

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Austin, Texas

Vestry Meeting Minutes – August 30, 2022 @ 6:30 pm

Meeting by Zoom and in person

Vestry Members in Attendance: Ann O'Connell (Senior Warden), Lise Harding (Junior Warden), Jim Michael, Joyce Statz, Gary McNeil, Christian Von Wupperfeld, Stephanie McCollum, Blythe Wilson, Kelli Hughes, Nicole Banister, Armando Ruiz, David Kennedy, Anne Webster

Vestry Members Absent: Chris Hansen, Vicki Blumhagen

Clergy in Attendance: Rev Katie Wright (Rector)

Business Manager: Chris Schumacher (present)

Treasurer: Nora Foster (present)

Guest: Jack Robertson

The August 30, 2022 meeting of the Vestry of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church was called to order at 6:36 pm by Rector Katie Wright who led the members in Compline. Mother Katie presided over the meeting and determined that a quorum of members was present.

CONSENT AGENDA

The first item was consideration of the July 22 meeting minutes. After a motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes, **the motion was approved unanimously.**

The next item was acceptance of Commission/Committee/Council reports. After a motion to accept the reports was made and seconded, **the motion was approved unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS

1. For Approval: Motion to approve the \$3,600 Endowment Grant application for "Open Arms, Safe Communities". Ann O'Connell explained the grant will allow St. Matthew's to obtain church safety consulting services from Jeanie Garrett, author of the book by the same name. This will include discussions and a Q&A session facilitated by Jeanie. **A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved.**
2. For Approval: Motion to approve the IRS Housing Resolution for the Rev. Chanta Bhan. Mother Katie explained this motion permits a church-designated payment to be given to a minister as a housing allowance which can be excluded from the recipient's gross income in computing federal income taxes under Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code to the extent used by a recipient for actual expenses in renting or owning a home. **A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved.**
3. For Approval: Motion to amend Article XIII of the St. Matthew's Articles of Incorporation. Mother Katie and Ann O'Connell explained this proposed amendment would make it clear

that St. Matthew's could host voter registration activities. Ann said the language of the amendment was suggested by the Diocese. The change will go to the Bishop for approval and be submitted to the Secretary of State's office. **A motion was made and seconded and unanimously approved.**

4. For Approval: Motion to approve the replacement of expansion joints in the not yet approved sections of the campus (referenced as 2, 3, 4B, 4C, and 5 in the provided illustration should funding become available. After a motion to approve was made and seconded, a discussion ensued regarding possible sources of funding for the remainder of the project, including the possibility of gifts from persons who might specify the areas they wanted to support. A motion was made and seconded to amend the original motion to add the following words at the end of the original motion: "from donations approved by the Rector". **A motion to add the amended language (in quotation marks in the previous sentence) was made, seconded and approved. The amended motion was then approved.**
5. Stewardship Report – Blythe Wilson provided an update on the work of the Stewardship Committee. She, Leon Whitney, and Gary McNeil participated in a webinar August 27 put on by The Episcopal Network for Stewardship. The webinar offered some really excellent ideas on messaging, leveraging technology and planned giving. The fall pledge drive will begin on St. Matthew's Day (9/25). There will be a "stuffing party" at 10:30 am on September for pledge letters which should be mailed September 26 or 27. Some members of the parish will write "My St. Matthew's Story" which will be included as bulletin inserts and announcements will be made at the Family and Sanctuary services.

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Chris Schumacher reviewed several of the items in his written report including the previous week's power outage which necessitated the replacement of four thermostats and led to the discovery of expired batteries in several exit signs. 5-0 Landscaping will begin removal of dead tree limbs (and for a much better price than a different company offered). Replacement of expansion joints has begun. The hot water heater in the basement of the sanctuary may need to be replaced. The new phone system has been installed and is working well. Fiber optic cable was installed August 30. We have received insurance reimbursement to help defray costs of repairs to the irrigation system following the vandalism. Cothron's will present a proposal for ways to secure some offices and other interior spaces on campus. In response to a question, Chris advised the federal security grant (if it is approved) will not cover interior doors, but we want to integrate locks for those doors with the overall campus security system. Chris said he would defer to Ann O'Connell. An update was provided on campus thefts. Chris also reported the Day School and Church are exploring the possibility of applying for employee retention credit which is part of the CARES Act.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Chris also presented the Treasurer's Report on behalf of the very newly appointed Treasurer, Nora Foster. Chris noted the reports will look different because of the changes recommended by the auditor and certain reports combine information which we have previously separated into

funds designated “Operations,” “Capital,” and “Endowment.” Income and expense for Operations will continue to be reported in a standalone report since those items are compared to the budget approved by the Finance Commission and Vestry each January. The balance sheet and Restricted accounts will be consolidated to include the three funds mentioned previously to provide a complete picture of the church’s finances. Joyce Statz reported that she and Chris have worked out most of the financial adjustments required under the new reporting system and they would continue to work on the remaining items.

Chris highlighted the following:

- The continuation of lower revenue than planned and, although year-to-date revenue is still \$6000 ahead of plan it is likely we will fall behind in August and September.
- Positive impacts on compensation of clergy and staff due to personnel changes along with savings on medical insurance will be offset to some degree with the hiring of Rev Andrew Benko and Rev Chanta Bhan.
- Administrative expenses remain close to plan.
- Buildings & Grounds expenses are close to plan, but several unexpected items (thermostats, exit signs, water heater) have cropped up and others may occur.
- Outreach expenses are close to plan.
- Parish programs are \$20,000 ahead of plan but keep in mind \$10,000 of that is a result of a small VBS program and VBS revenue.
- Overall we are \$48,000 ahead of plan which is a healthy financial position.

The “Restricted Net Assets” is a new report which reflects the full endowment funds, capital accounts (including funds left over from Gratitude Together Capital Campaign), and the familiar “800” accounts or restricted operations.

DAY SCHOOL

Nicole Banister reported that the Day School Board had a retreat August 26 & 27. She said they had good discussions on a number of matters. The Board has taken preliminary accreditation action and will be ready for full accreditation in five years. She said the school had a number of new families this year which provides a good chance for new people to connect with the church. The school Fall Fest will be October 21.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Christian von Wupperfeld said they had a three hour meeting going over the results of the surveys and had another meeting scheduled Thursday. The Committee is interested in getting more input from younger parishioners, as most survey respondents were older. Jim Michael commented that many long-time members feel that the focus on Small Groups perhaps 30 years ago was THE big step in moving the parish forward.

RECTOR COMMENTS

Katie said Chanta should be able to meet with the Vestry at its next meeting. She said the first Family Service with Chanta went well. VBS will be one week earlier in 2023. The Intergenerational Retreat is scheduled for this weekend and Katie and Chanta will both attend.

Katie also reminded everyone that Congregation Beth Israel (CBI) will be using our space for their upcoming high holy days. Katie will be on vacation from September 12 – 23.

JUNIOR WARDEN COMMENTS

Lise reminded everyone that St. Matthew's Day will include lunch and request Vestry member volunteers willing to take money.

SENIOR WARDEN COMMENTS

Ann gave a full report on the thefts which had occurred at St. Matthew's and the ramifications for the person involved. She said a sign for the Baby's Nest (formerly known as the Cry Room) will go shortly. She hopes to find out about the application for the federal security grant soon and that on October 11 Jeanie Garrett will be here to help facilitate a parish discussion on safety for all who are interested.

Mother Katie closed the meeting with Compline.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 pm.

Next Meeting: September 27, 2022