

Parish Cluster 23 Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2006
Hosted by Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Attendance:

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|--|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fr. Reggie Brissette | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fr. Lawrence Conley | <input type="checkbox"/> Fr. Norm Carpentier | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fr. Joseph Daniels |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sharon Williams | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pat McHatton | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elaine Rioux | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jessica Hart |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Donna Libby | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dick Peterson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lynn Shorty | <input type="checkbox"/> Anna Cutter |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bernie Filieo | <input type="checkbox"/> David Bois | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Martha Corkery | <input type="checkbox"/> Ernie Lebel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ben DeRoche | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Martha Conroy | <input type="checkbox"/> David Twomey | <input type="checkbox"/> Jim Soma |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Russ Champagne | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lisa Champagne | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leo Lambert | |
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Meeting began with a prayer service led by Martha Corkery, attendance taken, and then turned over to Bernie Filieo and Martha Conroy. Minutes from the November 7th meeting, agendas, draft outline for the final recommendation were distributed. The agenda was reviewed and a few modifications made.

9-1 Review of Action Items

Lynn Shorty

It was noted that our last formal committee meeting was on 11/7/05; since then, we have completed visitations with parish leaders at Bridgton, Fryeburg, Windham, and Gorham. Our final “parish leader” meeting is with St. Anthony’s on January 31st.

- Complete remaining data collection for “major statistics worksheet” -- Still some items to be obtained from OLPH and Westbrook. With regard to maintenance issues, the group was asked to prioritize items by necessity (safety, required), identify costs, and develop a timeline for a 5 year protection plan – **Information should be forwarded to the Facilities Subcommittee (Dick Peterson)**
- Develop a five year capital plan once a recommendation is identified (All) – **Final responsibility for this may fall under the Facilities Subcommittee**
- Initiate development of an organization chart (Bernie) – **first draft completed; further development will be the responsibility of the Personnel Subcommittee (Martha Corkery)**
- Development of a FAQ sheet (Lynn) – Ongoing project – add information as clarification is obtained – **FAQ list was distributed at parish meetings. Further development will be by the Communications Subcommittee (Lynn Shorty)**

9-2 Draft Outline for Final Cluster Committee Report

Bernie Filieo

Outline was distributed and reviewed. Draft is based on a document from the Bishop’s original planning committee; our goal is to have this report developed by May 2006.

- Request was made to add to the outline: include a plan for periodic follow-up evaluations once the implementation process begins
- Request was made for clarification regarding the implementation timeline: our group is responsible for making recommendations – for example, identify when a church would close, which mass would be eliminated, etc. However, the timelines may be impacted by the unexpected retirement of a priest, etc. so we will need to remain flexible.

9-3 Sub-Committee Updates

Martha Conroy

Four subcommittees have been created to address facilities, personnel, demographics and communications; each group was asked to share their objective statement:

- Facilities (Dick Peterson)
The objective of the facilities subcommittee is to recommend to the entire cluster planning committee how the physical facilities currently existing in the various parishes will be used in Cluster 23. The committee is

comprised of Dick, Russ and Lisa Champagne, and Fr. Daniels. This subcommittee will be a resource for other committees regarding the use of facilities in the future. The following information will be gathered:

- Description and pictures of all existing physical facilities
- Description of current use of all physical facilities
- Documentation of any repairs necessary and the associated costs
- Documentation of the 5 year expenditure plan for capital improvements to all existing structures

- Personnel (Martha Corkery)

The subcommittee will create a complete list of all positions currently existing in all five cluster parishes along with costs or salary and benefits for each position. The subcommittee will then review the personnel plan provided by the diocese and develop a proposal for the staffing of Cluster # 23. Parish budgets and needs of the parishes will be considered in the development of this personnel proposal. Members include Martha, Elaine Rioux, and Donna Libby. Clarification was requested by the subcommittee:

- Is the committee responsible for making a recommendation for the transition of the Pastoral and Finance Commissions? *Group felt that this would be beneficial as the stepping stone to a full group discussion when the final recommendation is being developed*
- If we begin to post our minutes on the various parish websites, is it appropriate to publish salaries? *Group felt this was appropriate, but caution must be used when publishing potentially sensitive data*

- Demographics (Bernie Filieo)

Objective statement will be forwarded to the group via email. Subcommittee consists of Pat McHatton and Bernie. They informed us of a useful website at www.GPCOG.org

- Communications (Lynn Shorty)

The subcommittee's objective is to provide clear, current and uniform information about the work of our cluster committee to all parishioners of Cluster 23 through as many means possible/necessary. The group, consisting of Sharon Williams, Jessica Hart, and Lynn is hoping to use a variety of approaches in disseminating information – use of bulletin boards, pulpit sharing, posting our minutes on parish websites, further development and distribution of FAQs, etc.

- Question was raised regarding this committee's involvement with the final writing of the cluster's recommendation. *It was felt that each subcommittee would be creating documents as objectives were met. It would not be the sole responsibility of the Communications group...*
- Subcommittee was asked to make a recommendation on how to approach the next wave of meetings with parishioners. Our cluster committee committed to revisiting each site to share the plan for the cluster, but what is the best approach, and at what time? *Communications sub-committee will review this further and make a recommendation.*

9-4 Mid-Course Review

Martha Conroy

Martha pointed out that we are halfway thru the process timeline and emphasized the need to use our time and resources as effectively as possible during the next five to six months. A handout was provided (Cluster #23 process review along with Reflection Questions for Inter-Parish Collaboration).

- Existing subcommittees represent important items that are essential (skeleton) to the process of making our final recommendation. However, we must not forget the spiritual items (flesh and blood) that promote parish life: **Word, Sacrament/Celebration, Service, and Community**
- Reflection: How can we best use our time and resources in the next six months to address all significant dimensions of the new cluster's life? Additional comments:
 - Fr. Brissette commented on potentially reaching out to other denominations within social faith, similar to the ecumenical food pantry
 - Martha suggested that we also include the sacraments in our sub-committees' tasks; also include collaboration with minister and laity training; include shared activities with liturgical ministries as well as
 - Underlying spirituality is critical to this process; we must include within our recommendation how it will nourish one's spiritual faith, and how a connection with the priests (outside of weekend activities) will be maintained

- Review of Reflection Questions
 - This is a tool to assist with the development of the recommendation
 - ? if it would be beneficial to review one section per meeting: this was well received by the group
 - Caution should be used with sharing information in the minutes; must be clear that this information is in the discussion phase and that no final decisions have been made. However, we feel it is important to share information and challenge people to encourage discussions among the churches/parishioners. We need to make this process real to the people!
- Cluster Report Outline
 - Martha offered another perspective on the cluster report outline so that the grouping of questions fit into our approach for gathering information and ensuring that we maintain a strong faith community when making our recommendation.

9-5 Brief Overview of Four Key Elements in Parish Life Martha Conroy

It is the person of Jesus Christ who is uniting these four elements; it is important that we maintain these in our clustering process:

- **Word:** “Appearing” the word of God is important to our everyday lives; this helps reveal God’s love, mercy and justice thru word and action
- **Sacrament and Celebration:** Reminds us of the presence of Jesus Christ among us – that he died and rose for us – maintaining this is essential to what we are doing. It is not easy to let go of what we know now, but new life can come from this process. How can we best support a worshipping community that expresses and develops its relationship with God and one another thru liturgical celebrations?
- **Service:** Reminds us “whatever you do to the least of our brothers...” – responds to the social concerns of the local area and the needs of the broader world
- **Community:** Defines church as the people of God, not as individuals but as people united – how can we most effectively use our resources?

9-6 Taking Ownership for Tasks Associated with Key Elements Martha Conroy

Group was asked to take on additional tasks to help achieve our goal/objective for this cluster process:

- **Liturgical Schedule:** Need to propose a schedule that would work with three priests; we need to be prepared for when the number of current priests in the cluster is reduced. *Donna Libby, Sharon Williams, and the four priests* will review and propose a schedule. Of note, the priests have already completed a first cut at the schedule (distributed at this meeting) which will be reviewed with the group at the February meeting
- **Social Justice:** Need to summarize current social justice needs, current ways of meeting those needs, identify additional needs, and collaboration opportunities to meet those needs. *Martha Corkery and Leo Lambert* volunteered to lead this effort
- **Religious Education:** Need to take a similar approach to the Social Justice assessment and answer the question “how will we provide ongoing catechesis for the faith development of all members within the Parish Cluster?” *Dick Peterson and Lynn Shorty* volunteered to lead this effort. Much of the work will be delegated to the parish catechetical leaders; goal is to have an initial meeting with this group prior to our February meeting, with a more formal report prepared by March/April.
- **Community:** Deferred - This will be assigned at the next meeting

9-7 Action Items: Bernie Filieo

- Complete remaining data collection for “major statistics worksheet” -- Still some items to be obtained from OLPH and Westbrook. With regard to maintenance issues, the group was asked to prioritize items by necessity (safety, required), identify costs, and develop a timeline for a 5 year protection plan
- Develop a five year capital plan once a recommendation is identified (All)
- Initiate development of an organization chart (Bernie)

- Development of a FAQ sheet (Lynn) – Ongoing project – add information as clarification is obtained
- Liturgy Committee – will review a proposed mass schedule at the February Meeting
- Religious Education – set up initial meeting with PCLs and provide them with an outline of their task
- Communications Committee – develop a proposal for best approach in our next wave of meeting with parishioners; submit bulletin update
- Martha will prepare a brief presentation for the next meeting, to assist with building a “common language” among us before proceeding
- Group is asked to review the Reflection Questions within the handout provided at this meeting

9-8 Schedule of Upcoming Events

- Tuesday, **January 31st** at 6:30pm – with parish leaders at the Faith Formation Center (old convent) at St. Anthony’s Parish. Map provided by Lisa Champagne
- Tuesday, **February 7th** at 6:30pm – Cluster Committee meeting at Our Lady of Perpetual Help
- Tuesday, **February 28th** at 6:30pm – Cluster Committee meeting at St. Anne’s in Gorham. Members are invited to arrive at 6pm to enjoy a “Mardi Gras” supper with the community
- Wednesday, **March 29th** at 6:30pm – Cluster Committee meeting at St. Joseph’s in Bridgton
- Saturday, **April 8th** at ??? – Follow-up meeting with Brother Loughlan Sofield, to include chairs of Pastoral Councils and Finance Councils. Location yet to be announced.

Meeting ended at 8:45pm after a closing prayer