

St. Bernard and St. Henry Joint Pastoral Council Minutes for Meeting of Thursday, October 18, 2018
in St. Henry Meeting Room, Watertown, Wisconsin

I. Meeting called to order at 7:02 pm. Fr. Miro led the Council in prayer.

II. Roll Call Members present: Parochial Vicar Fr. Mirosław Szynal; St. Bernard members Tracy Bargo and James Romlein; Hispanic community member Nancy Acosta; St. Henry members Francine Butzine and Donna O'Brien. Excused: Pastor Fr. Patrick Wendler; St. Bernard members Kathy Chandler, Kathy Reinhard, and trustee Al Reinhard; St. Henry member John Wanke and trustee Jim Becker. Absent: St. Henry trustee Joseph Coughlin and Hispanic community member Ronald Castellion.

III. Chair Jim Romlein shared the agenda. Approval of the Minutes for the May 2018 meeting was tabled until the next meeting. Request made for Tracy Bargo to share them on line again since so much time has passed.

IV Jim asked for a recap of the September 27 meeting of the St. Bernard and St. Henry Finance Committee and Pastoral Council. No official minutes were taken. Father Pat shared that the mandate given to him by the Bishop to do something about the two schools was a four year project for him: a year of intense study and then a three year implementation. As of this year, that has been done. There was a thorough recap of all the capital improvement projects completed over the past several months at both parishes as well as some projects approved but not yet completed. Included were facts regarding the name of vendors, the costs, and dates of completion. Projects still pending and needing approval were listed. Also shared were a number of fact sheets regarding household numbers of both parishes since 2014, as well as extensive financial records over that time period. Budgets for both parishes for July 2018 through June 2019 were included as well. Attendees were called to note that if present trends continue the Finance Committees and Parish Council will need to find viable ways to meet the upcoming financial challenges looming over the next several years. Members were challenged to brainstorm and evaluate possible solutions.

V. Jim shared and explained a model for “Framework and Objectives” on the agenda.

Members of the Pastoral Council are being asked to act as liaisons to the two finance meetings held monthly at each parish. A St. Bernard Pastoral Council member would attend the St. Bernard finance meeting generally held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 5:00 pm and a St. Henry Pastoral Council member attend the St. Henry finance meeting held on the fourth Thursday of the month at 6:00 pm. The hope is to rotate members among the Council. Jim offered to attend the St. Bernard's meeting next week and Donna O'Brien the St. Henry meeting.

VI. Discussion ensued on what the Pastoral Council felt would be a wise course for the Finance Committees to study as one possible solution/action to mitigate upcoming financial challenges. After pros and cons, the decision was reached to ask them to seriously consider the financial benefits of uniting in all ways as one parish. Now, although St. Bernard and St. Henry are often cooperating and working together, we still remain two separate parishes. There seems to be some financial benefits to become one in reality. Some members expressed that a number of parishioners thought we had already become one, under the name of Watertown Catholic! Jim and Donna will take this initiative to the Finance Committees to explore further.

X. Jim proposed that the parish/parishes explore more efficient and creative ways to expand communication for its members: finding out how parishioners preferred to receive information and then meeting their preferences as best as possible whether it be texting, email, phone, paper, etc. He mentioned a program that would make that possible with one input.

XI. Father Miro called the meeting to adjournment at 7:50 pm. He gave a blessing. Next meeting should be Thursday, November 15, 2018 at 7:00 pm at St. Henry.

Francine Butzine, Secretary