

BCC Cabinet Meeting Minutes

Date: 11/13/2022

Submitted by: Sanjay Cherian

In Attendance:

Name	Role	Voting?
Catherine Merrill	Minister	N
Sanjay Cherian	Clerk	Y
Rena Duncklee	Treasurer	Y
Susan Haight	Trustees	Y
Bill Dunbar	Finance	Y
Amy Razzaboni	Outreach	Y
Ann Desrochers	Moderator	Y
Candy Tiner	Publicity/Deacons	Y

The meeting started at 8:36 am with a prayer from Rev Cath. We had a voting quorum.

Calendar Review

- Will add THM preparation before the Faire.
- Funeral on 11/22 – family gathering, they are providing a pastor and accompanist. Cath will open the church and welcome them.
- Time for Christmas Eve service not yet decided.

Review of Prior minutes

- Ann noted the meeting opening time was erroneously listed as 9:32. Sanjay will correct to 8:32.
- Candy moved to accept the amended minutes, Amy seconded; the motion passed with a unanimous vote among those who attended that meeting.

Stewardship Campaign

- We have a total of 10 pledges for total of \$11,650.
- Most of the Cabinet hasn't handed in their pledge yet.
- Cath: is thinking the campaign ends next week. Ann confirms.
- Cath: today's worship has a "standing for stewardship" moment. Do we want to give an update?
 - Ann: it's probably less discouraging not to give current numbers.
 - Candy: confirms we have pledge forms in the back.
- Bill: prefers pledges be made online for consistency of income. There was some discussion that cabinet members said they are submitting forms while also doing EasyTithe. Bill: we can send pledges to Rena's personal email or do it through EasyTithe.
- Ann: is there a way online to denote that it's a pledge? Bill: yes, there's a dropdown to specify pledge.

Budget

- Fuel oil was \$4,000 last year and is expected to be \$9,000 this year. We have 1,500 gallons of oil and we're paying the rack price, which is already up to \$5.40/gal. Bill budgeted 1,500 gallons at \$6/gallon.
- Electricity expenses are staying the same because we have a 3-year agreement with our 3rd party energy delivery company for about 8c/kWh vs 22c for Eversource.
- Snowplowing: Bill got numbers from Sue and looked up online snow projections and budgeted \$1,000 for this year. This service has historically been free to us.
- Sue: met a man here to look at the parking lot. She thinks he owns a security company on Rt 13 and is doing this as an offseason activity. Since it's a side business, he doesn't have a mechanical sander and will have to do it by hand. He's expecting to have only a small number of clients.
- Minister's salary and benefits increase was budgeted using conference guidelines for 2023. Ann: that was 4% this year. Bill: doesn't look at percentages but just uses what is sent out in guidelines.
- Other pay positions had an increase too.
- The rest remains the same as last year.
- We're currently at 61% deficit and we're allowed 10%. Ann: is that with today's pledges? Bill: yes, until we get the actual pledge number.
- Tracking Electric bills: we've saved \$408 from being on a specific savings program.
- We're saving on oil too.
- Sue: called Eastern to come fill the tank but they have to inspect everything and wait until it's below half a tank because we're on a new program. She will call back in a couple of weeks.
- Ann: in the new budget, is the new THM / Organization sharing approach in place? Bill: \$8.75 out of every THM goes to our budget and anything over goes to charity. It will have to be looked at when we get closer to the final budget.
- Bill was looking at ways to get the budget to a tolerable state. One way is to keep the \$2,000 Outreach budget but use THM money to offset that. Another way is to move money from general funds (currently \$20k) or the capital fund (currently over \$100k) over to operating expenses. He would hate to touch the trust funds because they give us interest. The balance of trust funds really went down this month. He wants to wait until we're closer to January to decide.
- Rena: if there's any plan to use overage money for an organization this month, there isn't any because we didn't make \$8.75 this month from THM. Amy: it was Marguerite's place. Rena: there's some extra going to them from a different source.
- Cath: we may want to talk as a church about how we manage shocks, in light of the fuel price shock. If we don't have any elasticity, we might want to consider a longer-term plan on how to build it in. She doesn't want to make people feel doom but wants to be realistic. Bill: referenced our general & capital funds as buffer sources.
- Cath noted new families coming to church so are we growing again? Do we just need a year's buffer to get us back on track?
- Bill: or are there other things to do like reducing the cost of the two streetlights that represent \$600+ of our electric bill vs \$1,700 for our other electrical use.

Annual Meeting

- Ann: Superbowl Sunday is the first Sunday of Feb. She proposes Jan 29th, in person, hopefully with a pot luck lunch. Thus, Jan 6 is a hard deadline for annual reports.
- Snowplowing: do we need a formal request? Sue: so many people are not doing it because of the cost of gas, vehicle wear, etc. If the guy we're talking to hadn't put in on Facebook, we wouldn't have known about it. Ann: his rates look reasonable. Sue: he's giving us a discount because we're a church.

UMC Split

- The UMC is hierarchical so they assign people in their structure. The NE district did not assign a new bishop to the NE area. Our current bishop is retiring effective year end. The speculation is that the NE area is more liberal so they are being more intentional about a right fit. Cath: the current bishop was supposed to retire 2 years ago but extended it. The clergy were separately notified that there will be a bishop on Jan 1. Her takeaway is that this is causing problems in the UMC, leaving our situation even further down on their list of things to worry about.
- Bill: re: membership numbers we have to submit, he moved UMC dues down to \$10 according to the apportionment of undeclared members we were told to do between UCC & UMC last year. Thus, we are basing dues on 7 UMC members, 43 UCC members.
- Ann: what are we paying for UCC dues because she knows the assessed amount is going up? Bill: \$150.

Fundraising Events

- The Ghost Train Rail Trail raised \$541.
- Sanjay: Megan said she is not doing anything for the soup & chili supper this year, in case anyone's expecting it. This includes setting up, soliciting help, getting containers, etc.
- Donna could use more items for the alcohol basket for Christmas Raffle. She got contributions from Cath & Sanjay. She got the sandwich board set up, and is taking pictures and advertising. Amy and whoever wants to help will be decorating inside for the raffle.
- Cath: if after Christmas, we want to stop running candles in the windows all the time to save electricity, she's okay with it. Bill: doesn't think it's much cost. There was discussion about how we like having the church lit up. Susan: feedback from the community is that they love seeing lights when they drive by.
- Streetlights – Bill: we have no control over their use. We just get billed. Sue: are we required to operate them by law? Bill: no. We requested them a long time ago and they put them in and bill us for it. The town pays for one that lights up the library. If we get a light on a pole that lights up the church, we can shut off the streetlights. The same goes for the parking lot light. The window lights don't represent much potential savings.
- Ann: did we advertise Soup & Chili? Amy: yes, and Carol Farwell sent it out in a letter for the tree lighting.

Faith Formation

- Cath: the first session was well attended and successful. We had parents and a couple more adults attend adult CE and she thinks people had a productive morning. She told parents that if 8:30 to 11 is too long for the kids, they should feel free to bail after Sunday School. She thinks it was a successful test run and there are opportunities for further improvement.
- Cath: we need to be on our game for background checks. As a Cabinet, we need to be a bit more aware of BG checks as we do more activities that include kids.
 - Susan: there was an article in the news about daycare centers and enhancement of BG check programs. She doesn't know if it would affect churches. Amy: would it be our insurance company that would say something about it? Ann: yes. Also there are 2 levels of check at the conference: one for violations and a second that has to be notarized and sent in to the state.
 - Sue: this even affects people who are already employed at daycare centers. It may cause staffing shortages.
 - Amy: who has contact with our insurance company? Answer: Bill.
 - Amy: the current check we do is \$9 and confirms identity, sex offender status, and criminal background. Ann: there used to be a separate one for people who drive kids but we don't do

it anymore. Amy periodically gets notifications from a family watchdog group showing offenders in the area.

- The next Faith Formation session is 12/4.

Live Music for worship:

- Cath: We reached out to Levi Maxwell who played in our coffeehouse. John Panto talked to him. He would be interested in playing. \$100/Sunday sounded reasonable to everyone. Lots of churches in the area are looking for musicians to play on Sunday but they're not thick on the ground. If Levi can play one Sunday a month, it expands our roster of musicians. John said Levi was particularly interested in playing his own originals. Cath was hoping he would play for congregational singing. So even if we approve the money, he may not want to do it.
- Given that the congregation has strong feelings about live music and singing together, we're pursuing it. What do we think? She knows there are concerns that we can find money for the building when we need it but it's not so easy for worship.
- Cath: was originally skeptical that videos would add much to worship experience but feels she was wrong. They often bring in something we can't get with our own resources. She doesn't ever plan to stop using videos.
- Bill: if we are going to do it, we should pay everyone who does it. Cath: talked with Yi Fan & Jocelyn before pursuing this direction. They both felt their musical contribution was a gift to the church and wouldn't be comfortable taking money.
- Bill: how would we budget it? Cath: once a month. She's perfectly comfortable going back to Levi and talking about how our budget doesn't support it just yet. Jocelyn said she'd play more regularly. Cath doesn't think we're going to have Yi Fan play regularly but he will play on request. She's happy to go with videos for now and try again in the Spring.
- Bill: there's a Charlotte Farwell memorial fund with \$575, which was for music. We have \$166 associated with New Beginnings.
- Cath: thinks for rest of Nov/Dec, we have coverage for live music we need. She will talk with Levi and see if his musical identity would allow him to play out of our hymnal or if he's called to play in the spirit. If so, we can try one or two services in January & February out of the Charlotte Farwell funds, and then make a decision after that. We are committing to not spending more than is in that fund.
- Yi Fan gives the gift of choosing music videos. If managing a musician adds to Cath's workload out of her area of expertise, she may need to come back and say we need a live musician who's more autonomous.
- Ann: confirmed with attendees that we're okay with Levi if he can play from our hymnal.

Energy Audit

- Sue: sent Kevin an email but hasn't received a reply. She will follow up with him and if he had someone in mind, will reach out to them. It was Kevin & Bob who had said they would look into it but she doesn't know if it's gone anywhere.
- Cath: from her volunteer work with the water company in ME, there's a lot of Covid relief money in the energy relief category. It might be a good time to do energy/water/infrastructure projects now because we can apply for and get a lot of money. Bill: Eversource might still have grant money to do energy audits for free.

OCWM budget

- Ann: do we still want to bring this up at annual meeting given budget concerns? Bill: We're still moving line items from Outreach as planned to the conference section. Ann: so do we still want to bring it up?

- Sanjay: it would be helpful to bring this up for Annual Meeting to make us consider the macro-level issues that are part of our budgetary situation and not get too hyper-focused on logistics like specific energy costs.
- Ann: will put some stuff together for that discussion.

Annual Meeting Nominating Committee Slate

- We still have lots of holes. Some people are considering things but no confirmations.
- Bill: is anyone thinking of being treasurer? Ann: heard a rumor. There have also been creative conversations about the roles of moderator & assistant moderator. Cath: emphasized that this doesn't affect Rena's plans. Bill: is concerned about transitioning from Rena so we hit the ground running in January. There's a lot we have to do in January like W2's.

Trustees Report

- Russell took measurements for the rail in the basement. He will also help her replace a light in the 3rd floor stairwell, where someone is needed to hold the ladder.
- Sue: The rhododendron that's encroaching on a tree – was it the one donated by Sid Hall? She doesn't want to take the tree down. Research says you need to cut down a rhododendron when it's frozen out.
- If anyone knows someone who can shovel, like a boy scout, let her know. They would be paid.
- Furnaces were serviced last week with no major issues.

Outreach Report

- October Food Drive – Collected 2,320 food items for Brookline Food Pantry and Share in Milford. \$600 in gift cards almost purchased. Need to shop for SHARE because they asked for that rather than money.
- Senior Luncheon – celebrated 15 years of offering this program to the community. 43 people attended, some new. Angie Dacey was the guest speaker. A woman emailed Amy and volunteered to help at the luncheon. She asked Amy to let her know if there was any more help needed.
- Rena: are we putting SHARE wreath up. Amy: was hoping to have heard back by today. Is still planning it.
- Attended a fundraiser for Home Health & Hospice last week to raise funds for their Hospice House. Amy couldn't go but Marjorie and Ann went.

Finance & Treasurer's Report

- Nothing new to report.

Publicity

- Nothing new besides screen shots. Things are going in the right direction.
- It's a little discouraging when more people are going on the web site but we're not seeing it in the pews. Amy: is seeing the response in Outreach's world – new attendees, volunteers, etc.

Minister's Report

November 2022 (9/5 to 11/6)

- Averaging 22.5 hours/week, which puts me between 19 to 39 hours under since Sept. 11. This time last year, I was averaging 27.1 hours/week.

- Designing, coordinating and delivering part of the November CE session: Jesus, Fully Human, Fully Divine.
- Speaking with the three families with kids about a once-a-month CE program.
- Assisting Lisa Jarman plan a Thanksgiving week funeral for her dad.
- Handling inquiries about an April 8th (day before Easter) wedding.
- Pastoral counseling in person & on the phone.
- Attending the October Senior Luncheon to celebrate 15 fabulous years!
- Recruiting Jocelyn Jones for live music in worship, especially for Christmas Eve to work with the band (yay!)
- Working with the Deacons to figure out what we're doing for 12/24 and 12/25 services
- Attending Ann Desrochers' retirement party from the NH UCC
- Coordinating the making of a video for the Three Part Amen for worship
- Fire drill in the 9/11 worship service.
- Vetting the Stewardship letting and stewardship letter mailing list.
- Attending NH UCC Annual Meeting
- Continuing worship plan for November - February.
- Attending 2022 Clergy Convocation "Nurturing Our Creativity for Life and Ministry"
- Scanning & filing more of the BSA bankruptcy settlement notices.

Services:

- 9/11: We bear a burden of restoration for the lost coins and the lost sheep of this world.
- 9/18: While we are urged to pray for everyone, we actually pray in particularities.
- 9/25: Out of the pulpit, Clergy Convocation.
- 10/2: Don't bother to wrangle with words to explain the mystery of the love and heartache that surround us. Just live into them.
- 10/9: Celebration of the church ministries, how mustard seed sized faith grows.
- 10/16: Stewardship invites us to reflect on God giving us the opportunity to wrestle with blessings every day.
- 10/23: Fighting the Good Fight and Running the Good Race in small group discussion
- 10/30: Celebration of All Saints Day. Remembering the saints who have helped us keep going when we want to retreat from the world.
- 11/6: Going beyond clever answers to clever questions to find the truth of resurrection life.

Regular Meetings:

- Cabinet, Deacons, Clergy Support
- Cath thanked people for Clergy Convocation support – 3-day retreat on creativity and ministry.
- We had 30 people in worship recently, which we haven't had since Covid except for one outdoor service in 2021.
- Going into planning for Christmas Eve. Going to try to tie more of the content of services into CE so kids see it's not something that's done occasionally for kids but rolls up into regular services for everyone.
- Will be trying to engage with kids who are here more so they feel they have a special spot here.

New or Other Business:

- None.

The meeting was closed in prayer at 9:52 am by Rev Cath.