

# First Congregational Church of Woodstock

## MINUTES of GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Wednesday Apr. 12, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. (in person)

**In attendance:** Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, Jim Nowak, Bruce Staehle, Suzanne Cimoichowski, Charles Bottieri, Jennifer Duggan, Ginny Moylan, Laura Boies (as clerk)

### Welcome and Opening Devotion

- The meeting was opened at 7:13 pm
- Rev. Kevin shared a reading from the Daily Devotional from the UCC called “Consider” by Quinn Caldwell, based on Luke 12:27. A reminder that (like many things) even the lilies we enjoy at Easter don’t just happen, they are the result of greatly planned effort and nurturing.

### Prior “Action Item” Updates

- All items from last month were completed.
- Richardson’s Fund for tree lighting (Suzanne C)
  - Bruce L responded that he doesn’t currently have a connection with the family. He suggested possibly Paul Lynn or Woody Durst might have a connection.
  - The board discussed options
    - Do we want to pursue contact to request more funds from the Richardsons?
    - \$800 per year is a lot to spend on Christmas tree lighting.
    - Recommend lighting a smaller tree.
    - Decorate the tree with other decorations.
    - What are the stipulations regarding *when* the tree is lit? Can we light it earlier in the season? Maybe invite children to decorate during the carol sing.
    - [Suzanne will check with Toby on specific wording of the Richardson’s request.](#)
  - Cemetery Association meeting on March 25th (Jen attended)
    - The sexton of the cemetery, Steve Brainard, is working to restore broken grave markers. Additional funds were provided to continue that work.
    - There are only about 30 lots left, but only 1 to 2 are sold per year.
    - Looking for ways to create more availability, they have considered a columbarium but Steve reported that they are not popular in this area and don’t sell well. They are also considering an urn garden or a scatter area.
    - They plan to clear the back area by Roxbury Road to see if they could add plots there.

### Organization of Google Drive Folders (Bruce S)

- Discussion of whether to keep meeting minutes in a separate folder or in the monthly meeting folder: The board agreed to keep the minutes, as well as the treasurer’s monthly reports, in the folder for the following month’s meeting. In this way, all materials for the month’s meeting will be in one folder. [Suzanne will notify Tom of this decision.](#)
- A shared drive titled “Policy Repository” has been created to organize the policies of the various teams and groups of the church.
- Policies and procedures of the various ministries and teams are currently being uploaded to the Policy Repository Drive.

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- Deacons are in the process of organizing what needs to be transferred to the Repository.
- The old Board of Trustees will need to migrate their files.
- At this time the Stewardship files are on a USB drive (in Charlene's possession). Some of the Stewardship information will need to be kept confidential. [Jim will follow up with Charlene.](#)

### **Nominating Stewardship Team**

- A Stewardship Team of two to three people is needed before summer.
- The Governing Board will appoint a Stewardship Team.
- Suzanne has volunteered to support the Stewardship team with processing pledges.
- Let the congregation know we are seeking volunteers. Add this item to our April 23 "Town Meeting" agenda as well as a note in the Sunday bulletin and Friday email. [Suzanne will write a notice.](#)

### **Financial Report (Suzanne C)**

- Please see the Treasurer's Report for details.
- Pledge income is up.
- Although the Daycare was in the budget for March, it is not open yet. (Waiting for final inspections.)
- Expenses included an unanticipated boiler repair bill of \$2,800 (which would have been much more if Glenn Boies had not donated his labor).
- Staff pay increases did not start until February, so January was still at 2022 rates.

### **Ministry Update**

- Paula and Carolina are joining Ginny on the Faith In Action team.
- The Worship Retreat was very good. A meeting is being planned to review with those who were unable to attend.
- Mitra (Children & Family Ministry) will be with us this Sunday.
- Deacons are organizing the Care Ministry. They will be meeting soon. Doe West will be doing some training for this ministry.
- SNEUCC Regional conference will be in Oxford, MA on May 20th. Their Annual Meeting is June 17th in Worcester, MA.
- SNEUCC Lay Delegate Training at FCCW on Apr. 22nd. Do they need any set up? [Charles will check.](#)
  - Consider adding a set-up fee to the building use form.

### **Question Regarding Grounds Care**

- The Lymans submitted a list of some of the things they typically do around the church that would fall under grounds care and wondered if they should be asking permission to do these things.
  - Since the Grounds Committee which was dissolved a couple years ago, these duties were generally absorbed by the Property Management team.
  - This list is helpful for the Property Management team and will be added to the

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information in the Policy Repository Drive.

- Permission is not needed but it is good for us to be aware of the many tasks like this that people do voluntarily “behind the scenes”.

**Flowchart**

- We will create a flowchart to show the different ministries and governing areas of the church.
- This will identify who is responsible for these different areas so that congregants know who to contact with specific concerns, including their contact information.
- This will be shared via a poster in Harrison Hall, the Sunday Bulletin, our website, weekly email, the June Share, the shared Drive, and at the “Town Hall” 2nd Hour next Sunday.
- [Suzanne and Kevin will work on this on Thursday.](#)

**SNEUCC Delegates**

- Two delegates are needed for the SNEUCC and the Windham Association.
- SNEUCC annual meeting is June 17th in Worcester, MA
- Delegates are only required to attend the business meeting and vote.
- [Jim volunteered, Suzanne will consider.](#) Rev. Kevin will also be attending.

**June Share**

- Updates from May meeting can go in the Jun/Jul/Aug Share
- [Ginny will write an update after the May GB meeting.](#)

**Other Business**

- Otis Elevator - Charles still in negotiations with them.
  - We paid \$3300 over the past three years for quarterly maintenance but Otis never came to check our elevator.
  - Charles escalated the case to the General Manager. Otis offered a \$1900 refund plus one month free and they will not raise rate over next two years. Charles firmly refused their offer. He will call them again this week.
  - ADDENDUM: Note via email from Charles on Apr. 14:

*“After negotiations with the General Manager at Otis we have come to a resolution.*

*In reparation for the lack of service for years 2020 through 2022, Otis has agreed to credit our account for the cost of the annual pressure test conducted in March for the amount of \$1,473.83. In addition they have agreed to provide us with a 1 yr. service contract that includes all required annual testing free of charge, thus waiving the \$1,968 charge. Thus, a compensation value of \$3,441.83.*

*We had paid a total of \$3,299.76 over the three years for the maintenance programs, so there is a small bonus here.”*

- April 23rd GB informational “Town Meeting”: [Bruce S previously volunteered to lead the meeting.](#) Members will gather helpful documents ie: flow chart, Guiding Principles, summary of GB activities. ([Jen and Ginny?](#))

**Action Items (noted in blue above):**

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- Suzanne -
  - check with Toby on specific wording of the Richardson's request.
  - Notify Tom that we will keep the Treasurer's reports in the GB monthly meeting folders for the month where they will be reviewed.
  - Create a notice seeking volunteers for the Stewardship team.
  - Suzanne and Kevin create "Flowchart"
- Jim -
  - Jim will follow up with Charlene re: Stewardship files.
  - Attend SNEUCC meeting as delegate with ...??
- Charles -
  - Check to see if set up is needed for SNEUCC Lay Delegate Training on Apr. 22.
- Bruce -
  - Lead "Town Meeting" Apr. 23
- Jen and Ginny -
  - Prep information for "Town Hall" meeting Apr. 23
- Ginny -
  - Plan to write update after May GB meeting.

Meeting adjourned @9:04 with Closing Prayer offered by Rev. Kevin