

Cluster 21 Planning Committee Meeting

2 – 4:00 p.m., Sunday, October 22, 2006

St. Peter's Parish Hall

Present: *David Deprey, chair; Msgr. Paul Stefanko, Rev. Richard-D. Bertrand, S.J., Rev. Fred Morse, Rev. Roland Pitenge, O.F.M., Peter Lancia, Gene Fetteroll, Bob Konczal, Barbara Linnehan Smith, Gregory St. Angelo, Lori Arsenault (admin)*

Minutes:

(1) Opening Prayer

(2) Review of updates to the comprehensive data spreadsheet – all members acknowledged receipt of the spreadsheet, and have no updates to make to it at this time.

(3) Reports of how parish councils work, how financial issues are determined, and conditions of parish facilities, was given by each of the pastors. Summary:

- Four of the five churches employ a part-time bookkeeper.
- Three of the five parishes employ a part-time secretary.
- Several of the parishes employ a custodian.
- Additional work is done by volunteer staff.
- Several parishes have trust funds dedicated to the upkeep of the facilities.
- All advisory councils are volunteer.
- All of the facilities are in good condition, without a significant amount of capital improvements needed.
- Several of the parishes have completed major renovation or repair projects without incurring debt.

(4) Review / discussion of last three years' of financial data from each parish (D. Deprey)

Dave has started an in-depth analysis. A copy is available for committee members to review. Will have the analysis completed by the next meeting. Observation:

- Diocese uses cash accounting.
- Every parish is at least breaking even or better.
- Three out of five churches, revenues have decreased over the past three years.
- Balance sheets show different dedicated and non-dedicated funds with healthy balances.
- Cathedral school is in good financial condition.

(5) Guest speaker: Peter McPartland, Assistant Controller for the Diocese – Led a discussion of the funding formula(s) of parochial schools – gave an overview of how the schools will be supported beginning with the 2007/2008 academic year, and answered questions.

School funding plan: for each cluster, the schools within the cluster will be supported by the cluster as a whole. Schools funding is now going to be carved up between the parishes, and prorated to the offertory. Will be looking at funding at the current levels without any increases. Peter has requested information data from schools. Superintendent will meet with each school in the Diocese and then turn it over to the clusters. 10101, the first income account is the account that will be used in the new funding formula. “Assessment” is what it's called that each parish will be charged.

Other items discussed:

- Special circumstances of St. Peter's, St. Louis and Sacred Heart / St. Dominic.
- City funds are available to Cathedral School because of the percentage of poverty level students, making the school eligible for Title 1 moneys. If the percentage were to change because of merging with other schools, some of these programs would be lost. It's approximately \$100,000 plus a summer school. Poverty level allows for programs to provide services for students and families in need.
- Discussion of the distribution of students in schools across the city, and concerns about enrollments, and the associated variables.
- Suggestion for a study to be made about the area Catholic Schools apart from the Cluster. Sr. Theresa spoke in favor of the K-8 model rather than middle school
- Fr. Bertrand spoke in favor of looking at all the Catholic schools in the region as a unit, and perhaps look at school support and collaboration as a several step process.

Summary: Quality of education, economies of scale, can we do it better for less cost? Cluster will fund Cathedral school, in addition to children going to other schools. Cluster will receive money for out-of-cluster children coming to Cathedral School. An analysis is being done to arrive at specific numbers that will affect the cluster. Time frame: formula will be in place for the next school year, 2007-2008, using 2006-2007 financials as a basis. Changes can be phased in over three years.

(6) Update on creation of shared directory for document sharing (Lori) – a password protected directory has been created for making draft documents and planning materials available to the committee online. Instructions were given to members for getting to the directory.

(7) Update on youth ministry (R. Rier) - tabled

(8) Update on religious education and faith formation (P.Lancia) – Peter provided a summary sheet showing a comprehensive program of faith formation throughout cluster. Through phone calls, he determined that interest is present for collaboration in several areas. The cluster's multi-cultural efforts are very broad, and include various levels of diaspora, especially among some of the immigrant communities. Some duplication was noticed, and opportunities for collaboration without a lot of extra work exist.

(9) Update on social justice & peace (C. Thibeault) - tabled

(10) Discussion of need for volunteers to gather information on parish life & worship & spirituality (All) - tabled

(11) Review timeline from now to November 22, and discussion of next steps – It was determined that a sub-committee would be appointed to discuss a timeline for the 6-week project of creating the report to be completed by November 22, 2006. The sub-committee members are Lori Arsenault, Gene Fetteroll, Peter Lancia, and Dave Deprey. A brief meeting was scheduled following the full committee meeting.

(12) Time/day for next meeting at St. Louis Parish – Sunday, October 22, 2006: 2 – 4 p.m.

(13) Adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

(14) Closing Prayer

Submitted by Lori Arsenault
October 23, 2006