

ST VINCENT de PAUL EVANSVILLE DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FOR MAY 6, 2025

6:04PM President Dan Miller called the meeting to order in Rager Hall of Sts. Mary & John Parish

IN ATTENDANCE: Executive Committee members Dan Miller (President), Jeff Kropfl (Vice President), Melanie Seibert (Treasurer), Rosemary Beckman, (Secretary), Joe Cook (Executive Director), Mike McKee (Thrift Store Advisory Committee Chair), Bill Hussmann (Food Pantry Advisory Committee Chair), Noah Werner (Director of Case Management), Maggie Garrison (Thrift Store Manager)

Absent: Sr. Doris Clippard (Spiritual Advisor)

OPENING PRAYER: Dan led us in reciting the traditional SVdP Opening Prayer. Afterwards, Dan asked that we keep Sr. Doris in our prayer as she was not feeling well and could not be present tonight for our meeting

REFLECTION: “Prayers in memory of Pope Francis and for the Cardinals as they gather to elect the next Pope” included excerpts from this, the ninth day, of the Novena for Pope Francis and recalled messages Pope Francis gave to the Society of SVdP and the Vincentian family. These included: Emphasis on Service, Extraordinary Force for Good, Importance of Humility and Compassion, Seeing Christ in the Poor and Call to Action. Tom Bryan read Pope Francis’ prayer to the Vincentian Family and Julie Beudel read from a letter to the Corinthians by Pope St Clement. In closing, we prayed in unison with the Church in asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten, grant wisdom and holiness to the Church and the Cardinals as they elect the next Vicar of Christ.

RULE 4.1.1: “Twinning promotes spirituality, deep friendship, solidarity and mutual help. Funds and other material resources can be provided to enable a Conference or a Council to help local families. Financial, technical, medical and educational support is given to projects which are suggested by the Society locally and which encourage self-sufficiency. Even more important is support given by prayer as well as through mutual communication regarding what has been accomplished and what is happening among Vincentians in each area, including news about persons and families”. Read by Dan.

MEETING MINUTES: After review and with no additions or corrections to the April 1, 2025 Evansville District Council Meeting Minutes, Phil Gamble made the motion to approve them as written and Debbie Neufelder seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

TREASURER'S REPORT: District Council 5/3/25 (Melanie)

Financial Statements - March 31, 2025

District Council

- General Donations are about \$18,000 ahead for the YTD.
- Conference grants distributed through the end of March were down \$15,000 from the previous year, but during April we have made several distributions which will close that gap.
- Miscellaneous expenses are down \$6,000 from last year, when we were engaging Lamar for design fees.
- Program expenses are running \$9,000 ahead of last year due to the Getting Ahead Program, and having a couple of defaults on our microloan program.
- The District Council net loss for the year to date is \$119,000, which is up \$24,000 from last year.

Food Pantry

- For the first six months of the year, cash donations are down \$42,000.
- Cost of purchased food is down \$17,000 year-to-date.
- Other operating expenses remain steady.
- Net income YTD is \$25,000.

Thrift Store

- March store sales were slightly ahead of last year (\$3,500), but we did not have any bulk sales in March, which led to a decrease in income of \$8,000 compared to last March. YTD income is down \$22,000.
- March payroll was about \$2,000 more than last March, and is ahead \$30,000 for the year to date.
- Other expenses were down \$6,000 in March, but about \$5,000 ahead for the YTD.
- YTD Net Income is almost \$40,000.

Other Items:

A reminder to all conferences to apply for the 'Friends of the Poor Grant', especially those who struggle financially. We are in the Mideast Region, and can submit applications between July 23 and August 13, 2025 to receive up to \$5,000 maximum per conference.

Endowment Distributions - We have just been notified of distributions that are available from endowments with the Catholic Foundation of which we are beneficiaries:

SVdP District Council Endowment	\$34,175.88
SVdP Crisis Fund	\$ 364.53
Robert T Temple Endowment.	\$ 1,298.81
Joyce Harms Endowment-F.Pantry	\$ 3,315.11
Joyce Harms Endowment-Crisis F.	\$ 3,315.11

Melanie noted the the amounts have increased on the first two SVdP Endowments and the last 3 endowments listed are 'new money' for us.

Jeff asked if the last entry 'Agency Endowment Fund - Unrestricted' on the District Evansville SSVdP Cash Balances Report is the source of the SVdP Endowment distributions. Melanie verified it is. She also commented our cash reserves are deep. The Catholic Foundation does a very good job managing our Agency Endowment Fund yielding 18% last year. Melanie explained the endowment funds are unrestricted, meaning there are no restrictions on us using the money.

Melanie also noted a farewell to Joe will take place at the Second Quarterly Gathering at Holy Redeemer on June 21.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: (Joe)

Grants

- **National Council Friends of the Poor (FOP) Grant Reminder - July 23-Aug. 13** is time for our region to apply for up to \$5,000 per conference. National Council news releases will follow. Hyperlink to the application was forwarded to all conferences March 20
- **Work has begun at the Food Pantry for the DHS grant received.** We pay for the work to be done and submit request for reimbursement. We are proceeding slowly to be certain of receiving reimbursement due to the current federal spending cuts.
- **Mission Ministry Impact Grant (MMI) -** We received the full amount of our request, \$80,000 for Food Pantry purchases and \$10,000 for Young Adult Conference to use on emergency assistance.
- **City Development Block Grant (CDBG) -** paperwork completed to receive funding for our 2024 request. Noah will be reaching out to the DMD (Dept. of Metro. Devel.) for request status. In the past we had heard decisions on our request by end of April.
- **Sacred Heart Fund** invited Evansville District to apply for another grant to help with work we are doing assisting those in the community. Grant decisions will be made by early June with grant checks sent by mid-June 2025. The mission of the Sacred Heart Fund is to provide support to organizations/ministries working to alleviate conditions of poverty by improving lives of the poor/marginalized in our communities. Based on our grant application and needs we may potentially receive up to \$50,000 for our Rent & Utility Assistance Program and/or Food Program. The grant is intended for programs at our SVdP location. We will have 10-12 months to use the grant before submitting a final report.
- **CenterPoint Energy Foundation** grant cycle opens June 16. Noah will apply to receive funds. Typically, these are only for rent and water bill use.

Treasurer/President Training - the documents for the Financial and Process Audits have been uploaded onto the Members' Section of the website, svdpevansville.org. Dan has created a PowerPoint for the officer training to be uploaded onto the website.

Cohort #4 of “Getting Ahead” program has had a couple participants discontinue. Some attrition is normal. Noah reports there are two Wednesdays in June without a provided dinner. Conferences should sign up with Noah to provide a dinner.

Sr. Donna’s reception is scheduled for Sunday, June 29 1-4pm at the Food Pantry. More from Bill’s report below.

FOP Walk solicitations have gone out to past sponsors. Last year Bill Hussmann harvested advertisers from the parish Sunday bulletins to solicit and we continue to ask them for donations. \$40,000 is the goal for the District Council. It would be good to have volunteers help the new Executive Director with fundraising ideas. In terms of the FOP Walk, possibilities for sponsors might include those listed on annual donor reports of similar organizations such as Mater Dei and Memorial High School and Habitat for Humanity.

Ozanam Orientation is Saturday, May 10 at St. Benedict School Woodward Center. Currently there are 26-27 registrants with room for more. Register by Thursday, May 8 using online link on our website. Joe stressed Formation is important for the growth and success of the SVdP organization. Joe researched and found 60-70% of our Vincentians have completed this orientation/training in last 5 years. Dan noted this is a comparatively high percentage .

Summer Quarterly Gathering is Sat., June 21 at Holy Redeemer. Jim Hayden is working on a speaker and Pam Stephens will cater the meal. This will be Joes's last public appearance. (As noted earlier, our farewell to Joe will be held at this event).

Joe is trying to get to every conference to say goodbye before June 21 and gave a calendar of upcoming conference visits with days and times. Joe also commented how blessed our District Council is. He has attended Diocesan SVdP meetings and concludes we are very blessed because of the people “like you” in our conferences.

STORE REPORT: Mike and Maggie

- Volunteer hours were up for March (182)
- Clothing - Total served (180), number of items sold (1450) and retail dollar value of items sold (\$4,557.69) were all up for March
- Furniture - sales were considerably higher in March (\$2,309.38), making March the highest monthly figure in last 12 months
- Bedding - a total of 34 families were served with bedding in March making March figures the highest for families served in the last 12 months
- Donations also continue to go up in part due to spring cleaning and yard sales. Mike is thankful for these donations and the help getting donations out on the sales floor quickly.

- Maggie noted a report she produced showing daily sales are up 8% over previous month and up 8% over last 3 months as well.
- The store continues to tweak prices for increased sales and turnover of inventory.
- No additional truck driver has yet been hired
- Maggie noted the success of a recent activity the store is using to help make employees more aware of positive aspects in co-workers and to acknowledge those good traits. This has led to more and better teamwork.
- Volunteers can be high school aged. If younger, a parent should accompany them. No advance notice is needed. Help anytime Tues.-Friday (not Mondays) 8-5pm is appreciated.

PANTRY REPORT: Bill

- April figures: 2593 persons in 1154 households were served. This is an increase of 513 individuals and 193 households over last month. Demand is increasing.
- Volunteer Appreciation Week at Food Pantry was celebrated last week with lots of good food and tokens of appreciation for the many FP volunteers. Sister made a large photo display of all the volunteers that will remain in place for the new FP Manager's benefit.
- Resurrection parish held a food drive that has been a big help to the FP
- Tri-State Food Bank has a new Director, Zac Heronemus. Recently they have lost some grant funding which will in turn affect us.
- The FP office will be closed May 26 and June 2 while new flooring is installed. Furniture will be moved May 30 at 3:30pm and moved back on June 3 at 7am. Help moving furniture is appreciated.
- We are in need of more donors and sponsors for the Food Pantry. Bill asks that we seek new supporters as we transition to a new FP Manager.
- The new Food Pantry Manager is Mary Reed. Mary is currently the Assistant Manager at the Thrift Store and will start her new position at Food Pantry June 3. She will have a month to train with Sr. Donna before Sister retires.
- Sister Donna's Retirement Reception will be held at the Food Pantry Sunday, June 29 from 1-4PM. Invitations have been printed and Bill shared them with all. It would also provide a chance to meet and welcome Mary Reed in her new position.
- Bill relayed a story Sister Donna gave him about a lady who attended the FOP Walk last Sept. and just recently noticed and filled her blue bag from the walk with laundry detergent and other items to give back to the Food Pantry 7 months later!

ON-GOING BUSINESS: Joe

- Ton of Toys discontinuation update - at the recommendation of a conference president, Joe reached out to the Columbiettes, a women's auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus, to see if they would be willing to take over our part in the TOT program. The Columbiettes group decided after discussion/discernment that the effort was not feasible for them to undertake. The WIKY Operations Manager

and Morning Show team have been notified of our decision to discontinue partnering in the program. We have 6-7 large cardboard boxes of toys, games, sporting goods we can provide any organization that would take over our place in the program. If nothing develops, these boxes will be distributed to the conferences for their Christmas programs. WIKY likely will work in the future with the Salvation Army Program, Toy Town.

- Food Pantry Manager and Executive Director Search - As Bill mentioned in his report, Mary Reed has been offered the position of Food Pantry Manager. There were 3 candidates for the position. As current Assistant Manager at the Thrift Store, Mary is familiar with Vincentian values and brings that Vincentian spirit with her to the new position. Mary joined the Catholic Church last year and is a member of All Saints Parish. June 3 is her start date as FPM.

Dr. Ashley Newell was offered the position of Executive Director. She originally was interviewed for the Food Pantry Manager position and in that process it became apparent she would be better suited for the Executive Director position. Dr. Newell holds a PhD in Oriental Languages/Studies and most recently had worked for 6 years in the office of US Congressman Larry Buschon MD. Her work experiences for the Congressman gives her many contacts that would be of benefit to the Evansville SVdP District Council and the position of Executive Director. She is also a very likeable 'personable' person. Dr. Newell is married with two children. Her husband is employed at Toyota. Dr. Newell's start date is June 2 and both she and Mary Reed will be attending the June 3 District Council meeting.

- Noah Werner will take over management of the Office of Emergency Assistance (currently under Sr. Donna Herr) and Charity Tracker. He will be receiving a raise in pay with these added responsibilities.

NEW BUSINESS: Dan

- Report from Mideast Regional meeting - Meets one time a year (outside of the National Assembly) and includes district council and diocesan representatives from Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. Dan noted their discussion of a 'Voice for the Poor' program, an initiative by National SVdP, that would be of help if implemented at the diocesan/district level. The Voice for the Poor program makes current legislation/proposed legislation impacting SVdP and the people served by SVdP known to Vincentians. Dan is seeking a coordinator for this program at the diocesan/district level to keep Vincentians informed and up to date on laws/pending legislation pertinent to our mission. Dan asked conferences to mention this coordinator position opportunity to their members. There is a state level coordinator Dan felt would be very knowledgeable and easy for our DC/Diocesan coordinator to work with. Other meeting discussion included the inequity of conferences and district councils in other parts of the Mideast Region. Dan used Detroit as an example where an entire district council is comprised of

conferences serving inner city neighbors. Another topic of discussion was the effort to include more youth in SVdP via the Minnie Vinnies program. A Minnie Vinnie brochure/booklet with activities geared toward young adolescents is now available.

- Dates for Invitation for Renewal - held outside St. Louis July 16-20 and Nov. 12-16. The District Council will cover expenses to attend. Dan noted these sessions are long and intense but very worth it. He encourages attendance and feels the sessions will help develop future leadership for our District Council.
- This year the National Assembly takes place in Louisville Aug. 27-30 at the Galt House. The agenda has not yet been set. With Louisville so close, attendees could commute from Evansville area for daily sessions. Any Vincentian may attend. Dr Newell will attend this year and Maggie is encouraged to attend the sessions for Charitable Works/Thrift Store Managers.
- Dan mentioned the financial training for conference presidents/treasurers is now available on our website. The handful of conference officers who have not completed the training may now do so online.

ON-GOING ACTION ITEM: Dan

- Draft Safeguarding Policy - Set to approve in June, Dan asked if there were any questions/concerns regarding the draft. Bill said he had concerns about Sections IX (applying to Partners and Vendors) and VI (applying to Volunteers for SVdP events, TS and FP). Bill felt it would be difficult to require any partners or vendors to have similar safeguarding policies. Bill also wondered how easy it would be for some of our volunteers to go through this training and would it be necessary for those who volunteer very infrequently. Dan responded we currently have no partners or vendors and perhaps Section IX could be removed. Also Dan noted only officers, employees and those volunteers interacting with neighbors or having access to confidential neighbor data would be required to complete the criminal background checks and the training. Most volunteers would only be required to read and sign a Non-Harassment Policy form. Bill felt the effort to maintain/track or enforce the policy would be cumbersome and could lead to serious complications if we do not fulfill the duties we say we are undertaking. He felt we should think through this a little more before adopting it. Dan asked Joe to determine the cost of implementing the policy and report back. Phil Gamble suggested we hold off making a decision to allow the draft to be reworked and reviewed again at June DC meeting.

ROLL CALL OF CONFERENCES, NEW MEMBERS, ILL AND DECEASED VINCENTIANS, ANNOUNCEMENTS -

- All conferences were present except Young Adult.
- Annunciation conference has two new members: Lolida Osgood, who speaks fluent Spanish, and Frank Conkling
- St James noted the passing of 50 year Vincentian, Virginia Reising

- Joe announced updated versions of our SVdP Resource Guide trifold pamphlet for conference presidents to take this evening. Trustee information for all 4 counties we serve was updated.

CLOSING PRAYER: We read aloud in unison the SVdP Vision Prayer

7:22PM Dan adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting is June 3, 2025 at 6:00pm at St. Mary's Rager Hall