

First Congregational Church of Woodstock  
MINUTES of GOVERNING BOARD MEETING  
Wednesday Aug. 9, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. (via Google Meets)

**In Attendance:** Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, Jim Nowak, Suzanne Cimochowski, Charles Bottieri (joined @7:40pm), Jennifer Duggan, Laura Boies (as clerk)

**Welcome and Opening Devotion**

- Moderator, Jim Nowak, opened the meeting at 7:07pm.
- Rev. Kevin shared from “The Courage to Lead” by Brian Stanfield.
  - What does it mean to be caring when overwhelmed with requests for our time and energy? To respond caringly to requests does not mean we always have to say yes, but we can honor the person making the request by responding with grace and understanding. It is possible to say “no” or “not yet” in a caring and thoughtful manner.

**Minister’s Report**

- See full Pastor’s Report [2023.08.09 Minstry Update.pdf](#)
- The Deacons plan to meet with the Governing Board in October to present a plan for what they think the role of the Deacons will be in the future.
- The Music Director Search Team seeks the approval of the Governing Board to extend an offer to Gretchen D’Andrea for the position.
  - A search team of six members received five applications and interviewed the best candidates.
  - Gretchen is a school music and band teacher. She reads music, can do some basic accompaniment (we’d still need a regular accompanist), and has experience leading choirs/choruses. She has been active in our church and choir in the past. She has a passion for music and its connection with spirituality.
  - Compensation for this position will be increased from \$9,500 to \$11,600 (salaried).
  - The Governing Board voted to approve the recommendation of the Music Director Search Team to extend an offer to Gretchen D’Andrea. Approved unanimously.
- 2024 Ministry Planning/Budgeting Time Table
  - Rev. Kevin proposed a timetable for the 2024 Ministry Planning and Budgeting in his Pastor’s Report for this month which the Finance team approved.
- GB Members (as well as any other members of the congregation) are welcome to give the Sunday Offering Messages in September and October.
  - [Rev. Kevin](#) will add this to the Sign-up Genius.
- Creative Worship team met July 18th [20230718 Creative Worship Meeting Notes.docx](#)
  - The team drafted possible purpose statements. Jen Beck will consolidate their thoughts into a single statement.
  - Explored ideas for the fall services.
  - They are looking at the “Worship Design Studio” website for resources and ideas.


**Financial Business update (Suzanne)**

- See Financial Statement [FCCW Financial REports July 2023.pdf](#)
- At this point it looks like we should be \$4,000-\$5,000 in the black at the end of the year.

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- Treasurer's Position
  - Bill Moylan is interested in the position and the Financial team seeks the Governing Board's approval.
  - MOTION from the Financial Team: to approve Bill Moylan as the Assistant Treasurer for the remainder of the year 2023, with the intention that he will become Treasurer after the Annual Meeting in January 2024. (Motion: Suzanne C, 2nd: Rev Kevin. Motion passed unanimously.)
- Preservation Connecticut Maintenance and Repair Grant Application
  - The Circuit Rider needs to view the property (scheduled for Monday) and has warned that this is a very competitive grant. He's not sure storm windows will qualify.
  - Suzanne is confident that we can submit a successful application but is concerned that storm windows may no longer be available for these windows and we may have to look at replacing the windows.
  - Stewardship Team - Karen Graves declined. Suzanne is trying to contact **Yucha** Kantorski but has not received a response as yet.

**Property & Facilities Update** (Charles)

- See Facilities Report  [August 2023 Facilities Report.pdf](#)
- M & M Energy is doing an energy audit Aug. 17th. They may have resources for storm windows. They are part of the Energize CT program and offer up to 50% on certain updates and 0% financing for up to 60 months.
- John Navarro is meeting with Willis Construction regarding the location of the new catch basin. Then Will will pave the parking lot.
- Parsonage: Charles and Suzanne did a walk-through with Stephanie Gosselin (Premier Properties)
  - They recommended a pre-inspection to look at structural integrity, etc.
  - Provided a list of preferred inspectors and well drilling companies.
  - We will have to drill a new well for the church. They suggested pulling that permit soon because it takes time.
  - Recommended selling ASAP.
  - They need the age of roof and latest water test results.
  - Moylans will need some notice.
  - We will move up the 2nd Hour on the Parsonage to September.
  - We cannot put it on the market until the congregation votes to approve selling.
  - Consider scheduling a special congregational meeting (Oct. 1st) at our next meeting Sept. 13th which will be after the 2nd Hour discussion on Sept. 10th.
- Community Kitchen conversation regarding the grease trap and septic system has not yet occurred partly because Bob and Bruce were not available. [Jim N](#) will send an email to the parties involved (Bob K, Bruce L, Bruce S, Glenn B, Charles B) to coordinate a date for a meeting.
- Palladian window installation will probably not take place until after Labor Day.

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- Solar Panel inverter needs replacement. The manufacturer has not called Charles back. He will escalate the case tomorrow.
- Targeting spring/summer 2024 for painting the remainder of the church.
- Labyrinth as an Eagle Scout project
  - Our troop does not have any Eagle Scout candidates this year.
  - Charles will contact the Putnam scout troop.
  - Rev. Kevin has spoken with Leslie S and Bruce L, and will send out a survey to get people's thoughts prior to scheduling a meeting. He will also ask Lisa Haupt for ideas.

### Old Action Items Review

- Reminder of meeting and dinner with Carol Steinbrecher on Oct 18th.
- [Jim](#) will send out an email in October to plan dinner.
- Jim did not find anyone with interest in doing a B&B for the Roseland Cottage Arts & Crafts weekend.

### New Action Items

- [Jen D](#) will write a note of gratitude from the [GB](#) to Kim Mitchell's daughter, [Carra](#), who raised money with a lemonade stand.
- [Ginny](#) will write the GB article for Sept/Oct Share. [Suzanne](#) will let her know we are switching the topics for Sept. and Oct.
- [Rev. Kevin](#) will add sign-ups for the Sunday Offering Messages in September and October to the Sign-up Genius.
- [Suzanne](#) will continue to try to contact [Yucha](#).
- [Suzanne](#) is continuing with grant application.
- [Jim](#) will send an email to the parties involved with the CK issues (Bob K, Bruce L, Bruce S, Glenn B, Charles B) to coordinate a date for a meeting.
- [Jim](#) will send out an email in October to plan dinner for Oct. 18th.
- [Charles](#) will write an informational article about the proposed sale of the Parsonage.
- [Charles](#) will escalate the solar panel inverter issue.
- [Charles](#) will contact the Putnam Boy Scout troop.

**Closing Prayer** offered by Rev. Kevin.

**Meeting adjourned** at 8:31 pm