponsible for a parish to pay this monthly amount for 'free bulletins'. He checked with the Springfield parish secretary and she said that their bulletin costs them several reams of paper. Our monthly budget is not met, but yet we are throwing away bulletins each week. Eischen then asked what can we do? Joan's hours need to be paid. Can we do something, as a parish or AFC, to lessen her time working on the bulletin? Fr. Steffl responded that Joan is quite efficient in putting the bulletin together and has been doing it for some years now. Rathman did comment that our 10:30 mass time does affect the attendance on Sunday, even prior to COVID, and maybe the number of bulletins we get each week should be looked at. McMullen said that someone has to be paid to

put the bulletin together. Fr Steffl said that the cost of \$117/month comes to roughly \$30 per week. Eischen feels that this is reasonable for her time. Callanan left meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Schotzko asked how often our Council will meet, as we have Certificates coming due in September and October. Fr. Steffl is okay with whatever the parish council wants. Augustin feels that every other month would be okay for right now. Will plan on scheduling as such unless something urgent should come up.

Financials for June and Fiscal Year End by Grausam: Fiscal Year ended okay, but the biggest concern is the Sunday envelopes and collections. There was a deficit of \$168,990.56, but this also includes the \$150,000 that was transferred to the Cemetery.

Schotzko has talked with other parishes on their contribution envelopes and many are being mailed out quarterly instead of having the boxes that are not picked up in the back of church for most of the year. Grausam said there are other options but possibly more for metro area and we do offer online giving now. St. Mary's does quarterly envelope mailings (mailed out by Church Budget Envelope Co.) and they have been doing this for 2-3 years already. Puts the envelopes in the parishioners' hands as a good reminder. Schotzko asked if monthly mailings are possible? Not sure if company does it that frequently. Richter is to check with envelope company on cost of doing the mailings vs. box sets and if we can change our order for 2021. M/S/C Schotzko, Eischen to accept financials.

COVID-19 Updates: Fr. Steffl said that masks are to be worn in church now, as in all public places. Schotzko asked why more churches are not having people write down their names for masses? Can be used for tracing purposes if there is a positive exposure case. Steffl said that it is not mandatory to do, plus not easy to do in larger churches. There isn't a rush for people to come back to mass right now and St. Paul's hasn't turned anyone away yet due to no seating available.

Eischen said he talked to Andy Peschges and he stated that completion of roof project will be done by October 1st, but date not known when they will start the project. Grausam left meeting at 7:26 p.m.

Fr. Steffl on Religious Ed: Dan Davis sent out an email letter to each family with children in program on what their wishes are – have our own program with JM or have students join Springfield or St. Mary's programs? Trying to get the best idea on what to do with feedback received. Eischen said that his wife, Erin, teaches a class and finding teachers is the biggest issue. A concern is if we discontinue our program and kids go to another parish for Religious Ed, could we lose these families as parishioners, as they may gravitate to the parish where their kids are involved? Would like to continue to have a program if at all possible. Servers and lectors showing up for Sunday Mass has been a struggle lately. Schotzko stated that space is an issue for Religious Ed classes. Fr. Steffl wants to meet the needs of the families and more contact with them is better.

Catholic Mutual Group (John Urlaub) did a walk-thru July 15th of our buildings and grounds and our Inspection Report states that the Gingko tree (between church and rectory) needs to be trimmed. Ryan Tree Service will be coming to trim boulevard trees for the city and they will also (for fee) trim trees on private properties if asked. Schotzko volunteered herself and Stan to do the trimming. Also, the AED battery and pads need replacing and they have been ordered thru the Comfrey First Responders – approximate cost will be \$360. Eischen's dad, Kurt, did the walk-thru with Urlaub and it was suggested to add a safety light on the stage area in basement (to consider, but not a requirement). Urlaub also mentioned about asbestos concerns – floor tile in altar area and under the carpet in the church proper for sure. Also, smoke detectors in the Rectory should all be replaced due to their age. Eischen will check into replacing them.

Church Dinner: Take-out meals and raffles are the only things possible to do this year, and that may change by October. Church Dinner Chair people are urgently needed! Augustin contacted her work group and all said they were okay with working for the dinner. Leavenworth had to cancel all but their mass and raffle for their festival. St. Mary's is having an independent ice cream truck at their Festival this Sunday – otherwise no food will be

sold. They are also having Silent Auction items and raffle and they are asking people to possibly donate what they would have spent on purchasing/baking, etc. McMullen said that Turner Hall is doing an all curbside pick-up meal – his dad plans to attend to see how they do this. Eischen said that the Fire Dept. did their Steak Fry and offered limited inside seating, curbside pick-up, take-outs and home delivery. They served more meals than other years, possibly due to people wanting something different or to just get out. At the June 29th meeting, it was also decided to decrease the food purchases and preparations by 10%, but may need to re-evaluate.

Fire-proof 3 or 4-drawer file cabinet for church records: The Cemetery Board bought their own 2-drawer cabinet this spring. The Church should go with a 4-drawer cabinet if space allows - get quotes and then email/call everyone for an online vote.

CCW Report by Schotzko: Executive Meeting held July 9th – went from 4 active circles down to 3, with approximately 23 women in each circle. Also made a Prayer Circle consisting of women who no longer want or are unable to help at funerals. Discussed funeral luncheons, but will continue to do the hot dish, salad and cakes per family's request. Decided to discontinue offering the lunch during wakes as a CCW function – friends and family are welcome to do if they so choose. No hostesses set for CCW meetings as not able to serve yet in basement. Planned for 4 masses for the CCW in 2020-21. Also, thanks were given to Judy Augustin and Betty Zwaschka for all the washing of linens, turning lights on, doing sacristan work and everything else they do 'behind the scene'. Also, thanks to Nettie Kelly for being sacristan since Sister JoAnne left up until COVID hit.

Liturgy by Augustin: We were unable to do music earlier because of COVID, but have been trying to offer music from choir loft since end of June. No practices held – priests are to let her know if changes need to be made.

Cemetery by Fr. Steffl: Cemetery Board met with Bankers Life Representative, Travis Braulick, and will be investing in an Annuity that will offer a better interest rate for Perpetual Care funds. \$210,000 total will be transferred from Edward Jones to Bankers Life after the CD's come due in August and September.

Heating Contracts for LP/Fuel oil: Travis from Farmward quoted \$1.13/gallon for LP (used 3700 gallons last year) but no info for the fuel oil cost. No prepayment necessary for either contract. Eischen said they usually lock in at 75-85% of gallons used the previous year, then not much to purchase above that if needed. Cooling temp at church was set to 73 degrees. Heating was set too cold last year, especially for Religious Ed classes, but were adjusted prior to class times. Eischen suggested we go with approximately 75% of 3700 gallons used for LP and also do 75% of fuel oil used last year. Farmward owns our tanks.

Schotzko brought up the parish letter that was going to get sent out last November, but was then redone by Msgr. and then was not sent at all. Possibly have Fr. Steffl look at both letters and put together a letter, highlighting what our parish has to offer. Sunday Mass time change? Fr. Steffl said same as they are now.

Thefts in Lambertton Church by Fr. Steffl: Would like the priest sacristy to be locked and lockbox put in – need to look at how many doors for the south sacristy. St. Mary's is looking at cameras for their church. Weekday masses – Fr. Steffl is open to see if there is a better time for mass, such as maybe an evening mass. Can talk to Fr. individually with thoughts on this.

Fr. Steffl led group in closing prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nellie Richter - Secretary