

Minutes
Board of Trustees Meeting (at VOTF office)
Voice of the Faithful, Inc.
August 28, 2007, 7 -10:30 P.M. (EDT)

Board Members: Ron DuBois, Elia Marnik, Dan Sullivan, Jim Post, Bill Casey (presiding, phone), Maura O'Brien, Jayne O'Donnell, Dan Bartley (phone), John Hushon (phone, 7:10).

Officers: Mary Freeman, Gaile Pohlhaus (clerk), Sally Vance-Trembath (phone, 7:50).

Present and Former Executive Directors: Donna Doucette, Mark Mullaney.

Opening Prayer from *The Confessions* of St. Augustine by Bill Casey.

Administrative matters

Bill Casey welcomed Dan Sullivan and Donna Doucette as the newest member of the Board and as Executive Director, respectively. Upon motions duly made and seconded, it was:

RESOLVED: the Board of Trustees appoints Daniel B. Sullivan as a member of the Board to a three-year term, effective August 28, 2007. Unanimously Passed 8 – 0 – 0.

RESOLVED: the Board of Trustees appoints Donna Doucette as Executive Director of VOTF, effective August 27, 2007. Unanimously Passed 8 – 0 – 0.

RESOLVED: the Board of Trustees appoints Svea Fraser to an interim term as a member of the Board from September 10 until December 31, 2007. In the event that a Trustee shall be appointed with a three-year term before December 31, 2007, then this interim term shall expire on the appointment date. Unanimously Passed 8 – 0 – 0.

RESOLVED: the minutes of the 7/6-7/07 meeting of the BOT are approved. Unanimously passed: 9 – 0 – 0.

On behalf of the Trustees, Jim Post presented commendations to Maura O'Brien and Mark Mullaney as a departing Trustee and Interim Executive Director, respectively (see attachment).

Development

Jim Post and Mark Mullaney reported on the work of the Development Committee and better-than-expected revenue development so far. Among the things started has been a sharing of membership contacts from local affiliate lists and the list maintained at National. This needs to be extended. Jean Boyle and Donor Perfect provide us with good records.

Jim Post reported that the Development committee needs more people to make phone calls. Trustees or others can also send a personalized letter based on guidance provided by the committee. Volunteers can sign up immediately with Michael Rafferty. Dan Sullivan suggested the option of seeking endowment funding, e.g., wills, trusts, other planned giving instruments. Jim Post confirmed that no reserves were, or are, needed to be set aside against pledges.

Mark Mullaney indicated that the fall appeal letter is under development.

Jim Post and Ron DuBois will send a letter to the NRC to draw them into the leadership giving effort.

Operations

Budget

John Hushon said that the Audit and Finance committee will report at the September Board meeting on reductions to the FY 08 budget being completed by the Officers. Mark Mullaney confirmed that one of the budget handouts shows a 12-month expectation of expected revenue.

Financial Statements (June & July 2007)

Mary Freeman presented the June and July statements. The Finance Committee will recommend whether monthly financial statements should be posted on the website.

Convention

Mary Freeman reported on the upcoming convention in Providence—137 registrations to date, 20% from Massachusetts. The Marriot says registrations are on track with trends for other conventions, and registrations seem to be ahead of the lead-up to the convocation in Indianapolis two years ago. VOTF will send out another brochure during the first week of September. Revenue is also expected from paid advertisements, sales and donations.

Committee Reports and Issues

Governance

Elia Marnik summarized the key aspects of the last nominations and elections procedures, and she proposed plans for the 2008 election (see attachment). After discussion and a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

RESOLVED: the Board of Trustees appoints Mark Mullaney to chair the Nominations Committee and Margaret Roylance to chair the Elections Committee for the elections of national officers in 2008. Unanimously passed 9 – 0 – 0.

The Governance Committee will review the proposed plans and make recommendations to the Trustees at their September meeting. Of particular significance will be the qualifications and nominating criteria for candidates.

The Ad Hoc committee on Leadership Roles and Collaboration members was announced by Elia Marnik. The members are Elia Marnik, Bill Casey, Mary Pat Fox, Mary Freeman (later changed by Mary Pat to Gaile Pohlhaus), Bill Culleton, Ed Wilson, and Kris Ward. The committee will ground its deliberations in the existing By-laws, but its charge is to develop recommendations that are then presented to the respective leadership centers for discussion and action. The committee expects to meet once a week up to the NRC meeting prior to the Convention so that a substantive discussion can occur at that time.

Trustee Nominating Committee

Jayne O'Donnell reported that the committee is meeting in mid-September. Several nominees have regrettably declined. Several calls are out to other potential candidates.

Strategy Committee

Dan Bartley reported that the Strategy Committee is going to start meeting by the middle of September.

Leadership Reports

Officers: Mary Freeman reported on objections raised about a Convention speaker by a frequent critic of VOTF. The critic has raised objections in the name of some clergy abuse survivors from a Maine H.S. where the speaker now serves on the Board (but was not involved in the abuse or the settlement made with some but not all of the survivors). Mary Pat and the Officers have addressed this matter with one of the actual survivors from the high school who is satisfied with the speaker. No changes will be made to the speaker line-up, but Mary Pat will continue to work with the survivor to see if VOTF can be of specific assistance to the survivors who did not receive a settlement. Mary Pat and others will connect with spokespersons for the survivor community to allay concerns they might have about the Convention.

Sally Vance-Trembath presented the revised Strategic Plan. Individual responses will be sent by Sept. 8th to Bill Casey who will consolidate them to send to Mary Pat. Jim Post suggested that the Board look at the big picture and find a crisp attention-grabbing message to go with it—what we're about and how we're going to get there.

Sally Vance-Trembath reported that the Officers are monitoring the L.A. settlement developments with a particular emphasis on the release of diocesan personnel records which are under the control of the courts. Resulting from discussions with Working Group One chair Kris Ward, Mary Pat posted a running clock on the website to indicate the time expiring while awaiting release of the records. The officers are also attempting to work with the local affiliates as well.

NRC: Ron DuBois reported that there will be elections in Region 1 and Region 13. There will also be an election to replace Donna Doucette on the steering committee.

Closing Prayer 10:30

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 25, 2007

A true record. Attest: Gaile M. Pohlhaus Clerk

COMMENDATION: TO MAURA O'BRIEN

It is impossible to describe all that Maura O'Brien has contributed to Voice of the Faithful in the past five years. However, I want to say a few words about what Maura has contributed, and meant, to the VOTF board of trustees.

The board has three responsibilities: to safeguard the legal integrity, financial integrity and mission integrity of VOTF. Maura has significantly affected the way we think about, and try to meet, each of these responsibilities.

Maura has been our in-house legal counsel, providing sound advice, point of contact with lawyers who have helped us on specific issues, and the negotiating skills we have sometimes required.

She has alerted us to legal issues, and the legal implications of actions we proposed to take. She urged us, for example, to develop an approach that could accommodate our advocacy, without the kind of lobbying that might jeopardize our federal tax status.

Maura's knowledge and instinct for good process was immeasurably helpful in our early days when she served as the Moderator of the first VOTF council. She shaped our procedures and rules, and insisted—in a fair and even-handed way—that we all follow those rules to the benefit of the Council and the entire organization. Our meetings were well-organized, without being scripted.

On the board of trustees, Maura joined David Castaldi to serve as the first Audit Committee. As we weathered early financial challenges, we gradually put in place the budgetary and oversight mechanisms to help ensure financial integrity. Our record of success in dealing with the auditors over the course of five years is attributable to the thoroughness with which David and Maura performed their audit committee responsibilities.

Finally, Maura has always displayed a keen understanding of the mission of VOTF. From the earliest days of our legal incorporation, to the development of our revised system of governance, she has been a clear thinker and an articulate spokesperson for sound decision making that is faithful to our shared values.

It is said that a good lawyer will be consulted when messy problems arise, or when difficult judgments must be made on important matters. Such has been the case with Maura. She is one of the people I most often consulted when making decisions as president, or trying to sort out complex issues. She is a model of wisdom and sage advice. She finds the flaws, and knows how to insist they be repaired the right way.

In reviewing some of my files, I rediscovered a few Maura O'Brien stories. We spent a lot of time addressing some of those problems. Today, I doubt that any but a few former leaders recall the angst that was generated by those issues. We developed an even-handed way of dealing with issues and safeguarding the interests of VOTF. Maura's fine hand, principled positions, and insistence on good process helped achieve those results.

For more than five years, Maura has demonstrated wise counsel and a willingness to do the tough work of discussing, and drafting, sound policy. As is often the case with "lawyer's work," it will be invisible to most people. But board members know that Maura has shared important and unique gifts with VOTF over these years. What we have achieved was made possible by her selfless dedication to Voice of the Faithful.

It is with deep appreciation and great fondness for Maura that I ask the board of trustees to express its thanks

and gratitude to our good friend and valued colleague, Maura O'Brien.

COMMENDATION TO MARK MULLANEY

It is a pleasure to recognize Mark Mullaney for his exceptional service to Voice of the Faithful.

A founding member of VOTF, Mark, and his wife, Kathy, have been “shirtsleeves” VOTF members for more than 5 years. Their work on behalf of protecting children has been steadfast. And Mark’s professional talents as a manager, counselor, and human resources executive have been frequently and gratefully employed by VOTF.

Mark has chaired several search committees, and in this most recent incarnation, simultaneously served as interim executive director.

What can we say but “*thanks*” to someone who has given so much and so selflessly to VOTF?

The endless hours of attention to problems surely exceeded his agreement and our budget. But the work got done.

I have always admired Mark’s willingness to do whatever it takes to help a sports team or an organization succeed. Mark carried the cross at the closing Mass of our first convention in 2002. Little did he know that he would continue to carry the VOTF cross for more than another 5 years.

It is with deep appreciation for all that Mark has done –and the leader he has been-- that I ask the board of trustees to express its thanks and gratitude to our good friend and valued colleague, Mark Mullaney.

James E. Post
8/28/07

FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL OFFICERS' ELECTION

September 2007—February 2008

OVERSIGHT

1. By-laws of VOTF, Inc.
2. BOT Governance Committee Chair (Elia Marnik)

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

TBD

CHARGE/AUTHORITY

1. the BOT charges two committees to conduct the processes for nominations and elections respectively in accordance with the by-laws of VOTF, Inc. and direction of the BOT.
2. the BOT appoints Mark Mullaney to chair the Nominations Committee and Margaret Roylance to chair the Elections Committee.
3. the committee chairs will identify 3-5 members (representative of the general membership) for their committees, subject to concurrence with the chair of the BOT Governance Committee.
4. the committees will develop and administer procedures and processes to complete the nominations and elections process in accordance with this charge.
5. coordinate the nominations and elections process with the Executive Director and rely on VOTF resources and procedures to conduct the nominations and elections.
6. the cost of conducting the nominations and elections should correspond to the costs for the last election (adjusted for inflation).
7. the nominations committee will seek out qualified candidates in addition to soliciting candidates from the general membership.

OVERALL EXPECTATIONS

1. at least 2 highly qualified candidates for each of the four Officer positions
2. geographic and gender diversity among the candidates, if feasible
3. ample opportunity for members to learn about the candidates
4. general norms for candidates' campaigns

DECISIONS

1. voting by Internet only
2. use of Campus Vote as an elections mechanism unless directed otherwise
3. listing of candidates on the ballot by office/alpha sequence
4. use of criteria below for determining winners where no candidate for an office receives a majority of the votes

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. chronology of last Nominations Process
2. chronology of last Elections Process