

First Congregational Church of Woodstock  
MINUTES of GOVERNING BOARD MEETING  
Wednesday Mar. 8, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. (in person)

**In attendance:** Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, Bruce Staehle, Suzanne Cimochoowski, Charles Bottieri, Jennifer Duggan, Tom Duggan, Ginny Moylan, Laura Boies (as Clerk)

**Welcome and Opening Devotion**

- Bruce S opened the meeting at 7:01 pm, as Jim N. was unable to attend.
- Rev. Kevin shared a reading and reflection on Zephaniah 3:17.

**Treasurer's Report (Tom D)**

- Please see the Treasurer's Report for details.
- Taking advantage of increased interest rates, the church has invested in CDs with TD Ameritrade where we already have an investment account.
  - From approximately \$98,000 in Operating Funds, 57% (\$56,000) was invested in FDIC insured CDs with various terms from 2 months @4.45% to 6 months @4.9%, with a blended rate of 4.72%.
  - From approximately \$112,000 in the Restricted Funds, 72% (\$80,000) was invested in CDs with 3 month to 12 month terms with a blended rate of 4.87%.

**Finance Team Report (Suzanne C)**

- Approval of reimbursements for non-recurring purchases.
  - Formerly, a senior board member or chair of a committee would approve requests for reimbursement.
  - Currently, coordinators of core ministry teams can approve requisitions in their area:
    - Deacons: Bruce L, Christina M
    - Worship Team: Leilani N, Rev. Kevin, Maria S
    - Faith in Action: Ginny M
    - Worship Tech: Bruce S
    - Operations Team: Suzanne C (Fiscal), Charles B (Facilities)
  - A team leader cannot approve their own purchase, they need another team leader to approve.
  - Tom D recommends using the credit card for any substantial purchases, for tax purposes.
  - Rev. Kevin suggests having an "All Leaders" meeting after Easter to go over this and other policies.
- Richardson Fund
  - We would like to contact the Richardsons regarding guidance on the funds for lighting the Christmas tree. Current cost of lighting the tree is about \$800. It was originally stipulated that we were to use the interest from the fund for the tree lighting but the account does not earn any substantial interest.
    - Marilyn P and Bruce L were known to have had contact with the Richardson family in the past. [Suzanne will try to establish contact.](#)
    - We could consider a smaller tree, but would still need to build up the fund.
- Search for Assistant Treasurer
  - There is a possible candidate.

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- The Governing Board has the power to appoint an Assistant Treasurer.
- Does the Treasurer need to be present at Governing Board meetings?
  - Since the Treasurer now meets with the heads of Finance and Facilities prior to the GB meeting, the Treasurer does not need to attend unless there is a special topic that he needs to be present for.

### Bylaws Review

- Review of Governing Board Team Expectations and Terms of Reference document (20230215 GB TeamingPrinciples)
  - Section III A “Guiding Principles”
    - Wording of this section was approved as written.
  - Section III B “Shared Expectations/Covenant”
    - All the points (appearing in red ink) are agreeable to the board.
    - Some general wordsmithing should be done to the list of principles. [Jen D volunteered to work on this.](#)
- Review of Governing Board Duties document (re: IV.1.3 Responsibilities during the Interim/Transitional Period January 2023 - January 2024 from the current bylaws). GB Duties were grouped into categories of Fiduciary, Financial, Facilities and Personnel.
  - The first priority for this meeting are the duties in the Personnel category.
    - Hiring personnel
      - The ministry team, in the area where personnel will work, will form any necessary search team for hiring.
      - The Governing Board acts on the hiring recommendations of such search teams and extends the offer; presenting the offer letter and processing the paperwork. [Suzanne volunteered to produce an offer letter and process the paperwork for the current Children and Family Ministries Candidate.](#)
    - The minister is the personnel director of all staff except himself.
    - The Governing Board will assign an ad hoc committee for the Annual Review of the Pastor.
      - Pastor’s review is due in March. [Jen D and Charles B volunteered to be on this ad hoc committee.](#)
  - Current policies of the areas and Ministry teams will be gathered and organized into a folder in the GB Google Drive.

### Ministry Update

- Woodstock Cemetery Association meeting is Mar. 25th. Rev. Kevin normally attends but is unavailable that day. [Jen D will attend](#) to represent our church and report back.
- Funding Noah’s Discernment Process
  - A psychological evaluation is required, the cost of which is normally split three ways between the candidate (Noah), the home congregation (our church), and the local association (Windham Association).
  - The cost is \$2100, our third being \$700. This can probably come from the reserve funds. Tom D and Toby can determine how this will be itemized in the budget.
- We will be extending an offer to the candidate (Mitra Sarshuri) for the position of Children and

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- Family Ministries Coordinator. [Suzanne will draft the offer letter.](#)
- The Witness Stone Project has asked to place a Witness Stone on our property.
  - This stone is for a slave owned by an historical member of our congregation.
  - The stone is roughly 10" x 10" x 4" high and will be placed next to the Peace Pole.
  - On Palm Sunday the president of the Witness Stones Project will speak and we will hold a 2nd Hour conversation about witness stones.
  - The Placement Ceremony will be June 19th.
  - The members of the GB all agreed to this plan.
- Delegates to the Windham Assoc. Annual meeting will be chosen by the Faith in Action team.
- Identifying Ministry Leaders
  - We will give our new governing model some more time for people to come forth as their areas of interest are established.

### Counting Team

- Suzanne C reports that five people signed up at the Ministry Fair; she only needed four.
- [Suzanne will draft a schedule and policy for the Counting Team.](#)

### Share Article

- We should have an article in each Share. Deadline this month is Mon. March 20th.
- [Ginny M will compose an article](#) to include a summary of our work: organizing our Guiding Principles, organizing and prioritizing our duties, gathering and organizing church policy documents, and planning a "Town Hall" meeting for April 23rd.

### Replying to Emails

- Emails should be sent to the team/committee covering the area of concern.
- If it is not clear which ministry team, then the GB will handle it.
- We need to create policy for handling various items such as the recent request to publicize the Prop 46 vote and a request to use the church organ.
- Request for use of church organ by Kristin Wedegis for lessons/practice.
  - We do have building use policies in place from the Trustees.
  - Due to the poor (near failing) condition of the organ the board feels we need to reserve use of the organ to necessary use for church services. [Charles B will respond to Kristin.](#)

### "Housekeeping" Items:

- It would be helpful to have a draft agenda a week before the meeting.
- It would be helpful to have "Action Items" added to the minutes, and have the minutes posted within a week.

### Action Items:

- Ginny - Draft article for Share by 3/20/23.
- Charles - Respond to Kristin Wedegis re. use of the organ.
- Suzanne -
  - Speak to Jim re. Draft of Agenda one week prior to meetings.
  - Draft offer letter for Children & Family Ministries Coordinator.
  - Write Counting Team policy.

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- Draft Reimbursement policies.
- Try to find a contact for the Richardson family.
  
- Jen -
  - Wordsmith section III B of Teaming Principles/Shared Expectations.
  - Attend Cemetery Assoc. Meeting on Mar. 25th and report back.
- Bruce - Create a common folder in Google Drive for current church policies.
- Charles and Jen - Ad Hoc committee for Pastor's review.

Meeting adjourned @9:18pm with a closing prayer offered by Laura B.