

Minutes
Board of Trustees Meeting
Voice of the Faithful, Inc.
January 26, 2008 (11:00 A.M. – 9:00 P.M. EST)
January 27, 2008 (10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. EST)

Trustees present: Dan Bartley, Bill Casey (presiding), Ron DuBois, Mary Pat Fox, Elia Marnik, David O'Brien, Jayne O'Donnell, Jim Post, Dan Sullivan (Quorum present).

Officers present: Gaile Pohlhaus, Mary Freeman.

Executive Director: Donna Doucette.

Opening and Closing Prayer Sessions each day were led by Jayne O'Donnell.

Agenda

The participants addressed major oversight and strategic issues in four sessions.

1. Session One (Saturday morning/afternoon): VOTF performance, development, and governance.
2. Session Two (Saturday afternoon/evening): financial issues, leadership issues, and election of Officers.
3. Session Three (Sunday morning): decisions on key strategic and governance issues.
4. Session Four (Sunday afternoon): recurring business of the Board.

Session One

Summary Conclusions:

- ambitious fund-raising efforts during last six months proved very effective, but they did not raise enough to provide a comfortable reserve for the next six months.
- continuing development success depends upon greater clarity and focus about VOTF's message and compelling rationale for contributions from members and donors, especially at levels above \$500.
- the lived experience with VOTF's unique governance structure and decision-making process has achieved some expectations of the original vision but has frustrated others.

Action: decisions on specific actions were scheduled for Session Three.

Session Two

Summary Conclusions:

- the proposal from Working Group 2 (Crisis In The Priesthood) offers a well-designed plan to advance Goal 2 and merits consideration in the development of the FY 09 budget. VOTF finances (FY 08 budget) do not permit funding requested by Working Group 2 at this time.
- the proposal from the Board's Committee on Trustee Nominations warrants implementation: that VOTF form an Advisory Council of members with a seasoned perspective on the abuse crisis, VOTF, and the role of the laity in the life of the Church.
- the report and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Roles and Authority offer an opportunity for improved trust and leadership collaboration, but they impose

- recurring complaints from some members that some candidates have unauthorized access to members' email addresses for purposes of campaigning require a careful and deliberate review by the Board in order to ensure the integrity of the election process and balance the interests and rights of all parties as much as is possible.

Actions:

1. Executive Director Donna Doucette will contact the chair of Working Group 2 to encourage further advancement of its proposal (Crisis In The Priesthood) and, in conjunction with the Working Group, will offer to explore potential sources of funding in connection with the development of the FY 09 budget.
2. Dan Bartley agreed to explore the possibility of a special fund-raising appeal among the Long Island affiliates for front-end funding needs in the proposal.
3. The Board's Trustee Nominations Committee will explore the interest and availability of former Trustees, authors and academics, and other national figures as potential nominees for a Council to advise the Board on strategic vision and direction.
4. The Board will request all of the candidates for national office to refrain from any campaign messages to members for whom they have no authorized access to their email addresses.
5. The Board will continue to review the interests and concerns of members and candidates as it seeks to ensure a fair election.

Session Three

Summary Conclusion: the Board needs to take a strong leadership role regarding key strategic and governance matters.

Actions:

1. The Board will develop a leadership proposal that reaffirms VOTF's commitment to substantial and concrete lay roles in the life and governance of the Church; further that clear and compelling messages be articulated to members and donors explaining how VOTF delivers value.
2. The Board will notify the NRC Steering Committee that it and the Officers are ready to participate in a six-month trial period of the recommendations (with slight modifications) of the Ad Hoc Committee on Roles and Authority.
3. The Board will undertake a re-examination of the VOTF governance structure and decision-making model based on lived experience since the By-Laws were effected in June 2006, and it will invite a member from the NRC and the new Officers to join in this initiative.

Session Four

Updates/Actions:

1. Board Minutes—the Board approved the minutes for its meeting on November 27, 2007.
2. Meeting with Tom Doyle—Bill Casey reported on his continuing efforts to schedule a meeting with Tom Doyle over the exchange of views between Tom and the Board on the future and direction of VOTF; Tom's schedule has not yet allowed a meeting.

3. Officers Report—Mary Pat Fox reported on correspondence with the Jesuits about their commitment as a religious order to address the effects of sexual abuse of minors by Jesuits as well as her efforts, in conjunction with Mike Sweatt, to arrange a meeting with Cheverus H.S. officials about the survivors of Charles Malia’s abuses. Mike Sweatt informed Mary Pat that the Malia survivors no longer were interested in such a meeting. Mary Pat also reported that she and Tom Doyle reached agreement that any meeting that he offered to broker between officials of VOTF and the survivor community should wait until after the election of national VOTF officers.
4. NRC Report—Ron DuBois reported on the newly-formed ad hoc committees to review VOTF’s role regarding the responsibilities and work of the National Review Board and religious orders in responding to the sexual abuse crisis. The Board appointed Elia Marnik to serve as its representative to the committee regarding the National Review Board and Mary Pat Fox as its representative on the committee regarding religious orders.

The meeting ended with a final prayer at 3:00 P.M.