

Valdosta Kairos Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Saturday, August 8, 2009

Regions Bank Building Conference Room, Valdosta, GA

Volunteers Attending:

Bill Newcomb - Chairman

Lee Turner - Secretary/Admin Coordinator and State Representative

Dennis Webrand - Financial Secretary

Tyson McLane - Treasurer

Tommy McNeal - Institutional Liaison

Jimmy Whatley - Fundraising Coordinator (via teleconference)

- Meeting began at 8:15am by Bill Newcomb and an opening prayer by Tommy McNeal.
- Bill Newcomb explained that the purpose of the meeting was "To let the current elected officials of the Valdosta Kairos Advisory Council and the current leadership of weekend leaders at Valdosta State Prison and Valdosta State Prison Annex formulate a clear and distinct statement as to the direction that this council will follow as pertaining to the rules/regulations as set forth by the Kairos International board." Bill added that after 10 years of operating under the Kairos ministry "haphazardly, but we have survived" that we have issues that we need to adjust in our weekends and that we are here to make a decision on the future course of Kairos in Valdosta.

- Jimmy Whatley began the discussion by explaining that we must come to grips with the purpose of the meeting and described his understanding of the issue of authority. We fall under the delegated authority of God and the Holy Spirit, and of KPMI and Kairos of Georgia and we exercise that authority in conjunction with the authority of the Warden and the Chaplain. He further explained that we must be willing to give that authority to our weekend leaders. We must come under that authority of Kairos of Georgia and KPMI to the extent that we are led to by the Lord and it fits the best use of our time, effort and money. The riverbanks are a principle that we should put forth as we select and prepare our leaders. Jimmy raised the issue of Serenades and reiterated the Chaplain's support for Serenades and said that if we are going to discontinue Serenades then we need to seek the Chaplain's approval for such a move. Jimmy also address the issue of team size and the number of hours in team formation training and believes there should be flexibility in the guidelines.

- Bill Newcomb read the Question of Concerns from the prepared agenda and offered his comments on each of those questions.

- Team size vs. number of residents that we receive. *We have seen it work with 25 and 45, but we are supposed to have at least 44 team members for 42 participants.*

- Qualifications of team members.

A. Enforcement of new members per team *We are currently have a shortage of new team members.*

B. Enforcement of clergy members per team.

C. Enforcement of # of weekends that members can work consecutively.

D. Enforcement of # of training hours as required by International. *We don't necessarily get all the required number of hours in training.*

E. Shall we allow former out of town members to work weekends, without attending any meetings? *We have had great success allowing team member to just come and work a weekend without a commitment to attend team meetings or reunions.*

4. We still have a 501(c)(3) organization, VPMI, that has been a vital part of this Kairos community for nearly ten years; VPMI is a "thorn in the flesh" for the Kairos International Board. *It is our understanding now that persons are no longer holding elected positions within VPMI and Kairos Advisory Council simultaneously, and this eliminates the perception of conflict of interest.*

5. Kairos International set guidelines for meeting schedules and agendas to be followed at these called times, will we observe these meeting schedules?

- Bill read the list of questions that are listed as open items at the end of these minutes.
- Dennis Webrand had no comment of the list of issues and questions raised.
- Tyson McLane agreed with Jimmy Whatley's comments. For clarity, Tyson sees himself at the meeting as a Kairos volunteer and as an involved person with VPMI having previously resigned as the Treasurer of the Advisory Council. This created some conversation about whether or not Tyson had resigned like he said he did 2 months prior to this meeting to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest.
- Tommy McNeal focused his comments on the visible results of the Kairos ministry in Valdosta and that the means by which we achieved that success is now being questioned and that flexibility should be strongly considered.

- Dennis Webrand wishes he had not made the "written" comments that he did because they did not include his discussion with the Chaplain two years ago when we changed the name of "Serenade" to the "Post-Forgiveness Ceremony" under the direction of the chaplain. The question about whether new team members are required to sit a separate table was discussed. Clergy qualifications were discussed.
- A discussion ensued about the meaning of "riverbanks" and their overall impact on any decision to have those riverbanks keep us from having a weekend. The discussion centered on the evolving nature of the Kairos riverbanks. Tyson McLane said that our team size should be basically the 3 table workers and the leadership positions (including coordinator) and described the remaining positions as "outside administrative positions" that should not necessarily be required to attend team meetings. There was some uncertainty expressed about what 42 inside team members would actually do on a weekend. Lee Turner said that 42 inside team members fills every position, give some positions an assistant to train for upcoming weekends, precludes assigning multiple jobs to one person, and corrects a long-standing deficiency that exist where we are not training and cultivating our leadership candidates.
- Bill shared with the group the several previous offline meetings concerning the direction of Kairos in Valdosta and made sure that the written comments by those absent Advisory Council persons and concerned volunteers were available and have been reviewed (Attachments 2 - 5).
- After much discussion, the Advisory council formulated the following statement:

"The Valdosta Advisory Council will stay in directional compliance with the KPMI set of riverbanks so that each leader has flexibility to lead their respective weekend faithfully in accordance with the riverbanks of KPMI."

- Questions remaining as open items for the Advisory Council are:
 - Is there any point in scheduling Advisory Council meetings if the majority of the Advisory Council is unable or unwilling to show up? *No action or discussion.*
 - When are we going to review the issues raised by the Advising Leader's report during Kairos #18? *No action or discussion.*
 - When are we going to appoint or elect a Food Control Coordinator and a Treasure? *No action or discussion.*
 - Is our Institutional Memorandum signed by the current Warden or do we even have an Institutional Memorandum? *It does not appear that our Institutional Memorandum is current and the original Institutional Memorandum does not appear to be available. Tommy McNeal expressed an understanding that a new Institutional Memorandum needs to be accomplished.*
 - When will the Advisory Council meet to discuss the lack of a Coordinator for Kairos #19 and the lack of a Coordinator and Observing Leader for Kairos #11 at

the Annex? *Apparently a plan is in place to correct these deficiencies in our current teams, but no details were presented or discussed.*

- Is the Financial Secretary changeover complete? *No action or discussion.*
 - What is the status of our Reunion Schedule - speakers, subjects, etc.? *No action or discussion.*
 - When will the Advisory Council discuss the previous Weekend Leader's Report? *No action or discussion.*
 - When are we going to review the list of active volunteers prior to elections? *No action or discussion.*
 - What is the Advisory Council's position on State Observers at VSP? *No action or discussion.*
 - What is the Advisory Council's position on the use of Serenades at VSP and the Annex? *Serenades are an important part of Kairos at Valdosta and any change to that part of the weekend must be coordinated with the chaplain by the Weekend Leader for each weekend.*
 - What is the Advisory Council's position on the appropriate number and length of Team Formation meetings? *Left up to the discretion of the Weekend Leader.*
 - What is the Advisory Council position on inviting volunteers to be part of a team that are unable or unwilling to attend Team Formation meetings or be part of the continuing ministry of Kairos after the weekend? *Discussion centered around the effectiveness of some of the core volunteers that have since moved out of our local community and the positive impact they continue to have on our local weekends. No action or discussion.*
- The meeting adjourned at 9:25am.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lee Turner
Secretary/Administrative Coordinator
Valdosta Advisory Council

Attachment 1

Valdosta Advisory Council Special Called Meeting Agenda

August 7, 2009

8:00AM - 9:15AM

PURPOSE OF MEETING

To let the current elected officials of the Valdosta Kairos Advisory Council and the current leadership of weekend leaders at Valdosta State Prison and Valdosta State Prison Annex formulate a clear and distinct statement as to the direction that this council will follow as pertaining to the rules/regulations as set forth by the Kairos International board.

QUESTIONS OF CONCERN

As an Advisory Council, we have operated nearly ten years under the guidelines of the Kairos International Board. However, there are still areas that we are "out of the riverbanks" on.

1. Serenades on Saturday evening.
2. Team size vs number of residents that we receive.
3. Qualifications of team members.
 - A. Enforcement of new members per team
 - B. Enforcement of clergy members per team.
 - C. Enforcement of # of weekends that members can work consecutively.
 - D. Enforcement of # of training hours as required by International.
 - E. Shall we allow former out of town members to work weekends, without attending any meetings?
4. We still have a 501(c)(3) organization, VPMI, that has been a vital part of this Kairos community for nearly ten years; VPMI is a "thorn in the flesh" for the Kairos International Board.
5. Kairos International set guidelines for meeting schedules and agendas to be followed at these called times, will we observe these meeting schedules?

THINGS TO CONSIDER

1. Shall the local advisory council set the standards for every weekend conducted at the Valdosta State Prison and Valdosta State Prison Annex? (example: shall we set forth what rules to follow and what rules can be skirted)

2. Shall the local advisory council come into complete compliance to the Kairos International set of rules/regulations, (riverbanks)? (example: this is full obedience to the Kairos method, no exceptions)

3. Shall the local advisory board allow each leader of the weekend to determine his perception of how his weekend will be governed in accordance with the rules/regulations of the Kairos International Board? (example: comply with all rules/regulations or change some of the rules/regulations to adapt to the weekend at hand)

Attachment 2

From Roy Sears, Outreach and Recruiting Coordinator:

I think I love the prison ministry and hate the advisory counsel position. I will resign and let somebody who gets into this stuff get into this stuff. I will show up every Tuesday night and do my best to love on the 129 guys who also show up. I will not show up on reunions because I don't want to show up on reunion Saturdays. I will work every Kairos and will do whatever anyone wants me to do except leadership. Been there and I only want to do the work of a servant. If I am not needed on a weekend, I will not pout! I will serve 50+ Tuesdays and at least two weekends. Other than that, I don't care what the advisory counsel does. God bless the boys in the white uniforms with the blue stripes and the guys who love them. Those are my riverbanks. the rest of the stuff anybody can have it that wants it.

Roy

Attachment 3

From Dennis Webrand, the Valdosta Advisory Council Financial Secretary

I must first confess that I have always been a strong supporter of the Serenade (Post Forgiveness Ceremony) that has been held at both Valdosta institutions. However after some very deep soul searching I now realize the importance of the entire Forgiveness theme of Saturday, and that by ending it with burning of the names of those we have forgiven is a powerful ending. This moment of forgiveness is to stay with us and stay on our hearts and minds as we rest and reflect overnight on the entire experience of Saturday. We should still encourage the outside community of believers to participate in the weekend. They can be a part by sending written Agape, Food Agape, Green Agape, and most certainly by attending the closing on Sunday afternoon. I pray that we as volunteers in Gods ministry we continue to stay within the River Banks of Kairos International. These are my own personal reflections YBIC Dennis

Attachment 4

From Rich Pye, the Valdosta Advisory Council Agape Coordinator

Unfortunately I will not be in attendance as I will be having a total knee replacement on either Monday the 3rd or Thursday the 6th. Unfortunately I tend to disagree quite a bit with the current direction of KAIROS International, and find the manual to be poor at best. I know there is a new one coming out, hopefully it is better, but if they did not get local areas to review and comment it will probably be the same crap as we had in the last manual. I truly believe International should set the basics of the weekend i.e talks schedule etc. But the actual nuts and bolts of the weekend should be left up to the team leaders and the institution chaplain. Also people like Bob Astelo sure put a damper on an effective weekend, eating more than any inmate without a donation/support for the weekend. His evaluations were so wrong it was evident he was not even listening to the talks. I feel the program with its hands on approach is taking away from the effectiveness of the weekend. The individual who came down from International not long ago said we need to live within the River banks, but later said KAIROS says to do it this way, but it's not necessary. So even the leadership has differences of opinions as to what should be followed and what not to follow in International guidelines.

Probably not what you wanted to hear, but they are my true feelings.

ICS,

Rich Pye

Attachment 5

From Roger Quick, Leader, Kairos #18, VSP

Sorry I could not be here. This is our 50th today.

I have mixed emotions about Kairos International. I understand that there has to be rules and regulations or everybody would not only be out of the riverbanks, but there would be no river. Kairos has been successful for many years and it would be a shame to drop it altogether, but it seems to me that Kairos Int. is sort of like the Pharisees were in Jesus day, obey all the rules and that makes everything alright. No that doesn't make everything all right.

Jesus did not come to do away with the law, but He proved that it is the condition of the heart, not trying to keep every little law that counts.

I firmly believe both Kairos and we need to be a bit flexible, not straying far from the banks, but Kairos Int. needs to be the same. I get the feeling that we are at war with each other at times. THIS OUGHT NOT BE.

I am hearing that Kairos Int. does not want us to have VPML, and unless I am missing something, that is none of their business. We are volunteers, and VPML is one great asset as far as I am concerned.

In conclusion, I feel that we should stay with Kairos, and stay real close to the riverbanks, but if they are going to tie our hands, and make it hard to accomplish God's goal, and insist on us dropping VPML, and maintain the spirit of head butting that I feel every time I am at a meeting with them, then maybe it is time to take a look at some change.