

Minutes (Draft)
Board of Trustees Meeting (at College of Mount St. Vincent, Bronx, NY)
Voice of the Faithful, Inc.
Sunday, October 31, 2010 8:30 PM-2:00 PM EST

Board Members Present: Elia Marnik (presiding), Mary Pat Fox, Pat Gomez, Bill Casey, Dan Bartley, Ed Wilson, Ron DuBois, Jayne O'Donnell, Mary Freeman, Mark Mullaney, and John Hushon (absent).

Officers Present: Janet Hauter (absent), Kevin Connors, Nick Mazza.

Executive Director: Donna Doucette.

Opening Comment: Chair Elia Marnik acknowledged the fine work of Jessica Lillie Ciccone in her years of service to VOTF as Public Relations Director. Elia mentioned that Jessica was given a departing gift and read a thank you note from Jessica to all.

Opening Prayer Service was led by Ron DuBois on Centering Prayer. Ron explained the nature and techniques on Centering Prayer. Group shared their insights and experiences.

1. Administrative Matters: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board approved minutes of the Board of Trustee meeting on September 28, 2010, as presented (10-0-1 absent).

2. Finances: Treasurer Kevin Connor indicated that there are three areas of the operating budget that show vital signs on the health of the organization. Two of the three are revenue and expense goals each month against the projected budget. The third is the liquidity standards established by the Board as an indication of our ability to maintain our viability. Kevin encouraged the Board to review these financial indicators each month and to question the Executive Director, Development Committee and Officers when differences from the planned budget exists and how these should be addressed.

Executive Director indicated that she is very pleased with the current monthly revenue and expenses (October 2010) despite larger than normal expenses in this month. There was some concern expressed about future cash flow to meet future expenses as a general rule. Donna further indicated that there are some positive movements with donor activity that can place us in a better position. However, donor fatigue is always a concern. Acquisition mailing is also important to the identification of future donors. Our current strategy is to "swap" donors with other reform organization and at no cost to us. This seems to be working.

3. Development: Committee Chair Jayne O'Donnell indicated that major donor activity is a vital part of the development effort. This is being implemented in conjunction with a thank you follow up program to donors of \$500 and above. Acquisition donor mailings continue to be developed as well as foundation solicitation. Finally, plans are in motion by Mark Mullaney to cultivate and solicit donors for the establishment of an endowment fund. This received positive feedback. Secretary Nick Mazza suggested that a solicitation for an endowment also include a request to donors for a portion of their donation to be directed to the establishment of a cash reserve which would be invested in order to be used, with donor permission, in a financial crunch.

4. Discussion on VOTF Mission/Goals/Identity Statement: Chair Elia Marnik opened a discussion on the topic of VOTF's mission, our three goals/identity statement and asked the Board

and Officers to join in discussion. It was agreed that a clear working framework between Board and Officers on each others understanding of our Mission Statement, three goals and the Identity Statement was critical for a productive working relationship between these two leadership groups to sustain the organization.

An extensive and passionate discussion took place around the question of whether VOTF's mission and goals direct it to address structural reform issues in a way that is distinctive to itself as an organization and potentially different from the way in which other Catholic reform groups address similar issues of interest from their organizations. As a result of much honest discussion and creative thinking the follow two resolutions were made and passed by the full Board in attendance by a vote of 10-0-1 absent. These resolutions read: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board approved the following statements:

- 1) At its most recent meeting VOTF BOT and Officers agreed that a primary lens through which it will consider VOTF initiatives is the impact of the initiative on reducing clericalism which is a root cause of the clergy sexual abuse scandal.
- 2) At its most recent meeting VOTF BOT and Officers concluded that mandatory celibacy is a contributing factor impacting clericalism and therefore VOTF endorses optional celibacy as a step to reduce clericalism, for diocesan priests in the Latin rite.

The Officers agreed that a plan to implement these resolutions is the next step before a more formal public pronouncement is made by the organization.

Much of this discussion altered the meeting schedule timeframe. As a result further discussion on the Officer's Strategy Committee report will be deferred to the next Board conference call.

5. Discussion on VIA Initiatives: President Dan Bartley provided a summary of the *Voices in Action* Initiatives and mentioned that the Local Action Platform is progressing along with its reorganization and the Child Protection/Survivor Support Committee is about to launch a VOTF webpage for Survivor Support and it will include a link to the advocacy guide it developed to assist VOTF members in reform efforts to change statue of limitations regarding child sex abuse victims.

Executive Director Donna Doucette reported on the web site development for the Women's Initiative as well as the upcoming drafts on positions affecting women in the church, including the women's diaconate.

Trustee Ed Wilson provided an overview of the actions and plans underway by the Bishop's Initiative, including the current survey and meeting with officials in the Diocese of Manchester, NH. The Initiatives' team is developing plans for the Archdiocese of Chicago which has active affiliates and the upcoming resignation of Cardinal George.

Finally, President Dan Bartley and Secretary Nick Mazza discussed the progress made in working with the former Priest Support Working Group transitioning to the VIA and the establishment of the Priests Initiative under the Universal Church Reform Platform co-moderated by Nick Mazza and Anne Southwood.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board adjourned the meeting at 2:00 PM. Furthermore, a motion was duly made and seconded to move to an Executive Session of the Board of Trustees. Both resolutions passed by a vote of 10-0-1.

Next meeting: Tuesday evening November 23, 2010 at 7:00PM EST.