

Bethesda Episcopal Church  
Saratoga Springs NY

Minutes: Vestry Meeting  
Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Vestry	Clergy
Mark Claverie	Dean Marshall J. Vang, Interim Rector
Darren Miller (excused)	Peter Sweeney, Deacon
Mary Withington	
Geoff Delbridge	
Gordon Boyd	
Catherine Berheide (excused but came anyway at 8:00)	Treasurer
Mark Griffin	
Jane Agee	Anne Van Acker
Geneva Henderson	
Sara Manny	Ann Casey, Esq. (Bullock) also present
Denise Limoli	

Call to order: Dean Vang called to order the regular meeting of the Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry at 7:00 PM on December 16, 2015 at the Parish House on Washington Street.

Devotions: Ms. Withington began the meeting with devotions (featuring the new Capital Campaign prayer).

Previous meeting minutes: Ms. Withington moved that minutes from the previous meeting be accepted, seconded by Mr. Boyd, unanimously approved.

Financial Report: Ms. Van Acker reported that the owners of the parish house will now be paying property taxes and some utilities for the building (including water, sewer and garbage disposal), which brings us nearly to a balanced budget. (It might be worth investigating insurance costs and switching to renter's from general liability.) We still have a very serious income problem however and, if not for this mitzvah, we'd be seriously in the red this year. Still, this will be helpful with the capital campaign since we can show donors that we're operating in the black (by \$4.22). We're going to have to overhaul the approach to the building fund party in order to make it community-wide, rather than just for the parish, and should perhaps consider a different venue. We should have a specific project goal in mind for future building fund parties. Health insurance costs are going up next year, as is Dean Vang's rent. We will need to add \$1,000 for Nashota house to the scholarships line in the budget (this puts us slightly back in the red).

Interim Rector's Report: Dean Vang reported that he will be looking for a committee to address needed changes to the building fund party and that Landon Moore is going to pursue seminary. This will be an extended process. Dean Vang expressed gratitude to the church school staff and volunteers for pulling together the Christmas pageant and to Deacon Sweeney for the spaghetti dinner.

Ensley Update: Ann Casey summarized the history of our attempt to sell the Ensley property. A prior offer of \$650,000 from Executive Builders fell through, but we kept \$7,500 of the deposit. We are now

under contract with John Witt for \$600,000. We have just received a new offer for \$750,000 which we can accept as secondary backup offer but which can't, currently, replace Witt. However, we can use this as leverage in negotiating with Witt. She asked for the Vestry to vote on a negotiating tactic. Mr. Griffin moved and Ms. Henderson seconded the motion to accept the backup offer on Ensley. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Boyd moved to ask Witt for \$100,000 additional non-refundable consideration, that the additional purchaser (Waldrip) be added to the contract, and that time of the essence be declared for the end of March, or that we request a \$75,000 additional non-refundable consideration with a time of the essence closing for the end of February (with Waldrip still to be added to the transaction). Mr. Griffin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Deacon's Report: Deacon Sweeney reported that the spaghetti dinner raised \$1,000. \$100 went to creating hygiene bags, and the other \$900 to support two families through the race track chaplaincy (clothing and gifts for Christmas). Confirmation is scheduled for the 20th. Deacon Sweeney continues to visit Mary Eddy in Wesley; she is doing well. He formally presented Ms. Henderson with a penitential chocolate bar in apology for having corrected the September minutes after the established deadline.

Senior Warden's Report: Mr. Claverie reported that Toby Milday and Jeff Ward (the parish house landlords) came to visit the building committee meeting last night. They need a kitchen and would like to renovate and expand ours into our current meeting space. In exchange, they'd give us use of a meeting room above Starbucks (seats 120, elevator access) which we could use for Coffee hour. Mr. Miller brought up school taxes and they agreed to take care of taxes, utilities and trash removal. We can use the space over Starbucks for potlucks, etc. Mr. Boyd moved to appoint Mr. Miller to negotiate with Milday to get this figured out. Ms. Manny seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Expenses: Mr. Claverie moved that Dean Vang's expenses for the month be approved. Mr. Griffin seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Building Committee: Mr. Boyd reported that he met with an out-of-town friend of Bethesda and had a very informed conversation with him about the plans for the new parish hall. This person expressed concern that the music program was being relegated to the church basement. Mr. Boyd asked the architects to come up with another plan, putting the choir rehearsal space in what would have been the chapel and moving the chapel and columbarium into what is now the MLW access area of the church. The basement space can be an expanded sacristy area.

Capital Campaign: Mr. Boyd and Ms. Withington will be co chairs of the campaign and will be recruiting members of the church to help with this. There will be a Kickoff event towards the end of Feb. They would like to hire Barbara to be Campaign Coordinator on a consulting contract (this would mean an additional 10-15 hours of work for her per week while the campaign is going on).

Nominating Committee – Ms. Henderson reported that the nominating committee had nominated Ms. Berheide to replace Mr. Miller as junior warden. The members of the congregation will have an opportunity to nominate other candidates.

Parish History– Ms. Agee reported that the draft of the Parish History Book would be sent to a professional editor (Marilyn McCabe) at the end of January. The History volunteers have done a lot of work to edit internally, but it's important to have an impartial and fresh eye look over the manuscript.

Stewardship – Mr. Delbridge reported that a total of \$143,708 has been pledged (67 pledge units).

Other business: Mr. Boyd announced that there would be a forum on race and restorative justice on February 27<sup>th</sup> and encouraged vestry members to attend.

Closing: Mr. Griffin moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Henderson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.