

First Congregational Church of Woodstock
MINUTES of COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. via Google Meets

In attendance: Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, Jim Nowak (Moderator), Laura Boies, Charles Bottieri, Toby Bishop, Suzanne Cimochowski, Bob Kirk, Debby Kirk, Alexandra Lyman, Bruce Lyman, Christina Manuilow, Leilani Nixon, Lisa Nowak, Kathy Packard, Debbie Pallatto-Fontaine, Bruce Staehle, Charlene Swanson

Welcome and Opening Devotion

- Moderator Jim Nowak opened the meeting at 7:03 pm.
- Bob Kirk shared Jesus' words from various scripture readings, for our reflection and meditation.

Clerk's Report (Laura B)

- Two corrections had already been made to the December Council minutes at the time of this meeting. The December meeting minutes were accepted with appreciation.

Treasurer's Report (Suzanne C)

- Please see the Treasurer's Report for details.
- Tom D is away. Suzanne shared a brief overview of the budget so far in 2023.
 - We ended the year \$46,000 better than budgeted, with \$1,000 better net income plus the \$10,000 New Century withdrawal that was *not* taken and the \$35,000 surplus from 2021 which was not used. These funds were not needed due to generous giving, outstanding fundraising and thrifty spending, in addition to unexpected staff vacancies.

Pastor's Report (Rev. Kevin D)

- Please read the full Pastor's report.
- Prep for Annual Meeting
 - The Call has been published and will be in the bulletin and the weekly emails for the next two weeks.
 - Meeting materials are being added to the Google Drive folder for the Annual Meeting.
 - The Annual Report template is open and currently being filled in. (If you need help please ask.)
 - Intend to publish the Annual Report before Sunday Jan. 15th, which means content needs to be in by Wednesday.
 - The Annual Report of Council will be submitted by the clerk.
 - Agenda draft is in. Final draft needs to come from the moderator, in consultation with the pastor.
 - The Annual Meeting this year will be in person after two years that were held virtually via Zoom. Do we want to offer a hybrid option?
 - The Council members agree that a virtual option should be offered and that those members attending virtually should be counted in the quorum and be allowed to vote.
 - Rev. Kevin offered to monitor any virtual attendees.
- Interim Governing transition after the Annual Meeting
 - A draft approach for how we move to Ministry Areas/Teams is included in the

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Pastor's Report.

- Deacons, the Board of Outreach (as the Faith in Action Team), the Creative Worship team and the Faith Formation team will continue to meet and plan for the transformation period. As we shift to focusing our work into the four ministry areas we need to define goals and look for team leaders.
- Transfiguration Sunday on Feb. 19th, would be a good time to have an interactive experience to display and sample the varied ministry options.

Updates from Boards, Committees, and Church Members

Restructuring Team (Bruce S, Deb K, Charlene S, Debbie P-F)

- Prior to this meeting, the team shared a draft of their recommended changes to the bylaws as they relate to the new governing board model. The team reviewed these recommendations with Council.
 - It was noted that the new Governing Board model generally combines the governance functions of the Trustees and the Council, but the board will delegate much of the actual work that gets done.
- MOTION: that Council endorse the edited bylaws as presented by the Restructuring Team. Debbie P-F/2nd Lisa N. Motion passed unanimously.
- These proposed changes will be in the Annual Meeting folder in the Google Drive with a link posted in Friday's email.
- Keep in mind there is still time to ask questions and make suggestions before the Annual Meeting. The Restructuring team will be available after church this Sunday to answer any questions.

Visions and Values Team (Bob K)

- The team has not met since the last Council meeting. No updates to report.

Trustees (Suzanne C)

- The proposed 2023 Budget was reviewed at the congregational gathering after church on Sunday (Jan. 8th). This is also posted in the shared Google drive.
- Proposed budget income is \$251,539 with \$151,300 from contributions, \$28,000 from fundraising, \$29,100 from facilities (parsonage and proposed daycare rentals) and endowment from the New Century Fund.
- Proposed expenses are \$250,807 (with new categories revised to match our restructuring plan) creating a net income of \$732.
- The Employee Retention Credit under income is federal money we qualified for which will be reserved in contingency funds rather than spending it in this budget.
- While hoping that we will not need to take the withdrawal from the New Century Fund, but reserving the right to do so, those proceeds are being treated as a contribution to reserves.
- \$35,000 surplus from 2022 sits in the operating checking account as net assets that are not subject to donor restrictions. This helps build our planned six month reserve.
- MOTION: to present the proposed 2023 Budget at the Annual Meeting. Suzanne C/ 2nd Charles B. Motion passed unanimously.

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Sharing Prayers and Celebrations

- Noted by Deb K that we are in a very strong place right now. We have put in a lot of work and witnessed a lot of generosity to make big changes for our future.
- Jim N noted: we may be a smaller church than we used to be, but we are no less mighty.
- Charles B acknowledged and appreciated the fact that Leilani has chosen to volunteer her work as organist.
- Gratitude was expressed for Rev. Kevin's guidance and for his joining our fold.
- Charlene S noted that this is the final meeting of our Church Council.

Closing Prayer:

Bob K shared a prayer for the final meeting of Council.

Meeting Adjourned @ 8:21pm

Scribe: Laura Boies