

St. Mary Parish Council Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2009
7:00 p.m.

Opening Prayer and Reflection: Keith Coveney – “For a Stronger Faith” (Prayer Assignment for April – Rebecca Edwards)

Presided by: Fr. Raymond Goodwin

Present: John Gill, Janice Mead, Tom Tellier, Jo Dascanio, Rolande Parent, Keith Coveney, Mary Szymczak, Sister Yvonne Millman, Deacon Nick CaraDonna,

Absent: Mary Belmore, Rebecca Edwards

Ministries: Kathy Voll (Religious Ed), Helen Rehberg (Stewardship), Betsy Holt (Safe Environment)

February minutes: Approved. After a discussion, the Council Members approved the Parish Council Secretary’s request to document only Religious Education Board items that generated discussion, rather than continuing the practice of documenting all updates. It was suggested that the Religious Education Board also post their approved meeting minutes on the parish web site.

Received Correspondence, etc: Refer to Council Discussion item on Safe Environment.

Chairperson Comments - None

Ministry Updates

Religious Education: Kathy Voll provided an update on activities of the Religious Education Board. Discussion occurred on the following items:

- Mardi Gras: Parish Council members who attended agreed that freshly made pancakes were much better than frozen used in previous years and that the work crew did an excellent job.
- Grade Level masses:
 - The Grade 6 Mass occurred on the same day as Boy Scout Sunday. The Religious Education Board would like a way to document assignments between the two groups to avoid confusion during the Mass. Deacon recommended that coordination should be as simple as possible. Deacon and Father discuss the number of scouts presenting the gifts with Scout leaders the week before the mass. This information needs to be shared with those planning the Grade Level mass.
 - Father asked that the Religious Ed Board document all their recommendations for improvements for next year if they have not already done so.

- Tuition - Tuition remains at \$45 per student, with a \$100 cap per family. Confirmation tuition is the only exception at \$75. This fee pays for books and materials and does not cover any salaries. It has not been raised in 3 years and is in line with other parishes.

Stewardship – Helen Rehberg

- A parish open house at the rectory is being planned for April 26th. The Stewardship Committee would like this to become a quarterly event. All parishioners are welcome. Open houses are a good way to welcome new families to the parish. Father welcomes having the open house at the rectory.
- The parish picnic is in the brainstorming phase. It was noted that Labor Day is late this year, so mid-August would be a good time for a picnic. We discussed the possibility of having the three Grafton cluster parishes involved as was done a few years ago. Deacon suggested having a picnic on the Common where everyone can bring their own food.

Finance – Deacon Nick

- Deacon was not at the last meeting so he does not have a report.
- Using a “Parish Pay” system that is free to parishioners and provides an electronic option to envelopes will help maintain a consistent weekly collection. It also increases efficiencies. St. Patrick’s of Whitinsville has 100 parishioners on line. It is also used by St. Luke’s and St. Mary’s of Shrewsbury. This will be introduced to the parishioners very soon.

Cluster – Fr. Ray

- The Cluster parishes plan to have each parish on the same financial system before the May meeting.
- A job description for the cluster Business Manager is being written. This person will work with the finance team and handle day to day operations, contracts, purchasing, etc. The job description will be presented to the pastors in May.
- Mass schedule - Sister and Marty need to work on a class schedule before a Mass schedule can be developed.
- Ideas are being shared on how to make the best use of all 3 parish facilities.

Council discussion:

Deacon Nick’s transfer

- Deacon received approval to transfer to St. Joan of Arc, his home parish effective August 1. Deacon’s work will only involve ministry, he will not work as a Pastoral Associate as he does at St. Mary’s.
- The Diaconate community knows of the open position at our parish. The position can be filled either with a newly ordained Deacon or someone interested in transferring to St. Mary’s. An official announcement will be made at the end of March.

Safe Environment – Betsy Holt

- Betsy distributed the Safe Environment Status tracking sheet and explained the program which provides training and tracks CORI background checks focusing on volunteers working with children in the certain ministries.
- The council listened to and discussed her concerns about the lack of clarity around the definition of a “ministry.” Not all ministries, such as the Veteran’s, have contact with children. There is concern is about meeting requirements that will be subject to an audit. Father feels very strongly that the Bishop needs to define this and that we should continue as we have.
- Betsy is looking for another parishioner to assist her.

Parish Achievement Award - Mary Belmore

- Mary was not able to attend the meeting, but she forwarded a copy of a draft of the application and is looking for feedback. Members were asked to send their comments to Mary via e-mail.

Replacement of parish organ

- Currently there is an expense item for regular maintenance/repair, but not a separate budget item for the organ. John will set up a separate fund to prepare for receipt of donations to replace the parish organ.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 14th, 7:00 p.m. **Opening Prayer:** Rebecca Edwards

Minutes respectfully submitted by Janice Mead, Parish Council Secretary