

BCC Cabinet Meeting Minutes

Date: 11/17/2021

Submitted by: Sanjay Cherian

In Attendance (by Zoom):

| Name | Role | Voting? |
|-------------------|------------------|---------|
| Ann Desrochers | Moderator | Y |
| Sanjay Cherian | Clerk | Y |
| Amy Razzaboni | Outreach | Y |
| Bill Dunbar | Finance | Y |
| Susan Haight | Trustees | Y |
| Jill Aitken | Deacons (Phone) | Y |
| Catherine Merrill | Minister | N |
| Candy Tiner | Secretary/Deacon | Y |

The meeting started at 6:35 pm with a prayer from Rev. Catherine. We had a quorum.

Calendar Review

- November 14th - Rev. Cath back in the Pulpit, Stewardship Campaign Kick-Off
- November 20th – Boy Scout Clean Up Day
- December 2 & 3 – Take Home Meal Preparation (2nd and 3rd) and Pick Up (3rd)
- December 5 – Town Tree Lighting (4:30 pm) Take Out Soup & Chili (4:00 – 6:00 pm) Christmas Raffle Drawing
- December 11 – Breakfast with Santa (Brookline Women’s Club)
- December 24 – Christmas Eve Service
- November 21 – Decorate church after worship but this doesn’t need to be on calendar.
- The Garden Club date has moved up. Candy will talk to Sue Laub next week and put 12/9 on the calendar as a placeholder.

Review of Prior Meeting Minutes

- Page 5 trustees report should read “plaque” rather than “plague.”
- Bill: we didn’t get 1,000 gallons of oil. We got 918 because the price had gone up from when we submitted it. This happened on 10/18 after the 10/10 cabinet meeting so it will be an update for this month’s minutes, not a change to the prior minutes.
- Candy moved to accept the minutes amended as above; Susan seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Decorating the church

- Amy: Do we want Outreach to do any Christmas decorating as usual or just have the deacons do everything this year? Jill: the deacons are talking about different things like what’s Christmas Eve going to look like this year – service times, logistics, etc. It’s not a typical year. There’s no guarantee

how long we'll be able to keep worshipping indoors. The conclusion was that Outreach should do what small things they want to do.

- Ann: are we going to have the raffle baskets on display during soup & chili pickup? If so, a little decoration would be nice in the room where the baskets will be but not too much. She's hoping people will come in during pickup.

Boy Scout Sponsorship

- Ann: The UMC is all over this. The UCC has finally put out a statement. Their legal counsel is telling us to get our own legal counsel as an independent church to make a decision. They're not making a global statement for all UCC churches.
- Cath: as far as she knows, we've received nothing from the UMC about sponsorship of scout troops. Everything she's received is retroactive to the bankruptcy settlement.
 - The UMC is negotiating with BSA to get a separate side agreement that covers Methodist churches in the BSA bankruptcy, not under a general settlement. If UMC lawyers pull it off, we're set and will have more protection than under general bankruptcy settlement. If they can't come to an agreement submitted by 11/22, we need to take action based on legal papers we've already received that went out under the general BSA bankruptcy settlement. They asked us to have a Special Cabinet Meeting on November 29th or 30th to get guidelines from UMC on what motions to make, how to vote. We may discuss the BSA settlement and our legal response to it. They are encouraging us to fill out paperwork in a way that maximally protects our assets but this has to be done church-by-church. The special meeting may not be necessary if the UMC settlement goes through. If not, we have to fill out special paperwork and submit it to the court by mid-December.
 - Susan: doesn't know what Russell has been signing or not signing with the local boy scout and cub scout troops. Local leadership has changed this year and there are a lot of new players who have to be signed off on by the church. She knows Russell has been signing things this week. Cath: the paperwork that needs to be signed is with her and remains unsigned so whatever Russell is doing is not related to that. Susan: Russell is acting as our liaison to the local troop. Ann: we had asked Russell a month or so ago not to sign anything on behalf of the church because the UMC was recommending we not sponsor any troops. They're saying that if we sponsor a troop, depending on the language in bankruptcy agreement, we could have legal consequences that pull us into the bankruptcy case. They recommended we not sponsor a troop but have a facilities rental agreement with them. Susan: doesn't know how Russell signing paperwork authorizing individuals to be troop or pack leaders relates to the sponsorship relationship.
 - Ann: Russell had said the official sponsorship paperwork doesn't come until January.
 - Cath: we have a stack of paperwork and there are certain conditions the UMC will request us to meet.
 - Ann: Tuesday 11/30, 6:30 pm is set as a tentative date for the special meeting. Cath will let us know if we need to have the meeting. If we do have the meeting, she'll present the decisions and we'll walk out knowing how to fill out the paperwork.
 - Cath: if anyone from the UMC contacts us about the BSA bankruptcy, point them at her.
 - Ann: our insurance agent says until the UMC sorts things out, we should not be signing a sponsorship agreement because of liability. It all comes down to bankruptcy, not the relationship with the scouts. If bankruptcy was taken care of, sponsorship wouldn't be a big deal.
 - Cath: court deadlines are all before the end of the year so things will wrap up soon.

Slides for discussion of church direction

- Ann asked if we should take a fresh start on this discussion in February. Everyone: yes.

Faith Formation

- Ann: are we still doing crafts? Susan: yes. The craft we did last magically fit in with the supply minister's sermon. We will keep something ready but she may change it as we get into December.
- Amy: hasn't printed out and filed background checks because there's nowhere to file them. She's reviewed them. She doesn't mind doing them but should someone else be checking? Everything was in a lock box but she can't find the key. She took a picture of the box to County Stores who says the lock looks damaged like someone tried to open it with a screwdriver. Should we have a place to file these things?
 - Cath: we can break in with a sledgehammer and buy a new lock box. Amy: someone could walk away with the new box if it's portable. Do we have something more stationary?
 - Susan: there's a second Sentry lock box with a key in the secretary's office. It's smaller and portable. There's also a 2-drawer file cabinet on the 3rd floor that locks. It's a Sentry fireproof file cabinet where some church records are kept. Cath: doesn't want the records in a general-purpose lock box.
 - Candy: is wondering if there's room in the secretary's office to move the file cabinet there? Is it okay there because of the water leak we've had before?
 - Cath: Amy doesn't have to get into the current lock box. We can break into it and shred or save records as appropriate. She asks that we please move the 2-drawer box from the 3rd floor to the secretary's office and make sure we can lock it. If it takes a while, we should spend the \$20 to get another lock box from Walmart that we can use in the interim.
 - Ann: all the stuff in there should be shredded anyway because it's at least 5 years old. Cath: we shouldn't shred them for protection. Sanjay: can scan the records with his sheetfed scanner if they're loose sheets.
 - Amy: when we have a place to put the reports, should she print them out for filing? Who will double check her? Cath: it doesn't matter as long as Amy isn't checking her own background check report.
 - Amy: if a background check brings up something she doesn't know what to do with, who should she go to? Answer: Ann.
 - Ann: What information do the old reports have? Amy: name, address likely. Birthday & social security number are probably crossed out. She would also like someone else to have the login info for the system. Ann will be that person.
 - Ann: the conference keeps the finished reports with address and check pass/fail status.
 - Susan: will be at church tomorrow around noon. She will take the second Century table top safe and leave it on the desk. She will find space for new file cabinet away from the hot water cabinet.
- Susan: take & make crafts are still being worked on. She showed an example.

Fundraisers & Financial Impact

- Ann: noted from our website that we're in great shape with the Christmas raffle. Amy: we were hoping to get 10 good raffle prizes but are up to 30.
- Jill: how are ticket sales going? Amy: sales are good.

Building-Use Guidelines

- Ann: talked to our insurance company based on a request that came in to Candy. When we let someone from an organization like the scouts use the building, we should have a certificate of insurance form them showing us as coinsured. This usually doesn't cost them anything. Ann does this when the NH conference has events at other places. She doesn't know if the scouts, AA, etc. have this kind of insurance or if we've ever had such an arrangement. It is a best practice, not a requirement for volunteer organizations.

- As far as renting to for-profit business, we have to file a bunch of paperwork, go through an underwriter, and get a rider on our policy to do that. This is not a suggestion but a requirement. We were asked by a for-profit person to rent our space on regular basis.
 - Susan: doesn't recall us ever renting to a for-profit business. Ann: thinks more than 25 years ago, we did rent space to a preschool.
 - Cath: for the organization that approached us, do we want to rent to them? Candy: it was a young couple that came to church before. The woman teaches ballroom dancing in her home and wants to know if she could teach in the church. Consensus was that this specific instance is likely to be expensive for her to get insurance and dangerous for the church.
 - Cath: suggested sponsoring a pre-Valentine's day Sweethearts' Dance the Saturday before and seeing if a lot of people sign up. That way we're not saying no to her flat out but offering something helpful.
- Susan: for organizations already using the church, we (Candy) need to put out a reminder about turning the heat down after turning it up. She found a window left open. We also need a reminder about removing their own trash. Susan has put up signs in the bathrooms. Ann: are all these things in our building use guidelines? Susan: do we give copies to organizations that want to use the church? Candy: if we're refreshing the guidelines, it's a good reason to send them out again.
- Ann: if we're sending the guidelines out, should we add something about putting us as coinsured on their certificates of insurance if they have such insurance?
 - Amy: if relationships are annually renewed, that would be a convenient time to revisit the insurance question.
 - Bill: noted the Women's Club and similar organizations that use the church once or twice don't have insurance.
 - Ann: we should ask it of regular uses, not intermittent. The conference asks it of all contractors and vendors.
- Jill: it sounds like we don't renew relationships each year but we can send usage guidelines every January. Cath: notes we should do it in September because groups and church follow a September-starting calendar.
- Cath: what about the ballroom dance person? Candy: thinks she'll be fine because she's an admin at a couple of churches. Cath: then let's just say no. If she continues in relationship with our church, we can bring up the sweethearts' dance idea as a completely separate thing.

Reopening Guidelines

- Ann: Covid positivity rate in NH is 9.1% today.
- Cath: we want to work to getting back to a place where we're singing, the band's playing, etc. but people are not coming back. The discussion with Jill was how to make Christmas Eve maximally accessible to people while honoring our physical and staffing limitations. Do we do something different for Christmas Eve vs regular Sundays? Is there any point in trying to deal with nuance as we have to look at both infection rate and what are we willing to try? Do we try one thing at a time? Do we look at prior decisions as pre-vaccine and current decision as post-vaccine but not universal uptake?
 - Ann asked if the deacons had a recommendation. Jill: they haven't had a deacons meeting with Cath. The meeting in October started talking about Christmas planning. They were assuming it would be in-person because that's the most logistically complicated scenario. Since Cath has been back, they have talked informally about Advent and Christmas. Initial thoughts are that Christmas Eve may be its own animal because there are more people in attendance. Advent attendance is more typical. They haven't come to specific guidelines and are looking to the Cabinet for guidance.

- Cath: knows her physical limitations now and is hoping they're at least no worse by end of December. She could do the following but this is just her. She doesn't know about live musician at any of these. It's been hard to get 2 sets of live musicians in a non-pandemic year. It's likely at least one indoor service is a video singalong. Some of this will be determined by the infection rate on 12/23.
 - 4 pm service with masks required the whole time
 - 6:30 pm outdoor candlelight service that's a purpose-designed service with masks discretionary
 - 8 pm indoor service that's "mask recommended"
 - pre-recorded version of indoor service for people who don't want to come to the building.
- Amy: it feels like a lot of work for everyone to do 3 services on Christmas Eve. Cath: we always have trouble staffing Christmas Eve. We can do an indoors and a shorter outdoors that's not as kid-friendly, 5 pm and 7 pm. The kids' service has to be the first service and that has to be the safer one so outdoors at 5.
- Cath: it comes back to what we want our indoor policy to be? With the current rate, fully-masked, no-singing is a reasonable policy. She knows there are plenty of people for whom indoors is no-go, masked or otherwise. Sanjay: then it would automatically be no-singing. He described his dissatisfaction with that outcome.
- Bill: suggests Christmas Eve singing since everyone is required to wear masks. We are not likely to have 6 foot spacing either.
- Cath: if we don't have hymnals in the pews, do we put words in bulletin? Amy: thinks this is a good approach. Cath: if we're putting words in, are we encouraging singing? She wants to avoid hypocrisy.
- Cath: what do we for the Dec 12th service given that Christmas Eve might be packed with singing. It's a regular Sunday. Do we say "masks expected" and still have singing. Bill: we should supply words for one song, have the service be masks-optional and sing if you want.
- Jill: the weather is getting colder. We used to open all the windows but that will get harder and harder. Christmas Eve may be a night where ventilation will be an issue. What will we do with the windows?
 - Bill: last week, the windows were cracked a couple of inches, not wide open. Jill: is that what we want to do all winter?
 - Ann: is there a way to open only the top windows or is the screen only on the bottom? Jill: there are 3 levels to the windows. We can open the bottom one as we've been doing. She thinks the middle one can go down and the top one is fixed. Susan: the top 1/3 is only a pane but the middle pane can come down. Ann: this would keep a draft from being at person-level while maintaining airflow.
 - Cath: we should have all the windows open as much as we can stand. She likes the idea of the top ones pulled down rather than the bottom pushed up. We should turn on the fan. Susan will check out the mechanics of it. But we also have to recognize that like last Sunday, the windows were open but there was no breeze. We may need to set the sanctuary temperature to 60 so we don't waste heating oil. People should expect to wear their coats.
- Jill: for a typical Sunday, are we keeping the guidelines the way they are?
 - Ann: it sounds that way.
 - Cath: the current guidelines say no singing. Amy: it says congregational singing will be allowed with masks on. And that masks are recommended for all attendees to avoid airborne transmission.
 - Jill: should we say "strongly recommended?" Cath: interpretation is subjective so it's not worth changing.
- Cath: Friday is 12/24 so 12/26 is a Sunday. How do we feel about having pre-recorded worship only? She's happy to be there alone but if we know we're not going to be there, does it make sense.

Susan: will run the UV machine on that Saturday. Bill: is okay with a recorded service. That seemed to be the consensus. Cath: is trying to minimize the number of people who would be needed to make a 12/26 service work.

Deacons' Report

- Deacons met on Sunday, October 24, 2021.
- Observed All Saints Day during worship on Sunday, November 7 with supply minister Rev. Celeste McQuarrie.
- Began planning for Advent/ Christmastide season.
- Planning to have Communion on December 12.
- Looking for volunteers to assist with decorating the church after worship on November 21.
- Decorating church 11/21 after worship. Help is welcome.
- Cath expressed deep appreciation for us putting in 10 weeks of pulpit supply in a way where she didn't have to worry about or deal with anything.
- Ann: all guest pulpit supply ministers felt that there was something special about our church and told Ann. We have a good reputation.
- Amy: the supply ministers made each week interesting and she appreciates everyone's work to make it happen.

Stewardship

- The campaign was kicked off, letters are going out soon. The goal is to get them out this week. Cath will work with Candy.

Finance & Treasurer's Report

| BCC YTD Financial Summary | Actual Income | Actual Expenses | Income vs Expenses + / - |
|---------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| October | \$82,708 | \$74,561 | \$8,147 |

- Bill talked about the oil pre-buy issue. Suppliers cut off the oil companies after a certain amount at the negotiated rate. We could have paid extra to get the whole 1000 gallons but decided not to.
- Plaques for memorial boards are going up – there are 4 new ones. The criterion for going on the board is some donation. One person gave an anonymous donation from their will so we can't put that one up.
- Working on the budget. Everybody's budget will be the same as last year until we're done with the stewardship drive. Increases for paid people other than Catherine will basically be CPI, which was 5.9%.

Outreach Report

- Dropped off gift cards donated to SHARE, adopted 11 children and 9 single adults. There was \$1,050 in gift cards and there's one more at the church. Another is being taken right to SHARE.
- Emailed town welfare officer to let her know we can help. She's stepping down in December. They're looking for someone to take her place.
- Helping out with the Christmas raffle and whatever else they can help with.

Minister's Report

- Back in the pulpit, missed the work.

Trustees Report

- Absolute Mechanical is coming tomorrow (Thu) noon for a furnace tune-up. Cath: their paperwork says they need minister's office access but they get in and find they didn't need it.
- Monday, they're meeting with someone from Millwork Masters to look at 17 windows in back of church. Peter Bretschneider found significant rot.
- Will get shovels and ice melt ready.
- Russell took apart the rack in the basement that he had made and disposed of it. The big metal cabinet in Fellowship Hall was disposed of.

Publicity

- Trying something new – announcement videos made as a slide deck and posted on Facebook. They're getting a lot of views.
- Bill: is the link to raffle ticket purchase there? Candy: The link for Facebook or email is different than the link embedded in the church website.
- People are starting to use Venmo more.

New or Other Business

- Picking a day for Annual Meeting. It needs to happen within 60 days of January 1st. Superbowl Sunday is Feb 13th. Last year, we did Annual Meeting early because we did it online but there's no way we can do it that early (Jan 10) this year.
- Cath: suggests the weekend before Superbowl Sunday, 2/6/22.
- Ann: 1/14 would be the deadline for submitting reports.

The meeting ended at 8:39 pm with a prayer from Rev Cath.