

Christ Church
Vestry Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting of the Vestry
Tuesday December 9, 2014

Present: The Rev'd Joanna P. Hollis; Rector's Warden Paul Ambos; People's Warden Sheila Cooper; Vestrymembers Beth Binde (via telephone), Kelly Bogan, Gerri Callahan, Carole Forsythe, Judith Kuldinow (arrived 7:25 p.m.), Effie Lamptey, Andy Murphy, Artie Phills, Melisande Skillicorn.

Also Present: Treasurer Jonathan Gloster (via telephone); Ali Van Kuiken, Steven Caruso

Absent: Vestrymembers Andrea Cunnell, Mel Garber, Debra Lowe

The Rev'd Joanna P. Hollis called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. with opening prayer by Carole Forsythe. Rev. Hollis asked for approval to move agenda item "Coffee House project" to the top of the agenda following approval of minutes, in order to accommodate parishioner Steve Caruso. The Vestry approved the request unanimously.

Dwelling in the Word was on Luke 1:26-38.

Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of November 11, 2014: Rector's Warden Paul Ambos moved to accept the minutes as distributed. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Coffee House Project: Parishioner Steve Caruso gave a PowerPoint presentation on his idea to open a coffee house in the Nicholas Room. He also noted that further information is available on his blog as well as a Facebook page. He advised that he has experience with coffee and he has reached out to others with experience. He stated that the coffee house could raise the profile of Christ Church in the community as well as provide revenue.

Mr. Ambos moved that the vestry authorize the formation of a taskforce, with members to be appointed by the Rector from vestrymembers and parishioners including Steve Caruso, once the new vestry is seated, for the purpose of to gathering more details and giving a presentation to the vestry in February or March. In response to vestrymember Andy Murphy's questions, Mr. Ambos stated that the taskforce would gather information on opening a coffee house, including the finances, and that the Rector would appoint the taskforce chair. Vestrymember Artie Phills suggested that the new vestry members see Mr. Caruso's presentation, and all agreed. The motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence: Clerk of the Vestry Gerri Callahan reported no correspondence.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Jonathan Gloster discussed his written Treasurer's Report to the Vestry, December 9, 2014 Meeting (November 2014 Report). He advised that pledges are

approximately \$1,000 behind, and they presently are at approximately at 94%. He noted that December usually picks up as people catch up on their pledges. He advised that the Sunday School has exceeded fundraising budget predications. He stated that it was decided not to do an Advent appeal this year. He said that if the overdraw for the month is subtracted, monthly income was \$31,956.28 and that income for the year, without the excess overdraw, is \$346,663.63, which is 89% of budgeted income. He advised that December should be around the budgeted amount due to quarterly payments. He reported that a good job was done controlling expenses for the month as budgeted expenses will be 4 to 5% lower. The year-to-date operating deficit is \$71, 619.38 and if capital expenses are added, the deficit grows to \$85,815.84.

Mr. Ambos asked about the Rector's salary and housing allowance lines, which were shifted earlier in the year for tax purposes, that do not seem to align. Mr. Gloster advised that they are investigating the details and that a readjustment was not made in September but will be made by the end of the year. In response to Ms. Forsythe's question, Mr. Gloster advised that the figures that appear in the bulletin will be as of November.

Mr. Ambos moved to accept the report and file for audit. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports by Title

Rector's Report: Rev. Hollis submitted a written Rector's Report, Vestry Meeting December 2014. Rev. Hollis highlighted the Missional Leadership Thick Description and noted that it will be reviewed and updated the following week.

Committee Reports

Stewardship: Stewardship Committee Co-Chair Andy Murphy submitted a written Stewardship Committee Report, December 2014 and advised that the Committee is following up on outstanding pledges. He said he will advise in the future of the result of the follow-up calls. He stated that while the number of returned pledge cards is down, the pledge average is up 12%.

Annual Meeting: Annual Meeting Committee Chair Artie Phills reviewed his written Annual Meeting Committee Report to the Vestry - 12/09/14. He noted that the Committee is on schedule with its timeline. Notices have been posted and information will go in the Close Call. As an update to the Report, he noted that there are six candidates for Northern Convocation Delegate. Mr Phills reported that the Fellowship Committee will take care of refreshments, which is much appreciated especially since Bishop Councill will be in attendance. In response to Mr. Phills' inquiry, Rev. Hollis advised that if the Vestry approves the proposed budget, the funding can come from the Fellowship Committee's hospitality budget. Mr. Phills said the two Committees can work together.

Personnel: Personnel Committee Chair Debra Lowe was absent, and Rev. Hollis advised that there was nothing to report.

Property: Committee Chair Kelly Bogan discussed his written Property Committee 2014 Annual Report. He noted that the eave repair is done, but there still issues to be resolved with the work, so the invoice has not been approved yet. He further reported that the Committee determined to replace a toilet in one of the public bathrooms due to the already numerous repairs to it. He noted that the Handi Lift repair was the second most expensive repair for the year. In response to Mr. Ambos' question regarding to the fence painting, Mr. Bogan noted that only completed jobs are included in the annual report.

Old Business

Insurance: There was no report, as Vestrymember Debra Lowe is absent.

Newcomer/Inclusion Committee: As a follow-up to last month's meeting, Rev. Hollis said she would like to create a new Newcomer/Inclusion Committee to address the integration of new parishioners into parish life. She noted that the pending request to the Diocese for a second Deacon can be part of the conversation. In response to Ms. Forsythe's question, Rev. Hollis advised that the Committee's focus would be how to include newcomers into parish life. In response to Vestrymember Melisande Skillicorn's question, Rev. Hollis said there are possible candidates for chair. Mr. Ambos stated that if approved, the new committee should interact with the Evangelism/Communication Committee. Vestrymember Beth Binde stated that, as a relative newcomer, she sees a need for such a committee. Vestrymember Judith Kuldinow asked whether the committee would fall under the responsibility of the new Deacon. Rev. Hollis advised that if the Diocese approves the Deacon, yes it can, but, until, then Rev. Hollis would oversee it. In response to Ms. Skillicorn's question, Rev. Hollis advised that the greeters fall under liturgy but it would be connected.

Mr. Ambos moved to take up from the table and to approve the following Resolution, which had been tabled at the November 11, 2014 Vestry Meeting:

Resolved, That the Vestry approve the formation of a new vestry committee to be named the "Newcomer/Inclusion Committee" for the purpose of developing strategies for presentation to the Vestry to better incorporate visitors and new members into the parish, the members of such committee to be appointed by the Rector.

The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Bylaw Amendment: Mr. Ambos moved the following amendment to the Parish By-Laws, which had been previously noticed by email to the members of the vestry as required by Section 9.1 of the By-Laws:

Resolved, That Section 4.7 of the By-Laws of Christ Church in the City of New Brunswick be amended as follows, effective immediately (deletions shown by strikethrough and insertions by double-underline):

Section 4.7. *Method of voting and election.*

- (a) The chair of the meeting may vote.
- (b) Elections at any parish meeting (other than a selection of the chair of the meeting) are by secret ballot. No other votes at any parish meeting may be by secret written ballot. No cumulative voting or voting by proxy is allowed. The vestry may by resolution provide for absentee ballots for parishioners unable to attend a meeting.
- (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 4.7(b), a motion may be made to have the secretary of the meeting cast a unanimous vote for the candidates of any ballot section that is uncontested, after nominations from the floor are closed.
- (d) If the required number of officers is not elected upon the first ballot by a majority of the votes cast, one or more further ballots are taken until a majority is achieved. On each such further ballot, the name of the candidate receiving the fewest votes on the preceding ballot is deleted.
- (e) After all balloting has been completed, the results as announced are final, the persons so elected immediately assume their offices, and all ballots are destroyed.
- (f) The chair of the meeting is the judge of the qualifications of the voters, receives the vote, and declares the result.
- ~~(g) All persons elected at the annual meeting assume their offices immediately, with the exception of wardens and vestrymembers, who shall attend the next regular meeting of the vestry as nonvoting observers and shall assume their offices at the close of such meeting.~~

The reference to § 4.7(g) in the last sentence of § 7.4 then being superfluous, that sentence should be deleted.

He explained that these amendments would return the text of Section 4.7 as it was prior to the amendments made by the Vestry on January 8, 2007, so that newly elected persons would again assume their offices at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting rather than at the close of the next regular meeting following the Annual Meeting. Vestrymember Gerri Callahan pointed out a typo in subsection (c): “case” should be “cast”. Mr. Ambos stated he would make the correction. Rev. Hollis further advised that she is preparing a “Vestry Member 101” binder to aid new vestry members. In response to Ms. Binde’s comment, Rev. Hollis stated that the Annual Meeting Committee's members are explaining the duties of a Vestrymember to potential candidates. The resolution carried unanimously.

Mr. Ambos also moved the following housing allowance resolution for 2015:

Whereas, Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code permits a minister of the Gospel to exclude from gross income (in computing federal income taxes) a church-designated allowance paid to her as part of her compensation to the extent used by her for actual expenses in owning or renting a home; and
Whereas, the Reverend Joanna P. Hollis is compensated by Christ Church, New Brunswick, exclusively for the services as a minister of the gospel; and
Whereas, Christ Church, New Brunswick, does not provide Rev. Hollis with a rectory;
Now, therefore, it is hereby

Resolved, That the total compensation paid to Rev. Hollis for calendar year 2015 shall include \$30,000 of her regular cash salary annually, which is hereby designated to be an additional housing allowance over and above the contracted annual housing allowance in compliance with diocesan mandate of \$28,000, for a total allowance of \$58,000 for purposes of Section 107, and it is further

Resolved, that the designation of \$58,000 as a housing allowance shall apply to calendar year 2015 and for all future years unless otherwise provided.

This resolution also carried unanimously.

Jack Newton Bequest: Finance Committee Chair Carole Forsythe began by advising that there are no substantial draft budget changes from last month, as the Committee is waiting for the final pledge amount to present the budget for the special meeting December 14. She then advised that the parish had received a bequest from the estate of long-time parishioner Jack Newton, which is in the form of various stocks. Within one week of notification of receipt of the bequest, the Committee had PNC Bank sell the stocks. The net proceeds are approximately \$106,000. The Committee recommends that \$8,000 of this amount be designated for the Living Stones account, as Mr. Newton had over the years done significant repair work at the church, and that the remainder be placed in the Mustard Seed account. Ms. Forsythe noted that the Mustard Seed account is a true endowment, and the Finance Committee plans to review the account to make its restrictions clearer. In response to Mr. Murphy's question, Ms. Forsythe advised that the \$3,000 in the Living Stones account as of year-end 2014 is already planned in the draft 2015 budget to be used to reduce the principal balance on the PNC line of credit, so with this additional \$8,000, the line of credit balance will be reduced by 10% in 2015. Rev. Hollis advised that the funds from the bequest presently are being held in the investment account. Ms. Forsythe moved to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation for distribution of the bequest. The motion carried unanimously.

Topics on the Mind of the Vestry: Rev. Hollis reminded the Vestry of the upcoming December 14, 2014 Special Vestry Meeting on the budget. It will be bring your own lunch.

Mr. Ambos referenced the diocesan Fair Share Asking letter and asked whether it is appropriate to advise the Diocese of the diocesan pledge amount in the draft budget. Rev. Hollis agreed and noted that she had already advised diocesan CFO Phyllis Jones by telephone of the expected amount and that the form will be filed once the budget is approved.

Ms. Forsythe stated that having children light the Advent wreath is a good idea as it involves an entire family. Rev. Hollis noted that the wreath lighting is inclusive.

The meeting adjourned on consent at 8:45 with Compline.

Respectfully submitted,
Gerri Callahan
Clerk of the Vestry