

First Congregational Church of Woodstock

MINUTES of GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Wednesday Dec. 13, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

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

Welcome and Opening Devotion

- Moderator, Jim N, opened the meeting at 7:04 pm.
- Rev. Kevin shared “Glow” from the Advent Devotionals from the UCC.

Current Action Items:

Parsonage

- The survey is underway.
- The well is under contract with LaFramboise.
- Charles will prepare notes and review of the offers (with personal information redacted) to share with the congregation (update the website).
- When the sale closes we will have an announcement and celebration with the congregation.

Annual Meeting Prep

- **Push Annual meeting to the end of January.**
 - MOTION: to move the 2024 Annual Meeting date to the last Sunday in January. [Bruce S., 2nd Charles B]. Motion passed unanimously.
- **Nominations Updates for GB**
 - No self-nominations have come in.
 - GB suggested nominees.
 - Jim N will contact the possible candidates.
- **Ministry Plan and Budget Update**
 - A contribution of \$2,000, which we had hoped for, did come in, and was added to line 401.03. That \$2,000 was added to Office Supplies for the purpose of replacing the “Church Windows” program.
 - After discussion with the Worship Team, the accompanist salary (Item 503.07) was reduced from \$7,800 to \$4,400.
 - Actual pledges are up to \$132,000, with \$5,000 more anticipated, for a total of \$137,000.
 - We don’t expect any further changes to the budget other than more pledges.
 - We will need to work on creating a more sustainable budget in the coming year.
 - MOTION: to accept the proposed 2024 Budget “2023.12.13 version B” as presented, for presentation at the 2024 Annual meeting, with the provision that minor adjustments may be made. Bruce S., 2nd Charles B. Motion passed unanimously.
 - Only the “2024 Budget Summary” tab from the Budget draft needs to be posted to the website. The “2024 Budget Detail” tab will be used for the Budget Crunch meeting.
 - Plan to ask for support of specific Angel Fund items via the Friday emails, etc. Current Angel Fund priorities are an Orbi Mesh Wifi and Sound System updates (wireless mics and mixer). Toby will write up these requests.
- **Bylaws Revision (Bruce S)**
 - Addressing Latest Comments and Suggestions
 - *Set a specific dollar amount the GB can authorize without a congregational*

First Congregational Church of Woodstock

MINUTES of GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Wednesday Dec. 13, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

meeting.

- It is agreed, \$25,000 is a reasonable amount to handle emergency expenses.
- ADDENDUM: On Dec 20th, after the GB discussed this point via email, it was decided that it is better not to name a specific dollar amount. In the event of an emergency that cannot wait for a congregational meeting, the GB must be able to act for the congregation. The following wording for the bylaws was agreed upon:
 - [The Governing Board] acts for the Congregation, where appropriate, between Annual Meetings, including the ability to authorize emergency expenditures.
- *Update the wording of categories in the Openness and Inclusivity section*
 - This wording references our Open & Affirming statement. We would need to change our O&A statement before changing the bylaws. This may come after defining our Vision & Values.
- *Consider clarification of the term Community in section "Relationship/Connection with others..."*
 - This comes from the statement from the Vision & Values team and would need to be changed there before changing the bylaws.
- *Reconsider the terms of service for the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.*
 - The GB will keep the current wording, feeling that having added the terms "renewable term" covers this issue.
- *Consider moving the "keeper of the corporate seal" to the clerk from the treasurer.*
 - The GB believes it is logical for the seal to be kept by the treasurer, in the treasurer's office which can be locked.
- *Remove or change all references to committees in favor of teams.*
 - The GB feels there is a difference between committees and teams. These terms need to be better defined before any changes.
- *Move the Annual Meeting to November.*
 - Currently, having the meeting in January means we operate in January on an unapproved budget. This causes unnecessary complexity in the way we deal with our finances in our budget, especially with respect to salaries and taxes.
 - Possible solutions are:
 - Move the Annual Meeting to November.
 - Give the GB clear authority (via the bylaws) to be able to allow the budget to take effect on January 1st in good faith, knowing that adjustments might be made at the annual meeting.
 - Split the Annual Meeting into two meetings, with just a budget meeting in early December and the rest of the meeting issues in January.
 - The preferred solution at this time is to get approval from the congregation to entrust the GB to operate on the new budget in January prior to the vote. [Rev Kevin](#) will draft an explanation for the congregation in order to vote on this at the Annual Meeting this year,

First Congregational Church of Woodstock

MINUTES of GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Wednesday Dec. 13, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

thus fixing the issue for 2025.

- Plan "Bylaws and Budget" review for Jan. 14, 2024, which will combine the Annual Budget Crunch with the bylaws revisions.

- **Annual Report**

- Content is due by Jan. 3, 2024.
- The template for everyone to add their content is in the Communication Drive > Planning and Budgeting folder > 2024 ACM > 2023 Annual Report Draft.
- The [clerk](#) will draft the GB Annual Report.

Image and Video Use Policy (Bruce S)

- Policy update is needed regarding images of children and vulnerable persons.
- MOTION: Replace the current policy with the proposed policy from Bruce S.(based on the UCC guidelines). Rev. Kevin, 2nd Jim N. Passed unanimously.
- This policy statement is found in the Policy Repository Drive > Communications Policies > FCCW Image and Video Use Policy

Property Management Team Revitalization (Charles B)

- See Facilities Maintenance Management Planning pdf [Facility Maint Mgt Planning.pdf](#)
- All maintenance requests must be submitted via the new Facility Maintenance Request Form [Facility Maint Request.pdf](#) This form will be posted on our website. Do not send requests directly to Charles.
- Some tasks should be moved to other teams, ie: the piano humidifier responsibility could be moved to the music team.
- Daycare liaison: Rev. Kevin volunteered to handle the daily communications and issues with the daycare (mainly because he is consistently on site). Billing and financial issues will still remain the purview of the Financial Team.
- Plan an annual chore day.
- Publish a monthly task wish list.
- Candidates were suggested for the Property Maintenance Team. Jim Nowak volunteered.
- Create division of labor, ie: Kitchen, Grounds, etc.
- Maintenance jobs will be listed in a shared drive.

Creating Our Future

- Discussions about creating a culture of Grace and Gratitude as we progress through difficult times was postponed due to lack of time at this meeting.
- Vision & Values planning next steps: Where would we like to be in the future?
 - Imagine, dream, envision our future church.
 - Be creative without creating anxiety.
 - We will share our different visions and try to find similarities, while listening for where God is trying to lead us.

Ministry Update (Rev. Kevin)

- See full report [2023.12.13 Ministry Update.pdf](#)
- Plan next steps with Rev. Steinbrecher. She suggests we start by exploring Module 1 of the ADAPT program. See <https://www.sneucc.org/adapt>.

First Congregational Church of Woodstock

MINUTES of GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Wednesday Dec. 13, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

- Rev. Kevin attended a meeting about keeping sacred spaces safe. See details in his report.
 - EWCC is interested in doing further work in this program with us.

Facilities Report (Charles B)

- See full report [December 2023 Facilities Report.pdf](#)

Financial Report (Suzanne C)

- See full report [FCCW Financial Reports 2023 November.pdf](#)
- Pastor's Housing Allowance motion required by the IRS:
 - MOTION: That beginning January 1, 2024 the portion of the pastor's salary designated as a housing allowance in accordance with Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code shall continue to be \$1679 per month until the compensation rates in the 2024 budget take effect, at which time the housing allowance designated in the 2024 budget shall replace it and shall continue in effect until a new designation occurs. Suzanne, 2nd Charles B. Motion passed with one abstention.

Other Business

- Rev Kevin will contact Dottie Durst regarding the offer of a big screen TV.
- Add appreciation of leaders at the Annual meeting.
- Suzanne needs two new members for the Counting Team.

New action Items

- *GB members specific Action Items are now in a separate document.*

Closing Prayer: Jim asked for a moment of silence for all those who are grieving the loss of a loved one during this holiday season.

Meeting adjourned @9:24pm