

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALT LAKE CITY
DIOCESAN FINANCE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES of January 23, 2024
Pastoral Center, 27 C Street, Salt Lake City, Utah

PRESENT

Monsignor Colin F. Bircumshaw
Reverend John Evans
Reverend Sam Dinsdale
Deacon George Reade
Fred Strasser
Kathie Roberts (Zoom)

Mark Longe
Doug Black (Zoom)
Andrea Steenburgh
Candice Greenwald
Sarah Niemann

GUESTS

John Curtice
Marlee Garcia

CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING PRAYER:

The meeting was called to order at 2:33 PM and the opening prayer was led by Monsignor Colin F. Bircumshaw.

APPROVAL of October 17, 2023, MINUTES

Monsignor Colin F. Bircumshaw asked the Diocesan Finance Council if the council had time to look at the minutes earlier, or if they would need a few minutes for review. Father John Evans motioned to approve the minutes, Father Sam Dinsdale seconded the motion, and the October 17, 2023, minutes were unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mount Calvary Catholic Cemetery Loan Request and Update

Msgr. Colin summarized what has been known thus far with regards to Mount Calvary Catholic Cemetery Loan Request:

- Mount Calvary Cemetery is running out of in-ground full coffin burial space. We had great success in the columbarium and niches that were built. There is some ground that we can use to build some non-in-ground internments.

- Out of State representatives came and did a presentation of possible solutions. Bishop Solis had committed at least to the exploration of some possible solutions.

Msgr. Colin F. Bircumshaw introduced John Curtice from the Mount Calvary Cemetery to give a presentation on the addition to the cemetery. John Curtice introduced himself to the council. John Curtice handed out the design and layout packets of the proposed mausoleum. He said that they are in dire straits for a new mausoleum and ground. Out of 1,484 spots in the current mausoleum, we have only 120 mausoleum spaces left. Sales are up for mausoleums. With the proposed mausoleum we will be providing over 300 crypts and niches. The new mausoleum will accommodate 840 niches and 664 crypts. He added that there are many styles of crypts: double, head to toe, side by side, and the majority being single crypts. They can accommodate cremations as well.

He said that the proposed mausoleum has a chapel built inside that can be used for funerals, weddings, receptions, and events. John Curtice said that Bishop Oscar A. Solis had pre-approved the project. He mentioned that the geo-engineering, architecture, and other works have already been done for the project. There are two bids out for the construction of the mausoleum, and that they would be going with the same architecture firm from Georgia.

John said he would be going around to all the parishes about the proposed project. Mark Longe asked if he would be asking for money for the project, or to do pre-sales of the mausoleum. Father Sam Dinsdale asked if we should consider dedicating the space for the chapel to be more space for niches and crypts, unless the space where the chapel is can also be used to accommodate 300 glass niches, side by side crypts and urns. He said there are enough churches for funerals and such. Father Sam Dinsdale said that he has more questions and concerns about more space in the future. John Curtice said that the caskets and niches will also be in the chapel and will be utilized for more space. Msgr. Colin F. Bircumshaw said it makes sense to have the chapel so they can hold proper masses at the cemetery.

Mark Longe asked how many people are interred every year. John Curtice responded that about 150 are interred every year. So, Mark commented that with the proposed project having 1504 crypts and niches, it would take about 10 years before we run out of space again. John mentioned he needs to adjust the ground property sales and pricing to make the mausoleum option more desirable – like raising the ground prices. John said right now we have less than 100 graves. John also has a reclamation project that has about 120 graves that he needs to process for reclamation. Kathie Roberts asked under what circumstances by which reclamation occurs. John Curtice responded that reclamation is the process in which they identify graves that have not had any activity in 60 years, placing a notice in the newspaper,

church bulletin notifying the public of the possible sale of those grave sites. And, if there is no claim to the grave, it is put into the reclamation process.

Doug Black asked John Curtice if he had done any sort of cash flow projections over the next three years – as to what will be coming in, maintenance, upgrades, etc. John Curtice replied that maintenance in a mausoleum, which involves vacuuming the floor and dusting the vases, will be included with what we are maintaining right now. John Curtice said he thinks right out of the bag, he will have a cash flow deficit.

Father John Evans asked how Mount Calvary Cemetery is priced compared to other like cemeteries. John Curtice said that currently the Mount Calvary Cemetery is priced about 20%-30% below the other cemeteries in Salt Lake City. Father John Evans asked if they will be priced higher than other cemeteries sites once the new mausoleum is built. John Curtice said we would be priced higher, but they have a captured audience for Mount Calvary Cemetery. Msgr. Colin commented that captured audience may not really be there due to mobility, some Catholics are choosing to be buried elsewhere or choosing other burial alternatives.

John Curtice said operations right now are running on burial, vault and our ground sales. John added that they are a little low compared to others. Msgr. Colin said that he has done his research, and they are about 25% lower than other cemeteries. The concern is the cash flow year to year.

Father Sam Dinsdale asked if instead of the mausoleum, they could build towers. John responded that the towers do not hold as many and that they are limited in how they can be built. Msgr. Colin F. Bircumshaw asked John what Bishop had approved. John Curtice responded that Bishop Oscar A. Solis had approved the architecture and the geo-engineering.

Msgr. Colin F. Bircumshaw said that he is worried that the cemetery is not endowed and there is no perpetual care planned. Msgr. Colin said that if the mausoleum is filled in ten years, then it needs to be paid for in ten years. Msgr. Colin said that he does not see how it is possible if it is not endowed to pay for and have a stream of revenue for the future.

Doug Black said that they should solicit donations from people who have already bought a plot. Deacon George Reade asked if they are committed to anything after what Bishop Oscar A. Solis had approved. John Curtice responded that they are not committed to any future plans. Mark Longe commented that this is a big project for only one person, and it might be beneficial to have a committee for additional support with marketing and the project.

Msgr. Colin F. Bircumshaw said that the only resolution he could come to is a different payment schedule. Msgr. Colin said that he does not see how it should go through the D&L. Msgr. Colin said that what he can see saving this project is finding a donor. Father John Evans said he does not see this project working, servicing the loan would be doubling his operation costs.

Father John Evans said he does not hear a commitment to the Mount Calvary Cemetery loan. Fred Strasser said this is a bad idea. Father John Evans said that there are other possibilities for burial and burial sites. Doug Black asked if there is a way to do a survey of the Catholic population to show how many people are interested in being interred at Mount Calvary Catholic Cemetery. Father John Evans said that we need to see this ten-year plan. Msgr. Colin F. Bircumshaw said that he does not see this being serviceable. Father John Evans said that he can see this possibly being feasible after he gets enough donations.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.

MCC special meeting scheduled tentatively for either March 5 or **Feb 29, at 2 pm**, depending on the Bishop's availability.