



St. Vincent de Paul Society Milwaukee Archdiocese

Voice For the Poor Committee

Minutes from the Meeting held on March 8, 2025

In Attendance: David Anderson, Randy Bedore, Armand Carriere, Jim Erven, Tom Jozwik, Sister Julie Krah, E. Michael McCann, John Weber, and Milwaukee Council President Mike Farrell

Call to Order: As we gathered online, there was some discussion on the government layoffs coming out of Elon Musk and the [DOGE](#) office. Committee members were largely wondering if some of the moves Musk was making were even legal. Mike McCann stated that a lot of Trump's policies are being challenged in the courts and will likely end up in front of the Supreme Court. Some actions have the courts issuing cease and desist orders and some challenges have been dropped by federal judges. The consensus was, that we will all need to wait and see. The meeting was called to order at 8:05 AM with all members praying together, the Opening Prayer for SVDP meetings.

Approval of the Minutes: The Chairperson asked for any changes or corrections that need to be made to the Minutes from the VFP meeting held on February 8, 2025. Committee members offered no corrections nor changes to the Minutes. E. Michael McCann made a motion to accept the Minutes as submitted and John Weber seconded that motion. The chairperson asked for a verbal vote on the motion, and the Minutes from the February Meeting were passed unanimously.

Subcommittee Updates:

Energy – Busch reported on what we can expect to pay for energy after the new rates went into effect in January. Here's what to know about rate increases for Southeastern Wisconsin and Milwaukee-area customers.

How much more will I pay?

A typical monthly residential electric bill could rise between \$8 and \$9 in 2025, and between \$9 and \$10 a month in 2026, We Energies said.

A PSC analysis showed the average residential We Energies customer, with energy usage of 660 kilowatt-hours per month, could expect a \$7.62 increase on their monthly bill beginning January 1 and \$9.73 more per month in 2026, for a cumulative adjustment of \$17.34 over the next two years.

Both sets of figures are estimates. More specific numbers will be finalized by the Public Service Commission before the end of the year. WE Energies customers have been hit with nine rate increases over the last 13 years, which seems excessive when you consider we already pay some of the highest energy rates in the nation.

When will the increases go into effect?

Customers will see increases in their electric bill, based on the higher rates, beginning January 1 and again in January 2026.

Can I still apply for energy assistance?

Yes, help is available through the State of Wisconsin by calling 1-800-506-5596.

The [Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program](#) offers several types of assistance including help with energy emergencies and repairing or replacing nonoperating heating equipment.

More information is available by calling We Energies or going to its website <https://www.we-energies.com/payment-bill/wi-energy-assistance>

Criminal Justice - E. Michael McCann stated that he needed to leave the meeting early today for a family commitment. There were two issues that he wanted to fill us in on. First, he reported that the Wisconsin legislature is taking up the issue of reckless driving. The headlines from Milwaukee on reckless driving deaths are at the forefront of this effort, but the problem can be found in all of the larger city/county population areas statewide. Milwaukee's mayor recently discussed the problem in his state of the city address. [AB78](#) seeks to authorize the impoundment of any vehicle used in a reckless driving offense regardless of ownership of the vehicle or prior record of the operator. The bill also provides that a local ordinance may authorize impounding such a vehicle until outstanding fines and forfeitures owed by the vehicle's owner are fully paid.

McCann asked the committee members if we need to, or want to take up this issue. He pointed out the dichotomy of our Society backing the expungement of non-violent criminal records, while advocating for stiffer penalties for reckless driving.

Randy Bedore stated that he often drives through some of the poorest areas of the city and sees firsthand the damage being caused by reckless driving in those neighborhoods, yet it was his opinion that we should not take up this issue, for the same reasons McCann mentioned. John Weber mentioned that many of the vehicles involved in reckless driving are stolen and the police are always going to pursue felony criminals, sometimes leading to accidents. VFP Chairperson Dave Busch mentioned that there are no real statistics available to help us measure the direct affect of reckless driving on the poor. The opinion of the majority of VFP members was that we should not take up this issue at this time. McCann agreed to set this issue aside unless we later decide differently.

Secondly, McCann revisited our support for the [expansion of Medicaid eligibility](#) in Wisconsin. Mike reported that Barbra Sella of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference told him and Jim Erven that the spring election did not do enough to further the expansion in Wisconsin. Even though there are some Republicans in the state that favor the expansion, it is still largely opposed by Robin Voss the Republican Speaker of the Assembly. Voss is holding the majority party members to oppose expansion of Medicaid and has stated that he will not let this pass in Wisconsin. McCann felt that, considering the Wisconsin Bishops are in support of the expansion, some Republicans support this expansion, and the additional seats that the Democrats have picked up in the state legislature, that we should support this effort and get our message out this year. The expansion of Medicaid benefits would directly improve health care for an estimated 90,000 of the state's population that are most in need. Mike stated that he will continue to push for Medicaid expansion. Busch suggested we launch a [VoterVoice](#) Action Alert to encourage Christians to contact their representatives in support of Medicaid expansion.

Mike Farrell reminded us that one of the arguments against expanding eligibility for Medicaid was the concern that when federal funds for Medicaid run out, the State would be left holding the bag for the extra money necessary to support the expansion.

McCann added that under the current administration we may have to fight just to keep the *current* Medicaid coverages in place.

Housing: John Weber reported that the cash- strapped Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee ([HACM](#)) [owes the City of Milwaukee](#) a total of \$5.1 million, according to a new review by the city comptroller.

The housing authority's new chief financial officer, Brad Leak- who joined the agency's team in November and was quickly promoted- discovered last month that his predecessors had used \$2.8 million in restricted federal funds to cover up the agency's serious cash shortage.

Leak - who was already negotiating a payment plan for a \$1.1 million payment in lieu of taxes the housing authority owed the city- was informed via email that the agency's obligations to the city were about \$4 million higher than previously known.

Council President Jose Perez, who requested the financial review after Leak shared his discovery publicly last month, said the \$5.1 million figure came to his "utter shock and amazement".

In total, the underpayments and non- payments add up to a \$6 million debt. It's unclear whether the city or the housing authority, ultimately, will be responsible for those costs.

Next, Weber told us that Randy Bedore supplied him with important information for current and former tenants of Milwaukee landlord Joe Berrada's companies. If they may be wondering how they might be impacted by state 's recent settlement of the suit against the landlord, they can find answers on a new website launched by the state. The frequently asked questions page created by the state Department of Justice and the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection can be found at:

https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/BerradaSettlementFAQ.aspx

The page includes answers to questions including how to get rent assistance and how the eviction diversion program works. The state settled its 2021 lawsuit against Berrada last December when Berrada agreed to pay \$1.7 million and take several other actions, including creating \$1.3 million account to pay rent assistance. He owns more than 9,000 rental units in Milwaukee and Racine.

Weber next reported that in late January, 13 members of the Sycamore Place Tenants Association filed complaints with Wisconsin Equal Rights Division and the state's Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, alleging age discrimination.

Their complaints include moldy and damp carpeting, bedbug infestation, water leaks from air conditioner units that damage furniture, broken heating systems, and unexplained rent increases.

On the night of February 7th. Residents at Sycamore Place Apartments received a large yellow envelope in front of their door with a small note affixed to the front. Inside was a new lease agreement for upcoming rental term. The note gave residents one week to sign the new lease.

Those who didn't would face a \$250 increase in their rent. Tucked into the rental agreement's was a bold sentence: "Tenants hereby specifically waive his/her right to written notice by Landlords for nonpayment of rent".

The statement, according to legal experts, is intimidating and illegal. It prevents tenants from resolving or addressing overdue bills. If implemented, the clause could justify not notifying a tenant of an eviction. On February 17th, the company said it would promptly review and respond to the issues raised by residents.

Weber also told us that through a provision in Gov. Evers' 2025 -27 budget proposal ([SB45](#)), Milwaukee and other Wisconsin communities seeking to attract affordable housing by changing their zoning codes could be rewarded with grants from state taxpayers. If approved by the Legislature, the \$119 billion budget would include \$20 million to encourage local governments to adopt zoning changes that reduce barriers to development of more affordable housing options.

David Anderson asked Weber if he had any information about a report that President Trump had placed a freeze on funds for Section 8 housing. Weber and Busch stated that they had not heard this news. Weber stated that he would look into this and report back to us. Armand Carriere added that he quickly Googled the freeze on Section 8 housing and found an article that stated "a freeze on Section 8 applications refers to a situation where the processing of new Section 8 housing applications is temporarily halted while funding is being reviewed by the Administration.

It does not mean that existing Section 8 residents would lose their eligibility, but could affect the residency eligibility for future applicants”.

Tenants facing eviction can go here for legal help or resources:

Milwaukee Rental Housing Resource Center, <https://www.renthelpmke.org>

Impact 211, <https://www.impactinc.org/impact-211/>

Community Advocates, <https://communityadvocates.net/what-we-do/rent-assistance-2025.html>,

[EvictionFree MKE](#) is a program of Legal Aid Society that provides eviction defense to tenants served with eviction summons and complaints. Their number is 414-892-7368.

Hunger/FoodShare: Tom Jozwik reported that countries around the world are already feeling the impact of the Trump administration’s decision to eliminate more than 90 percent of foreign aid contracts and cut some \$60 billion in funding. Many programs have been “shuttered, leaving millions of people without access to life-saving care” according to [reports by the Associated Press](#). A good number of the programs “are in fragile countries that are highly reliant on U.S. aid to support health systems (and) nutrition programs and stave off starvation.” The article went on to cite twenty “key projects around the world that the AP has confirmed have closed.” A handful of them: “In Congo, aid group Action Against Hunger will stop treating tens of thousands of malnourished children from May, which the charity said will put the children in ‘mortal danger.’” Meanwhile, ninety communal kitchens closed in Khartoum, capital of war-ravaged Sudan, “leaving more than half a million people without consistent access to food.” And access to food, water and health services was cut for more than 270,000 in Mali.

“In Kenya, more than 600,000 people living in areas plagued by drought and persistent acute malnutrition will lose access to life-saving food and nutrition support... In Haiti, 13,000 people have lost access to nutritional support (and) cuts will affect in total at least 550,000 (Haitians) who were receiving aid.” Additionally, 25,000 extremely malnourished Nigerian children will stop getting food assistance by April.

In a later development, by a 5-4 margin, the [Supreme Court ruled](#) on March 5th that the Trump administration must release the \$2 billion in foreign aid owed for overseas projects started before January 20 of this year.

Jozwik also reported that locally, an article in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel noted that Hunger Task Force (HTF) has [relocated its Southside Community Center](#) one block west of its previous location—moving from the 700 block to 802 W. Historic Mitchell St. The 802 address represents 7,000 square feet of renovated space. The very short move to larger quarters was purposeful, according to Hunger Task Force CEO Matt King, in that many clients travel to the center on foot or via bus. There is a similar center on the north side at 4144 N. 56th St. Clients at these centers are helped in applying for and accessing Food/Share benefits.

Also, HTF hosted a free nutrition class February 20 at the Washington Park Senior Center as part of HTF’s recently introduced robust nutrition education program. Through that program, older adults can learn about healthy eating on a budget. HTF employs a community nutrition manager who leads classes such as the one at Washington Park.

Lastly, Jozwik told us that the Wisconsin Department of Health Services advises that persons who lost FoodShare benefits due to not meeting a work requirement before 2025, can now reapply for benefits. More information can be found here:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare/news.htm#:~:text=Reapply%20for%20FoodShare%20if%20you,you%20will%20get%20FoodShare%20again>.

Human Trafficking – The VFP Committee is looking for a Vincentian that may be interested, passionate, or knowledgeable on the subject of Human Trafficking and is willing to report on this topic in future meetings.

There are a number of agencies in the greater Milwaukee area, addressing Human Trafficking in what they describe as a “hidden pandemic”.

These agencies include:

[St. Bakhita Catholic Worker House](#), 3138 N. 2nd Street, Milwaukee, WI 53212

[The Women’s Center of Waukesha](#), 505 N. East Ave, Waukesha, WI 53286

[The Redeem and Restore Center](#), 4430 N. 127th Street, Brookfield, WI 53005

Immigration - Armand Carriere reported on several national issues related to immigration.

A detention center will resume operations as a controversial [immigrant family housing facility](#) under a new agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and private prison company [CoreCivic](#). The facility will house up to 2,400 parents and children.

The restart of the South Texas Family Residential Center reverses a Biden administration's policy of ending the practice of holding undocumented migrant families in detention centers. Military bases are also being identified as options for detention centers, with sites in Texas, New Jersey, Utah, and Florida already picked out. Use of these bases is supposed to ease the overcrowding at current detention centers.

In an effort to [speed up deportations](#) the Trump administration has directed federal officials to identify immigrants who can be rapidly removed from the country without a request for a court hearing.

The Trump Administration has frozen funding and [issued stop-work orders](#) for legal aid programs serving immigrants, including for unaccompanied immigrant children and people in immigration court.

In a related move, the Administration is directing immigration agents to track down hundreds of thousands of migrant children who entered the US without their parents.

In late February, a federal judge temporarily [blocked Trump’s executive order](#) banning admissions of refugees, arguing that the order improperly nullified congressional authority. The injunction requires that the Trump administration continue to admit refugees and unfreeze funding to refugee assistance organizations until the case is decided.

Locally, Wisconsin [Assembly Bill 24](#), introduced by House Speaker Robin Vos, would require county sheriffs to work with ICE in detaining and arresting immigrants. The Bill would require sheriffs to ask for proof of citizenship or legal status for an individual in jail “for an offense punishable as a felony”. The bill also asks sheriffs to report those whose legal status they cannot verify to ICE. Governor Evers has stated he [will veto any bill](#) that would require county law enforcement to cooperate with federal immigration officials. Seven Wisconsin counties currently participate in a federal program to assist ICE. Waukesha is the only county in the Milwaukee Archdiocese that participates.

Lastly, Armand reported on his participation in a workshop that offered training for people that are interested in working with immigrants and may be advising immigrants on their rights while here in the US. Armand stated that it was a very thorough and informative presentation and provided some basic advice and background for a layman seeking to assist immigrants as they navigate through the system. It was emphasized, however, that legal advice should only come from lawyers trained in immigration law. The complete training package, sponsored by the Turners Club in Milwaukee, is available on the Milwaukee Turners website, here:

www.milwaukeeeturners.org/immigration-training

David Anderson asked Armand a follow-up question about how have illegal border crossings been affected by all of these new policies. Carriere replied that, because of Trump's policies and the extra enforcement efforts underway by the Mexican government, illegal crossings are dramatically down.

John Weber added that President Trump's [military deportation flights](#) to Guatemala likely cost the taxpayers at least \$4,675 per migrant, according to data provided by U.S. and Guatemalan officials. That is more than five times the \$853 cost of a one-way first class ticket on American Airlines from El Paso, Texas, the departure point for the flight, according to a review of publicly available airfares.

Mental Health Care – Sister Julie Krahrl reported that [Governor Evers 2025 to 2027 budget](#) has just been published and it contains several areas of added spending on mental health issues in Wisconsin. The three main items to look for in the new biennium are first, the new focus on kids. Evers' budget invests nearly \$300 million to provide comprehensive mental health services in schools statewide. The second, expanded service hubs. Evers' budget includes investments to help Wisconsinites access behavioral health services and receive care closer to home. This includes the development of up to two crisis urgent care and observation centers that would serve as crisis service hubs. And thirdly, expanded resources for suicide prevention and crisis response. The budget provides \$12.2 million to meet the needs of those contacting the 988 Wisconsin Lifeline and to address a continually increasing volume of contacts.

Julie stated that she believes the biggest impact will come from the extended service hubs. Based on what they are learning from running their Fond du Lac homeless shelter, people without resources cannot get full time mental health services of any kind. But with more facilities there will be more opportunity to address mental health crisis when they occur.

Gov. Tony Evers' 2025-2027 "pro-kid budget" takes a balanced approach to making investments in Wisconsin's public health, health care, behavioral health, and long-term care systems, as well as historic investments to ensure Wisconsin kids throughout the state are fed, healthy, and safe.

Dave Busch mentioned that the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Southeast Wisconsin ([NAMI](#)) is offering a [Crisis Intervention Partner](#) (CIP) educational workshop. This two-day workshop is designed for any adult that wants to gain skills and understanding about how mental health issues impact people, and how to identify when someone is in crisis and get them help.

Questions? Please contact Bob Hagen at rhagen@namisoutheastwi.org

COST: No cost!

WHEN: May 13 & 14 (must attend both days to receive certificate)

TIME: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Hoard Historical Museum – 401 Whitewater Ave, **Fort Atkinson**, WI

Snacks, beverages, and Lunch are included.

Please note any dietary needs or restrictions when you register.

Please Click on the Link Below to Register:

https://namisoutheastwi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2lyBKJfVT28clf4

Minimum Wage/Labor – Dave Busch reported that The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development ([DWD](#)) and the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) have not yet announced the latest local unemployment rates. The January statistics would be the most recent numbers available and are normally released at the end of the next following month.

Busch then reported that on the Labor front, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) released a new report highlighting key milestones that the department achieved in 2024 to combat worker exploitation while supporting employers who play by the rules. The report, [Working to End Exploitation](#), highlights DWD's collaborative efforts to combat worker exploitation while advancing Wisconsin's record-breaking economic performance,

including eight consecutive months of record-high employment, and continued low unemployment rates that are well below national rates in 2024.

DWD's efforts to combat worker exploitation delivered important results during 2024. According to the newly released report, recent milestones across the department's Equal Rights Division (ERD), Unemployment Insurance (UI) Division, Division of Employment and Training (DET), and Worker's Compensation (WC) Division include:

- **Labor standards cases and back wages collected:** From January through Dec. 1, 2024, ERD received 2,985 labor standards cases. During the same period, the division recovered \$998,394.77 in wages and penalties owed to workers through ERD's administrative efforts.
- **Number of child labor permits issued:** From January through Dec. 1, 2024, ERD issued 29,719 work permits for youth aged 14 and 15, a process that supports safe and lawful employment conditions for young workers.
- **Field investigations found misclassified workers:** From January through early October 2024, Unemployment Insurance worker classification investigators have conducted 470 worker classification field investigations. These investigations resulted in 147 audit referrals to the division's tax auditors. Those referrals resulted in UI division tax auditors identifying 1,477 misclassified workers and the assessment of over \$400,500 in UI taxes and interest.
- **Migrant labor camps inspected:** In 2024, DWD's Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program inspected and certified 288 migrant labor camps that house migrant workers.
- **Heat and housing rules developed:** In 2024, DWD revised the health and safety protections for migrant labor camps and housing to include new heat protections, updated field sanitation requirements, and reporting requirements for certain diseases and symptoms.
- **Penalties collected for Uninsured Employers Fund:** The Wisconsin Worker's Compensation Uninsured Employers Fund is funded through penalties assessed against employers for illegally operating a business without worker's compensation insurance. The WC division conducts an average of more than 23,000 investigations each year.

Workers, employers, job seekers, and community members with concerns about worker exploitation are encouraged to contact DWD at (608) 266-3131 or via [contact form](#). Additionally, the DWD website has a list of county [migrant and seasonal farm worker services](#) contacts and [worker classification](#) information.

Busch also reported that twenty-one states [increased their minimum wages](#) on January 1, raising pay for more than 9.2 million workers by a total of \$5.7 billion. In addition, 48 cities and counties will raise their minimum wages above their state wage floors, mostly in California, Colorado, and Washington.

The January 1 increases show that the minimum wage continues to be a powerful tool for combating racial and gender wage disparities, supporting working families, and reducing poverty. According to analysis of these states minimum wage increases:

- Women make up almost three-fifths (58.2%) of workers getting a raise.
- Black and Hispanic workers will disproportionately benefit. Black workers make up 9.1% of the wage-earning workforce in the states with increases, but are 11.3% of affected workers. Similarly, Hispanic workers are 19.5% of the workforce in these states, but 38.8% of the workers receiving wage increases.
- More than a quarter (25.7%) of affected workers are parents. More than 5.3 million children live in households where an individual will receive a minimum wage increase.
- Almost one in five (20.4%) affected workers are in families with incomes below the poverty line, and nearly half (48.5%) have family incomes below twice the poverty line.

Most January increases are the result of state laws that index the minimum wage to inflation.

Fourteen states are increasing their minimum wages through automatic annual inflation adjustments, containing more than half (57.9%) of the workers affected by this year's increases.

Racine Update: Jim Erven reports that the Racine Council is still in the process of reviewing their standards of excellence for operating their SVDP programs and stores. Erven also reported that Racine is reaping the rewards from their recent membership drive. Conferences have seen an influx of new members, including younger people. But at the same time, aging of the membership is still a cause for some loss of Vincentians. This past month, even as two new members were installed, one Conference leader had to step down to devote more of his time to becoming a care giver for a family member. That Conference's VP is stepping up to take over and the Conference is making plans to elect a new President and recruit new members.

Waukesha Update - David Anderson reported that the Waukesha Council is hosting Ozanam Orientation today March 8, in the Council Meeting Room, located at 818 W. Sunset Dr, in Waukesha, and that the workshop filled all available spots. Nice work!

Next Anderson told us about fund raising events planned in Waukesha.

Is your conference looking for a fundraising opportunity? Our Pewaukee store is hosting a family-friendly festival and we would love to help your conference raise needed funds to assist our neighbors. Conferences can sell food, beverages, plants or whatever you think will fit in with our festival.

Please contact our Marketing leader, Antonio Slade to learn more and share your ideas. Call 414-553-0911 or email aslade@svdpwaukesha.com.

Anderson also told us that his Conference sponsored several barbeques in the church parking lot as a fund raiser after Sunday Masses.

Another way to raise money for your conference is to work with a local restaurant for a fundraiser. The St. James Mukwonago Conference recently teamed up with the local Mukwonago Culvers for a "Scoobie Night." Members had lots of fun and plan to continue this fundraiser as often as possible. Anderson then reminded us that the [North Central Regional Meeting](#) is coming up on June 12 through June 14 at the Hilton Minneapolis St. Paul located in Bloomington, MN. Details are still being put together.

And, the 2025 [National Assembly](#) is scheduled for August 27 thru 30 at the Galt House in Louisville, KY.

Next, Anderson told us that the Waukesha Council is planning another Home Visit training session on April 9th from 6 to 8:30 PM in the Council Meeting Room, 818 W. Sunset Dr, Waukesha

Mike Farrell asked Anderson if the Waukesha Council has a housing program. Anderson replied that they do not have a program but they do have a housing hotline that they run out of the store on Sunset Drive, in conjunction with the [Housing Authority of Waukesha](#) County.

Old Business:

Report to the Executive Board – Dave Bush updated us on the meeting with the Archdiocesan Board on February 15th. The weather was challenging on that weekend with a large snow storm blowing in on the day of the meeting. The Board decided to meet online using Zoom. Busch was not able to attend, as the snow storm resulted in him getting called into work. He had presented his report to the Executive Board members in advance and has sent a copy of that report to the VFP members in advance of this meeting. The news of our potential collaboration with the [Wisconsin Catholic Conference](#), understandably raised a lot of questions from the Board members. Busch will need to pitch the idea in-person to answer those questions and give a more complete explanation of this endeavor to the Board at their next meeting.

Regional VFP Committee – Jim Erven opened by reminding the VFP that our collaboration with the Wisconsin Catholic Conference is really more about the Society and the VFP building consensus on our issues with the other four Diocese, statewide.

Erven then lead off with a local report that Kirsten Johnson, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services ([DHS](#)), recently issued a press release on Governor Evers Budget proposals on public health. In her message Johnson stated that “[BadgerCare Plus](#) expansion is the cornerstone of the budget proposal for DHS”. Johnson also solidified the reasons for our support of Medicaid expansion, “This would expand high-quality, low-cost health care coverage to an estimated 95,800 low-income Wisconsinites and save the state \$1.9 billion over the biennium. Expanding access to quality health care services makes it easier for enrollees to afford other expenses like food, housing, and paying down their debts. Forty other states have already expanded their Medicaid programs and experienced positive outcomes as more people gain access to needed treatment and care”. Erven thought this could be good language to use for our support of expansion. He is fearful that the legislature will likely strip this type of language from Evers budget, as they have done so, over the Governor’s past three budget proposals.

Next, Erven told us that Michael Sylvester, the North Central Region leader for the VFP, has sent out an update to all Council Presidents in our region. In Sylvester’s report he wrote about the emergence of the regional VFP and mentioned that the Regional VFP has representation from all states in the region, except North Dakota. Also included in the update was information on the recent Catholic Social Ministries gathering in Washington, DC, which included a training workshop on how to do advocacy, working with legislative staff members.

Sylvester’s update also mentioned that he will be making a presentation at the North Central Regional Meeting in June, on how to prepare a VoterVoice Action Alert. Sylvester also mentioned that the Society’s position paper on Immigration is currently being updated.

Lastly, Erven reported that Susan Wiland, National Vice President of the North Central Region has sent out an email to all Council Presidents in the region asking them to have at least one person serve as a Voice For the Poor representative on the Regional VFP. Wisconsin has 19 separate Councils. Mike Farrell mentioned that nine of the nineteen councils are here in the Archdiocese.

Julie KrahI asked the members if they have a regular section in their conference meetings to discuss the VFP’s work. Erven suggested that the Ozanam training could do a better job of talking about advocacy work and the VFP in orientation. Julie felt that we might even gain membership if we did a better job of clearly explaining our advocacy for the poor.

Busch reminded us that the training and orientation programs come from the National Society and perhaps Jim can convince the NC Regional VFP to take this message of improving the Ozanam orientation, to the National VFP.

Mike Farrell asked if the other Councils in the Archdiocese get reports or regular updates from their VFP committee representatives? Busch replied that some of the members here at this meeting, do discuss the VFP work with their Councils, and all Council Presidents are getting email with the Minutes from our meetings attached.

New Business:

Bills in the New Biennium – The WCC has introduced testimony in Legislative Committee hearings on several bills affecting those in need. In the interest of time, the VFP Chairperson tabled discussion on this topic until the next meeting.

Next Meeting: The next VFP meeting will be held on the second Saturday in April, on Saturday April 12, 2025 from 9:00 to 11:00 AM.

Please plan to join us online, via ZOOM. The login information can be found at the bottom of the last page of these minutes.

Adjournment: The meeting ended with a brief discussion on the benefits getting representatives from all Councils in the Archdiocese to attend these VFP Committee meetings.

The March meeting officially adjourned at 11:11 AM with the VFP members praying together a Vincentian prayer for the health of Pope Francis.

“Restore his strength, guide his physicians, and let Your mercy be his comfort”

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MILWAUKEE ARCHDIOCESE VOICE FOR THE POOR COMMITTEE

Armand Carriere	ae2425@gmail.com
David Anderson	ajand1339@gmail.com
David Busch	dabusch99@yahoo.com
E. Michael McCann	emichaelmccann@yahoo.com
Jim Erven	erven.jm@gmail.com
John Weber	jjweber46@sbcglobal.net
Sister Julie Krah, CSA	julieann5202@charter.net
Michael Howden	mjhowden@att.net
Randy Bedore	ranshorewood@yahoo.com
Richard Fedler	rfedler@aol.com
Rose Lue-Hing	414-445-9224
Tom Jozwik	mjozwik@hotmail.com

Here is the information for logging into the VFP ZOOM Meeting:

St. Vincent de Paul Society of the Milwaukee Archdiocese is inviting you to the next scheduled meeting of the Voice For the Poor Committee, online via ZOOM.

Click Here to Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89896784028?pwd=KzZhR0xyWWY0QXlqNUNEYktaEIXZz09>

Or call in (audio only): 312-626-6799

(Dial by your location. 312 626 6799 is Chicago)

Meeting ID: 898 9678 4028

Passcode: 732237