

SVDP DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES

June 4, 2024

Dan Miller, President, called the meeting to order at 6pm, Tuesday, June 4, 2024 at Sts. Mary & John parish in Rager Hall.

In attendance: Executive Board Members: Dan Miller, President; Megan Charlton, Secretary; Melanie Seibert, Treasurer; Sr. Doris Clippard, Spiritual Advisor; Joe Cook, Executive Director; Noah Werner, Director of Case Management; Melissa Coleman, Thrift Store Manager; Mike McKee, Thrift Store Advisory Chair.

Minutes. *The minutes from the May 7, 2024 District Council meeting were approved unanimously as written by the District Council.*

Financial Audit. Tim Otte presented the findings of the annual District Council financial audit. The financial audit was performed for the fiscal year ending on September 30, 2023. Tim Otte found that the District Council has good and reliable controls in place for financial processing and procedures. Tim Otte found that the District Council is presenting fair and reliable financial information to the conferences and supporting members. The financial audit documents will be emailed to the District Council for review. The financial audit will be voted upon for approval at the July District Council meeting.

Financials. The District Council Financial Summary from February 2024 to April 2024 was brought to the attention of the District Council.

The District Council's April income was up about \$12,000 compared to last April, due to early collection of Friends of the Poor Walk sponsorship donations.

The District Council's total expenses are up about \$10,000 due to grants to conferences, additional payroll costs for an accountant, and payment of design fees to Lamar Architecture and Design.

Food Pantry donations remain steady.

Food Pantry April food purchases were up by \$5,000, or 50% when compared to last year, and year-to-date food purchases are up about 34% when compared to last year.

Food Pantry operating expenses remain steady.

The Walnut Street road construction seems to be affecting the Store sales slightly. Thrift Store income was down in April compared to March, but still consistent with April 2023 income. Thrift Store expenses remain consistent.

The Thrift Store's net income for April was \$10,000.

The Treasurer's Report was approved unanimously as reported by the District Council.

2024-2025 Budget. Melanie along with the Executive Director's office, Food Pantry, and Thrift Store will begin working on the 2024-2025 budget. The plan is to present the initial proposed budget at the July District Council meeting.

Centerpoint Online Payment. Jared Wells at Centerpoint has investigated the problem with the unauthorized payments and determined that our payment information is not saved so that the account holder can access our information. Our payment information is saved in the Centerpoint system, as the last account used for payment. Therefore, when a customer calls in for payment, they are asked if they would like to use the last payment method used, ending in xxxx. If they choose yes, purposefully, or not, the new payment gets pulled from our account.

Jared has tried to search their system for any SVDP payment information and delete it from their system. Once the new software for Centerpoint rolls out on July 1st, the above issue should not occur. It is still being recommended that the conferences continue to pledge payments and send a check to Centerpoint. Melanie would like to be alerted with any future occurrences of unauthorized payments by Centerpoint.

Friends of the Poor Grant Application. The District Council applied for the Friends of the Poor Grant through the National Council. If awarded, the grant funds will be used to help our increasing number of Hispanic neighbors.

Endowment Distribution. The District Council has received notification from the Catholic Foundation that a distribution of \$29,600.71 is available for use, based upon the 2023 account performance. The full distribution amount of \$29,600.71, will be moved to our unrestricted account through the Catholic Foundation. The District Council will have access to these funds at any time, but this unrestricted account will continue to grow through investments.

Conference Bylaws. Each conference has received a copy of conference bylaws. Conferences need to review these bylaws with their members and vote upon their approval. Once approved, conference presidents need to return the signed bylaws to Joe.

National Council Annual Assembly. The National Council Annual Assembly will be held in Phoenix, Arizona on August 14th through 17th. Vincentians can register for this online.

Bridges out of Poverty. There will be a Bridges Out of Poverty training held on June 26th. The District Council will fund the training for the first 10 Vincentians wanting to attend.

There will be a Bridges out of Poverty facilitator training starting on June 4th. Noah Werner will be attending this training in June. Joe Cook plans to attend the facilitator training in October.

Getting Ahead. The second Getting Ahead cohort is nearing the end. There are four people signed up for Getting Ahead facilitator training. There is a growing interest and excitement for the Getting Ahead program.

The District Council has been granted \$10,000 from the Centerpoint Energy Foundation to fund our Getting Ahead program. This grant should cover the expenses of one and a half Getting Ahead cohorts.

Microloan. The Microloan program is fully operational at the 1st Federal Bank. Those who have completed the Getting Ahead program will be eligible for a microloan through the 1st Federal Bank.

The Executive Director's office is continuing to work on creating a partnership between our District Council and Banterra Bank for a microloan program for our eligible neighbors. The Executive Director's office will need to form a Microloan Committee to review eligible candidates before they apply for the Microloan program. Vincentians wanting to volunteer for the Microloan Committee should contact Joe or Noah.

Security Grant. The Executive Director's office has applied for a grant through the Department of Homeland Security to provide the Food Pantry, Thrift Store, and their supporting vehicles with GPSs and security systems.

Evansville Endowment Fund. The Food Pantry was granted the funds from the Evansville Endowment Fund for the installation of a new outdoor electronic sign. The Food Pantry sign installation had been on pause until the variance had been approved by the County. The variance has been approved.

Steve Luigs, from the St. James conference, is contacting an electrician he knows at Mounts Electric to look at running lines to the sign for installation.

Friends of the Poor Walk. The annual Friends of the Poor Walk will be held on September 28th. The Executive Director's office has sent out letters and sponsorship forms to previous sponsored donors. Approximately \$15,000 has been raised in sponsorship donations. In the coming weeks, there will be solicitation letters sent out to businesses for potential new sponsored donors.

The Executive Director's office is continuing to work towards speaking to kids at parish schools about the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in anticipation of the Friends of the Poor Walk. At this time, there are four parish schools that have expressed interest in working with our District Council leading up to the Walk.

Charity Tracker. This summer, Noah and Joe will be doing a refresher training of Charity Tracker for Vincentians.

Quarterly Gathering. The next Quarterly Gathering will be held by the Annunciation conference. The Gathering will be held on either September 8th or September 29th.

Lenten Retreat. The 2025 Lenten Retreat will be held on March 15th. Tim Williams, the SVDP National Council Spiritual Advisor, will be the guest speaker at the Retreat.

Thrift Store. Mike McKee presented the Thrift Store Voucher and Volunteer Tracking handouts to the District Council. In May 2024, there were 256 volunteer hours, 186 people served through vouchers, and 31 people helped through bed vouchers.

The Thrift Store report was presented by Melissa Coleman. The Walnut Street construction is now directly in front of the Thrift Store entrance. The construction could be this close to the Store until August 2024. The construction seems to be affecting Thrift Store sales. The May Store sales were down 11% when

compared to last May, however the customers that are shopping seem to be spending more money. Customer traffic at the Thrift Store was also down by 23% when compared to last May.

The Thrift Store is in need of volunteers that can organize and help put items onto the sales floor for purchase.

Food Pantry. The May 2024 Assistance Summary Report was brought to the attention of the District Council. There was not a Food Pantry representative in attendance to present the Food Pantry report.

District Council Secretary. The District Council Secretary, Megan, will be stepping down from her position in June 2024. Conferences should consider members who could fill this position. The District Council Secretary position requires attending and recording minutes for all of the monthly District Council meetings, as well as the Executive Council meetings that are held every other month. Vincentians should contact Dan with District Council Secretary nominations.

Thrift Store Project. John Corressell and other committee members presented an update on the progress of the Thrift Store expansion project. A handout explaining the estimated Thrift Store project total was brought to the attention of the District Council. The blueprints for the Thrift Store project were projected on a television for the District Council to analyze.

The estimated cost of the Thrift Store project is \$1.3 million; this amount is too much for the District Council to pay out right. To afford this project, the Executive Council would need to find additional funding through a Lilly Endowment grant or fundraising. Melanie has suggested that the District Council fund approximately \$750,000 towards the project, with hope that the rest could be funded through other entities.

The Lilly Endowment grant has set aside several millions of dollars to fund capital projects for 501c3 status nonprofit organizations. Our SVDP District Council meets the qualifications to apply for this grant. The Lilly Endowment grant is open for application for the next four years.

The District Council needs a more detailed and solid design drawing from Lamar Architecture and Design to move forward with obtaining project bids from construction companies. These project bids will give the District Council more realistic pricing when applying for a Lilly grant.

Tom Byran motioned to approve the funds needed to retain Lamar Architecture and Design, up to \$47,000, for architecture and design of the Thrift Store expansion project; Julie Folz seconded this motion, and the present District Council unanimously agreed upon this motion.

Conference Review Committee. The proposal for the policy and procedure of the conference's financial and operational review was presented to the District Council during the May meeting. The District Council is proposing a type of financial and operational review committee to ensure conferences are handling and tracking funds appropriately. The goal is to have conference financials be reviewed every year internally by the conference and every 4 years by an external unbiased committee. The correlated worksheets for the proposed annual internal audit and every 4 years external audit were brought to the attention of the District Council. This proposal is the SVDP National Council's recommendation to conferences to ensure conference finances and operations are being handled appropriately. This proposal will be discussed further during the July District Council meeting.

Large Group Discussion. The present District Council discussed the question, "The home visit: can we lessen the load for some of our more oppressed conferences? If so, what might that look like?"

The District Council could change the conference boundaries to reflect a more equal load of the referrals coming into the Coordinator's Office, rather than keep the conference boundaries around the conference parish location.

Each conference has a different amount of funding to provide aid for their neighbors. This results in a huge disparity among conferences and the amount in which they can help their neighbor.

The District Council could create a specialized group to serve our non-english speaking neighbors. Our non-english speaking neighbors often require more time and resources to meet their needs appropriately.

This group discussion will be discussed further during the July District Council meeting.

Roll Call. Absent this month: All Saints, Corpus Christi, Holy Redeemer, Sts. Francis & Wendel, and St. Matthew.

Upcoming Gatherings.

The next Quarterly Gathering will be held in September by the Annunciation conference.

The annual Friends of the Poor Walk will be held on September 28th.

The next Ozanam Orientation will be held on October 26th.

The MidEast Regional meeting will be held on June 13th through 15th in Cincinnati.

The National Council Annual Assembly will be held on August 14th through 17th in Phoenix.

The Lenten Retreat will be held on March 15, 2025 with Tim Williams as the guest speaker.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 2nd at 6pm at Sts. Mary & John parish in Rager Hall.