

Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting
May 19, 2021
Beacon Hill Drive, Saratoga Springs

Attendance: Fr. Charles Wallace, Priest in Charge
Kate Berheide, Junior Warden
Karen Finkbeiner, Treasurer
Pam Houde
Field Horne
Laura Kszan
Marcia MacDonald
Sara Manny
Steven Rucker
John Van der Veer
David Wilder
Ann Bullock, Clerk

Absent: Darren Miller, Senior Warden

Opening Prayer

The regular meeting of the Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry was called to order at 7:12pm on May 19, 2021, by Fr. Wallace

Devotions:

Fr. Wallace offered devotions.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of April 21, 2021, and the minutes of the special meeting of May 5, 202, were unanimously approved. (K Finkbeiner, movant; S. Manny, second)

Priest-in-Charge Remarks:

Thanks to S Rucker for the parish work day and to K Berheide for arranging the Wednesday walks. The offices are moving into the newer space and will be able to use larger area for small meetings. Office will be open five days a week beginning May 24 and hope to have an open house for drop-in to see the new space.

Pastoral care committee needs to be constituted to allow for visits to more shut-in members. Fr Russo, P Houde and D Wilder may be part of this on a rotating basis.

Fr Wallace is taking some time off in June and seeking clergy coverage. Saturday is easier to find than Sunday. TJ will take some Saturday services while J Beck (deacon at the Cathedral) will cover June 27; also have coverage for June 20.

Kathleen Slezak and Fr Wallace met to discuss music as we approach the fall. Will take a gentle and cautious approach to returning to sung music. May start choir on All Saints Sunday in October. Kathleen will have some increased responsibility since Farrell's time is more limited under the new contract. Will include more music at 10am beginning in the next weeks, including soloists or other choristers. In future, the choir may have less music to sing and a bit more rehearsal time initially. Few members of the choir have been in regular attendance during the pandemic and will need to consider who will return in the fall.

Interest from the Griffith Fund pays for approximately six choir members and Kathleen's salaries. Some portion of Farrell's salary was paid from this fund, keeping in mind that the corpus of the fund cannot be touched. K Finkbeiner should be part of Endowment Committee meetings to be sure that we know what funds are available; eg, some of the funds for Farrell can come from Griffith fund to the extent that his time is dedicated to the choir. Griffith fund may be used only for choral music. Fr Wallace indicates that the purpose of the fund was to encourage young singing talent to serve the church.

Deanery representatives meeting in June (19th?), 2 Bethesda parish members needed : nominated Jeff Wentling and Lynne Priestley. Vestry approve the appointment of Jeff and Lynne as Deanery representatives. Expected that there will be two years before the Diocese has a bishop; uncertain whether there will be a convention. For the present, the Standing Committee stands in the stead of Bishop.

Presently seeking nominations for next Bishop of Albany

Treasurer's Financial Report: K Finkbeiner, Treasurer

K Finkbeiner sent report with bottom line that the budget assumed higher giving in April than actually received. YTD March was under budget for expenses and income was higher. However, after April, the deficit is worse and more nearly on budget—while income was lower.

Historically, until May annually, we run a deficit; during the summer, the deficit starts to shrink, although it does not disappear. In fall, the deficit grows again and then December, giving makes up for some deficit. We have budgeted a deficit of \$8000 this year which is a very low deficit, historically. Need to be careful about asking for special giving so that giving doesn't shift from P&P to specially gifts.

We do not have a cashflow issue since there is PPP funding available. Cannot use PPP as income on the books until the loan has been forgiven. No need to go to parish for special funding, but we do need giving to continue to general fund.

F Horne will approach Burke Funeral Home about their offered gift to the church toward the front entrance.

Monthly reports have been reported in the service sheets. May want to wait until PPP funding has been spent. After the increased June and July summer giving, we should report on the financing, especially as we approach the December giving season. John reported that one week recently was a generous P&P deposit.

Financial Report accepted.

Roof project:

D Miller signed the contract with Sano Rubin and Sano Rubin thinks the construction permit will go smoothly. We need to select the specific color of covering. J Waite will bring samples of grey metal material to choose. The delivery of the covering material is eight weeks. Intend to initiate roofing order while the preparation work begins to minimize delays in completion. Advised by insurance company not to have anyone in the Church during work on the roof to avoid liability/injuries.

P Houde suggested that noon prayer be held at the office. Scaffolding will be on sides of the building.

No visible effect on interior: No interior scaffolding, but there will be dust covers in place inside: will need to be removed before weddings. There are several weddings scheduled for the summer, including one on a Friday. It takes time to uncover the organ coverings: suggest that only the organ divisions required will be uncovered. Some of the weddings are not using the organ at all.

J Vander Veer reports that we need more furniture for the office. Barbara reported that someone has access to quite a bit of free office furniture. F Horne reports that the rocking chair in the basement belonged to a Skidmore student who sang in the choir and left it in 1969.

Report that Fr. Landon Moore has gotten a church position in Bedford Stuyvesant.

Churchwardens' Report:

Junior Warden: C. Berheide

Follow up on conversation with Rectory.

Conclusion that there should be a small group that works with Fr Wallace. A Bullock and K Finkbeiner will be on this committee based on their relevant backgrounds. Fr Wallace is willing to move into a rental if needed; if the Rectory sells quickly and there is not yet a replacement. Complication in that the Standing Committee is instead of a Bishop and, of course, the market is very strong for a seller, while very difficult for a purchaser.

L Kszan recommends that Fr Wallace and the Church use the same realtor, if permitted. Expect that the Rectory will sell quickly. Committee to think about how best to go forward. L Kszan will serve on the Rectory committee as the chair.

Sound system may need to be checked out. The current system is adequate, but there are spots which lack speakers. Dead spots in the church. The microphone may need to be moved per recommendation of L Kszan. Battery in portable microphone must be replaced each week and gets very weak by the end of the 10am service. Suggest that Tom Moeller assess the system and the hearing loop. Suggest that there be a class for lectors to be sure that readers project and introduce the lessons correctly. S Rucker will approach Tom Moeller and Vern Hinkle about this. We need to be sure we have batteries available. Suggest that we bring in an individual who uses the loop or has indicated difficulty hearing.

COVID update: Increasingly the 10am pews are filling up and will soon be at capacity. Can we move to every other pew now? No, the pews are 5.5 feet apart. Governor and CDC have not put out guidelines on church occupancy. Standing committee has allowed for removal of masks under certain circumstances, but this does not change capacity. Likely there will be changes coming in the next weeks. Vestry members may establish seating groups together to save seating.

S Rucker says we can stop using the Lysol and may use the same pews at 8am and at 10am. Will continue to require masks. Ushers may help to seat people together, if comfortable. S Rucker will talk with Tom Moeller about how to seat people within guidelines. Must replace the guidelines on the door. Could have coffee hour, but the requirements are onerous. Must keep hand sanitizer stands in place.

Summer concerts may have 120 people in attendance: cannot fit that many if all attendees are in singles/doubles. Can fit more people if they are in larger groups and can sit together. The approach to a concert may be different than our rules for church attendance per diocesan guidance.

No guidance requiring the names of those in attendance. S Rucker recommends that we continue to keep track of attendance -just in case we need to contact trace. We are getting relaxed about distances, etc.; suggest that the ushers approach parishioners to remind them of distances, sanitizer etc—and put this in the bulletin.

On-going discussion between K Berhiede and Fr Wallace concerning his continued position with the parish, including his looking into obtaining canonical residence so that he can become Rector. Standing Committee will serve in place of Bishop to obtain canonical residence.

Mercy House:

L Kszan asked about the status; M MacDonald has been approached by an individual who has given money to the project and wanted to know status. We do not yet have the financial report on the available funds from the donor. Cannot make a sensible decision without all facts.

Previously, D Miller said that it might be some time before we can make a decision. We also need to honor those who have dedicated time and effort to Mercy House. Must navigate the sensibilities of all those who were in favor of the project, as well as those who were opposed. K Finkbeiner suggests that the donor is unlikely to give a figure or any projection without final numbers available (once burned...)

The donation will produce some funds: what the available funds will be affects the choices we can make. Suggest that we have a retreat—but the purpose of the retreat cannot be met without having figures to work with. Donor did not get bids at the price that they had originally: we cannot tell the parish anything firm about the project now and a vague report to the parish only worsens the matter.

K Berhiede suggests that Fr Wallace, K Finkbeiner and J VanderVeer meet to think about how to address the future of on-going contracts for the project. J VanderVeer reminds us that we have not control over the process: we may get enough money to proceed or we may have to be flexible.

Commission Reports:

Parish Life: P Houde:

During knitting group, two young men from Skidmore came in to visit the church. Several others concurred that the open doors and the inside glass doors invite people into the church.

Property Management: S Rucker:

Next work day at the end of September (Sept 25)

Continuing Business:

New Business: none

Next meeting: June 16, 2021

Blessing and Adjournment at 9:07pm

Blessing by Fr. Wallace

Respectfully submitted by:

Ann C. Bullock, Clerk