

**St. Joseph Church**  
**Finance Council Meeting Minutes**  
**June 13, 2017**

**Members Present:** Tom Altenbach (Vice-Chair), Joe Price, Antonio Garcia, Olga Avila, Fr. Jorge Roman (President ex Officio), Helen Shepherd (Business Administrator), Kathy Cage (Parish Hall Project Manager)

**Members Absent:** Kathy Hansen

**Quorum**

The meeting was called to order at 6:50 PM. A quorum was established with three of the five Council members present; a fourth arrived later.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The minutes for the last Finance Council meeting, held November 3, 2016, were approved as previously distributed. See the St. Joseph Website <http://www.mammothcatholicchurch.org/finance-council> to view that document.

**Parish Center Project**

Most of the meeting was spent in review and discussion on this project. Two documents were distributed.

1. The Parish Hall Status Report dated June 13, 2017, prepared by Kathy Cage.
2. A letter from Msgr. Richard Ryan of the Stockton Diocese dated June 8, 2017 that gave conditional approval to proceed with the project.

See the St. Joseph Website to view these documents.

• **Project Changes**

Many changes have been made to the design since the last report was presented to the Finance Council in November, 2016. Major changes include abandonment of the metal building structure and redesign of a smaller wood-framed building. The commercial kitchen adjacent to the main rectangular structure was eliminated to reduce cost. Space inside the building was reallocated for a smaller kitchen, but no kitchen equipment is included in the design. Interior ceiling height has been reduced. A concrete retaining wall was added near the property line between our property and the neighboring lot to help control the intrusion of snow across that boundary. The total building occupancy is reduced to 300 people.

- **Status**

The plans were approved by the Town of Mammoth Lakes in May, and the bid package was sent to three interested general contractors. In a change from the usual Diocese policy, the bids will be delivered to St. Joseph Rectory and opened there on July 12. It is expected that all three contractors will submit bids. However, due to current local building costs, it is likely those bids will come in higher than the available funding for the project. It is desired to start construction by July 24, but there is no requirement to meet that date.

- **Discussion**

Several important topics were discussed and are briefly summarized below.

- 1. Contingency Plans**

If the bids come in too high and the contractors are unwilling to cut their prices, the project could be further reduced in scope. Areas discussed for cost reduction include the rock exterior finish, window design, movable wall design, hydronic floor heating, and overall building size. Modification of some of these design features could be palatable to the Council, while others had minimal support. Another possibility is to continue work on the parking lot, trenching, and site preparation, while delaying building construction until sufficient funding is available to complete the project as designed or a lower cost design is approved.

- 2. Snow Removal Costs**

The building will occupy the area currently used for snow removal, where it has been easily pushed downhill at a modest cost. The site design includes grading of a ramp up the hill adjacent to the Rectory, to allow snow to be pushed up there. A large blower may be needed regularly to accomplish this. Once it becomes impractical to store snow in that area, some will have to be trucked away. This will necessarily increase the cost of snow removal, which could be very significant in high-snow years.

- 3. Communication and Fund Raising**

It is essential that we do a better job of communicating the status, goals, and decision-making process to the Parish. Many parishioners have questions and concerns about this project, especially in the chosen location at the far end of the property. These concerns need to be addressed so we can achieve a wider understanding and support for the project. In addition, it's obvious that we need more money to complete a fully functional facility, and this can

only be achieved through a concerted fund-raising effort. So far, no one has stepped up to take on this desperately needed task.

- **Approval of Building Design**

The conditional approval to proceed with the project as granted in the letter from the Diocese requested that the updated project be approved by the Finance Council. A vote was taken and the design as submitted to the bidders was approved.

## **Other Business**

- **Financial Statements**

The Profit and Loss Statement as of 4/30/17 prepared by Helen was distributed, as well as a plot of offertory receipts as of 5/31/17 (see the Website). Offertory income is quite variable, and income in June will determine whether we finish the fiscal year with a net operating income or loss.

The Bishop's Ministry Appeal report from 5/16/17 was distributed. It shows we are tracking ahead of last year in meeting our obligation, probably due to frequent second collections.

- **Financial Audit**

The Diocese conducted a financial audit of St. Joseph Parish during the week of October 10, 2016 and produced a written report (see the Website). A draft letter and detailed response to the Diocese was distributed. It will be posted to the Website once it has been officially issued. Many changes to our procedures have been initiated to comply with Diocese policies. Some of these can be very difficult and costly to implement for our small remote Parish. In particular, regressing to an archaic labor-intensive method of manual bill paying is particularly time-consuming and onerous.

- **FY18 Budget Process**

Helen is working on the collection of data for the FY18 budget. Tom and Joe will round out the budget committee, assisting in the preparation of the draft budget needed for approval at our next meeting.

- **Parish Bookkeeper**

We hope to hire a prospective candidate to take over the vacant bookkeeper position. A new air cleaner for the office is also needed to maintain a healthy environment.

- **Election of Officers**

After many delays, we finally had an election. Tom Altenbach was elected as Finance Council Chair, and Joe Price was elected as Vice-Chair. No one volunteered to be Secretary, so Tom will continue doing that job until someone else can be found. It was noted that at least two more Council members should be found to increase participation in this essential Parish activity.

- **Next Meeting**

The next meeting was tentatively set for Thursday July 13, 2017 at 6:00 PM in the St. Joseph Rectory. This will be a joint meeting with the Pastoral Council for the purpose of deciding on the general contractor bids and continuing to the construction phase of the Parish Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectively Submitted by *Tom Altenbach*, MS Nuclear Engineer (retired), Chair