



CCEC

Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2017

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm by Sara Horvath.

Opening prayer led by Fr. Robert Creagan, followed by the Pledge.

Present: Sara Horvath, John Berlin, Gerald Heath, Larry Hoskins, Jody Maher, Larry Glendening, Michael Bauman, Jay Hardman, Kimberli Siglow, Michelle Oakes, Angie Seger, Fr. Robert Creagan, Aimee Dienes, Lori Anne Huegel, and Janet Sullivan.

Excused: Charlie LaSata, Noreen Szymanski, Theresa Rondelli.

Notes: Gina Smith

TCACSF Update - Advancement Director Update

Mr. John Berlin explained to the committee that Advancement Director, Kelli Corning was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Tuesday, November 14, had been a "big day" he explained, as he, Larry Glendening, and Michael Bauman had met with a group from the TCACSF to whiteboard the relationship moving forward. The meeting could be summed up with one word, "Positive." The group was also joined by Michelle Birkel, from Partners In Mission (PIM), and together they detailed how money would flow from the TCACSF to Lake Michigan Catholic Schools. The ultimate goal is to increase the General Fund, eliminating the need for multiple small fundraisers.

Mr. Berlin expressed his confidence with the Fund's participation, and feels "everyone is on the same page." The financial and process development background of Mrs. Corning will be of great benefit.

Larry Glendening admitted to the committee that he had entered the meeting with a large amount of stress. Much of this was due to the impact that these changes will have on his department.

The Advancement department should be kicking off the Annual Fund mailings soon, and the TCACSF will help with that process.

Michael Bauman noted that he was encouraged by the meeting, and felt that he obtained clarity of the operating model. For example: how do we go about obtaining new sports uniforms, a new boiler, etc.? How would we go about getting the money? We theoretically conducted some stress-tests to the model. “This is a new process, and we are learning continuously. We recognize that the process isn’t one-size-fits-all, but we have the right people in place, and the future looks bright.”

Larry Glendening agreed that the meeting was positive for all involved. It “cleared the clouds” of uncertainty. Mr. Glendening will be meeting with Sarah Jollay on Monday, November 20, 2017. Operating procedure in the Business Office will change drastically. “We need to plan ahead, and not act reactively.” Mr. Glendening continued to explain that this needs to go all the way to the coaches. For example, if you know your team will need new uniforms in a few years, plan for it. Mr. Berlin added that this relates to Blue Tide and the planning of each school year. Coaches will need to tell Blue Tide of their needs in advance, so that funds can be raised, Larry noted.

Fr. Robert Creagan asked the group if there was a time when all the coaches could hear this information. Both Larry and Gerald Heath agreed that indeed there is. Fr. Bob followed up by asking for clarification on whether all “little fundraisers” would be eliminated. “I feel that is nickel-and-diming, and would hope the parents would be thankful if those stopped.” On the other hand, we would just have tuition and the Annual Fund. How would those fundraisers be replaced? Michael Bauman noted that the small fundraisers have been used when teachers/coaches have had smaller financial needs.

Gerald Heath expressed to the committee that we “need to make the organization's healthy. Coaches have been helpful, but Blue Tide is not healthy. They don’t even have a Board (of Directors).” Larry Glendening then posed the question, “What do we do if Blue Tide goes away?” Michael Bauman eased fears by explaining to the committee that we “have a commitment from the Fund, which is basically a line of credit. The money is there, we just need to force a change in habits.” Agreement was expressed by Larry Glendening as he noted, “This is a major undertaking on the Fund’s part. Really, it is unprecedented.”

Jay Hardman wondered what our needs actually are, and how we would capture those. Looking at these needs through a project-based system, he would like coaches, teachers,

etc., to look two (2), three (3) years out, and prioritize. Mr. Hardman continued to express his feeling that the CCEC should do the prioritizing.

Mr. Berlin commented that we should shift to more of a zero-based budget, being closer to need. “For example, the (S.C.E.N.E.) auction brought in \$20,000 more than we expected. How do we now change the budget for this year’s auction?” This then raised a question by Larry Glendening on what would happen if we didn’t make that amount this year?

Mr. Heath circled back to the sports team needs and Blue Tide, asking, “When a coach makes a request, who says ‘yes’ or ‘no’?” Larry Glendening answered, “The thinking is that a coach will go to Blue Tide for money, but a request will still go to the Fund. If the money is there, they can’t say ‘no’.” “But what if Blue Tide goes away?” Mr. Heath asked. “Then it becomes an Administrative decision,” replied Mr. Berlin. “What do we do about the little things? Like the fact that we had grubs on the soccer field, and had to treat that? We can’t budget for things like that. We didn’t know. Then what?” pondered Mr. Heath. Michael Bauman agreed that there would be some fluctuations. Mr. Glendening's response was, “Budget. If it doesn’t get used, we can use it for something else.”

Sara Horvath felt that treating for things like grubs on the soccer field was maintenance, and should be a line item on the budget. Mr. Bauman agreed, noting that we understand the maximum and minimum operating cost over the past ten (10) years, and are sensitive to it.

Jay Hardman asked if all of the money except tuition, lunch and daycare will now go through the fund. Mrs. Kimberli Siglow wondered what would happen to the individual classes, and their financial needs for activities such as Prom. Larry Glendening admitted that we do not have an answer to that at this point. “We will have to see what is in-scope and out of scope. Is the need educational or not?” Mrs. Siglow also expressed the opinion that the students learn from having class funds, and needing to set and follow a budget. Mr. Glendening explained that further discussions are necessary, and communication with the parties in charge of funds will need to occur. “Be positive, so that it doesn’t hurt the project.”

Sara Horvath wondered when the change in financial policy would take effect. John Berlin explained that the TCACSF hoped for December 1, 2017. Larry Glendening noted that he will have to meet with Sarah Jollay first, and that switching (policies and practices) mid-year would be extremely hard. A solution will be found. Gerald Heath

wanted to make sure “little things like class funds” are decided soon, before Prom and other activities are planned. Mr. Berlin explained that parents would contribute to the Annual Fund, and then money from the Fund would pay for those activities. Larry Hoskins told the committee that at his previous school, they looked at all the little fundraisers, and added up what they made. Then they did one larger fundraiser to reach that goal, which they actually wound up exceeding.

Needed: Committee Chair for Faculty Staff/Growth

It was explained to the committee by Sara Horvath, that Charlie LaSata no longer wants to be the Chair of the Faculty Staff/Growth Committee. Lori Anne Huegel is a member of that committee, and said that there had been one meeting on October 4, 2017. Mrs. Horvath continued by reviewing the objectives of the committee, and wondered if any progress had been made. Lori Anne admitted that while there had been a good discussion about the low salaries, no progress had been made at this point. Since no other CCEC members volunteered to take on this committee, Sara Horvath wondered if it should be opened up to staff members who had shown interest. Mr. Berlin suggested talking with Megan Munafa and will will contact her.

Committee Reports:

Catholic Identity

Lori Anne Huegel reported that the committee had held its first official meeting on October 10, 2017. Following a review of the five (5) year plan and the Foster Catholic Identity Strategic Objectives and Outcomes, the decision was made to focus on families. “To do so, we need to incorporate the family into Catholic Identity.” John Berlin presented the “Building Strong Catholic Families...It takes a Partnership!” model. Mr. Berlin had worked with Tim McNamara from the Kalamazoo Diocese to arrange a site visit.

On October 30, 2017, the committee reconvened to discuss the program partnership particulars with Mr. McNamara. The Strong Catholic families: Strong Catholic Youth is an ongoing parish or school based process that engages and strengthens parents and families in growing as a domestic church through a close and vital partnership with the school and parish. Lori Anne reported that there would be a minimal cost for the initiative, as our Diocese has already purchased the copyright permission for us to use. We have full support from both the Kalamazoo Diocese and Tim McNamara.

The next step would be to have Fr. Bob do a brief introduction at each of the holiday events (Middle and High School Band concert on November 30, 2017, and Elementary

School Christmas concerts on December 12 and 13, 2017). An electronic survey would follow with the help of Mr. Berlin. The Catholic Identity Committee would then meet to review the survey results. A tentative date of January 31, 2018 has been chosen to conduct the review at the Rose Center.

Mr. Berlin wondered if the speaker at the Christmas Concerts would be Fr. Bob or Larry Hoskins. Fr. Bob explained to the committee that he is booked on November 30, but would be back for the December 12 - 13 concerts.

Fr. Bob went on to explain that a count is taken each year, usually in October, to figure out the basic attendance at mass. "October is the 'magic' month when kids are in school, and the snowbirds haven't left yet." In our Diocese, about 32.5% of practicing Catholics attend regularly. While we are higher than the National average, we would like to see it be higher. "Some areas are as high as 50%. St. Joseph attendance hasn't fluctuated as much in the past three (3) years as SS. John and Bernard." Fr. Bob believes the decline at SS. John and Bernard were due to the issues involving Fr. Stanley. He also reminded the committee that no mass times have been eliminated. Mr. Berlin agreed, noting that it has been "a revolving door" since Fr. Bill left.

Fr. Bob said he can get further numbers pulled out of the count. John Berlin asked Fr. Bob if it would be possible to get parish data, as he has concerns on the accuracy of school aged children. "We only know the info we do have, and that should be pretty accurate. We know the number of people. St. Joseph Parish has just over 1600 families, (which equates to around 4,800 people) while SS. John and Bernard has around 800 families (which equates to around 2400 people)", Fr. Bob said. He agreed that there are probably ways to "pull the numbers out, like ages of students, etc." but that he would have to know more specifically what was needed. The Church staff should be cooperating fully with any needs.

Strategic Plan High Level Committee Reports (All Non-Reporting Committees)

Ensure Long Term Financial Health

Michael Bauman reported that the committee had just met, and will do so again in three (3) weeks. During the last meeting the committee put together three (3) pillars of objectives. The most important thing the committee wanted to break down is how to measure success. For example, enrollment. "We need to determine the target number of students, and know why this is the number. We need to look at *new* vs. *retention*. We need to focus on retention." The committee identified good ways to focus on

retention, and will now work on those ideas, such as a Legacy Scholarship, Parishioner Scholarship, Incentive Programs, etc. “We need to keep the focus on keeping current families, which will attract new families.” There are eighty-three (83) new students at Lake Michigan Catholic this year, many of whom are Preschoolers. It was noted by the CCEC that Janet Sullivan and the Admissions Office are “doing a great job. They are doing a good job changing and improving the image.”

Lori Anne Huegel wondered what our “old image” was. Mr. Berlin explained that the perception has been that our “second level is not as good.” Angie Seger expressed her delight in the professional quality of our marketing materials. Fr. Bob noted that he hadn’t “been here long, but who is thinking we don’t have a Catholic identity?” One of the committee members responded with the saying, “Catholic kids swear like sailors.”

Discussing negative talk, Janet Sullivan commented, “Who goes to the E.R. and says ‘I had a great experience?’” Larry Hoskins seconded the sentiment, adding, “You can’t have it both ways. You can’t say we’re not religious enough and then complain about us spending too much time on religion.” “Or complaining that the kids are out of class for a service project,” added Mrs. Sullivan. She continued to discuss how negative “parking lot talk” causes damage.

Exit Interview Overview/Questions

Each CCEC member had received an email with survey responses and pertinent information from John Berlin. Sara Horvath began the conversation by noting that there had not been a high percentage of responses. She asked the committee if there were any thoughts/reactions/anything standing out to them.

Jay Hardman felt that “any feedback is priceless, and important to have.” He continued on to encourage the committee to dig down into the comments. “Internally, we may have to take a step back, and think like someone from the outside, looking in.” Mr. Hardman explained that he felt like we (as a school) are justifying the reason for leaving, and that a more unbiased, objective view is in order. Mr. Berlin responded by explaining that the column he had added to the survey responses was meant to explain “school life” to the newer commissioners, and not excuses.

Larry Glendening added that the “exit survey is nice, but if only eighteen (18) percent are being returned, what do we do about the rest? To these families, it (their issues) is real. It is easy to make excuses, so how do we go about accepting what is said? Sometimes we are right, sometimes we’re not.” Michael Bauman shared his thoughts on physical interviews, and that he felt they produced feedback more effectively than

surveys. Mr. Bauman wondered how the information received is processed, and are we finding any trends?

Janet Sullivan informed the committee that every family who left “got at least two (2) phone calls.” At the time, the Exit Committee was comprised of volunteer parents. Work with parents during the enrollment period gives families a chance to “say their piece,” Mr. Berlin added. Michael Bauman wondered if that information was being captured, and both Mrs. Sullivan and Mr. Glendening assured the committee that it was.

Fr. Bob talked to the group about “parking lot meetings” and how sometimes those actually capture the truth. “Is it really a question of finances? We bend over backward to help. We are still working on catching up with tuitions that haven’t been paid. If they really want to stay, we will make it happen. When someone leaves, does the faculty have a pulse on more than what is being admitted (in exit interviews)? Is there some sort of outreach above and beyond us?”

Mrs. Jody Maher commented that she felt that the Fourth (4th) and Fifth (5th) grade teachers have their “ear to the ground” about plans to leave, etc. In fact, she is working with one family right now. “We don’t want to be gossiping, but we need to act on it,” added Fr. Bob. Mr. Berlin explained that parents are given the time to vent, but at that point, it is post-mortem. “This is the ultimate negative decision for the schools, and we take it very seriously.”

Mr. Gerald Heath felt that “surveys are important, but we can’t be everything to everyone. We need to develop *Who* we are. If you don’t like it as a parent/teacher/coach/administrator, then go find another school or job. We are chasing our tails trying to be everything to everyone, and we don’t have the resources.” “We need to further our ideas, and decide ‘where do we want to go?’ We aren’t ethnically blended right now, and we don’t want to promote that, but we can get there,” commented Janet Sullivan.

“We need to stand for something,” Mr. Heath lamented. “We do!” Mrs. Sullivan replied. Mr. Heath followed with “Everyone around the table will have a different answer.” Mr. Berlin stated that the work we have done on our Strategic Plan indicates our identity very well. Mrs. Sullivan explained to the commission that her office has student statements that will be shared. Along those lines, Fr. Bob recalled hearing about a school program while at the Partners In Mission conference. “The school had a ‘We Are...’ slogan, and there were all sorts of different answers. For us, that would conclude

with 'We Are LMC.' Enthusiasm and excitement were generated. Hopefully we can do something like this, and not be fighting ourselves."

Mr. Hardman revisited his earlier statement, "Feedback is priceless." "What are we doing better? Communication has been great. The FaceBook posts and eNewsletter are wonderful. Many items have been acted upon." He wondered aloud if we should get feedback from those still enrolled. "If every year we are seeing the same thing, we need to record these trends and decide what to attack."

Larry Glendenning explained that when you read through the surveys, you will see that many of the problems are social issues associated with a small school. "How do you address that? Take bullying. This is not a new issue. We have been dealing with it for years." Angie Seger felt that it would take the school and parents partnering to combat that issue. John Berlin explained to the committee that when the school is made aware of bullying that there are policies in place, and action taken. Janet Sullivan noted that programming is in place to help bring the schools together.

"Intentional action is needed. Make the statement, 'We hear you' while addressing issues," stated Jay Hardman. "Parents will also need to address issues with their own children." Larry Glendenning added that we need to both individually and collectively work on issues.

Mr. Hardman then addressed Mr. Heath. "Gerald, I agree that you can't address everything." "We need to address 'What are you?' Parents leave, we change the issue, and then others go because of those changes. Maybe we should ask, 'Why do you stay?'," Gerald replied. Larry Glendenning followed with his feeling that we need to get positive parents to group together, and then slowly add the other parents. Mrs. Sullivan reminded the committee that we do have programs to include families, and we are trying to turn things around.

Lori Anne Huegel felt the Catholic Identity Committee could help with finding needs, and provide education on those topics. She wondered why we are working on separate things. "School becomes the common denominator. Sometimes people leave due to access to other kids while dealing with social issues. This is an exhaustive measure. We won't solve this as a committee. We can help, we have Student Ambassadors, etc.," Mr. Berlin stated. Sara Horvath thought it might be good to add the "Why do you stay?" question to the January survey. Mr. Hardman followed with a touching sentiment at graduation. "You hear them talk about each other and giving hugs, posing for pictures,

and so on. What a great thing to see.” John Berlin added, “Even after they’re out, they still keep in touch.”

Frequency and Type of Administrative Reports to CCEC

Sara Horvath asked the committee what the best timing of their periodic reports would be. John Berlin offered that he keeps a running update, with highlights at the bottom, and wondered if that is desirable for everyone. Michael Bauman thought the committee could rotate who would take each month, or maybe do it quarterly.

“Committees would rather focus on goals and then mid-year do an assessment of those goals and report out,” Jay Hardman thought. Sara Horvath added, “Obviously, if there is anything big, report it.” Mr. Berlin chimed in with, “Mid and year-end.”

Larry Glendenning wondered if the committee would still like the financial report monthly. Mr. Heath asked if the CCEC should invite students to report out issues in their world. “We could ask them about changes, hear from them.” Along those lines, Janet Sullivan mentioned the “Shark Tank” assignment done yearly in Mrs. Simmons’ classroom, and maybe it would generate ways to improve the school. This is typically done in the spring, during class time. “We have actually made some changes due to that project,” added Mr. Heath.

Mrs. Jody Maher thought club representatives could come to the CCEC meetings, and “tell us what it looks like” so that the committee would be better informed. Mr. Heath thought maybe having the class officers come would be a good idea, but they would have to “Keep things general. No attacks.” Jay Hardman would like to see students reporting on incorporating Laker Values. Sara Horvath would like to get Fifth (5th) graders involved as well. “You’d have to make it an earlier time,” Larry Hoskins replied. Mrs. Horvath hoped to get a student to come to the December meeting.

CCEC Shared Google Calendar is Live

John Berlin shared a Google Calendar with CCEC members, which included the meeting dates. Each committee can add their meetings and send invitations to attend. Help was offered to anyone in need. Events were highlighted for reference. A few members asked Mr. Berlin to re-share the email, as they hadn’t received it. The Google Calendar was re-sent.

January Board Meeting?

Sara Horvath posed the question of a January Board Meeting to the committee. “There isn’t one on the agenda due to the retreat at the start of February, and then a meeting later in the month. Do we actually need one?” Noting that she wouldn’t actually need to

attend, Jody Maher thought the only reason for a January meeting would be if Larry Glendening needed to discuss tuition and registration. Mr. Glendening told the group that he could simply email the information out. Janet Sullivan wondered about the survey, but Sara Horvath replied that the survey would be done, and sent electronically by that point.

Board Meeting Evaluation

John Berlin passed out an evaluation form to each committee member. Both he, and Mrs. Horvath asked the attendees to please follow best practices, and fill out an evaluation.

Comments

Sara Horvath asked if there were any further comments. None were offered.

Adjournment

Jay Hardman made the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Michelle Oakes. All approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 pm. The next meeting will be held on December 6, 2017, at 7:00 pm.