

**First Congregational Church United Church of Christ (FCCUCC) of Colorado Springs
Minutes of the Council Meeting**

Oct. 10, 2019 Gregg Library

Council Members in Attendance:

Connie Brachtenbach (Moderator)

Paul McNeill (Vice Moderator)

Adam Gibbs (Worship & Spiritual Life)

Lisa Mason (Secretary)

Wayne Bland (Outreach)

Laura Pfender (Education)

Polly Strovink (Treasurer)

Lynne Stefonik (Care & Fellowship)

Rev. Heather Haginduff

(Lead Minister)

Ruth Roland

(Director of Financial Ministry)

Rev. Jacque Franklin

(Minister of Pastoral Care)

Ex Officio Absent: None

Guests:

John Stefonik - Safety Team

David Wilson - Sanctuary Keeper

Council Members Absent: None

Ex Officio in Attendance:

Meeting called to order-6:23 pm

Dinner provided by Laura. Prayer thanks to Pastor Heather.

SAFETY TEAM (JOHN STEFONIK):

- Safety Team members are/have been: Ruth Roland, Mandy Todd, John Stefonik, Dennis Kleinsasser, Brian Kerrigan, and Jan Natzer.
- John Stefonik recapped that the Safety Team has, in the past, worked on a list of items and one of them was getting a security officer/Sanctuary Keeper for FCC.
- That lead to FCC hiring David Wilson. Safety Team's next job was creating his job description. They did so by templating the Boulder Congregational church's job description. After some revisions, the most recent Safety Policy Manual was presented and approved at the September 2019 Council meeting.
- The big question in that manual was whether to have the Sanctuary Keeper be armed.
- The second paragraph states we, FCC, will address threats with non-violent methods.
- We, the Church, have not authorized lethal threats and even personal contact is considered a last resort. Given that current position within the current context of today's mass shooting prevalent environment, should we readdress this issue?
- Connie stated that Council can approve a policy regarding this issue, but it is believed that the Congregation should be involved in this policy decision. David Wilson, current Sanctuary Keeper, then spoke.
 - He explained his upbringing was one of church tradition, a routine life, being inherently naïve - showing a lack of what he described as experience, wisdom, or judgement.

- David discussed various church traditions he sees in FCC and recognizes they probably won't change and expressed that is perfectly fine.
 - He also asked permission to give his observations regarding a few of FCC's current attributes: **1-Routine:** Within the last decade we, FCC and America in general, didn't have to think about safety. David's knowledge base comes from being an Army veteran serving in Afghanistan in a bomb ordinance position so he knows that its not fun not knowing whether you are going to come home, not just from a mission in Afghanistan but from your every-day job. David reported there have been 283 mass shootings in the USA (more than all the days in the year of 2019 as of today's date).
 - **2-Naïve:** David suggested to not be blind to the fact that things are not the same as they were a decade ago.
 - David suggests we need to be ready to protect, to keep our eyes open, to communicate and to not dismiss change and the fact that things have changed.
 - David emphasized- NOT BEING DISMISSIVE WILL SAVE YOUR LIFE.
 - David stated: we must live with God and also protect his house. Based on today's increased threat climate, we at FCC have various factors present that increase our risk for a mass shooting:
 - we are an out-spoken church
 - we have a female pastor
 - we are O & A.
 - David outlined different levels of how any Sanctuary Keeper, or congregant, could be armed - taser, knife, gun.
 - David recommends we consider a policy for our Sanctuary Keeper to have Concealed Carry and not be uniformed.
 - David said to "think like the bad guy." That person will know to "wipe out" the uniformed person first.
 - David says that communication during an incident is the starting place/first thing to do.
 - He suggests there should be 2-3 people "on the same page." (FCC has just ordered 6 walkie talkies.)
- Discussion followed. It was clarified that Council's policy has been that this church is a weapon-free zone. **MOTION: Paul moved that Council approve that we post that the church property is a weapon free zone. Lynne seconded. Passed by hand vote with one abstaining.**
 - The conversation of whether we will choose to have Concealed Carry be acceptable or not will be raised as a topic for consideration in 2020. (It was suggested that this topic can be used as a Just Peace exercise for the congregation to address)

SEPTEMBER COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION: Wayne provided the motion to approve the Sept Council Meeting Minutes. Laura seconded. Approved via voice vote.

CORE RESOURCE AREA AND MINISTRY AREA REPORTS:

SECRETARY (LISA MASON):

Lisa summarized the body of work from the latest Human Resource Committee meeting. This committee has been meeting frequently and has taken a strong and proactive approach to reviewing and submitting new policies and procedures for the church's Employee Handbook. This will produce a more comprehensive version to give more robust guidance for future employee relations.

TREASURER (POLLY STROVINK):

Polly reported that a letter was received announcing a change in a pledge due to how the staff reorganization was handled.

LEAD MINISTER (HEATHER HAGINDUFF):

- Pastor Heather reported that with an anticipated change to the timing of our Annual Meeting where we elect our new Council representatives, which will be in February rather than January, she wants to have a Council retreat in March to cover upcoming Council objectives and to have a spiritual retreat.
- She reported that Just Peace work surrounding the staff reorganization is still being framed and on-going.
- To help the congregation, she is suggesting four weeks in January offering a "FCC 101" theme to help educate more about our polity, about where our money goes, about what all these acronyms in our church stand for.
 - This would be in lieu of One Big Question.
 - Pastor Heather suggests we need to learn more about who we are and how we function; what does it mean to say we are Congregationalists.
- Pastor Heather reported that the next membership class will be in Jan./Feb. with two parts: 1) Exploration 2) Orientation.

MODERATOR (CONNIE BRACHTENBACH):

- Connie restated that the Special Meeting scheduled for November 17 is to be a preview of the 2020 budget so we should have Polly present budget information.
- She emphasized that this is an informational meeting only regarding setting the stage for the Annual Appeal. Its tone is to be uplifting.

WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL LIFE (ADAM GIBBS):

- Adam announced that we now have an accompanist, Christine Hitt.

OUTREACH (WAYNE BLAND):

- Wayne announced we had a group go to La Puente (Colorado), and the time spent there was great.

Discussion regarding the proposed Just Peace (JP)/Leadership Cultivation Committee (LCC) joint/merged document followed:

- Council members stated we need to create awareness around/ increased sensitivity to the effects of polarization.
 - Polarization has had a big impact on how the staff reorganization decision rolled out and how it was received. Lynne believes the LCC proposal is not as sensitive to that.
 - Several Council members felt the suggestion to perform a data survey is important and will help us move from anecdotal and “parking lot” conversations.
 - It was observed that the first JP/LCC documents told the Congregation how to feel and though Pam Shockley-Zalabak said that document was not for the congregation to see, how the language was crafted did create a visceral reaction for Council members.
 - Connie explained that an edited version by Pastor Heather includes more language of where Council is involved in this.
 - Pastor Heather is concerned about the timing of when to send out this document.
 - November would be when we would perform the data survey and then we go into the holidays and so there is barely time to then process and apply that data from the survey during the Annual Appeal in January but that might be a good time for a group to work on trust and grounding in “who we are” (see above “Lead Minister’s” comments).
 - There was consensus from Council in approving Pastor Heather’s edited version of the JP/LCC document.
 - Pastor Heather wants to be able to add additional members to the list of people LCC proposed that would be in an Alignment Committee that would help shepherd the LCC process to completion.
- MOTION:** Wayne moved that Council submits the “Pastor Heather edited” version of the JP/LCC document as the version that Council accepts to be returned to LCC/JP. Paul amended that the “Pastor Heather edited” version would also rearrange having JP as the framework and primary driver of the work through which the proposal is directed rather than LCC being the framework and driver. Lynne seconded. Amended motion approved via voice vote.
- Due to a sense of urgency and importance of the JP/LCC tasks, it was suggested we create a working committee to meet (use a doodle poll to get dates of when to meet) to continue to move the JP/LCC tasks forward. It was stressed that this Council-approved version needs to get back to Pam and Rich Law ASAP, even as soon as early next week.

- It was suggested we all send names to Connie for people to populate the LCC suggested “Alignment” Committee.

MEETING EVALUATION:

- Great food.
- Thanks was given to those who drove through the bad roads in order to be present tonight.
- The Safety information presentation was long but important and produced very good conversation. Mutual admiration was given for this Council and the work that has been addressed by this Council.

Adjourned 8:38 pm

Respectfully submitted by Lisa A Mason, Council Secretary

Lisa A Mason, *Council Secretary*

Connie Brachtenbach, *Council Moderator*