

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting Minutes - September 26 2023 @ 6:30pm
Location: Hybrid in-person in B-14 (Wilson Room) and on Zoom

Vestry Members in Attendance: Joyce Statz (Senior Warden), Bob Ascott (Junior Warden), Gary McNeil (Acting Clerk), Ann O'Connell, Armando Ruiz, Blythe Wilson, Christopher Hansen, David Kennedy (via Zoom), Anne Webster, Stephanie McCollum, Carole Taxis, Steve Ryder, Jason Bagshaw

Vestry Members Absent: Jenny Watson, Natalie Lynch

Clergy in Attendance: Rev. Katie Wright (Rector), Rev. Christine Brunson (Associate Priest)

Business Manager: Chris Schumacher (present)

Treasurer: Lisa Ottenbacher (present by Zoom)

Guests: Lise Harding (Exec Assistant to the Rector), Chichi Armstrong (Chair of Endowment Committee), Jeff Jury (Chair of Safety Council)

Observers: Lisa Ottenbacher

The September 26, 2023 meeting of the Vestry of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church was called to order by the Rector Katie Wright at 6:30pm. Katie determined that a quorum of members was present. Katie opened the meeting with prayer, and recognized Carole Taxis to lead the vestry in a devotional.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Katie recognized Lisa Ottenbacher to present the Treasurer's Report. Lisa was not able to attend in person because of illness so Senior Warden Joyce Statz offered to make the main portion of the report with Lisa able to provide additional information as needed. Joyce and Lisa advised the vestry that 2023 has seen lower undesignated offerings and pledge receipts than anticipated, especially for the month of August. This has been coupled with higher expenses than anticipated in building and grounds maintenance, clergy compensation and travel, and in a few other categories. As a result, current year to date expenses have exceeded revenue by \$38,463. There was discussion as to whether the Finance Commission should assess the situation and recommend action. At the suggestion of Lisa and several vestry members a consensus was reached that the vestry should evaluate the financial situation at the October vestry meeting and then determine if the Finance Commission should be asked to do a review.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

The next order of business was to approve the consent agenda items provided in the pre-read folder, including the August Vestry Meeting Minutes and Commission/Committee/ Council Reports. **A motion to approve was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.**

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Chris Schumacher referred everyone to his written report in the pre-read materials, but said for the meeting he would only address the items he felt were most significant. Those items include the assessment of various IT needs which Chris Hansen and Clark Hughes are conducting, the status of the FEMA grant which Ann O'Connell would present later in the meeting, the

development of a schedule for periodic maintenance for the HVAC system, and the evaluation of all aspects of roof repair/solar panel installation to minimize cost, maximize available credits, and secure the most cost-effective warranty for the work to be done. Chris also reported that two Anderson High students are now available a few hours a week to help out on campus work and that consideration was being given to installing a time clock for the two sextons.

NEW BUSINESS

The next item considered was a grant application by the Safety Council to the Endowment Committee to fund a Safekeeper for the remainder of 2023. The original grant request was for \$3,900 but the Endowment committee approved the amount of \$5,000 so additional church services or events could be covered. Jeff Jury, chair of the Safety Council, described the concept of the safekeeper as a resource person rather than a police officer. After additional questions from the vestry members, Mother Katie suggested, and the vestry agreed, that this item would be discussed in conjunction with the Rector's comments about Security.

The second item from the Endowment Committee was a grant application for \$425 for the purchase of birthday cards for senior members of St. Matthew's. **After a motion and second, this application was approved.**

The final item from the Endowment Committee was confirmation of a new member of the Committee after Brad Banister resigned. Doug Webster has agreed to serve in his place. **A motion to appoint Doug was made, seconded, and unanimously approved**

The vestry next considered approval of bylaws for the Endowment Committee. Lise Harding explained the Committee had been operating under separate policies approved by votes of the Committee at different times over a period of years; there was no organized compilation of policies and some of the policies were not consistent. Chichi Armstrong spoke to her personal experience of trying to comb through a binder full of documents as a new member of the Committee. She and the other committee members felt there was a pressing need to gather in one place all Endowment purposes, goals, and procedures to provide clear and consistent guidance on how the Committee should operate. Ann O'Connell described some of the history of parish involvement in changes to the Endowment fund. She reminded the Vestry of the requirement added in 2001 that if changes were to be made to the list of example Permissible Purposes for grants, the new list would have to be approved by a two-thirds vote of congregation members in attendance at a Parish Meeting. An extended discussion ensued regarding the proper degree of involvement by the entire parish and a need for thorough communication and transparency in actions taken by the vestry.. There was additional discussion on the intention that the new bylaws would revoke all previous Endowment policies. An amendment was proposed that the old wording about purposes would be inserted into the new bylaws document, in place of the list that appeared in the bylaws document circulated for approval. Further consideration of changes to that list of purposes may occur at a later date.

A motion was made that the vestry approve the Revised Bylaws, Policies, Procedures, and Practices of the Permanent Endowment as amended in the vestry meeting and to revoke all previous governing documents pertaining to the Endowment. Lise amended the document she put forth from the Endowment Committee, specifically deleting the changes the PEC made regarding the permissible purposes for which grant funds may be used, as well as the procedure to

change those purposes, and allowed the existing language regarding the eight permissible purposes that was approved by the parish to remain, as well as the procedure to amend them, which requires a 2/3 vote of the Vestry and a 2/3 vote of parishioners present at an annual or special meeting. With that change made, Lise made her motion.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Jason Bagshaw reported on the work of the Invite, Welcome, Connect Commission and presented the bylaws of that commission for approval. **A motion for approval was made, seconded and unanimously approved.**

Blythe Wilson gave an overview of Stewardship activities related to pledge letters, in-gathering on October 29, and announcements and stories of individual parishioners which will be shared with the congregation. She urged all vestry members to make their pledges as soon as possible to provide a good example. The Stewardship Commission bylaws were briefly discussed but will not be voted on until the October vestry meeting.

Stephanie McCollum reported that the Fall Fest for the Day School will be October 13. She will email vestry to ask if any members are willing to make a donation in support of Fall Fest. This is purely voluntary as it was last year. She also mentioned the La Noche event for the school is set for February 2, 2024.

Chris Hansen presented the Building and Grounds Commission proposal for engaging Association Reserves to do a capital reserve study for St. Matthew's. The study will involve an inventory of all physical components of the campus and a schedule of planned repair or replacement, to assist the church in budget planning and the creation of a Capital Reserve Fund. Parish members have committed to paying the study cost of \$7,700. **A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved regarding this proposal.**

The next item considered was the offer from Juliette Wood, a member of CBI, to plant an olive tree at St. Matthew's as her Girl Scout community service project. The project would also include a plaque to express CBI's gratitude for St. Matthew's allowing CBI to use its facilities while renovations were being made at CBI. **Motion made, seconded, and unanimously approved to accept the gift.**

The vestry then returned to the Safety Council grant application for a Sunday Morning Safekeeper. Jeff Jury explained that the grant would pay for a trained, licensed, insured, uniformed, and armed security professional who would serve as a resource for the full spectrum of potential safety issues which might arise on campus. The Safety Council would review and evaluate the services provide. The individual would likely be hired through Watchmen Protective Services, the company used by the Day School. Vestry members reported on discussions with parishioners which reflected support of having such a person, although some expressed concern about having an armed individual on campus. Jeff emphasized the person would be trained to observe, inquire, assist, and coordinate in an unobtrusive manner. All agreed that it was important that parishioners have the concept thoroughly explained to them. **Motion made, seconded, and unanimously approved to fund the Sunday Morning Safekeeper grant.**

CLERGY AND WARDEN COMMENTS

Mother Katie reminded everyone that Bishop Ryan would be here October 1 and would have a short meeting with the vestry after the 10:30 service. She was pleased at the participation on St. Matthew's Day and is looking forward to more parish fellowship. The vestry potluck meeting will be December 19, and Anne Webster offered to host. John McMullen will preach October 22. The church will continue to advertise for childcare workers for the nursery on Sundays with the hope that they will be utilized more as families with young children realize they are available.

Joyce Statz asked vestry members to attend parish activities if at all possible and asked for input on budget planning for 2024.

Bob Ascott asked for names of people who could serve as vestry members.

Mother Katie asked for any matters members might want to offer in prayer and then concluded the meeting with prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

CALENDAR REMINDERS:

October VESTRY OF THE MONTH: Natalie Lynch and Joyce Statz

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 17 @ 6:30 (social time 6:00)

Next Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 28th @ 6:30pm (social time 6:00)

Submitted by Gary McNeil, Acting Clerk of the Vestry