

**Minutes of the 95th Annual Meeting
of
The First Congregational Church of Woodstock
26 January 2020
Not yet approved by vote of the Congregation**

Moderator Bruce Lyman convened the meeting at 11:10 a.m. following worship. A quorum (35 required) was established by count, and later 49 persons signed the register of attendance (40 members and nine friends).

Clerk Alexandra Lyman read the call to the meeting.

Reverend Debra Pallatto-Fontaine, our transitional minister, led the meeting in prayer, naming those in the membership who died within the past year: members Richard Horsfield and Mary Woodcock. Debbie asked the meeting to join in singing “I Sing a Song of the Saints of God.”

1. Clerk’s report: Bruce requested a motion to accept the minutes of the 2019 annual meeting. MOTION to accept: Tom Singleton/ 2nd John Cimochoowski, unanimously approved with no abstentions.
2. Reports: At the moderator’s request, MOTION to receive with appreciation the reports of the Pastor, Director of Family Ministries, Church Council, Boards, Committees, and Church Historian: Nancy Horsfield/2nd John Cimochoowski, unanimously approved, no abstentions.
3. Treasurer’s report: Treasurer Suzanne Cimochoowski noted that an additional sheet was appended to the proposed budget for 2020, showing budgeted figures and actual expenditures for each line item. Having begun the year 2019 with a \$13K deficit, we ended with a \$39K surplus, largely a result of not having had a settled minister for the second six months of the year and having received \$10K more in income than predicted. In addition, all accounts were under budget in terms of expenditure. Suzanne urged members to consider using EFT (electronic fund transfer) for ease of cash flow, and she noted also that the pre-payment of pledges allows us to enter the new year on firm footing. MOTION to accept report: Dana Swenson/2nd John Cimochoowski, passed unanimously, no abstentions.
4. Nominating committee slate: Alexandra Lyman presented the roster of church positions, and board and committee members for the year 2020, noting that a few openings remain unfilled. Bruce Lyman has added himself to the list as archivist. MOTION to accept report: Charlene Swanson/ 2nd Glenn Boies, passed unanimously with no abstentions.
5. Report of pastoral search committee: Charlene Swanson, co-chairman, reported that the committee of nine members is working steadily to update our church profile, preparing to send it for approval to our regional conference minister, Chuck Ericson. Alicja Wisnosky recently hosted a meeting in her home. “Keep us in your prayers,” Charlene asked.
6. Stewardship report: Bob Kirk referred to his page in the annual report, noting that we received 59 pledges for a total pledged income of \$139,371, an amount \$8K less than last year. Within those numbers were seven new pledges. Bob gave thanks to the members of his committee – Carl Davis, Paula Wilmot, and John Cimochoowski. MOTION to receive report with

appreciation: Tom Singleton/2nd Glenn Boies, passed unanimously with no abstentions.

7. Proposed budget for 2020: Cheri Swenson, senior trustee, responded to a question asked by Tom Duggan at the Lunch & Crunch gathering on January 5th, noting that we have a balance of \$217,603 in the New Century Fund investment account. The sabbatical fund for a new minister is almost fully funded. The trustees made decisions about apportioning the surplus funds at the end of 2019:

\$17K to repay the remainder of the \$34K loan from restricted funds some years ago (\$2K is in the 2020 budget for this purpose as well), line item 504.117;

\$10K for maintenance of the church building (repair of rot, regrading to the east behind the building, replacement of north roof over Harrison Hall, revision of gutter pans);

\$5K for maintenance of the parsonage;.

\$3K added to off-budget capital improvement fund;

\$846 added to family leave fund for new minister.

Another \$2K in income has not been figured into the budget proposal, as it was received after the numbers had been refined several times. The pledged income line item 400.100 is \$100 greater than depicted in proposal, because of late receipt of a gift.

Other details outlined were these:

400.160 NCF withdrawal is predicated on a 3-yr average of fund balance;

500.101 Optimistic prediction for ¾-time minister for eight months of 2020.

502.108 *Messiah* Sing slated for December 2020

504.111 \$7K allotted to cover audit (\$1500), part-time bookkeeper (new), MinistryWorks for payroll, and EFT accounting with Vanco.

505.105 Grounds maintenance, lawn mowing & plowing will be covered by church members.

506.102 Line items combined with change in dues payment to the new UCC & 505.100 conference

Moderator Bruce offered profound thanks to Cheri and the trustees, and to the deacons, for hard work on the budget proposal. MOTION to accept the budget as presented: John Cimochoowski/ 2nd Glenn Boies. Discussion ensued, including Debby Kirk's recommendation that we allocate funds to upgrade our profile on social media. Charlene echoed that impulse for the search committee. MOTION to amend the budget proposal to allow the trustees to have purview over the \$2k of non-allocated funds, to use as they see fit: Dana/2nd Tom, passed unanimously with no abstentions. The original budget motion was passed, as amended, unanimously with no abstentions.

Cheri concluded by giving special thanks to Glenn Boies, John Cimochoowski, G. Leslie Sweetnam, and Bruce Lyman for the hours of labor they devoted over the past year to repairs, improvements, and maintenance of buildings and grounds.

8. Correspondence: Following our tradition, the clerk will send greetings from the annual meeting to the these persons – Eleanor Adams, Linda Chase, Doris Coster, Ellen Holley, Marian (Debbie) Macgregor, Ann Moran, Marilyn Pomeroy, Lib Putnam, Mary Seney and husband Ed, Paul Stanton, Tod and Ruth Stevenson, Rob and Mary Stuckey, Rev. Dr. Doe West and Bruce Gale, and Susan Zilke.

9. Appreciation of leaders: Moderator Bruce Lyman gave thanks for the work of those retiring from positions of leadership within the church – Dana Swenson as member of catering committee and member-at large, Laura Bond as member of the counting team, Alexandra Lyman as member of hospitality and nominating committees, Peggy Murphy as part of the investment committee, Susan Zilke as member-at-large, Holly Ware as chairman of music support committee, Gretchen D’Andrea and Donna Dufresne as members of music support, Bob Kirk as chairman of stewardship committee, and Carl Davis as trustee. Bob presented a gift to Bruce in gratitude for his service as moderator.

Gifts were presented in thanks to Suzanne Cimchowski, retiring treasurer; to Susan McKechnie and Jim Nowak, retiring senior deacons; to Cheri Swenson and Tom Singleton, retiring senior trustees; and to Lynn Singleton and Linda Chase, retiring members of the board of outreach.

10. Moderator’s comments: Bruce delivered his prepared comments, noting that our life over the past year has been characterized by high activity and great loss. During our CAT scan survey, we were described as a body that is “energetic and adaptable.” Those qualities were surely tested, “and we passed,” responding flexibly to the departure of our minister and our family ministries director within a few weeks of one another, to the theft of our rainbow flag eight times over, to filling the pulpit with lay speakers and tellers of faith stories, to maintaining the chicken barbeque, the October craft festival, rummage sale, and Italian dinner, the Christmas on the Hill fair, Pick-a-parties, and many other events; safe church training and messy church experience; and hosting meetings of the Southern New England conference. We are now in our fifth consecutive year of hosting the Monday Community Kitchens meal, with chefs from our church providing service once a month. Bruce made reference to the writings of Richard Rohr, who speaks of “getting the job of love done.” Three suggestions for continuing that work are to practice and value silence, to worship together, to remember who we are, grounded as “members of a beloved community of friends in Christ,” to borrow from one of Bob Kirk’s recent sermons.
11. Other business: Jim Nowak, head deacon, offered sincere thanks to Rev. Debbie Pallatto-Fontaine for her incredible work as transitional minister. Her devotion to all parts of the job is unending, and her beautiful spirit prevails over all.
12. The meeting adjourned to a luncheon of honey-maple chicken, macaroni casseroles, salad, and pie in the fellowship hall, all prepared by super-chef Ashley Alderman. MOTION to adjourn at 12:05 p.m. Glenn Boies/2nd John Cimochofski.

Respectfully submitted,
Alexandra Lyman, clerk

compiled 29 January 2020