**St. Philip/St. Teresa Parish Council Minutes**

**March 20, 2019– St. Philip Parish Hall**

Present: Fr. Fergal McGuinness (ex. off.), Joe Conway Chair, Hal McGuirk, Peg Duffy, , Dolores Novello. Absent: Susan Small, Marilyn Collins, Mary Griffith (ex. off.)

Fr. Fergal led the Council in opening prayer.

The minutes of the January 20 2019 meeting were approved as submitted.

**Ongoing Business**

## Rural Foods: On March 12 we welcomed 99 families representing 115 adults, 25 children and 34 seniors for a total of 174 people receiving nutritional support. This program is funded through the Rural Food Collection on the last Sunday of each month as well as through private donations and the generous support of our volunteers.

## Rural Foods’ Leadership Team is in transition with Cathy McCool, Hal McGuirk taking the reins over the course of the year from Rodney DeMartini. Many thanks go to Rodney for being steadfast to this wonderful program over the last 12 years.

## Due to changes in Redwood Empire delivery schedule Rural Foods will no longer be partnering with Redwood Empire Food Bank for government commodities food items. The program will continue as is for the next two or three months. Delivery of foodstuff will be a challenge to address going forward. See Rodney DeMartini’s letter to the parish attached below.

**Liturgy Report:** None

**Finance Report**: Fr. Fergal reports we are in good financial health. Painting bids for St. Teresa’s received and being vetted by the Parish Finance Committee. Landscaping bids for St. Teresa’s shrubbery alongside of church being sought to prevent pavement upheaval from root intrusion plus fire hazard reduction.

**Old Business Updates:**

AED at St. Teresa’s installed and the other two are in the process of acquisition.

**New business:**

Parish Picnic is in the good hands of Edna Irving. The Parish Council was reminded to be actively involved with lending many happy hands with cost, preparation, setup, activities and clean up. It is the Parish Council’s event and we need to make it easy as possible on Edna. It is held June 9.

Sesquicentennial of Calvary Cemetery (150 years) is June 4. There will be a Mass at 1100 by Monsignor Dan Whelton to mark and celebrate the occasion at the Cemetery. Art Hansen is leading this commemoration of this historic cemetery and landmark. Art is also searching for old photos of historical interest to add to an information board as found at the Watson School. Being a Tuesday there will be no 9 AM Mass at St. Teresa’s June 4.

Gospel Sing-a-Long perhaps in the works.

Next Parish Council meeting: June 5 at 10 AM.

Closing prayer by Fr. Fergal.

**NEXT MEETING:**

**Tuesday, June 5th 10 to 11:30**

**Rodney DeMartini Letter to Parish**

March 17, 2019

TO: St. Philip & St. Teresa Catholic Community

FROM: Rod DeMartini – Coordinator, Rural Food Program

Our parish Rural Food ministry has continued for over thirty years because of financial and volunteer support from pastors and parishioners and from family members, neighbors and friends who have been invited to serve our neighbors in need.

In addition to groceries and produce that we purchase each month, our program has been enrolled in the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) that is conducted by the Federal Department of Agriculture. The food items that we receive each month as a partner member of the Redwood Empire Food Bank have been delivered on the day preceding our second Tuesday monthly distribution. These items are provided free of charge.

Due to changes to the EFAP program initiated by the Department of Agriculture, the Redwood Empire Food Bank is no longer able to maintain the current delivery schedule. In fact, beginning in April, we were given a schedule that would have changed our monthly distribution week and day and would have mandated that delivery, set-up and distribution occur on one day. In my estimation and in consultation with Catholic Charities who oversees our program and other Rural Food programs in the Diocese, these sudden, radical changes would have a negative impact adversely affecting the families we serve as well as the dedicated volunteers who are essential to this ministry. Therefore we have withdrawn our participation in the EFAP program effective immediately.

We will continue as a partner member of the Redwood Empire Food Bank that is the source of most of the grocery items we purchase every month. They are committed to continue to deliver these items to us in April and May on the Monday before our Tuesday distribution. After that time pick-up and delivery will be our responsibility.

At this point, these are the major challenges facing us:

1. We will be purchasing all of the produce that we distribute each month from Andy’s Wholesale Produce Market because we will no longer be receiving free EFAP produce. In each of the three client surveys we have conducted, the request for more produce is at the top of the list. Therefore we need to increase the produce line item in our annual budget as well as find adequate transport of our purchases to the Parish Hall.
2. We will be looking to increase protein choices to replace the loss of EFAP protein contributions.
3. We will be working in partnership with the staff of the Catholic Charities Rural Food Program on logistical issues such as pick-up and delivery of food purchased from the Redwood Empire Food Bank beginning in June. Charities has only one box truck that also serves Rural Food programs in Sonoma and Lake counties so this would place a strain on this limited resource. We are committed to work with Catholic Charities to identify additional transportation resources.

I am confident that we can address these challenges together. In the months ahead we will endeavor to “fill gaps” created by this sudden change. I will personally be communicating with our client community regarding the loss of the EFAP program in the next “Food Basket Newsletter” to be distributed in April. I know that they will understand our commitment to make any changes in the least disruptive way. I will continue to update our parish community in the bulletin.

I welcome your assistance, questions and suggestions and ask that you direct these communications to our leadership team:

Rod DeMartini: roddemar@comcast.net

Cathy McCool: cmccool318@hotmail.com

Hal McGuirk: mcguirksfarmhouse@gmail.com

Please keep our ministry in your prayers that God’s grace may guide us in this transition period.