**St. Brendan the Navigator**

**Minutes of the Vestry Meeting**

**December 2, 2019**

Present: Lis Ingoldsby, Josephine Jacob, Barbara Kourajian and Fr. Edward Dufresne. Present by video conferencing: Mirian Antich, Meg Graham, Bill Scaife, and

Tom van Buren. Pete Dane was present for the first part of the meeting.

Senior Warden Lis Ingoldsby called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. Fr. Dufresne offered an opening prayer.

**Review and Acceptance of the Minutes from the November 8th Meeting**

Meg moved to accept the Minutes of the November 8th meeting; Tom seconded the motion. The Minutes were approved.

**Clarifying the Vestry’s Role**

Fr. Dufresne brought up two points in terms of best practices for our meetings:

1) We start our meetings on time. It’s important to go ahead and start on time so we don’t penalize the folks who made the effort to be punctual. This is an important way of treating one another fairly.

2) We need to refrain from falling into the weeds. The Vestry is there to do the ministry of governance, leadership, oversight, and encouragement and creating enthusiasm for the ministry of the church. Its job is not to do committee work. Our job as a Vestry is to:

* Make sure the Ministries are going as well as they possibly can
* See if there are problems
* Define the problems and challenges and then send them back to the Ministry for them to address.

Our job is not to solve the problem for any of our Ministries but to think on a more global level. This will make our meetings more efficient and less bogged down with details.

Meg offered a different point of view: “One person’s weeds are not another person’s weeds.” She felt efficiency is not always the most effective way to handle this. Fr. Dufresne agreed that often sharing detailed information is important in order to help the Vestry come to a good decision. That’s not ‘getting into the weeds,’ that’s gaining clarity in order to come to a good decision. He stated our system is to deploy and spread out authority; the more decision-making and problem solving that can be done at the lowest level, the better. Lis said we need a happy balance. Barbara added that getting into the weeds depends on how well the ministry is functioning.

**Finance Ministry**

Review of October Financials: There were no issues with the current financials.

Fr. Dufresne’s proposal for the Balance Sheet:

Fr. Dufresne raised the concern that we need to be mindful of our Balance Sheet. He has been trying to identify the funds we have and whether they are allocated or restricted and to what. He suggested a small congregation should have four funds:

1) Checking account

2) Savings account – We may not be spending these funds immediately but at some point during the year we may be spending them. This is essentially a holding account.

3) Capital Depreciation fund – A rainy day fund for capital expenses.

4) Endowment -- Could have a mission statement attached to it and specifics on when and how it could be used (e.g., we could use 4% of this to help fund projects outlined in the mission statement)

Fr. Dufresne said people can identify with an Endowment Fund – it attracts money and helps the Finance and Stewardship folks when they talk about Planned Giving. It also helps the congregation get through tough patches if necessary.

He suggested we divide our unrestricted funds into the areas of Capital Depreciation and Endowment and make a mission statement for the Endowment Fund. This will make our finances easier to understand and more transparent. Pete Dane stated there was a subcommittee of the Finance Committee looking into this very thing.

Meg agreed that it is a good idea to have a mission statement for the Endowment. She said we often only think in terms of physical investment and that we are far less willing to invest in program, people, and relationship. Meg believes this is much more important and our congregation at our best reflects these sorts of values. Meg is willing to be part of the process of defining this and suggested we need to be creative on how we formalize and talk about it.

Fr. Dufresne said it is important to make the distinction between what can we only use for property and capital expenses and what can we use for what Meg is talking about – the application to our Ministries. He suggested this may be $80,000-$100,000 for property and $100,000 for the Endowment.

Lis made a motion of support and encouragement to develop a refined plan on the use of our funds and will welcome a report back by the end of the first quarter. Meg seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Fr. Dufresne summarized by saying we are putting a framework together on what we envision for the best allocation of these funds. The first two steps: 1) perhaps accept the four categories as a start, and 2) set up mission statements for the Capital Depreciation and Endowment Funds.

Presentation of the Revised 2020 Budget

The budget was reorganized and now puts forward two scenarios: one for the status quo and one for a 1/3 Priest in Charge. The budget shows a $12,614 deficit, not dramatically more than what we have had the past several years. Pete drew our attention to the Depreciation Reserve contribution ($10,000); whether we fund it or not, this is what it takes to keep the building going in the long term. The budget includes an Office Assistant for three-quarters of the year.

Lis expressed her thanks to the Finance Committee. She encouraged us to discuss creative options for a balanced budget especially as we look to hire a priest. Fr. Dufresne concurred with her. Meg pointed to the fact we have reserves to cover this deficit. Discussion ensued with several options presented which included sharpening our pencils to make cuts and taking money out of our Reserves to cover the building depreciation. Meg suggested the idea of paying it forward: Put our 2019 surplus into the Reserve so we have already covered part of the deficit. This could be as much as $5,000, lowering our deficit to $7,000. Pete suggested this could be handled by adding another Income line item that would read “Contribution from the 2019 Budget Surplus.”

We passed the budget back to the Finance Committee for final tweaking. A narrative was requested to explain the $7,000 deficit. Bill will write a summary of the budget for presentation to the Vestry and Congregation. We agreed to pass the budget without a meeting by unanimous consent through email.

**Gift Acceptance Committee Report and Recommendation**

Pete Dane reported that Susan Mangam, a long-time occasional seasonal worshipper at St. Brendan’s, is offering eight of her landscape paintings to the church (total value is around $10,000). There are two conditions for this offer: 1) that they be displayed for a time in the Parish Hall, and 2) that proceeds from their disposition be contributed to Outreach activities.

The Gift Acceptance Committee recommends the gift be accepted. The paintings will be displayed, one painting per week for eight weeks, in the Parish Hall. After that, Outreach will take custody of them and dispose of them (or at least remove them from the building) by the end of the summer. The proceeds from the disposition of the paintings will be added to the Outreach budget.

Pete will make sure there is no problem with coverage of the paintings on our insurance policy.

Miriam moved to accept the committee’s recommendation. Tom seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**Ministry Review and Updates**

**Building & Grounds:**

* Meg reported the steps in front of the church have been rebuilt thus addressing the safety concerns.
* Back-up generator: Jo and Meg are looking into this. They have one estimate so far for a self-starting generator: $7500 which covers everything but the organ and dishwasher (an additional $1000 will cover these). We agreed this is protection/an insurance blanket for the building. They will continue to pursue. A longer term question – do we want to move towards propane or solar.
* Potential land purchase: Meg doesn’t see a lot of enthusiasm for this right now. We will put this on the back burner until advised otherwise.

**Outreach:**

* The Thanksgiving meals went smoothly. Lis said the effort was amazing with a well-organized group of volunteers.
* WindowDressers: The build starts on Thursday, December 12th.
* Intern position: Tom and Ann van Buren will be meeting with a potential candidate this week for the Office Assistant/Hall Rental Coordinator position. We’re thinking of this as an experiment to help us define this position, especially in the areas of assisting with Outreach.

The Outreach Committee will meet on Thursday, December 12th. They will discuss the request for funds to help settle newly-arrived Guatemalan families in the Bangor area. Tom will circle back with Elaine Hewes on this.

**Worship & Music:** Meg moved that the Revised Worship & Music Ministry Description be adopted. Miriam seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Barbara reported we have supply priests through Easter Sunday (April 12).

**Pastoral Care:** This ministry has been invited by Outreach to provide lunches for the WindowDressers build.

**Welcoming & Hospitality**: Miriam reported this seems to be going well. Supplies are being provided for coffee hour. George Pazuniak will work on a schedule for help in the kitchen. We will approve their Ministry Description at our January meeting.

**Education & Spiritual Development**: This Ministry in conjunction with the Worship & Music Ministry is working on the Book of Amos Study which takes place in Epiphany.

**Stewardship Update**

Miriam reported the amount pledged remains the same. This amount is $100,406.

**Search Update**

Barbara reported the Committee is on the verge of making a decision and will be requesting a special meeting with Vestry soon to give their recommendation. She briefly outlined the steps in the process after the recommendation is made.

**Other Business**

* Hall Rental: Lis stated the Hall is a popular place. It was ideal for the Thanksgiving meal preparation. Upcoming events:

December 5th: Salt Air Seniors Holiday Party with Paul Sullivan

December 13th: Contra dance with Chrissy Fowler

December 25th: Private Christmas party

December 28th: Private Wedding and Reception

* Zoom technology: Lis suggested we explore whether it is worth getting our own account. We need a dedicated laptop computer for the Conference Room. She will talk to Tim Henderson about that and the possibility of getting other laptops hooked up to the Webcam.

Our next Vestry meeting will be Monday, January 13th at 10:30 a.m. Our February meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 10th at 10:30 a.m.

We closed the meeting by reading the Prayer of St. Brendan together. The meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Barbara Kourajian,

Clerk