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Diocesan Finance Council Highlights Thursday, January 8, 2009

Present were Bishop Daniel Walsh, 13 members of the Finance Council, one staff member and two guests. Following an opening prayer and approval of the agenda and previous minutes and highlights, the Bishop delivered his report.

1. **Bishop Walsh** remarked that he attended the General Assembly of Catholic Bishops that included a Digital Media Boot Camp, which he found an amazing arena of communication.

Bishop also reported that there are two issues to address. The first would allow him the authority to mediate some claims that will be heard in late February. After discussion, a ***motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved, to allow the Bishop to offer a fiscally reasonable sum during the mediation.***

The second issue is a follow-up to the Finance Council recommendation, at the last meeting, to cut positions to meet the budget shortfall. In response to a request by an affected (longtime) staff member, a ***motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved, to: retain the employee at 30 hours per week with full benefits through March 31, 2009; after which the position will revert to 19 hours per week with no benefits. If the employee were to obtain an additional part time position at another Diocese of Santa Rosa location, and the combined total hours at both positions are equal to an eligible amount, then the Chancery Office would contribute a prorated amount towards the employee's eligible benefits.***

2. **Report of Diocesan Finance Officer:** The Self Insurance Fund currently has \$4,525,610 which includes worker's compensation, and property and liability insurance. A parish or school would pay \$1,000 deductible and the balance up to \$99,000 per claim eligible would come from this fund.
3. **Report of Legal Counsel:** Dan Galvin reported there are still four cases pending against the diocese, and two new claims; there is existing insurance on these. His office also handled a cemeteries issue and a contract case at St. John's in Napa.
4. **Cash Flow and Budget Committee:** In the absence of Kim Sampietro, Mike Urick reviewed the **Budget versus Actual Cash Flow** for the months of October and November 2008 and detailed the timing and other variances. Bishop Walsh explained some of the yearly grants that are received by the Diocese.

Budget Committee: No report.

8. Committee Reports

- A. **Membership:** Father Shaw reported that the St. Bernard parishioner Gene Senestraro is the new council member from Eureka. Fr. Shaw distributed a handout that shows the terms of the present council members.

B. Communications: Judy Barrett reported that the North Coast Catholic is now being printed in color and the response has been very favorable. However, due to budget concerns, the committee will be discussing the pros and cons of moving to an online-only production of the NCC, or of printing only a small number. There was some discussion of the original purpose of the NCC, and how it has evolved. Also Judy reported that Mike Carter, who has been acting as volunteer webmaster, has now retired. Deirdre Frontczak has arranged for installation of a Content Management System, allowing her to assume accountability for maintaining and enhancing the website. Selected staff and ministry directors (for Parishes, Schools, the Deaconate, and the Annual Ministries Appeal) will be trained to update and enhance their own diocesan web pages on a regular basis.

C. Investment Committee: No report.

D. Audit Committee: No report.

E. Property: Clem Carinalli reported that the Druids want to give the Diocese their cemetery in Elk. Bishop Walsh explained that it is basically a liability. Clem pointed out that Mike Urick had sent a letter requesting additional information about the status of the cemetery and cemetery records. Clem also asked for an update on the property that Father Chinh had been trying to purchase. Bishop Walsh reported that the property had been purchased but is not in the name of the Diocese, nor does the Diocese have any responsibility for the property.

F. Building and Construction: No report.

G. Insurance and Human Resources: Bob Fish reported on a memo distributed from Mike Urick about the rate increase for the lay employee pension contributions. He also reported that there will be a return of the Worker's Compensation premium of approximately \$259,580. He recommended that this be distributed back to the parishes and schools at a pro-rated amount. *Msgr. Brenkle made the **motion**, duly seconded by Msgr. Pulskamp, and unanimously approved to return the funds on a pro-rated basis to the schools and parishes.*

H. Development: The Bishop reported that the 2009 Annual Ministry Appeal is beginning and the brochures are being mailed. He is asking for enthusiastic support.

9. Other Business: In other business, Msgr. Brenkle is still pursuing the issue of priests who are over age 65 and are active in a parish to try to have Medicare supplemental plans with Medicare as primary health insurance. He realizes the Diocese and parishes cannot influence the priest to select this option.

10. Tentative Dates for meetings were set and the meeting adjourned.