

# Church Council Minutes

March 11, 2024

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Present: Mark Johnston, Stacy Honson, Kelly Wright, Stan Greene, Bernice Lopata, Mike VerMerris.

Excused: Jim Kern, Mike Mok

1. *Welcome and Introduction* – Mark called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.
2. *Opening Prayer* – Mark opened the meeting with prayer.
3. *February 2024 Meeting Minutes* – Mike V. distributed the final draft of February 12 council minutes prior to the meeting. Thank you, Bernie, for your excellent job of filling in for Mike.  
**Motion:** from Mike V. to approve. Stan second. Motion approved.  
**Action:** The meeting minutes will be in the E-pistle and posted on the Friendship Hall bulletin board.
4. *Interim Pastor Planning & In Person Interview* – Council members gathered at 5:00 pm to prepare for an in-person interview with interim pastor candidate, Rev. Jody Betten. Early in the process members received Rev. Betten’s Ministerial Profile for review. Prior to the meeting, Stan provided his introductory zoom call notes where they discussed her interest in serving as our interim pastor during this transition. Rev. Betten arrived at 5:30 pm and the interview commenced. Upon completion, members thanked Rev. Betten as she left, and Mark called the council meeting to order. Following further discussion a motion was crafted.  
**Motion:** from Stacy to extend the offer of a full-time, six-month covenant, renewable in three-month increments, starting 30 days from the date an agreement is reached; with her part-time support starting as soon as an agreement is reached and continuing until the six-month covenant begins. Kelly second. Motion approved.  
**Action:** Stan will present the offer, and work with Rev. Jody Betten to finalize the terms of a covenant for her to serve as our interim pastor.
5. *Financial Report* – Stacy distributed February’s financial reports prior to the meeting: Profit and Loss Comparison; Monthly Balance Sheet; Budget vs. Actual FY24 P&L.  
Highlights:
  - a) There were two significant expenditures in February: \$5000 to the Allegan Community Foundation, and \$2000 to Lake Effect Garden Design.
  - b) The total financial results, net of the capital income and expense are:

	February, 2024		YTD February, 2024	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Income	16,993	26,640	214,958	238,176
Expense	18,383	29,050	214,958	238,176
Net Income	(1,390)	(2,410)	20,734	5,776

- c) Below is an analysis of contributions by month (net of capital campaign) for this year compared to last year. Stacy thinks the big decreases in October and at year-end are due to the capital campaign.

	2022-23	2023-24	Increase (Decrease)	
July	27,800	38,079	10,279	37%
August	23,380	23,893	513	2%
September	26,976	18,638	(8,338)	-31%
October	37,788	26,400	(11,388)	-30%
November	14,478	19,832	5,354	37%
December	42,047	46,974	4,927	12%
January	42,164	24,147	(18,017)	-43%
<u>February</u>	<u>16,793</u>	<u>16,993</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>1%</u>
TOTAL	231,426	214,956	(16,470)	-7%

**Motion:** from Bernie to approve the financial reports as presented. Stan second. Motion approved.

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

Previous Business & Recent Activities:

- a) Haveman Electric completed the three campus electrical projects previously discussed:
  - Replaced the wire feed to church light box located next to front door and cleaned up the sub-standard wiring junction in the church basement. Also a weather-protected electrical outlet below the box was added.
  - Updated the light/switch wiring in the Retreat House upstairs walk-in closet.
  - Updated the wiring to the Retreat House kitchen garbage disposal.
- b) The deteriorating Memorial Garden picket fence was removed. The replacement fence, originally planned as part of the Stewardship Campaign Phase-1, has been combined with the campus landscape project being led by the Creation Justice team as discussed last month.
- c) The new AED unit was installed in the Friendship Hall, with the assistance of Rich Marth. The old unit was installed in the Isabel Graham Center. The old unit had the battery replaced in November, but eventually this unit will need to be removed or replaced as the battery is obsolete and difficult to find.
- d) Received an updated estimate for exterior painting of the Isabel Graham Center. The earliest date TMT Painting can begin work is June 2024.

- e) Renewed the sprinkling system service contract for the upcoming season, which includes spring activation, mid-season maintenance check and fall winterization.
- f) Received a quote for addressing the sprinkler drip line on the south side of the church, to the left of the front doors. Rather than replacing the existing drip line, it will be removed and replaced with spray bodies. This option allows for future design changes and, for about the same cost, is more within the scope of the campus landscaping project.

Upcoming Activities & New Business:

- g) Church members have asked to consider adding a handrail down the center of the front main steps leading into the church, to accommodate the physically challenged. Kelly will request a quote from Chris Maitner who built and installed the current side handrails.
  - h) Waiting for an estimate on exterior siding repairs at the Isabel Graham Center. Once obtained and reviewed by the council, a plan can be finalized to complete the exterior repairs and then paint. Until the estimate is received, Kelly will use \$2000 as a placeholder.
  - i) Rich Marth, Peter Mueller (Wellness & Safety), Chris Clark (Creation Justice) and Kelly reviewed the Friendship Hall entrance lighting due to concerns the lighting is inadequate. Everyone agreed the lighting is functioning as intended, though the bulb wattage/brightness was increased as a first step towards addressing the concern.
  - j) Determine next-steps and create a plan for concrete replacement of Isabel Graham Center parking. Kelly has received a quote from Custom Concrete Inc. and will seek a minimum of two more.
  - k) Installation of new lettering for the exterior of Isabel Graham Center will be completed once the exterior has been painted (June).
  - l) The annual spring campus HVAC/air conditioning, preventative maintenance is scheduled for May 1, 2024.
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 \$1250 be awarded to Interfaith Action of SW Michigan, and \$2500 be awarded to Wishbone Pet Rescue Alliance.

Interfaith Action of SW Michigan:

- a) Interfaith Action (SW Michigan Peace & Justice Collaborative) is a coalition of various faith communities who understand that we are stronger when we act together. In a public policy climate where the most vocal voices are narrow and sectarian, Interfaith Action seeks to bring justice-oriented and interfaith voices back into the conversation. The overarching purpose of Interfaith Action, woven from differing faith traditions, is the expression of Love in Action for the healing of our world. Interfaith Action’s work is done through their working groups and alongside community partners. They aim to practice and promote:
  - expressing the dignity of all human beings
  - engaging in peacemaking and countering violence
  - advancing justice, especially for those on the margins of community life
  - upholding the holiness of all creation

- b) Interfaith Action currently operates through three groups (Common Life, Common Home, and Common Good), whose format has been developed over time, inspired by a 2018 planning process. Each working group is co-chaired by two faith community leaders. Working groups define action and advocacy agendas for each year. Agendas are also reviewed at a general meeting of Interfaith Action and subsequently formally approved by the Interfaith Action Board of Directors.

**Motion:** from Mark to commit \$1200 to Interfaith Action of SW Michigan. Stan second. Motion approved.

Wishbone Pet Rescue Alliance:

- a) Wishbone Pet Rescue Alliance's mission is to alleviate the pain and suffering of homeless pets by providing shelter and veterinary care, and to ultimately secure permanent, loving homes for animals in need.
- b) The Allegan County Animal Shelter asked Wishbone if they would manage and operate the shelter. They assumed operations in June 2009. At the shelter, located north of downtown Allegan, they care for 3,000-plus animals a year. they have expanded hours and programs and greatly increased the survival rate for animals who enter the shelter. Their goal is to reach 100 percent survival and rehoming.
- c) Wishbone House in Douglas opened in 2011. The facility is a thrift shop (with proceeds going toward Wishbone) and an adoption site, primarily for cats. The facility also serves as headquarters for Wishbone Pet Rescue Alliance.

**Motion:** from Mark to commit \$2500 to Wishbone Pet Rescue Alliance. Kelly second. Motion approved.

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

8. *Ongoing Business*

9. *New Business*

Planning for Congregational Meeting – Sunday March 17:

- a) Mark reviewed the agenda and will develop the PowerPoint presentation.
- b) Stacy will get Mark a slide on the budget status. Stacy is out of the country, so Mark will speak on the financial information during the meeting.
- c) Jim is out of the country, so Pete will speak on the Stewardship Drive's progress and Kelly will speak on the campus improvements which are resulting from the drive.
- d) Stan will give an update on the search for an Interim Pastor.
- e) Mark will contact Jeff and Greg to see if they would like to give an update on the Search Committee's progress. If they do, it is important to emphasize that the Search Committee functions independent of the Church Council.

10. *Next Meeting Date* – Council Meeting, April 9, at 6 pm

11. *Adjournment* – 8:11 pm.

**Motion:** from Kelly to adjourn. Bernie second. Motion approved.