

Church Council Minutes - Approved

April 9, 2024

Present: Mark Johnston, Stacy Honson, Kelly Wright, Jim Kern, Stan Greene, Mike Mok, Bernice Lopata, Jody Betten, Mike VerMerris.

1. *Welcome and Introduction* – Mark called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm with a special welcome to our new interim pastor, Jody Betten.
2. *Opening Prayer* – Jody opened the meeting with prayer.
3. *March 2023 Meeting Minutes* – Mike V. distributed the final draft of both March 11 Council, and March 17 Special Congregational meeting minutes prior to the meeting.
Motion: from Bernie to approve March 11 minutes. Kelly second. Motion approved.
Motion: from Stan to approve March 17 minutes. Mike M. second. Motion approved.
Action: Both meeting minutes will be in the E-pistle and posted on the Friendship Hall bulletin board.
4. *Pastor's Report* – Jody began work on April 2, a week ago. Julie and Kelly have been helpful in getting her acclimated.
Highlights:
 - a) Jody will be putting together a transition team. She will begin calling for members using the E-pistle beginning April 12, with questions: Who should be on it? How to choose? Characteristics of the team would include people concerned with the best interest of the congregation, integrity, trusted, creativity, respect for process, interest in or knowledge of the history of church and community, vision for the future, able to recruit helpers. The ad hoc team will serve at the discretion of the interim minister.
 - b) Jody is planning an initial sermon series to focus on 'What is an interim period'.
 - c) Her schedule in Douglas will be Sundays and Tuesdays, with one other day of the week to be determined. Hours will be posted in the E-pistle a week in advance.
5. *Financial Report* – Stacy did not have all the required data prior to the meeting. She distributed March's financial reports by email on April 19: Profit and Loss Comparison; Monthly Balance Sheet; Budget vs. Actual FY24 P&L.

Highlights:

- a) Income is over budget for the month of March, and as expected, expenses are much lower.
- b) The summary with the campaign subtracted from income and expense:

	March, 2024		YTD March, 2024	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Income	33,572	26,640	248,530	264,816
Expenses	14,640	29,050	210,138	261,450
Net Income	18,932	(2,410)	38,392	3,366

6. *Trustee Report* – Kelly distributed the report prior to the meeting.

Previous Business & Recent Activities:

- a) Received the estimate for exterior repairs to Isabel Graham Center in preparation for painting early this summer: \$1800 - \$2000. The carpenter should be starting the work within the next week and is expected to take about a week.
- b) Lewis Corbin selected an exterior siding paint (white) and door color (soft brown) for the Isabel Graham Center. Eventually we will apply samples to the building exterior for review.
- c) Along with Kathleen Mueller (who made introductions), met with Cornerstone Building & Maintenance LLC, to investigate their interest and the associated costs with potentially assuming the maintenance responsibilities of the church campus. Cornerstone manages the maintenance of Kathleen & Peter Muller's condo association. We have not received information back from Cornerstone yet.
- d) Contacted the sprinkler contractor requesting they schedule replacement of the church south side drip line with spray heads. Have not received a confirmed installation date yet.
- e) Put the three flags back up for the season on the south-west edge of church property. Also replaced the wind-damaged American flag.
- f) Serviced and put the campus snowblower in storage for the off season.
- g) Installed a new garbage disposal in the Retreat House kitchen. The original unit had a defective bearing which caused the motor to freeze.
- h) Met with the A/V team to discuss options for improvements to the church sound system. Decision was made to request the contractor that Stan Greene consulted with late last summer, complete a specific review of the sound delivery to the Friendship Hall.
- i) Validated that Pastor's computer was ready for use, by applying all system updates and verifying operation.
- j) Added Pastor Jody's name to the sign left of the church front door.
- k) Cleaned the rain gutter on the front of the Isabel Graham Center.
- l) Refresh and clean up the campus landscape mulch.
- m) Along with several members of the Creation Justice team, met with Lake Effect landscape design service to begin the process of preparing a campus-wide landscape refresh plan. More information will be coming within the next month to six weeks.
- n) Completed several miscellaneous items; IE replacing interior light bulbs, lock batteries, etc.

Upcoming Activities & New Business:

- o) The quarterly campus-wide building pest inspection is scheduled for April 10 (Vandenberg Pest Control).
- p) Collect and store snow shovels and sidewalk deicer for the off season.
- q) Distribute garden hoses around the campus for the season.
- r) Determine next-steps and create a plan for concrete replacement of Isabel Graham Center parking.
- s) Once the weather cooperates, paint 3'x3' section (approximate) on the Isabel Graham Center exterior to evaluate paint colors. This will include a sample of the door paint selection.

- t) The Isabel Graham Center exterior repaint is currently scheduled for early to mid-June.

Further Discussion:

The quote to design and install a center handrail to the front steps of the church was received from Chris Maitner. The quote included a diagram showing two options. Option-A is a single rail \$1080 plus tax, Option-B is a double rail \$1720 plus tax. Both options are constructed of the same material as the existing side rails.

Motion: from Stacy to move forward with Option-A. Mike M. second. Motion approved.

Action: Kelly will inform Chris to start fabrication.

7. *Committee/Group Updates* – Prior to the meeting, Mark distributed copies of the following grant applications provided by the DUCC Grant Committee. The committee recommends \$4000 be awarded to Center for Dispute Resolution/ Mediation Service, \$4500 be awarded to Ladders of Hope, and \$5000 be awarded to Community Pride. During the meeting, we also discussed information regarding the Art Guild and Director of Inclusivity.

Center for Dispute Resolution/ Mediation Service:

- a) The organization's goal is to offer affordable, confidential, and successful mediation to anyone who needs it. As a nonprofit they use State of Michigan-certified volunteers who make service more affordable and accessible than private mediation. Often waiving thousands of dollars in fees for people who are on state assistance or receive disability.
- b) Support from Douglas UCC would help make it possible for Mediation Services to recruit, train and retain more volunteers who make their service possible. Training their State of Michigan-certified mediators is an ongoing operational expense and requires funding support.

Motion: from Stacy to commit \$4000 to Center for Dispute Resolution/ Mediation Service. Stan second. Motion approved.

Ladders of Hope:

- a) Funding will be used to assist Allegan County residents with everyday basic needs that they sometimes cannot afford such as school supplies or Christmas gifts. This means lightening the load of expenses to parents and families, helping them provide for their loved ones and/or those in their care.
- b) Projects to be funded:
 - Birthday Box: Providing birthday boxes to children aged 1 to 17. These boxes include cake mix, frosting, cups, plates, candles, napkins, balloons, and a birthday card.
 - Back to School: Providing backpacks and school supplies to school children up to 17 years of age.
 - Christmas Gifts: Providing client's children from newborn to 17 years of age with Christmas gifts such as toys, clothing, boots, shoes, gloves, hats, books, etc.

Motion: from Mark to commit \$4500 to Ladders of Hope. Bernie second. Motion approved.

Community Pride:

- a) Community Pride's mission is to be open and affirming, welcoming all LGBTQ people and allies to celebrate Pride.

- b) This year's Pride committee will invite several speakers, including Jocelyn Benson, and Jay Kapllan (staff attorney for the ACLU of Michigan's LGBTQ+ Project), to educate on hot topic areas. The event will also host speakers to talk about Women's Choice and current issues on book banning. Being an election year, several other supportive organizations will also be hosted.

Before moving forward, we requested more information from Community Pride be provided. Mike M. will contact the committee for specifics and relay their response by way of email. Additional details were then received on April 10. Mark and Mike M. suggest we approve this grant now, but also simultaneously communicate that we expect follow-up regarding the final budget and how the funds are used. Additionally, for next year, we will need more details (as all other grant recipients provide) before we approve. We reiterate that we support Pride in our Community, but we also want to challenge them as volunteers to strengthen their story, financial transparency, and message.

Motion: Mark put forward the vote as conditioned above for \$5000 to Community Pride. Mike M. second. Motion approved.

Action: Mike M. will inform the Grant Committee, allowing them to proceed with these three grant awards.

Art Guild: After many years of service, our Art Guild members have decided to step down. They are confident a new group of talented individuals will step up and take their place. Mark will draft and send a thank-you of gratitude and appreciation.

Director of Inclusivity: To better coordinate the many ways our church family can stay connected and involved, Council member Bernice Lopata will take on the role of Director of Inclusivity.

Motion: from Mark to move forward with opening the position with Bernie's lead. Kelly second. Motion approved.

8. *Ongoing Business*

Campus Stewardship Drive Update:

Prior to the meeting, Jim distributed an update on our stewardship drive.

- a) As of April 6, 2024:
- Goal = \$275,000
 - Pledges = \$228,820
 - Payments Received = \$134,637
 - Giving Units = 140 (50%)
- b) Next steps:
- In May the committee will discuss strategies for meeting the goal.
 - Letters reminding of balance due and/or pledge fulfillment progress will go out to members at the end of May.

9. *New Business*

Planning for New Council Members:

During the meeting, we discussed nominees and the idea of expanding the number of Council members. We will continue accepting nominations, announcing a deadline of April 19. On April 19, through email correspondence, we continued discussion and finalized a vote. This will allow time for the new members to attend either one or both of our final church year meetings (May and June) to become acquainted with our processes.

- a) After closing the process for people to either nominate themselves or someone else for our open Council positions, we had seven people nominated:

- Lynne Snyder
- Kathleen Mueller
- Max Brown
- Larry Fuerst
- Bill Briggs*
- Greg Sherman*
- Kirsten Stannis*

The three with (*) behind their name are ineligible due to currently serving on the Search Committee. All nominees were volunteers except for Greg who was nominated by someone else.

- b) As discussed in our last Council meeting in April, Mark put forward a motion that we add four new members to Council (Lynne, Kathleen, Max, and Larry). These four would replace the two outgoing Council members (Stan and Kelly). We would expand the Council to ten members plus the pastor. Our settled pastor would make it eleven voting members. Kathleen has volunteered to be our Campus Steward (previously called Trustee).
- c) The four members would need to be affirmed at our Congregational Meeting in late June. Their service would begin in July.

Motion: from Mark that Lynne Snyder, Larry Fuerst, and Max Brown become our new at-large Council Members and that Kathleen Mueller become our new Campus Steward, with their terms beginning July 1, 2024. Stan second. Motion approved.

Action: Mark will inform the nominees and make an announcement to the congregation at Sunday service.

Administrative Assistant - Bonus:

Discussion and voting took place by email on April 16-17.

- a) Wednesday, April 24 is Administrative Professionals Day. A suggestion was made to consider doing something for Julie that day to acknowledge how she's stepped up during the recent change within the church and willingly accepted additional work and responsibilities.
- b) Flowers and a gift card for dinner were suggested.
- c) It was suggested that, even though extra hours are paid, perhaps there should also be a bonus for holding everything together.

Motion: from Stacy to give Julie a monetary bonus. Mark second. Motion approved.

Action: Stacy organized delivery of flowers, dinner gift card and bonus.

10. *Next Meeting Date* – Council Meeting, May 14, at 6 pm

11. *Adjournment* – 7:54 pm.

Motion: from Stacy to adjourn. Mark second. Motion approved.