

First Congregational Church of Woodstock

MINUTES of GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Wednesday Nov. 8, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

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

Welcome and Opening Devotion

- Moderator, Jim N, opened the meeting at 7:02 pm.
- Rev. Kevin offered the opening reflection, sharing from “God Dreams: 12 Vision Templates for Finding and Focusing Your Church's Future” The work of this Governing Board is to remain grounded in helping our congregation to be the community we envision it to be and that God is calling us to be.

Current Action Items

- **Parsonage**
 - Updates since the Special Congregational meeting and vote to sell the parsonage:
 - Positive feedback from congregants
 - Referring people to our website for information
 - Septic has been repaired and electrical is completed.
 - John C (being a certified sanitarian) will handle paperwork and bids for the well.
 - MOTION: to hire Stephanie Gosselin as the realtor to sell the parsonage. [Charles B, 2nd Bruce S] Motion passed unanimously.
 - The Governing Board authorized Charles B to sign the contract. ADDENDUM: A motion was made on Nov. 9th via email from Charles B. MOTION: to authorize Bruce Staehle and Charles Bottieri to co-sign the contract with Stephanie Gosselin, realtor for the sale of the parsonage property. 2nd Bruce S. The motion passed unanimously.
 - The GB agrees that the property will be offered at \$375,000 with a realtor's fee of 5% (2.5% for church members).
 - The Moylans would like to stay in the house until Jan. 15th.
 - The “Offer Evaluation Team” (Bruce L, Jim N, Suzanne C, Charles B, Jen D, and Ginny M) will keep in mind our guidelines including duty of care and fiduciary obligations.
 - An easement for use of the well until we have our own, will be added to the sale agreement. We still need a survey of the church and parsonage properties. The surveyors will create an easement plan and our attorney will write the easement verbiage.
 - MOTION: to hire Atty. Ed Higgins to represent the church in the sale of the parsonage. [Charles B, 2nd Jim N] Motion passed unanimously.
 - Charles will check with Stephanie about who will work with the attorney.
- **Review of Meeting with Carol Steinbrecher**
 - Carol will take the lead with the Windham Association.
 - Ginny will get a thank you card for Carol.
 - Our work includes
 - GB members should review this document: [FacingYourChurchsUncertainFuture-full.pdf](#) (found in the GB Drive > Team

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Admin and Reference Materials > Reference Materials)

- There are five different paths a church can take: Regeneration, Collaborating, Yolking, Merging, Closing
 - Consider the idea of a symposium with surrounding churches.
 - The Vision process from the Vision & Values Team will help the GB explore the five possible paths and engage the questions to find which paths seem more viable.
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- **Bylaws Revisions Update**
 - Bruce S posted a draft in the GB Drive
 - Suggested updates include:
 - Under section II the UCC Statement of Faith will be replaced with our Bedrock Belief Statement from the Vision and Values work. [Belief Statements V&V Team 10 24 23.docx](#)
 - Quorum: At the Annual Meeting and all Special Meetings, a quorum shall consist of 25% of the average attendance for in-person Sunday worship for the previous 6 months (excluding July and August). Attendance will be tracked in a spreadsheet by the Communications Coordinator.
 - A Treasurer will be appointed by the Governing Board to serve a *three year renewable term* and need not be a member of the Governing Board. ~~The term may be renewed at the discretion of the Governing Board.~~ The Treasurer may be replaced at the request of the Treasurer or at the discretion of the Governing Board.
 - An Assistant Treasurer will be appointed by the Governing board to serve a *renewable one year term* and has the powers of and performs the duties of the Treasurer in the absence of the Treasurer, and gives assistance to the Treasurer. ~~The Assistant Treasurer may be replaced at the request of the Assistant Treasurer or at the discretion of the Governing Board.~~
 - A Clerk will be appointed by the Governing Board to serve a *two year renewable term* and need not be a member of the Governing Board. ~~The Clerk may be replaced at the request of the Clerk or at the discretion of the Governing Board.~~
 - Bruce S will make updates to the draft document.
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- **Nominations for 2024**
 - Review of letters from the Lymans regarding their “retirement” from the many duties they have performed for the church over the years. This represents a phenomenal amount of work that takes place behind the scenes and we are very grateful to the Lymans for their care and dedication.
 - The Property Management team has been depleted due to members moving away and aging out, leaving the team woefully understaffed.
 - Charles B will define a list of categories and subcategories, enumerating the duties under Facilities/Property Management, to include handling the Daycare, to aid the GB in seeking assistance from the congregation.
 - Jim N volunteered to be the contact person for the Grounds category.
 - Consider another “job” fair and personal invitations to cover the duties/categories for Facilities.

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- Notify the congregation that we are accepting candidate suggestions for the Governing Board. Jim N is retiring from the GB, but all other members are willing to continue on the board. We will put an announcement in the Friday email. [Bruce S](#) will make an announcement during church.

Ministry Update (Rev. Kevin)

- See full report [2023.11.08 Minstry Update.pdf](#)
- Due to health problems, Mitra submitted her resignation from her position as Children and Family Ministry coordinator.

Facilities Report (Charles B)

- See full report [November 2023 Facilities Report. pdf](#)
- The carpet in Harrison Hall is scheduled to be cleaned Nov. 29.
- The Palladian window installation is complete.
- “30/30 Food Truck” is looking for a commercial kitchen to work out of for the winter. Unfortunately the fact that they use a fryolator, as well as other aspects of their service, will not work with our facility.

Financial Report (Suzanne C)

- See full report [Financial Reports October 2023.pdf](#)
- As of Sunday Nov. 5th, we had \$108,000 in pledges for 2024.
- Stewardship will start follow-up calls next week.
- Suzanne recommends a special GB budget meeting with the Financial Team prior to the December GB meeting. Meeting scheduled for Dec. 6th at 7 pm.
- Suzanne and Rev. Kevin will meet prior to that special meeting.
- The Governing Board will have to vote on the housing allowance (required for the IRS) at the December GB meeting.

New action Items

- [Charles](#) will check with Stephanie about who will work with the attorney.
- [Ginny](#) will get a thank you card for Carol.
- [GB members](#) should review “Facing Your Church’s Uncertain Future”
- [Bruce S](#) will make updates to the proposed bylaws draft document.
- [Charles](#) will define a list of categories and subcategories, enumerating the duties under Facilities/Property Management.

Closing Prayer offered by Rev. Kevin.

Meeting adjourned 9:08 pm