

**St. Matthew's Episcopal Church**  
**Vestry Meeting Minute October 17, 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), Natalie Lynch (Clerk), Ann O'Connell, Blythe Wilson, Christopher Hansen, Gary McNeil, David Kennedy (participated online), Anne Webster, Stephanie McCollum, Jenny Watson, Natalie Lynch, Steve Ryder, and Jason Bagshaw

**Vestry Members Absent:** Armando Ruiz, Carole Taxis

**Clergy in Attendance:** Rev. Katie Wright (Rector)

**Business Manager:** Chris Schumacher (present)

**Treasurer:** Lisa Ottenbacher (present)

**Observers:** Lise Harding, Allen Junek, Christine Brunson

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The October 17, 2023, meeting of the Vestry of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church was called to order by the Rector Katie Wright at 6:30 pm who determined that a quorum of members was present. Natalie offered a devotional regarding Israel and Palestine.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Lisa Ottenbacher

Generally, we are down on income and high on expenses, but Lisa reported that we should not be discouraged. Our expenses in August led to increased expenses. Outreach hasn't made disbursements but will soon. We still have unrestricted reserves of \$233k, so there is no reason to feel a crisis. The endowment made less money in the market than hoped, but we are still positive. There were questions about IWC funds for food and the need for permission to go over budget in that area. Chris Schumacher reiterated that some of our unexpected expenses, like utilities and inflation-based issues, make the budget look off. We reviewed all the expenses of the restricted accounts. The Love Notes Grant is closing out grant-funded accounting and moving to a self-funding mode.

**BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT:** Chris Schumacher

The endowment grant activity was reviewed. There is some angst related to having a 20-hour-per-week sexton. Pedro will stay at 20 hours, but it is still being determined how other employee schedules will be affected if we move the sexton to 40 hours per week. As an example of the current difficulty, when rooms change during the middle of the day, there is no one to move any chairs

There was a discussion of the installation of fiber internet, which now has a December installation date but keeps being pushed back. The fiber is needed to feed the security requirements and provide backups. FEMA gave us final approval, and final related RFPs were sent out. The FEMA projects should only take two weeks.

One of the solar energy companies did meet with a sub-team of the Buildings and Grounds Commission, and there is a hope that we will have a proposal to the vestry soon.

Blythe asked how we are going to pay for the solar project; Chris S. explained that there is an intent to fundraise and also have city and state grants as well as federal rebates. Katie explained that even if we took out a loan, we would make it cost-neutral in five years.

Joyce wants to aggressively find an electrician to remove the electrical box on the hackberry tree stump so that the stump can be removed. We will plan the Girl Scout Project's olive tree near it. We are waiting on this work to plant the tree.

We have a solution to the remembrance wall engraving issue. We will have a calligrapher paint the inscription on the tile.

#### **Approve Consent Agenda Items:**

The vestry addressed the consent agenda items provided in the pre-read folder, including Vestry Budget Meeting Minutes, Parish Meeting Minutes, and Commission/Committee/ Council Reports.

There was a clarification in last month's minutes. Ann O'Connell added a comment – "Lise amended the document she put forth from the endowment committee, specifically deleting the changes the Endowment Committee made regarding the permissible uses of funds.

**Bob made a motion to make the clarification be adopted, Jenny seconded, all were approved.**

**With that change, a motion was made to adopt the consent agenda, seconded, and passed unanimously.**

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Katie called upon the vestry to approve the Letter of Support for the Ordination of Allen. The letter was circulated and gladly signed by all.
  - a. Allen jokingly requested a chocolate fountain at his ordination, but there was enthusiastic support.
  - b. After the new year, assuming all the assents are obtained, a date for ordination will be announced and scheduled.
2. Blyth discussed and presented the bylaws for the Stewardship committee. Jenny made a motion, and Ann Webster seconded. **This was unanimously approved.**
  - a. Blythe explained that we have 60 names of individuals who have already committed to renew pledges.
  - b. She also explained that on **Nov 13, 2023**, we will start the pledge drive.
  - c. Jason did an excellent job explaining why he supports this congregation during services this past Sunday.
3. The Capital fund.
  - a. Joyce made a motion, and it was seconded for discussion regarding the need for a capital fund.
  - b. Joyce explained that we are reviewing the capital reserve study. We will create a capital reserve fund that will be used specifically for capital improvements. Some of the money will be invested in funds intended to be used soon, and others will be intentionally long-term investments. Background reviewed by the Buildings and Grounds Commission included a presentation from EPN pointing out that 78% of the churches surveyed have such a fund, so we should mirror this best practice. There is also an expectation that next year, there will be a promotion to gather funds. The portfolio managers who manage the other endowment and memorial funds will also handle these. General and routine maintenance would not come out of this fund, but capital expenses would. Jenny sought clarification that there is a reason to have an additional fund, and Joyce explained that this fund is intended to handle long-term needs, with funds to be available according to the time of the expected need. Ann O. further explained that the

current endowment fund is only for unexpected and emergent incidents. Bob elaborated that the existing endowment does not use the corpus, whereas the capital fund would be intended to have the corpus spent as needed for capital projects. Bob expressed an interest in ensuring the congregation always appreciates which fund to which they contribute.

**c. The motion to create a capital fund passed unanimously.**

**4. The FEMA grant**

- a. We are obligated to follow federal procurement guidelines, so we have created an additional email account, currently controlled by Lise, to control the exchanges with vendors.
- b. The timing goal is to finish the work by Dec 31, 2023 .

**CLERGY AND WARDEN COMMENTS:**

- Katie explained that we ordered some new prayer books, and she is very happy.
- Also, Katie distributed the crosses that St. Matthew's obtained in Jerusalem as a remembrance gift.
- Katie further explained that the clergy will be very busy at meetings next week.
- Katie elaborated that there is an upcoming lunch to meet with Northwest Fellowship to pray for Austin.
- We also received an adverse letter suggesting not to use real wine in services. She cited this as an example of the environment that we create, wherein our community is always welcome to provide its input.
- The safekeepers were on duty last Sunday. There was a discussion about who will always be in communication with each other because of the Safekeeping process and how they will be dressed.
  - There has not been much pushback regarding the gun on campus; just regret regarding the state of affairs that mandates this preservation method.
  - There was a reminder that other weapons should not be on campus as it is unnecessary and creates chaos during an emergency.
  - Also, the guard is in the process of learning and developing a routine, and then they will have less of a bouncer feel about him.

We broke into prayer groups.

Katie closed the meeting with a prayer. Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by Natalie Lynch, Clerk of the Vestry