

**Minutes**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting (at VOTF office and teleconference)**  
**Voice of the Faithful, Inc.**  
**November 13, 2007, 7-9:35 PM (EST)**

**Board members:** On phone: Jayne O'Donnell, Elia Marnik (7:15), Mary Pat Fox, Bill Casey (chair,) David O'Brien, Svea Fraser; In Office: Ron DuBois (in office).

**Officers:** Gaile Pohlhaus (clerk, by phone).

**Executive Director:** Donna Doucette (in office).

Opening Prayer read by Bill Casey for Svea Fraser at 7:05.

## **1. Administrative Matters**

The minutes of meetings on 9/25/07, 10/9/07 and 10/30/07 were approved as presented (7 – 0 – 0).

Bill Casey suggested the weekend of January of the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> for an in-person meeting. He will solicit a definite response from all the Trustees.

Donna Doucette reported that she had secured a mail house to handle mass solicitations at less cost, a new part-time webmaster, and a modest grant to support VOTF web operations.

## **2. Ad Hoc Committee on Roles and Authority**

Bill Casey and Elia Marnik reported on the progress the committee has made and distributed a working document that shows the expectations, roles and responsibilities of the Officers, NRC members and the BOT as envisioned by the committee members (3 NRC, 2 Officers, 2 BOT). The Board Members' initial reaction to the expectations was favorable, but most felt that the roles and responsibilities made for a very time-consuming and cumbersome process. They also discussed the proper role of the Board in the early stages of a proposal in light of their later arbiter role defined in the By-Laws, but they agreed that more time was needed to review and discuss these questions. They also concluded that the provision in the working document that calls for the Board, during a meeting to resolve an irreconcilable difference between the NRC and Officers, to arrange an oral or written transcript of the meeting, was an excessive expectation should not be included in a final document. Bill asked for the sense of the Board about holding open meetings. They recognized legitimate expectations for members and leaders to understand the Board's thinking and deliberation outcomes as well as the challenges and inefficiencies of including more observers or participants in meetings largely conducted by phone. The discussion was deferred to a later time when all Board members could be present.

## **3. NRC Proposals**

There were three resolutions passed at the NRC meeting in October: Crisis in the Priesthood, Lay Council, and Women's Role in the Church (each one is in a different stage of deliberation). In an earlier response to the NRC, the Officers expressed significant problems with the wording if it does not situate the concerns about women in the larger context of inequalities regarding all the laity. The Board members thought that the resolutions on Priesthood and Lay Council fit within VOTF's mission, but they had mixed views on whether the Women's resolution did. They thought that the resolution ought to address the unique issues about women in the larger marginalization of all lay members of the Church. The members also expressed a financial concern about VOTF trying to take on multiple proposals and resolutions. Bill Casey will respond to the NRC on behalf of the Board about the three proposals after securing feedback from the full Board on a draft response.

#### **4. Expectations of VOTF**

Mary Pat Fox proposed a letter to members which expresses VOTF's commitment to its mission and 3 goals as reflected by the Identity Statement endorsed by most of the leadership in the summer. Bill Casey asked the members to provide Mary Pat with any suggestions quickly so that she could issue it in time for the Thanksgiving holiday. An expression of VOTF's commitment to 3 equal goals in support of VOTF's single mission followed from an earlier Board discussion about statements or expectations of some that suggest a hierarchy of priorities among the goals.

Mary Pat reported on continuing efforts to address concerns of the survivor community about VOTF's support for survivors. She will re-contact Tom Doyle who previously expressed his willingness to assist all the key players on this issue.

Bill Casey reported that the response to the Board's recent message about civil, respectful and Christian communications generated about a dozen responses, most of them very favorable.

#### **5. Committee Reports and Issues**

##### Development

Jim Post sent a report that the Development Committee is continuing to look at additional ways to increase contributions from members.

##### Trustee Nominations

Jayne O'Donnell indicated some additional ways the Trustee Nominations Committee is considering to attract candidates for Board positions, including the opportunity to take advantage of public figures who are interested in helping but do not have the time to sit on the Board. Jayne will make specific recommendations at the next meeting.

##### Governance

Elia Marnik reported that a general announcement was sent to the membership about the upcoming election of National Officers and that the Nominating Committee will issue more guidance about the nominating procedures in a few days. Elia also reviewed the procedures for the Board and indicated that she and the Nominating Committee will be giving this process high priority so that VOTF can have a successful election.

#### **6. Leadership Reports**

Mary Pat Fox reported about a meeting that she is trying to arrange among sexual abuse survivors from Cheverus H.S. (ME), Cheverus Trustees and a VOTF Trustee in order to try to address unresolved issues that the survivors have raised. Mary Pat is also preparing a Press Release about the issues and a letter to the New England Provincial and U.S. leader of the Jesuits.

Ron DuBois reviewed the summary of NRC business that he sent to the Board, including a new proposal which would establish a committee to review the workings of the National Review Board.

#### **7. Closing Prayer** was given at 9:35

Minutes approved as submitted on November 27, 2007 9 – 0 – 0

A true record. Gaile M. Pohlhaus, clerk

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 27, 2007**