

**SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT de PAUL
EVANSVILLE DISTRICT COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES FOR AUGUST 5, 2025**

6:02PM President Dan Miller called the meeting to order in Rager Hall of Sts. Mary & John Parish.

IN ATTENDANCE: Executive Committee members: President Dan Miller; Vice President Jeff Kropfl; Secretary Rosemary Beckman; Spiritual Director Sr Doris Clippard; Executive Director Ashley Newell; Thrift Store Advisory Board Chair Mike McKee; Thrift Store Manager Jennifer Gieselman; Food Pantry Manager Mary Reed; Director of Case Management and Office of Emergency Assistance Noah Werner; Staff Accountant Donna Hurm.

Absent: Food Pantry Advisory Board Chair Bill Hussmann.

OPENING PRAYER: Sr Doris led us in reciting the traditional SVdP Opening Prayer from green card.

REFLECTION: Sister Doris

Sister shared the 6/19/25 'A Letter From Our Servant Leaders' written by John Berry, SVdP National President. In this Jubilee Year of Hope the theme of the letter was 'Finding Hope in God's Unexpected Gifts'. The 16 paragraphs were read aloud by 16 meeting attendees. Sister asked for Reflection: 1) which phrase or thought in this letter struck you and is worth repeating and 2) when have you been surprised by hope through another person? Chris Pace noted the paragraph on the story of Elijah - how God's hope often comes quietly in all kinds of persons in our everyday life. Mary Reed noted the paragraph about faith being both a refuge and a challenge during suffering. Where is God when everything falls apart? We find God communicates with us in subtle ways. And Sr. Doris noted the belief there are no coincidences in life. God is purposefully present and working in our lives.

Note: At this time, Mike Rogan, St. John Evangelist Conference President, exclaimed his hip (replacement) had gone out of socket. He was in great pain. An ambulance was called, and he was taken to the hospital. We recited the 'Glory Be' for Mike. The meeting continued.

RULE 4.3 Read by Dan

"The Vincentian Family: Members throughout the world, together with other communities inspired by the spirituality of St Vincent de Paul and those whom they help, form a single family. Gratefully remembering the support and encouragement the first Conference received from Blessed Rosalie Rendu, the Society maintains and develops close relationships with other branches of the Vincentian family, while preserving its identity. It cooperates with them in spiritual development and common projects, as well

as with the Church's charitable pastoral initiatives at every level, whenever this may be mutually enriching and useful to those who suffer”.

MINUTES: With no additions or corrections Deb Neufelder made the motion to accept the July 1, 2025, SVdP District Council Meeting Minutes as written and Julie Folz seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Donna Hurm

April-June 2025/April-June 2024 and Fiscal YTD June 2025 and 2024

Financial Summary Comments 7/25/25

District Council

- General Donations are about \$24,500 ahead for the YTD.
- Conference grants distributed through the end of June totaled \$48,000 compared to about \$46,000 at this point last year.
- June's payroll was higher than usual due to paying for a 3-week overlap for training Ashley.
- The District Council net loss for the year to date is about \$146,000, which is about \$9,500 more than last year, most of which can be attributed to the \$35,000 decrease in grants received.

Food Pantry

- For the first nine months of the year, cash donations are down almost \$49,000.
- Food Purchases continue to be almost 20% less than last year and are down almost \$26,000 year-to-date.
- June's operating expenses were about \$2,700 more than last June, but up about \$26,000 year-to-date, mainly due to the \$22,400 down payment made for security upgrades that we will be reimbursed for.

Thrift Store

- June store sales were about \$5,000 more than last June, making year-to-date sales about \$1,000 more than last year.
- June payroll was about \$6,500 less than last June, but year-to-date payroll is about \$33,500 more compared to last year YTD.
- Other June expenses were about \$10,000 less than last June.
- June net income was about \$5,600, compared to a net loss of about \$10,000 June last year, and year-to-date net income is about \$73,000 compared to about \$108,000 year-to-date last year.

There were no questions on the Treasurer's Report

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Ashley

Grants -

- IDHS has deposited our 1st reimbursement of \$22,400 on 7/25/2025. We are now moving forward with the 2nd round of installations at the Food Pantry. Ashley met with John Jacobs of BCS on Aug. 4. Next steps will be installing the cameras inside and outside of the property, as well as installing the phones and

notification systems. That work should begin and end late August/early September, but we have to work around the Food Pantry's schedule, which limits BCS work windows.

- MMI has decided to approve the reallocation of the \$10k initially carved out for the Young Adult (YA) fund back into our original award. First distribution of \$22k is slated for October 2025.
- Evansville Endowment Fund - We have no asbestos! Though that doesn't greatly impact the \$132k quote from Happe to replace the floor, it does save us the cost of an asbestos abatement (estimated additional 6-figure project). Now we will need to discuss other upgrades, such as renovating the bathroom to make it more handicap accessible and replacing the entryway flooring. Happe suggested completing the upgrades before replacing the store flooring to avoid possible additional costs.
- SVdP Mideast Region Friends of the Poor grants - a reminder to conferences not to forget to submit their requests (opened July 23, closes August 13) to National Council for up to \$5k per conference to help with their cases.

Thrift Store -

- New Store Manager is Jennifer Gieselman
- New Box truck driver hired, Joseph Wersich

Food Pantry -

The Food Pantry Consortium is \$70k in debt and no longer able to fill our invoices with Tri-State Food Bank (this was an annual savings of \$120k for the SVdP Food Pantry). They ran out of money in April and were "floating the accounts" until their bills were called due. They have asked us to settle all or part of their \$70k debt. We are under no legal obligation to do so. We learned that they rely almost entirely on federal grants to pay invoices and have almost no other ways to generate revenue, nor are they interested in other ways. On 7/29/25, after meeting with the Executive Committee for their insights, Ashley sent an email to the Consortium asking for more detailed information about the state of their finances, estimated timeline to solvency, current status of grants, as well as having more than just a seat at the table but an active role and voice in their governance moving forward. They will be meeting tomorrow (Aug. 6) to consider this request for transparency. Mary Reed was invited to attend, and Ashley has asked Donna Hurm to also attend.

Regardless of continuing or discontinuing a partnership, this means that the roughly \$120k of groceries we were receiving nearly free will need to be supplemented. Ashley has reached out to Campbell's, Hormel, Del Monte and Goya, known for their charitable donations to US food pantries, seeking a regular partnership with them, as well as the Kellogg Foundation, J.M.Smucker Corporate Giving Review Board, which offer larger one-time grants. Mary and Ashley are looking into bulk purchases from Costco to supplement our canned goods as Tri-State Food Bank has inconsistent inventory. Ashley has been unable to make headway with Mead Johnson. Ashley respectfully asks each of the conferences to please consider hosting food drives in your parishes, schools and other community gatherings to help us remain afloat. If you have a contact with any major food supplier, please send them Ashley's way.

Events -

Hunger Bowl is September 12 at Enlow Field, kickoff at 6:30pm. Please mark your calendars. This raises funds and collects non-perishables for the Food Pantry, now more critical than ever. We are looking for large and small corporate sponsors with a fundraising goal this year of \$40,000.

Friends of the Poor Walk - This year's walk will be on Sept. 27 at the Evansville State Hospital Grounds. Currently we have raised \$25,950 of our \$40,000 goal. We are still accepting corporate sponsorships but the deadline for that is fast approaching. Ashley respectfully asks the conferences to reach out and ask large and small businesses you patronize every day to consider a sponsorship. If a business doesn't want to sponsor us, ask them to participate. We have flyers about the event we need distributed. We are collecting promotional items to fill our swag bags which will also need to be stuffed. We need water and snacks for walk participants. Bill Hussmann has asked for 3 volunteers from each conference to help with set up/tear down.

Fall Quarterly Gathering - hosted by Holy Rosary Oct 12. A breakfast will be served following the 9am Mass. Dr. Nancy Miller of the Susan H Snyder Center (new women's shelter on the eastside) will be the speaker.

Ozanam Orientation -

Date scheduled for Sat., Oct 25 at St Benedict Woodward Center from 9am-3pm. We have had a high participation percentage (60-70%) in this training the last 5 years. This training is very important for Vincentian formation.

Housekeeping -

Presidential terms - terms are 3 years and begin Oct 1. A President may serve 2 consecutive 3 yr terms before a different President serves at least one 3yr term. If you replaced a previous President on a date other than Oct 1, the clock has already started ticking and as of Oct 1 you start the second year of your 3 yr term. Conference Presidents completing six years as of Sept 30, 2025, are Annunciation, Corpus Christi, Good Shepherd and St Clement. St Clement has already elected a new President to start Oct. 1. Now is the time to start working on getting candidates lined up for Sept. election. It is important to share and cultivate leadership.

Conference turf and rendering aid -

Last week we had 3 separate instances of Neighbors seeking aid and the OES call taker not knowing which conference to send the referral to (the conference handling the current address of the Neighbor or the conference related to a bill incurred at a prior address). As Dan has clarified, the conference in which the Neighbor is actively residing should be the conference that provides the assistance, even if it involves a bill in another conference territory. One example is a Neighbor trying to pay a utility debt at a property they formerly lived at. Dan noted the two conferences also could work together if possible to help the Neighbor in need.

STORE REPORT: Mike and Jennifer

- **Mike reported on the Thrift Store Voucher and Volunteer Tracking figures (Rolling previous 12 months). The numbers for June were all down, however, the store has been busy. Volunteer hours 117.5 (May 250); Adults and Children served by**

clothing vouchers 187 (May 293); Number of Items sold 1524 (May 2426); dollar amount sold \$4,474.50 (May \$7,142.21); Furniture \$1,398.77 (May \$1,537.87). Families helped with Bedding total for June was 24 (May 41).

- Jennifer called attention to handouts on sales that help us better know where we are. Sales by Category comparing This Period to Last Period show increases in in most categories. Some categories showed dramatic increases such as Collectibles, Jewelry and Shop Tools. She noted a big push to sell linens. For instance, when beds are sold linens should accompany the bed. Daily Sales - \$1,981 in daily sales is needed to meet budget. Currently, the daily sales are averaging over 2k with \$2,300 being the average the last 2 weeks. Daily Customers figures are up almost 1,000 more than last year. The completion of Walnut St road construction has helped. Jennifer also said advertising and word of mouth have brought more customers to the store. Customers know this is a Christ driven store with a good team working to help everyone. She also noted the store has been blessed with donations.
- Other updates from Jennifer included:
 - Back to School Sale was OK. A free book was given to those who shopped. There was an abundance of uniforms not sold as EVSC no longer uses them. Jennifer asked the store team about donating the uniforms to Joshua Academy (enrollment 270) and all favored doing so. Joshua Academy was extremely grateful for this generosity.
 - Kerri Zeien was hired as a part-time employee to work the sales floor and fill in as cashier. And Joseph Wersich was hired as full time box truck driver. We have already received 2 calls commending him.
 - Starting Senior Day on first Wednesday of the month offering 10% off for customers aged 55 and older
 - New employee discount program of 20%. Signed itemized receipt kept on file. Shopping must be done before store opens or at/near closing time. To qualify the employee must have finished the initial Probationary Period
 - Customer Service now set up at front of the store
 - Jennifer now handles all vouchers
 - UE, USI students receive a 45% discount when they shop during the 3 day student move in period. The students must show school ID.
 - The store wishes to contribute to the work of Holly House perhaps by offering ‘anxiety’ bags for children---Jennifer would like to revive the Campaign Round Up Report and also start giving a free book to students who bring their report cards to the store.

PANTRY REPORT: Mary

- 2751 Individuals were served in July, up from 2550 Individuals in June.
- 1219 Households were served in July, up from 1073 Households in June
- Ruler Foods has been an amazing help to the pantry in the aftermath of the Food Consortium issue. Mary plans to make Ruler Foods a primary source in the future.

- Items currently needed are canned fruit (peaches, pears and pineapple); peanut butter, macaroni and cheese.
- Tuesday morning volunteers are needed and more substitutes as well to fill in as needed.

ON-GOING BUSINESS: Dan

- **Resolution 2025.4 on Changes to Safeguarding project -** After taking the Virtus Training Dan and the Executive Committee of the District Council determined that many of our employees are not in contact with our neighbors sufficient to justify taking the Virtus Training. Consequently, Dan made revisions to our Safeguarding Policy Article IV, Section 6 as follows: “All employees at the District Council Office, the manager of the Food Pantry (and any future assistant manager), the Thrift Store Manager, assistant managers at the Thrift Store, and any Thrift Store employee required by the Executive Director and/or the Thrift Store manager must successfully complete safeguarding training as to children and young adults and vulnerable adults. All employees shall read and sign the Harassment Policy (Appendix A)”. Tom Bryan made the motion to adopt the revision as stated, the motion was seconded, and the vote was unanimous in favor. Dan hoped by next month an email notification will go out to start this training beginning with the conference presidents. There may be additional revisions after the presidents complete the training.

NEW BUSINESS: Dan

- **First reading of Resolution 2025.5; 2025-26 Budget -**
Dan turned this first reading of the 2025-26 Budget over to Donna. Donna thanked Melanie and Jeff Kropfl for their help in creating this budget. Donna then went through the proposed budgets for District Council, Food Pantry and Thrift Store. She pointed out reasons or gave explanations for comments made in the ‘notes’ column pertaining to items with significant changes in income or expenses from the 2024-2025 Budget. There was some discussion or requests for clarification regarding a few changes but after explanations were given, there were no revisions recommended. Dan asked that any later concerns or questions be directed to him or Donna before the Sept District Council meeting when we will vote on adopting the proposed 2025-2026 Budget.
- **Problems at the Food Pantry Consortium -** This was discussed earlier in the Executive Director report. We will continue the discussion as we learn more.
- **Management of the Crisis Fund -**
Because the Young Adult Conference has disbanded, a new entity is needed to manage and disburse the Crisis Fund and Fr. Ted Tempel Fund monies. Dan would like to see a conference take this over and asks for the conferences to give this opportunity their consideration.
- **Completion of Annual Conflict of Interest Policy Paperwork -**
Dan provided copies of the Conflict of Interest Policy that states the Purpose, Definitions, Procedures for Addressing Conflicts, Violations of the Policy, etc. and

the Conflict of Interest Annual Statement. Dan also explained who would constitute an Interested Person required to sign the Annual Statement. He gave an example of a possible conflict of interest for better understanding of the policy. Those the policy applies to will be required to sign the Conflict of Interest Annual Statement by end of the current fiscal year (Sept 30, 2025).

OTHER: DiAnne Forville of the St. Clement conference asked to address the meeting in regard to neighbors in need not being able to get through on the phone to the Office of Emergency Assistance. Discussion followed which included comments that the call takers sometimes take too long to take the referrals thus tying up the phone lines, the need to train call takers to improve speed, accuracy and efficiency, the need to listen with empathy to the neighbor's account of their situation even if given in length, the possibility of adding an additional phone line.

ROLL CALL of conferences, New Members, ill and deceased Vincentians, announcements -

- All conferences except St Matthew present
- Holy Redeemer has two new members: Bill and Annette Seibert
- Two Food Pantry volunteers have died - Gerry Tieken and Sue Gries
- Noah announced the start of a new Cohort in the Getting Ahead Program. Volunteers are needed.

CLOSING PRAYER: Sr. Doris led us in reciting the SVdP Vision Prayer and the Hail Mary in thanksgiving for new members, for Mike Rogan in his situation, for the souls of deceased members and for the success of the newest Cohort in Getting Ahead Program.

7:53PM Dan adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting is September 2, 2025, at 6:00PM in Rager Hall of Sts. Mary & John Parish