

Parish Pastoral Council Minutes
Church of the Holy Spirit, East Greenbush, NY
January 13, 2016 at 6:45 pm

Presiding: Fr. Joe O'Brien. **In Attendance:** Rocco Acquilano, Cathy Bellisario, Nick Bruno, Kevin Haggerty, Karen LaFrank, Frank Putallaz, Joe Slichko, Steve Wiech
Absent: Cathy Bruno, Deacon Bill Dringus, Rick Hannmann.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:50 pm and Fr. Joe O'Brien opened with prayer. Parish Pastoral Council minutes from our December 9th meeting were reviewed. Kevin Haggerty made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Karen LaFrank seconded the motion. The Council passed the motion.

Old Business

Fr. Joe O'Brien updated the Council on some changes that had taken place in the search process to find a successor to Bernie Rizzo who had been serving as accountant not only to Holy Spirit Church and School but also to the Catholic parishes in Castleton, Clinton Heights and Rensselaer.

The original search, which would be conducted by the four parishes of our local Catholic community, was changed during the Christmas holidays. Fr. LeFort from St Mary's became aware of a candidate and he wanted to hire this person for the position. No plans were formalized by the parish leaders to advertise for this position or for leaders to interview this or any other candidate. This candidate was the only person considered for the position. This person, who is serving other parishes currently, would not have time to include Holy Spirit Church and School within the scope of work. Fr. Joe and Joe Slichko had reservations about the lack of process in this search. They convened a search committee for an accounting candidate to serve our church and school.

To update the Council on the search for an accountant, Fr. Joe stated that Bernie had provided the committee with a list of key responsibilities he performs. The Selection Committee will be meeting with Bernie to obtain additional details on the scope of accounting services he has provided at Holy Spirit. The committee will use this information to prepare language for an ad.

New Business

Dates for Lent/Holy Week/Easter Lent and Easter are early this year. Ash Wednesday is February 10 and Easter March 27.

Episcopal Vicars/Deanery Bishop Scharfenberger has named his episcopal vicars. The first meeting of the local vicariate will take place on January 25th. Deaneries may still choose to meet on a limited basis to address communication and local scheduling matters (ie: scheduling seasonal reconciliation services).

Holy Spirit Community Building Project, Communications Kevin Haggerty, chair of our Facilities Planning Committee, reported to Council members on the status of our Building Project.

The lighting upgrades are complete. Additional track lighting was installed to balance the lighting in the front of the church to the right of the sanctuary. A new cover plate will be installed over the dimmers in the storage room off the children's room. A new sound system was installed in the church for Christmas. The sound engineer has been in to make some adjustments to the system. Some different microphones have been installed at the presider's chair and the ambo. Some additional microphones will be installed to support the choir. The painters will begin work in church next week. New carpets will be installed the following week.

Finance: draft annual report, search for an accountant

A copy of our annual financial report and a draft cover letter were reviewed by Council members. Finance Committee members had also received these materials earlier in the week for their review and comment.

Both Council members offered some suggestions on how to report the credit the parish had received from the Diocese regarding our \$4,600 shortfall in the Bishop's Appeal in view of our participation in our capital campaign. Holy Spirit received this credit in December. Fr. Joe indicated that Finance Committee members had offered some similar comments on this point. He would revise the cover letter. The Council supported communicating this information at our first opportunity. Fr. Joe said that the report would be distributed to parishioners this weekend.

With the credit, the Church showed a surplus of \$2,100 and the school showed a surplus of \$1,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015. Comment was made that \$1,800 drop in offertory giving may have been due to giving to the Building Fund which as of June 30th was at \$110,180. Funds for the general church account and the Building Fund have been kept in separate accounts to prevent commingling.

School report

Joe Slichko reports that or focus now is on our School Open House which is on Sunday, January 31st. Our Open House kicks off Catholic Schools Week. Tuition rates for 2016/17 will be discussed at next week's school board meeting. A five year plan will also be discussed, including expenses, teacher salaries and budget reliance on PSA fundraising and the parish subsidy. The school wants to be self-sufficient within 5 years, that is, to use PSA fundraising and the parish subsidy to support improvements in school programming, not for operating funds.

St. Maureen Moffitt called Joe Slichko to congratulate the school on positive media reports.

LIFT report

Bill Dringus was unable to attend today's Council meeting.

Cathy Belisario mentioned that she had met with some parents from families who have have left to St. Mary's for a more structured faith formation program (instead of LIFT). Cathy's opinion is that these families were seeking a program where children could just be dropped off with no parent involvement in their children's faith formation.

Evaluation forms were received by over 50 January LIFT attendees. Helpful input was received. The reviews of their LIFT experience were overwhelmingly positive. Monday LIFT had about 45 attendees plus volunteers. At Sunday LIFT there were roughly 150-160 attendees. Confirmation candidates attended a meeting that afternoon; all of the candidates and parents stayed for Sunday LIFT.

February's Sunday LIFT gathering time was changed to 2:30-4:30 pm from 5:30-7:30 pm to accommodate the Super Bowl. With a shift in Catholic School's Week scheduling (driven by the diocese) our Monday, February 1st LIFT gathering is being reviewed by the LIFT team. Council members offered ideas to support the gathering.

Closing Prayer

The meeting concluded at 7:50 pm with a closing prayer led by Fr. Joe.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 8th at 6:45 pm. If the need arises to accommodate a new Monday LIFT gathering date, Fr. Joe will contact Council members.