

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES

October 5, 2009

A meeting of the St. Joseph School Board was held at 1740 Lake Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois on Monday, October 5, 2009... The meeting was convened at 7:00 p.m. and adjourned at 8:48pm.

Present: Fr. John Pollard, Pastor, Laura Clark, Principal, Mike Kerrigan, President, Denise Kenny, Vice President, Bob Daly, Gary Delaney, Megan Floyd, Mike Gervasio, Fran Seymour, Alison Silk and Andy Walberer. Also attending were Julie Butler, Catherine Sullivan and Andy Kohl.

There being a quorum established in accordance with the School Board Constitution, School Board President Kerrigan called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Mrs. Clark led the meeting with a prayer.

OLD BUSINESS

I. President Mike Kerrigan thanked the School Board for a great Faculty- Board dinner.

II. Approval of minutes from August 31 meeting. The minutes were then voted on and approved. It was agreed that these minutes will be posted on our website in their entirety.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

A. Registration

Currently there are 351 students registered.

B. Exit Interviews

Any board members that have not finished their interviews should send the

information to Mrs. Clark via email. Reasons given for leaving SJS were discussed generally: geographic concerns; financial concerns – some prefer to attend public schools, others not comfortable taking financial assistance; special education in public schools, etc. Fr. Pollard added that almost all families that have requested financial assistance have unemployment issues or have had employers reduce hours.

C. Tuition Collection

NEW BUSINESS

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Principal Laura Clark highlighted the following areas concerning School Management:

A. Dennis Uniform

Mrs. Clark showed the Board a new pullover zipper sweatshirt by Dennis that will soon be an alternative to the school uniform.

B. Classroom Shade Request

Mrs. Hara and Mrs. Estkowski have requested that the school purchase shades for their two classrooms. A tree that used to shade these two rooms is no longer standing and the glare from the sun makes it such that the teachers cannot use power-point in the classroom. It was discussed that getting funds for this added expense will be challenging given the current pressures on the school budget. Megan Floyd offered to talk to school parent Jen Truskowski (an interior decorator who helped with the Moms & Tots room) to see if she can get any sort of discount in this purchase.

C. School Play

Mrs. Clark announced that this year's school play will be "Annie" and will run March 19-21st. A play committee

composed of parents and one teacher will run the show. Interested students in grades 6-8 will audition for parts, and there will be an open stage crew option. Practice times and dates will be published.

D. School Reach

School Reach is up and running successfully.

E. PSA (Private School Aid Service)

It was agreed that the school should renew our contract for this service which costs \$150 annually (applicants pay \$21 fee). This service is used only for our scholarship fund. It advises us on what families need.

F. Fundraising Ideas

PSO Presidents Catherine Sullivan and Julie Butler were present to discuss PSO issues. They confirmed that the PSO will be running fundraisers to meet their targeted goals again this year. These fundraisers are chosen and run solely by the PSO. The School Board acknowledged its great appreciation and support of the PSO's efforts.

It was further discussed that the current economic climate will make fundraising a greater challenge this year. Fr. Pollard stated that the parish is in a difficult situation this year due to a deficit from the last fiscal year and that the parish has already started eliminating certain expenses in an effort to reduce costs. The parish has cancelled its annual music concerts and its thank-you party for volunteers. The parish is also eliminating some of its landscaping. Fr. Pollard emphasized the importance of PSO fundraising in light of this situation.

Fr. Pollard also stated that he has asked Mair Hill to oversee coordination of all fundraising for the parish. Such coordination is necessary because some Sundays we have had too many competing fundraisers going on after church. Mair has agreed to take this on, and all church fundraisers have to get her approval.

Mrs. Clark discussed two fundraising ideas that the PSO could consider: discount cards (which can be used at various vendors in the area) and the selling of gold jewelry. These

and other fundraising ideas would need to be approved by Mair (also to be certain there is no conflict with our agreements with her Angel plan). We also want to be concerned about the reputation of the firms involved (especially with selling of jewelry). These are just some examples of the many smaller fundraisers that could be done by the PSO if it so chooses. However, the PSO presidents pointed out that they have to be careful of: (1) bombarding school families with too many requests; and (2) making the best use of their volunteer manpower which at times seems over-stretched.

The PSO presidents reported that they have already looked into how other parishes such as OLPH and St. Athanasius handle volunteering issues; fundraising via school benefits; etc. They are working on the best methods for SJS this school year. The School Board reiterated its great appreciation of the PSO's efforts and also that it is the decision of the PSO with how they want to proceed with fundraising.

Fr. Pollard also acknowledged his appreciation of the PSO's efforts this year and added his strong plea that the PSO reach their targeted goal even in this difficult economic climate in order to keep tuition from being raised. He encouraged school families to come together in simple ways to enjoy each other's company and raise funds for the school.

PASTOR'S REPORT

A. Parish Council and Parish Finance Council

Fr. Pollard announced that the parish ended its fiscal year June, 2009 in a \$200,000 deficit. Most of this deficit came from the school, despite tuition collection and fundraising. The finance committee is projecting a \$200,000 deficit next year. Fr. Pollard said that a finance council memorandum to him addressing these issues asked that all cost centers reduce expenses by \$140,000: that means \$40,000 reduction in school expenditures; \$20,000 in music expenditures; and \$80,000 in church expenditures. Fr. Pollard has already cancelled music concerts, renegotiated landscaping contracts

and is taking bids for snow removal. He said the parish is already \$27,000 behind in parish collections for the first quarter of this year. He reiterated the importance of fundraising coordination this year via Mair Hill.

B. Emergency Assistance Fund

Fr. Pollard reported that \$19,000 has been disbursed to 15 children in seven families. It has been a successful initiative that has helped SJS not lose families in these tough economic times. The funds that have been collected by the EAF are disbursed, not saved like a scholarship fund. Fr. Pollard also reported receiving a \$10,000 matching donation of which \$4,800 more needs to be raised (we have already received \$5,200 of matching funds which includes a generous donation from a new parishioner).

PRESIDENT'S REPORT/Committee Reports

A. CCI Newsletter

President Kerrigan passed out the September Catholic Conference of Illinois newsletter to the Board confirming that Illinois has eliminated textbook assistance.

B. PSO Catholic Schools Week

In association with the Athletic Board, the School Board will be hosting a continental breakfast for the teachers on February 1, 2010 during Catholic Schools Week. Denise and Alison agreed to organize this.

C. School Board Goals

President Kerrigan acknowledged that our 2009-10 School Board goals were announced on Parent Night and published in the school newsletter.

D. School Issues

President Kerrigan encouraged school board members who are contacted by parents on school related issues to send parents to Mrs. Clark (or Fr. Pollard if appropriate).

E. Finance Committee

The finance committee is working on the deficit issue with a previous board member, Colleen Driscoll, who worked on our budget when she was on the Board. Work will be done with Laura Clark to discern the best way to remove \$40,000 from our current school year budget.

F. Facilities

The Facilities committee is working on a task list and funding for a "Fix-a-thon." This type of work will help reduce costs.

G. Marketing

Megan reported that SJS had a table at the Winnetka Alliance Preschool Fair on October 5th. Colleen Lazar and Carrie Flick represented the school at this event. The Wilmette Library Preschool Fair is upcoming in early November. Megan is busy working on the SJS Open House on November 12th. She is also considering ways to incentivize current parents to recruit friends and looking for more information on how new families are learning about our school.

H. LRP

Gary reported that there will be an updated final plan in the next 10 days for discussion at our next meeting. He suggested that we amend our by-laws to change the Long Range Planning committee from an ad hoc to a standing committee.

I. Christi Fidelis Award

President Kerrigan reported that, after nomination by Fr. Pollard, Tom and Helen Considine were chosen to receive this prestigious award for their extraordinary service to our church. This award is in its 6th year in existence and is given annually. The Considines will receive it on November 8th at Holy Name Cathedral.

The meeting adjourned at 8:48pm.

Respectfully submitted by Alison Silk.