

Christ Church
Vestry Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting of the Vestry
Tuesday, March 8, 2016

Present: The Rev'd Joanna P. Hollis; Rector's Warden Artie Phills, People's Warden Sheila Cooper; Vestry members: John Ager, Beth Binde, Austin Cooper (arrived at 8:06 PM), Carole Forsythe, Jean Houvener, Mervis Johnson, Penelope Lattimer, Debra Lowe, Beverly Stott, Patricia Warren

Also Present: Treasurer Jonathan Gloster (via phone), Consultant Kim Fletcher

Absent: Vestry members: Mel Garber, Andy Murphy

Rev'd Joanna P. Hollis called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM with opening prayer by Beth Binde

Dwelling in the Word was John 12:1-8

Election of Vestry Clerk: Rev'd Hollis explained that the election should have taken place at the last meeting. However, it was an oversight. She stated that she would like to re-elect Debra Lowe to Vestry Clerk for a second term. Beverly Stott moved to approve the nomination and Carole Forsythe seconded the nomination. The motion carried unanimously.

Review of Consent Agenda:

Vestry member Penelope Lattimer had follow up questions on the budget meeting that took place on January 3, 2016. She asked if Rev'd Hollis met with Phyllis Jones, the CFO from the Diocese of New Jersey. Rev'd Hollis stated that she did meet with the CFO and found out that there are no ramifications going below the amount the Diocese is asking Christ Church New Brunswick (CCNB) to pay. She said Ms. Jones understood our position. That may change if more churches are in the same predicament, as it negatively impacts the Diocese.

Penelope asked when CCNB had an interest free loan. Vestry member Carole Forsythe explained that when CCNB did the last capital campaign, the Diocese Loan & Grant Committee loaned money for construction costs.

Penelope asked how the Diocese came up with the amount of \$72,000. Treasurer Jonathan Gloster explained that the amount is based on what we spend; even when we pull from the investment account. Our parish was assessed at 16%; it's an average over three years.

Specific questions about the Parochial Report were asked which Jonathan answered. He stated that the Diocese CFO, Phyllis Jones reads the report. It is then input into the database for the National Church, which uses an online database that goes back 10 years. Once submitted, Jonathan gets confirmation that the Diocese accepted our submission. The auditor then compares the numbers against what was reported. Vestry members stated that the Report was informative and very helpful.

With respects to the Rector's report, vestry member Beth Binde stated that Meg Hall suggested paying off a smaller amount of the loan and asked if the Finance Committee considered her suggestion. Vestry member Carole Forsythe stated that the Committee looked at the pros and cons. The bank is holding

\$300,000 of ours that we cannot touch until the loan is paid off; we would default on the loan in 5-7 years; the past 20 years we've been in denial with our finances; it would lower the amount invested; money would not be available for emergencies; she recognizes the psychological impact on the church.

Rev'd Hollis came to the conclusion that the loan should be paid off because the Finance Committee and the Vestry members did due diligence and voted to have Jonathan pay off the loan. The pay-off amount is \$211,000. We don't have to close the line of credit if/when the loan is paid off. She knows this was the right decision and will let it stand as the Finance Committee voted. It's a big step.

Rev'd Hollis asked if she has the Vestry's support to pay off the loan. We need to be clear with our decision and speak in one voice. Vestry member Penelope Lattimer stated that she is in support, but would like more information and to have a written summary /bullet points. Consultant Kim Fletcher added that would be useful to give the congregation a level of detail. Vestry member Carole Forsythe stated that she will put the information in The Close Call Newsletter for April.

Vestry member Jean Houvener mentioned page 1 of the Rector's Report. The Halloween Spooktacular fundraiser was difficult to get people to help. She stated that we have a problem with getting people to show up at any events. It's hard to get CCNB parishioners at the front of the line. The Vestry members need to model that and bring people with us to events. Jean would like to do another Spooktacular this year. They are still vetting details; she will complete the fundraising form. There is a fundraising meeting on Saturday March 12, at 11:15 AM.

Rev'd Hollis mentioned that effective April 1 the Rector's housing allowance will be reduced from \$58,000 to \$48,000. As stated in the Rector's Report:

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 2016 shall include \$12,000 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 \$40,000 for purposes of Section 107, and it is further
Resolved, that the designation of \$40,000 as a housing allowance shall apply beginning April 1, 2016 and for all future years unless otherwise provided.

Rev'd Hollis asked the members of the Vestry to look at the website for Stephen Ministry. She mentioned that Mervis Johnson and Meg Hall will provide more information at next month's meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Jonathan Gloster highlighted several items. We have a new Bookkeeper, Lisa Keenan. She does financial record keeping for other churches. Lisa was our auditor for the past couple of years, but going forward she will no longer be so there will not be a conflict of interest. For February, our expenses exceeded our income. However, it's what we projected. Jonathan answered various questions from Vestry members and stated that he would make sure members receive the

Treasurer's Report before the meeting. There was one item that needed to be corrected; the amount raised by Shop with Script. He will also send members a copy of the Financial Report for January 2016. Carole Forsythe moved to receive the report with one correction and file for audit. The motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence: Clerk of the Vestry Debra Lowe reported that The Children's Home Society sent a letter thanking CCNB for its donation of gifts for Christmas. Rev'd Hollis gave a special thanks to Tina Hulme for organizing the event and putting up the Christmas tree.

New Business

Consulting Payment Discussion: Rev'd Hollis informed the Vestry members that Bishop Stokes agreed to pay a portion of Kim Fletcher's fees; the invoice is for \$7,334.77 minus a small amount of mileage (the cost/mile was incorrect). The Bishop originally agreed to pay \$2,500. He then said he'd pay more. Rev'd Hollis is waiting to hear from Phyllis Jones.

Rev'd Hollis looked at our investments as a way to pay for leadership development. The Young Churchman's Fund, which has \$32,000 in the account, has been around since 1964 and was started by the DeVoe family. Today, the Trustees are the Rector and People's Warden. Rev'd Hollis called Alice DeVoe to talk to her about using a portion of the funds as she would want her to be on board. A member of the Vestry asked what is included on the \$7,000 consultant fee. Rev'd Hollis stated the following: intake with the Rector and Wardens; communication between Kim and other parties, visits to CCNB, facilitating the Vestry Retreat. The FIRO-B assessments, travel, hotel and meals are separate. Kim's hourly rate is normally \$135; she is charging us \$125. The motion to use up to \$15,000 from the Young Churchman's Fund passed unanimously.

Old Business

Continuing Work with Kim Fletcher: Her task has been to take on conflict assessment. The objective is to talk with us and get our input. The next step is to propose solutions. Where we are is not irreparable. The Vestry needs to understand what is in the report and address issues. Kim disagrees that the group doesn't want change; people do want change. There's a values conflict. Everyone thought we were going to "plug and play."

Kim reviewed the assessment overview with the Vestry members.

Talked about ways the Vestry could be more visible.

People use past living language, e.g. "it used to be that..." when discussing concerns with CCNB

Most people are only here on Sundays.

A large percentage of people she spoke to didn't mention Christ, Jesus, or God at all. When we lose sight of that, we lose sight of everything.

We should do work around Eucharistic competence on how we do church at CCNB.

We need to do an audit of our music program.

We need to review our website and mission statement. People don't want to go to a "historic" parish.

We should see if our mission/vision statements still work for us as people have suggested that we've lost our identity.

Kim thinks people don't understand Rev'd Hollis' theology. Every priest has their own theology – background, culture, etc. Rev'd Hollis did not have and/or take the time to help us understand hers. Being from the west coast, she is usually on the left of most issues and it may show up in her preaching; she speaks up on issues and current events.

Rev'd Hollis stated that she needed to step away and have serious conversations with God. She has a vision for the parish being a hub of life where people know us in the community for music, feeding the poor and stepping out. She is comfortable with the unknown and is confident that God is there. The cuff she wears and what it states is not just for her, but for us; it's a statement of hope.

Kim stated that we are not broken, we are in crisis and we need to know who are rector is. She suggested that we offer adult forums to hear Rev'd Hollis' thoughts.

Topics on the Mind of the Vestry:

Vestry member Jean Houvener created a bulletin of special events taking place at CCNB. She suggested that it be placed on the website as a rolling item. She would also like a Facebook page for the music committee to list events. Rev'd Hollis mentioned that John Sheridan is an administrator and can post the CCNB website which automatically feeds to Facebook and Twitter.

People's Warden Sheila Cooper created an announcement Rota for the remainder of the year. We need to decide if we'd like to rotate making announcements at both services or one service each Sunday. If we don't make announcements at both services, we need to be present at other events. The majority voted to do both services.

The meeting adjourned on consent with Compline at 10:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra P. Lowe
Clerk of the Vestry