

St. Gerald School Board Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2014

Present

Fr. Malcolm, Pastor
Al Theis, Principal
Jen O'Reilly, President
Gail Stearns-Hussein, Vice-President
Paulina Bednarek, Secretary
Theresa Munoz
Daniel Cerceo
Nicholas Suh

Absent

Joanne Chavez Buchanan
Jennifer Cronin
Michael Johnson

Guests

None

Called to order at: 7:06pm

Motion to approve minutes from October 2014: Gail Stearns-Hussein **Second:** Dan Cerceo

Opening Prayer: Father Malcolm

Pastor's Report

- Father attended a Cluster meeting of 11 parishes
 - They discussed Catholic Education
 - 5 Catholic schools are closing
 - There are 4 schools in our area that are on the Watch List
- Discussed School Profile sheet (see attached)
 - Last year we had a \$85,000 deficit
 - \$35,000 in uncollected tuition
 - Maybe the school board can help collect
 - We still have diplomas we are holding, due to uncollected tuition
 - Discussion ensued regarding holding and releasing report cards.
 - Michelle Cesaro who worked in the rectory passed away and we are behind on envelope recording for parish donations. We want to have them recorded by Nov. to give out to parents.
- Dan Cerceo commented that St. Gerald's per parishioner contribution is low in comparison to the other schools on the handout given.
- Other factors that cause this were discussed

- St. Catherine for example has a lot of debt. They had no savings and weren't paying the diocese.
- Our Lady of Loretto closed and they were not paying their employee's Social Security contributions
 - Diocese pays health insurance and the parish must pay a portion of that
- Jen O'Reilly asked what is the likelihood of the schools on the Watch List closing
 - Discussion ensued that the new cardinal is pro schools
- Insurance covered the Teacher's Lounge leak but 2 other major leaks have not been covered by insurance
- St. Gerald is the oldest building in Oak Lawn
- Right now we are solid
 - We have \$150,000 in the bank
- We were planning on spending \$90,000 for a new boiler this year, but we will not. In 1 year we may qualify for a program to get efficient boilers through a grant. We are putting the replacement on hold until then.
- Theresa Munoz discussed the 3rd grade student body and in particular Mrs. Arnold's room
 - There are possibly 3 families looking to transfer as the classroom sizes are very big
 - On the Junior High level, Oak Lawn Hometown Middle School is very high tech
- We need 36 students to split a classroom
- Nicholas Suh commented it is not the same to compare public school to Catholic Schools as that would be like comparing apples to oranges
- Further discussion ensued regarding other nearby Catholic Schools and their class sizes.

Principal's Report

- The Christmas concert is being planned
- On January 25th St. Gerald will have its Open House
 - School board can help by giving tours again
- The Dinner Dance that is our biggest fundraiser is coming up.
- Some testing going on at the school right now is the new Aspire Test
- Honor roll and NJHS induction will be occurring soon
- St. Gerald placed 2nd at Brother Rice
 - These competitions are only for boys, Mount Assisi used to do one for girls but the school has closed now
 - Mrs. Fiscella also gave a new National Competition Test
 - Another event St. Gerald participates in is the Worth Township Spelling Bee
- A discussion ensued about celebrating sports championships. Nicholas Suh mentioned that Chicago Magazine puts out a list every year and St. Gerald does well.

- Advertising was discussed to potentially find new families for St. Gerald
 - Teresa Munoz mentioned that in the Chicago Parent January edition they have a most recommended school list. However you probably have to pay to be in there. St. Gerald was not in there.
 - Jen O'Reilly asked how much would it cost to be in the magazine.
 - Gail Stearns-Hussein brought up that at the Baby Expo you could have a booth. However that would also cost money.
 - Another idea was to set up a table at the Oak Lawn High School vendor fair.
 - The funeral home and eye doctor have a table set up.
- Dan Cerceo mentioned that the new Governor might give vouchers for private school parents.
- In January the Moms and Tots program will be starting which will be good advertisement.
- Mr. Theis mentioned the computer teacher we were going to use, Vicky Les, was snagged by a public school. We currently have Kelly White who applied several years ago and has a lot of experience. She will be teaching on Mondays and Fridays to the upper grades and Jessica Appericio will still be teaching the younger kids.

President's Report

- None

Committee Reports

- None

Old Business

- None

New Business

- Dan Cerceo researched the Facebook page for the school.
 - He talked to Jessica Fraider at St. Germaine who has had it for 1 year.
 - She said it was a big success.
 - She sent him a proposal for the Facebook page
 - Some things included on the page are sharing school news, events and announcements, etc.
 - A caution she gave was to not post photographs of students.
 - They do have it left open to comments. Any negative comments can be deleted.
 - A discussion ensued about the administrators of the page and to contact the person in charge of each group at St. Gerald to give them permission to post to the page.

- 2 Facebook pages would be created, one for the school board and one for the school
- The board asked Father Malcolm and Mr. Theis to recommend considering the Facebook page and permission to start the Facebook page was given.
- Gail Stearns-Hussein said the school website looks great.
 - She liked the link to how long everyone has been teaching.
- Father Malcolm mentioned that Grandma's Attic brought in \$2200
- Dan Cerceo asked about wireless internet for areas such as the teachers lounge, chapel, and that we could charge at big events such as the Craft Fair for the access code
 - He has the equipment. A firewall would have to be installed.
- Dan Cerceo also asked what we would need to do to have the Chapel Hall cleaned up and painted.
 - Donations could be asked for paint and labor.
- Gail Stearns-Hussein mentioned that there is a Kdg/1st grade parent we could ask to supervise and help with organization of painting.

Announcements

- None

Comments/Questions from the Floor

None

Motion to Adjourn: Paulina Bednarek **Second:** Dan Cerceo

Closing Prayer: Fr. Malcolm

Adjourned: 8:14 pm