

Church Council Minutes

October 3, 2022

In attendance via Zoom: Alex Joyner, Lisa Hanrahan, John Sykes, Frank McMullen, Bill Clarke, Jim Campbell, Evelyn Kessler, Dana Palmer, Guy Moffatt, Charles Kidd, Jeff Taylor, Cindy Remington, Lisa Mann, and Jim Berlin.

Bill Clarke opened the meeting at 7pm with a devotional on Psalm 55:12. He reflected that sometimes the enemy of our spiritual life is US and we impose objections upon ourselves that impede our spiritual growth. He then added an opening prayer.

Frank made a motion to approve the minutes from the August meeting. Cindy seconded, and the motion passed.

Jim Campbell gave an update from Staff Pastor Parish Relations. Lara Upton, the new children's coordinator has jumped off to a great start. He also informed everyone that the staff has many more obligations to handle than during COVID, which can be overwhelming. Please be proactive and inform them of any help you may need or announcements you may need to make early in your planning process. Bill will pass this information to other committees that he attends.

Jeff Taylor gave an update from the Finance Committee. August giving was \$39,500 which was \$27,000 above August 2021, but it was still \$10,500 below our budget of \$50,000/month. In total, we have received \$366,000 through August up \$21,000 from the 2021 YTD giving but \$38,000 below budget. Jeff estimated that we may have a giving deficit against our budget of \$45,000 by the end of the year (based on the prior year giving for the final four months) and we can either take this as a loss (and decrease our operating cash reserve) or request money from the Arthur fund to offset it. In terms of actual budget spent and income received (including the \$35,000 from the endowment committee in July) we have actually received \$6,000 more than we have spent at the end of August.

Jeff presented the pastor's compensation package, proposed by the finance committee. For 2023:

Salary: \$87,000

Reimbursements: \$3,000

Housing allowance: \$30,000

At this time, Hinton Avenue is expected to provide \$20,000 toward this package. Jeff moved that the committee accept this proposal. Bill seconded, and the motion passed.

Pastor Alex spoke about continuing work with Kay Katan and both churches. He said the Hinton Avenue leadership appreciates the support that has been given by First Church. Many in the Hinton Leadership Group are open to options like merger, but input is needed from their full congregation. They are meeting on October 5 to determine a next-step recommendation for the congregation. Rachel's Haven is still in limbo. The loan that was expected soon has been delayed until probably 2024. We discussed some implications of a merger. We would increase our membership but would also take on responsibility for the buildings and the future of Rachel's Haven. Hinton Avenue does not hold any debt, but the sanctuary has a leak, and the education building will need to be completed if part of it is demolished for the Rachel's Haven project. Piedmont Housing Alliance is working with Hinton Avenue and has put considerable resources into the planning. They want to know this month whether the project is going to proceed or not. Jeff said that part of the property would be put on a 99-year lease to

PHA and Hinton would receive \$339,000 for that lease in a non-profit partnership with PHA. The parsonage and church land are valued at approximately \$1 million. A total of perhaps \$2 million would be needed to make necessary improvements if Rachel's Haven is built. Alex added that without the congregation there to make relationships with the Haven residents and make use of the building, there may not be an impetus to make improvements to the building. The current revenue-producing part of the building where The International School is located is the part that would be demolished for Rachel's Haven. He said that another option is for Hinton Avenue to close and then all the property would go to the district and First Church could still accept the Hinton Avenue congregants as new members. Jeff suggested that both church's finance teams meet to go over all the financial implications of a merger. There are difficult decisions to be made.

Pastor Alex said that the charge conference is in person at Aldersgate on 10/25 at 7pm. He is currently working on nominations based on our current leadership structure; however, this structure could change if a merger occurs. There is an upcoming meeting on 11/13 to discuss the Simplified Accountable Structure (which Hinton currently uses.) Alex will send a link to everyone in case anyone else wants to attend. The nominations must be approved by the church council before charge conference. Lisa suggested that we handle that by email, rather than another meeting and everyone agreed to participate in that form of approval process. Also, Alex will need committee reports by 10/15 to add to our conference report. He will be in touch with leaders for this information.

Lisa asked for an update on the refugee teams. John spoke for the team supporting the Afghan family. The family had a slow start because of paperwork issues with the government but is now functioning. The husband has a job that he really enjoys, but he doesn't make enough money to pay all the bills. He and his family have moved in with another family to share expenses. The wife is pregnant and is working on her English skills. The team is mostly supporting the family with transport to doctor/dentist appointments and teaching English. Jim spoke for the team supporting the Iranian family. The husband has a job as a welder. The wife has medical issues. The adult son is currently not working nor taking classes. The family wants to move to DC for better job prospects for the wife, but this is a financially risky move. Even though we have exceeded the 6-month support goal, both teams will continue to work with the families.

Regarding the solar panel installation, Guy said we submitted an application to the city review board, but no meeting date has been set yet.

Evelyn Kessler reported on behalf of the Endowment Committee. At the end of August, the total of the endowments was \$2,231,691.33. No disbursements have been made since the \$35,000 was withdrawn for the budget.

Frank initiated a conversation about our online ministry. There are many who watch the Sunday feed and who access the website who cannot come to church or who are not local. Alex said that Kathleen has worked hard to further this important aspect of our ministry. Lisa added that she submits this committee's minutes to Kathleen for addition to the website.

Lisa Hanrahan scheduled the next meeting for November 21. We will finalize and vote on the budget at that time.

Pastor Alex closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully Submitted, Dana Palmer