

Board Meeting Minutes, January 23, 2020

Present: Father Seidel, Jerry Anhorn, John Lesko, Ruthann Haider (parent representative), Claire Valente, David Bynum, Joyce Sanks, Elly Sherry, Brenda Shields (teacher representative), Jim Barrows, Marlene Ramsey, Kristal Hassler.

Guests: Jamie VanWormer, Edie Mulvihill, Guy Gingell, Robyn Huether and several others.

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

Father Seidel led the board in Prayer.

Minutes from December board meeting and committee reports – motion to approve, Claire, 2nd Joyce, unanimously approved.

Presidents Report

Fr Seidel discussed the following: Beginning cycle of middle school retreats and 2nd/3rd grade completed their retreats. Eighth grade retreat was Jan 22nd, 6th grade retreat was the week before. The Catholic Youth Conference is Mar 6-8th in Spokane. DeSales high school students will participate in this conference as a retreat; there will likely be 400-500 students attending. This event is smaller than we have done in the past but will allow for our students to get to know the Diocese better. Jim Burrows asked about transportation for the DeSales retreat; Father Seidel responded it will likely be a rented bus.

Father Seidel also shared information about a retreat he attended in Austin Texas for his master's program with Notre Dame. Father discussed a benchmarking resource, National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS) he is using in one of his courses, and that he plans to use it to look at our various areas and policies.

Father discussed that the contract is in place with Ed Little for consultation services with the school, Mr Lesko and Father Seidel. Father shared Ed's schedule for the next few weeks, including Ed being in Walla Walla to observe and participate in our Catholic Schools week activities.

Father notified the board we received a \$10K grant from the Stubblefield Trust to upgrade our safety system at DeSales. Ruthann Haider asked who wrote the grant, Father shared it was Jamie VanWormer.

Claire Valente asked that Father share the NESBECS benchmarking resource with the board to insure we are all on same sheet of music going into our next accreditation cycle.

Principals report:

Mr. Lesko invited everyone to pancake feed on January 24th at DeSales – 7:45 – 8:30AM. Mr. Lesko also discussed the NESBECS benchmarking resource, sharing it was starting to become the standard in Catholic school education. He went on to discuss how the NESBECS has a rubric for the new protocol for our Western association of Catholic Schools. Mr. Lesko concurred with Father Seidel's recommendation for WWCS to use this resource as we prepare for accreditation.

Mr. Lesko reported he is working with the French department at Whitman regarding establishing an exploratory French club as we have 9-10 students between both campuses – Assumption and DeSales interested in participating.

Mr. Lesko reported our 7th-8th graders are participating in a Catholic Faith Challenge in the Tri-cities; it is like Knowledge Bowl.

Mr. Lesko reported that we are projecting to have a HS and MS baseball team. A middle school team will provide an opportunity for middle school to practice and participate with HS.

Jim Barrows stated at the last Knights of Columbus meeting it was announced with our transition to a new football league, there would not be an opportunity for the annual Holy Bowl with Tri Cities Prep, and there was some discussion at the meeting about doing a knowledge bowl competition with TCP instead. Mr. Lesko confirmed he was aware of this discussion

Jerry Anhorn asked if we had officially transitioned to District 9 for our sports league. Mr. Lesko confirmed we are officially in District 9 and there appears to be two divisions forming within this district. It appears there will be a north and south division, and it looks to be a very healthy league. Mr. Lesko shared a benefit of being in this league is that we are centrally located between the north and south division areas and it is most likely the playoffs for this league will be at the WW Community College for indoor sports and Borleske stadium for outdoor activities. This will reduce our travel during playoffs considerably

Finance Committee:

Kristal Hassler reported our cash balance is approximately \$250K less than we had last year at this time.

Several reasons for this reduction include \$140K less in bequests, Parish giving is down, and fundraising is down a little bit. She also reported that some of the cash was moved from operating to restricted funds.

Financial reports: Kristal reported that although the budget seems to show we are \$400K over budget, this is not reason for concern right now, since it is due to the discounts for multi-student families being reported on an annual basis and the revenue being recorded on a monthly basis, therefore, as we load each month's revenue, we will see a better picture of our budget to actuals. Kristal reported that Edie Mulvihill is working on a few accounts receivable. Jerry Anhorn commented that where we are with accounts receivable is excellent compared to where we were a few years ago and thanked Kristal and the budget committee for working to reduce the AR accounts.

Claire Valente inquired as to whether we could project out with the amount of cash we have and anticipated, are we going to make it to June?

Kristal Hassler responded it depends on our fund raisers, and Hope matters a lot. Kristal went on to say enrollment matters even more. Edie Mulvihill shared we have new students coming in.

Claire Valente followed up with a comment on the amount of reserves we have, but is that enough? Edie commented she is confident we are going to be ok with our budget. Kristal commented it's too early to say, we need another month of actuals to offer a projection.

Strategic Planning Committee:

Claire Valente discussed the handout for language the strategic planning committee proposed be added to the strategic plan and explained the other material in the handout is for the implementation schedule. Jerry Anhorn queried about the language being proposed and isn't tactics already part of the

plan. Claire Valente responded affirmatively but said the committee would not change the tactics in the strategic plan without bringing it to the board.

Father Seidel moved that we accept the language being proposed for incorporation into the strategic plan. Kristal Hassler, second, Unanimous approval of attending board members. Motion carried.

Marketing Committee:

Melissa Theissen reported we have two new students at Assumption (one in 2nd and one in 5th grades) and we lost a student in 6th grade to a family move out of the area. Assumption student total is 176. DeSales student total is 82. For a total student population of 258.

Melissa discussed our Winter 2020 Discount Marketing program, and what we are learning from it. She shared that we are widening our enrollment funnel, and we did a really good job once we get prospective families in the funnel. We saw a real enrollment of one student at DeSales from this marketing campaign, but the long term impact will be seen in the Fall of 2020, for the families who inquired as a result of our discount program and see we offer financial aide, will be more inclined to transition their student in the fall at a natural break in school. She reported her intentions to stay closely connected with the families that inquired about our discount program.

Melissa shared our referral program is a Best Practice; she has had 3 referrals recently and the conversations with the referred families went well. She pointed out how important it is to get contact info from existing families for potential new families.

Melissa shared the Catholic Schools week calendar with the board and highlighted the Kindergarten information night, the All School Mass, the talent show and adoration at St Francis on January 30th.

Claire Valente inquired as to the date for the next marketing committee meeting. Melissa offered she struggling to pick a date, as lots of people on marketing are also on other committees, but we've had our committee members meeting unofficially. Claire Valente followed up with a comment that the committees are established to help Melissa. Claire Valente also queried Melissa on when re-enrollment would start for our current families. Melissa responded with the schedule for re-enrollment, with a planned notice going out to parents to pick up their packets at the schools.

Policy and Procedures Committee:

Marlene Ramsey shared the committee has been working on the policies that have not been updated since 2014 – we discovered in the 5000 section of the policy book. These interim policies were primarily student conduct, and many are no longer relevant. The policy committee reached a consensus the best way forward was to frame these policies in the respective Assumption or DeSales student handbook. The policy committee is therefore bringing forward this recommendation to the board. Marlene read one of the interim policies as a final policy in the student handbook to familiarize the board with this approach. Marlene Ramsey shared there are six policies the committee would like to incorporate into the handbook and remove from the board policies.

Claire Valente inquired as to the language in one of the policies, there appears to be a word left out and suggested the committee add the word issued or recommended. Marlene Ramsey concurred and will

update the policy in question. Jim Barrow moved to approve the recommended policies transition to the student handbooks for Assumption and DeSales. Claire Valente seconded the motion. Jerry Anhorn called for any further discussion; there was none. The motion was unanimously passed.

Safety Committee:

Mr. Lesko reported major work completed in researching groups to come in and take a comprehensive look at what we are doing for safety and security. Mr. Lesko recognized Gary Hurwitz, a parent volunteer on the committee, who did a lot of work to get the information on companies. The safety committee has identified a group we want to engage and work within our community. The committee asked for proposals from about 3 groups and asked them to focus on parking lot safety and providing training for our staff and information for parents. Mr. Lesko shared the committee has done the right homework to pick the right company, and the committee is confident they have done the right amount of due diligence. Funding for these projects is anticipated to come from grants that Jamie VanWormer wrote for safety, and we have a grant from Nazareth Guild for Assumption safety program upgrades. Therefore, there is no cost to the general budget for these improvements. Mr. Lesko also shared we can access \$4-5K in Title 4 funds for these projects.

Gary Huritz discussed with the board the company the safety committee selected to assist the school with updating our safety program. He stated the company does a very thorough threat assessment – considering threats to our region – ie. Access control. They approach it as real threats from the outside – about external threats. This company is very experienced (note: company name not mentioned in the discussion).

Joyce Sanks queried Mr. Lesko and Gary Huritz on the day to day safety items, like parent drop off. Gary H responded the company will be evaluating this aspect of our day to day activities. He went on to state the company will want to meet with faculty and staff to discuss what level of intervention is acceptable in our day to day activities as they relate to the safety of our students. Claire Valente noted she had a point and a question. Claire stated she did not want the committee or company to go down the fortress mentality and traumatize children by overestimating the external threat; it's important to address this.

John Lesko responded to Claire Valente assuring her he understood her concern and we want to –keep the strengths we have in our safety program, and we don't want to scare 2nd graders.

Claire Valente followed up with a second point of concern, asking that the committee pay attention to afterhours, when students stay in the building, when everyone else leaves and students are here alone. She stated, "I don't leave my children like this, but I'm concerned for those students who are in the school, staying around with no one supervising them, and there is a potential for fights among students". Gary Huritz responded stating "this concern of Claire's is the crux of significant vulnerabilities on the campus; how do we manage traffic of students in and out of the building?"

Jim Barrow offered he thought the committee had given an excellent summary, but only tells a bit of the picture, given this 15 page document outlining this company's plan. Jim thought their plan was impressive and felt they know their business. Jim shared with the board he thought this was a great start based on the survey we did a few months ago.

Gary Huritz added this company has extensive experience with faith based schools.

John Lesko explained to the board that once Home and School approves the use of earmarked funds for this company to come in and evaluate our schools, we will sign a letter of engagement with them and establish a timeframe for their evaluation.

Nominating committee:

Claire Valente reported Joyce Sanks has agreed to be chair of the nominating committee next year. Claire went on to share with the board we have a lot of interest in potential new board members, with four applications on hand from interested candidates and maybe two more in the works. Claire Valente and Jerry Anhorn discussed the potential of bumping up against our maximum board membership of 21 people if all candidates expressing interest were selected to be on the board. Claire Valente pointed out three board members have their official terms ending on June 30, of which one (Claire) is nonrenewable as she has served for six years continuously. David Bynum, Jim Barrow and Andrea Renholds are coming up on the end of their first three-year term, and the board will need to know if they are planning to serve an additional three years, per our regulations. Claire Valente will send these members an email to inquire on their plans for future board membership.

Claire Valente commented on the parent position on the board, asking if that parent position counts in the calculation of the total number of parents on the board. Jerry Anhorn confirmed it did. Ruthann Haider asked the board if we want the committee to decide who, of the parent applicants, will be put forward as a potential board member, or do we want the board to vote on all parents who apply? Kristal Hassler commented that we've had people say they are interested, but then don't apply. Claire Valente commented the nominating committee has four applications in hand, of which two are parents. Jim Barrow asked at what point will these four applicants be voted on and when is their first meeting. Claire Valente responded that the first meeting for new board members will be the July meeting, as the board votes on new members with a July 1 start date. Jim Barrow suggested it made more sense to change the July 1 start date to a NLT date, to insure we get qualified people on the board quickly, versus having them wait to join. Further discussion ensued regarding how the new candidates would be considered, with the board generally agreeing it would be appropriate to use the executive session to discuss candidates and vote for new board members. Further discussion ensued with Kristal Hassler suggesting the board should select March 1 for all potential applicants to have their application submitted to the board, and then we should have an executive session at the march board meeting to review all candidates, then vote at the April meeting.

Claire Valente recommended Melissa Theissen put out a notice in the weekly email that all interested school board candidates should have their packets in to the nominating committee chairperson by March 1, 2020. Jerry Anhorn commented it is great we have so many people interested in serving on the board. Claire Valente concurred it is a wonderful surge of interest and a sign of Providence.

Building and Grounds Committee

Jerry Anhorn reported he is bringing the RFP back in front of the board and we have an estimated range of \$8-10M for a design-build process to renovate the school. Jerry Anhorn discussed with the board that Architects West estimated the best price we could achieve for what we want to do is \$12M. The grounds committee thinks we can engage a contractor in the Design -Build process and get this price tag

closer to the \$8-10M. Jerry Anhorn then asked the board to give direction to the committee so they can continue to work forward and lay the groundwork for getting an RFP together for the board to vote on.

Claire Valente commented she concurred with his request, but had a caveat, asking when is the committee going to be putting everything out on the table? Claire voiced concern that it is not always the majority that is the right thing – i.e. Jerry and Father Seidel and John Lesko making decisions.

Jerry Anhorn responded he understood her concern, but further suggested if the committee had something that said it was going to cost \$24M then the committee was not going to put that forward for a vote as it was not feasible. Jerry Anhorn requested a motion and a vote on the RFP process for school renovation. Claire Valente moved that the board authorizes the building and ground committee to move forward in the RFP process. Jim Barrow seconded the motion. No further discussion ensued. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mission Moments:

John Lesko shared how great things go on everyday, but the walk for life celebration really stood out, along with sharing a prayer for the celebration of life with all the student athletes at the basketball game. It was a great moment for our school and athletes.

Jim Barrow offered the U-B newspaper had an excellent picture covering the Walk for Life.

Ruthann Haider shared a mission moment regarding the spaghetti dinner and Bingo organized by Jamie VanWormer. The fellowship in the cafeteria that night was amazing. So many people enjoying a meal and playing bingo. Very positive event for our community.

Claire Valente shared a mission moment about step up day at DeSales for the 8th graders from Assumption. She felt it was well done and was a great event for all students involved.

Good of the Order

Public Comment Period:

Robyn Huether shared with the board that Nazareth Guild hosted a “Holy Hoops” tournament, like the peach basket classic January 25th, and there was a four-person team from Assumption participating and representing our schools.

Robyn Huether requested an audience with the board regarding the Assumption parking lot is an issue – specifically the drop off pick up line. She is concerned parents are speeding and weaving in and out of the pickup line throughout the parking lot. She wants to ensure the board understands the drop off pick up line does not run smoothly. She prepared a map and discussed a proposal to change the current process in one of two ways.

1st recommendation – cones on both sides of drop off pick up line – so people understand it is a process

2nd – use signage like Green Park school, where the signage says “no stopping, no parking and pull forward”.

Robyn Huether also suggested 6,7,8 grade students congregate at the front of school at the end of the school day. It would make more sense to move them down, closer to the 3, 4, 5th grade students.

Robyn Huether further suggested we always have a faculty or administrator at drop off, and that it's not just parents at fault; she is concerned teachers walk up to cars in the pickup line and talk with parents, which is not a good practice.

Robyn Huether asked the board and the administration to address the issues because they are safety and liability concerns therefore there needs to be action taken. Further discussion ensued on Robyn Huether's concerns until Claire Valente pointed out to the board that we don't comment on public comments.

Jamie VanWormer notified the board that she had secured a small grant through St Mary's Hospital to renovate the DeSales kitchen – bring in new equipment that's mobile to serve students and community.

Jamie VanWormer also notified the board the annual fund is up from last year, and she is planning a Parish Pledge in March. She also notified the board that a \$5K grant was received to update the home economics room at DeSales, where there is now hot water and a new countertop and plumbing. The last step is to get some volunteers to paint the room.

The meeting was adjourned by Jerry Anhorn at 8:20PM.

The next meeting is February 27th, 6:30PM Aquinas Learning Center.