

Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting
October 18, 2022
Saratoga Springs

Attendance: Fr. Charles Wallace, Priest in Charge
Sara Manny, Junior Warden
Karen Finkbeiner, Treasurer, via Zoom
Mark Claverie
Laura Kszan
Marcia MacDonald
David MacVane
Steven Rucker
Ann Bullock, Clerk

Absent: Darren Miller, Senior Warden
David Wilder
Holly Sofarelli

Opening Prayer

The regular meeting of the Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry was called to order at 7:10pm.

Devotions:

Fr. Wallace offered devotions.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the minutes of the meeting of September 21, 2022, were deferred to allow for circulation of same.

Treasurer's Financial Report: K Finkbeiner, Treasurer

K Finkbeiner sent report stating that, overall there was no change in trend from prior months. Our Deficit continues over \$20,000, and that is now near Budget as the budget assumed the deficit dropped into that range in September. Within expenses, we are under-running on the Employee Cost line thanks to our volunteer Office staff, while we are running over on the Rector Expense line due to timing and increased Pension costs, and on the Church Building line primarily due to timing on Insurance. Our utilities expenses are over budget Year to Date also.

In Income, our Pledge & Plate is now under budget, driven by a budget assumption that September would be a higher month for P&P, which was not the case.

During the meeting we will discuss actions to close our deficit this year and actions on our 2023 Stewardship drive over the next few months. Budget expected a deficit of \$20,000 in September, but we actually show a deficit of \$25,000.

There are further expenses to come for the fire stairs, clerestory windows and tower repair. The figures have not been finalized with SR for these expenses. Appears that there is

approximately \$120,000 of the capital fund that has not been committed as yet. K Finkbeiner recommends that we not make any other significant commitments until we know the state of our current project and the total expense. M Claverie reports that there will be some savings on the window woodwork and should have solid figures on Thursday.

We need to close the deficit prior to the end of the year and plan for the budget for 2023. It is not recommended that we approach the parish with urgent deficit discussion; instead, Oct 30 bulletin will include an insert discussing the current budget situation. November 8 bulletin will include FAQs concerning how to pledge; setting up giving envelopes; etc. The next two weeks of November will include a pledge discussion. R Bullock will preach on Nov 13 concerning giving.

M Claverie asked about giving historically at the end of the year (last quarter.) K Finkbeiner wants us to remind people that giving is an on-going commitment, rather than relying on the generosity of a few people at the end of the year to close any budget gap.

The Accounts Payable report shows that there are no current or past due balances.

Priest-in-Charge Remarks and Churchwardens' Report:

Senior Warden: D. Miller (Absent)

Junior Warden: S Manny

Reports that Fr. Wallace and S Manny went to St George's (Clifton Park) for a presentation on children and vulnerable adults. There are policies and procedures in place in the Diocese for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. On-line training is available for all those who work with at-risk populations. The Church Pension Fund requires that the diocese agree to safeguard these populations and each parish must adopt a policy for their own members following such policies, requiring training for those who work with vulnerable populations.

The office is still operating with a volunteer crew and working smoothly. They have agreed to stay on through the end of the year. After Christmas, there may be a rotation to allow those who have volunteered to take a break. Many churches operate entirely with volunteer staff; the savings is about \$1900 monthly. We don't need to have anyone in as much as thirty hours weekly. Having a volunteer staff has allowed us to consider what really is required to run the office, but there is a concern that those volunteering may burn out and we must guard against that. We need to be respectful of the time and other commitments of those volunteering.

D MacVane asked about the plans for rebuilding the church community once the repairs and renovations have been completed. Fr Wallace reports that the amount of money left will not permit much renovation of the church space for activities/programs. We would need a significant infusion to build/renovate a space for use. Further, there are few families who are interested in church involvement. Within the Deanery, only Ballston Spa has a children's program. Even Clifton Park has NO children in the parish. One family approached Fr Wallace to ask for their son to be prepared for confirmation; he will be available at any time for this and has suggested that this family bring their son and another friend to make this more intriguing for both boys. Following COVID, young families have not come back—a situation which affects churches across the Diocese and throughout mainline churches generally.

If there were a large gift, redoing the undercroft would allow space for programs and activities. Maintaining and restoring the church is attractive to the parish and may attract others to the parish.

Barbecue in September was a terrific event, weather notwithstanding, and raised a little money to go into parish collection, as well as cover the costs of the event.

Commission Reports:

Building Report: M Claverie:

Reports that scaffolding has arrived and is installed in the west side. The dormer repair will start this week early October 20. SR is not contracting this as the worker is self-employed and does not have separate insurance. The Church has contracted separately for the scaffolding. It is hoped that the window framing will be repaired and then the scaffolding will be moved to the east side. Need warm weather to be able to install the repaired windows according to Lamb Studios.

The tower roof has been repaired. The chiller will be replaced any time this winter.

The fire stairs are being fabricated now. Request for SR to remove the cement pad now in place and replace with gravel. The fire stair is likely not to be installed until mid-November.

The downspouts on the east side of the church need to be reangled and reinstalled. It looks unattractive and interferes with access to the side of the church. Mid-State will review this.

The wheelchair lift needs to be repaired. It was built in 1995 and getting parts is very difficult. The lift is in good shape other than the needed replacement of a part. Estimated cost about \$4000 for the part and, more to the point, labor.

The bell tower has also been inspected. Sprinkler must be inspected as well.

Fire inspection is scheduled for Monday, October 24. The fire escape will not be in place—but there has not been a fire escape anyway in the past.

Bonacio has inquired concerning the status of their proposal regarding their rental of the lot adjoining the church: S Manny will ask D Miller to contact James Cox, Esq. to consider the revenue issue and any liability concerns.

Continuing Business:

Bylaw amendment: Fr Wallace observes that the Church must operate more efficiently. We need to cultivate a culture of volunteerism. Finding twelve individuals to serve on vestry is difficult and particularly difficult to find those who have skill set that we need. We would like to have a smaller Vestry, as other churches in the Diocese do.

We must comply with Religious Corporation Law as well as Diocesan requirements. This requires that we bring motion to change the number of vestry members to the annual (parish) General Meeting in 2023 and then it cannot be effective until one year following the annual general meeting. Therefore, we must have a full slate in 2023, with four officers. There are six members of Vestry rotating off this year.

New Business: none

Next meeting:

Blessing and Adjournment

Blessing by Fr. Wallace

Meeting was adjourned at 8:38pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Ann C. Bullock, Clerk