

Asbury United Methodist Church Council

Minutes of May 27, 2021 Meeting

7:30 PM via Zoom

In Attendance: Council members Elizabeth Tawil, Dan Haas, Anne Haas, Alberta Stornetta, Nancy Cody, Nancy Beers, Karen Beer, Owens Walker, and Jen Karsner, and guests Scott Karsner, Mike Campbell, Colleen Paul, Melissa Martin, Tammy Kronenwetter, Karen Quandt, Denise Morans, Beth Sayles, Sarah Thompson, Robyn Kirkendall, Mike Johnson, Kay Johnson, Judy Robertson, Marilyn Betz, Colleen Bitner, Hollie Richards, Kris Neale, and Jackie Britton.

Open in Prayer

Nancy Beers opened us in prayer.

Preschool Update – Input from Concerned Parties

Owens Walker, SPRC chair, discussed the fact that the SPRC process is required to be confidential. SPRC is charged with overseeing staff and the SPRC committee members were faithful and thoughtful in reaching a decision regarding Vickie's contract. He discussed the forming of a hiring committee composed of SPRC, Preschool committee, staff and families that would oversee the selection of a new director. SPRC is committed to the preschool being a vibrant mission of the church and that SPRC is **not** taking a new direction with the preschool.

Elizabeth invited those attending to provide their input.

Karen Beer, chair of the preschool committee provided feedback from the preschool committee. The committee members were shocked that Vickie's contract was not renewed. They thought that Vickie was doing a great job. They were concerned that no one had asked for the opinion of the preschool committee or the preschool staff. Karen expressed concern that maybe the SPRC was using a different standard or had different expectations for Vickie than standards and expectations of the preschool committee and those standards and expectations were not communicated to the preschool committee. She commented that some committee members had resigned over the issue and some parents have withdrawn their children. She expressed her opinion that the preschool committee should be involved with SPRC in setting goals for the director and in reviewing performance of the director.

Kay Johnson provided feedback. She expressed her disappointment with the way Vickie's dismissal was handled and the lack of concern shown for the preschool staff and families. Vickie spent 20 years as the preschool director guiding staff and teachers who respect and care for her. The staff were surprised and heartbroken that Vickie was dismissed.

Mike Campbell provided feedback. He was concerned that the way the dismissal was handled broke trust particularly since feedback was not sought from the preschool committee before a decision was made. He thinks we need to fix the process going forward.

Robyn Kirkendall a church member and long-time preschool teacher provided feedback. She noted that she had already decided not to come back next year to spend more time with her mom who is 100 years old but that she had thought she might come back to teach at a later time. She said that now she would not even consider coming back. She said that no one had acknowledged the grief of the staff and that she felt the staff was taken for granted.

Marilyn Betz provided feedback. She commented that the fact that the preschool staff prayed before the meeting with Owens and Pastor Jen was a reflection on Vickie's leadership and her practice of beginning every school day with staff prayer. She hopes that Vickie was given an honest reason why her contract was not renewed.

Minutes

We approved the minutes from the April 22, 2021 meeting with one correction. The boy scouts mow the church grounds once a month, not twice a month.

Finance Report

Nancy reported that we have an operating surplus and that giving is ahead of budget. The Finance committee will do a mid-year review after June 30 with possible revisions to the budget.

Roxanne Kuhn has started as our new bookkeeper. Shingie is working on our annual audit which is due June 30.

The PPP loan funds will cover payroll through the July 2 pay date and we will apply for forgiveness in July. Payroll after June 25, the cutoff date for the July 2 pay, can be applied against the approximately \$40,000 Childcare Relief Fund Grant that Vickie applied for and received.

Preschool

Karen Beer reported that the preschool will need 20 staff for the fall plus a director. They currently have 10 staff but she is not sure how many will stay on for next year. Her term as preschool committee chair ends on August 31.

She wants to take a look at the preschool committee bylaws and figure out the best practice for engaging with the SPRC. She suggested that we also look at other committee bylaws. Nancy Cody commented that other committees are governed by the UMC guidelines. The UMC guidelines for all committees are included on the church web site (Info Center Forms/ [**Ministry Guidelines**](#)). The folder is password protected because the UMC charges for the information. The login is *asbury* and the password is *spirit*.

Karen provided preschool committee comments on the anti-racism statement. They suggested that maybe it should not just single out racism but should also address sex (women), ability, and age.

Trustee Report

Dan reported that an Eagle Scout project has repaired the fence and removed brush. Richards Tree Service donated services for the project. He is waiting for an engineer assessment of the sink hole. They will replace the failed air conditioning unit in the tech room (about \$500-\$600 for the window unit). There will be a \$700 bill to replace the chemicals in the fire suppression system.

Youth Ministry

Scott reported that the summer schedule is available. June 6 is the end of year party and June 15 is the cutoff for registration for Impact Week. He is planning for next year and is planning for the Refuge Retreat in March of 2022.

Anti-Racism Statement

Scott shared the Google doc. We still need comments from the Tuesday Night Bible Study, the Preschool Committee, and the Trustee Committee added to the document. Scott will go through the feedback and incorporate the comments and we will take a look at it at the next meeting

Reconciling Ministries

We decided to table the discussion for tonight.

SPRC – Pastor Sabbatical

Owens presented the 12 week sabbatical (to begin September 12) for council approval. Karen Beer asked Owens to distinguish the sabbatical from the spiritual renewal. The sabbatical is once every 7 years and is 12 weeks in length. The spiritual renewal which Pastor Jen took several years ago is a 4 week renewal and is once every 4 years. Karen Beer commented that she did not think the timing was good with emotions running high because of the dismissal of the preschool director and the need for the pastor to be there in the fall to provide stability during the transition to a new director. She recommended delaying the sabbatical for a month. That delay would mean that the pastor would not be would present for Advent and Christmas. Pastor Jen said that a delay would require some evaluation on her part. Nancy Beers commented that there is never a good time, that Pastor Jen will be there for the start of preschool, and that she felt that this has been a hard year and that Pastor Jen needs the sabbatical. A vote was taken with all voting yes for a 12 week sabbatical beginning September 13 except for Karen Beer who voted no.

Worship Re-Entry

We discussed the re-opening guidance. We felt comfortable relaxing the guidelines for adult groups but not for groups that include persons under the age of 18. Nancy Cody volunteered to update the guidelines and send them for review. The updated drafts are attached.

We will begin in-person worship on June 6. The 11:00 service on June 6 will be reserved for confirmands and their families, mentors, and teachers. Jen hopes to finish the re-entry video and show it on May 30. She will send out an announcement about re-opening.

The Boy Scouts presented a proposal for loosening specific COVID guidelines and we discussed and approved the request.

Elizabeth Tawil closed us in prayer and the meeting adjourned at 10:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Cody