

First Congregational Church of Woodstock
Minutes of Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday Jan. 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. (via Google Meets)

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 7:01 pm.
- Rev. Kevin shared from “Prayers Encircling the World”.

Parsonage Update (Charles B)

- The buyers have a concern about the easement for the new well.
 - John C is communicating with the health department for clarity on this.
 - Our attorney may need to draft an additional explanation.

Annual Meeting Prep

- **Nominations Update (Jim N)**
 - Jim N spoke with five possible candidates for the 2024 Governing Board. Carl Davis accepted the nomination!
 - Additionally Jen Duggan and Ginny Moylan had agreed to be nominees for 2024.
 - Jim N will write the nominating report for the Annual Meeting.
- **Budget (Suzanne C)**
 - A PowerPoint for the Budget discussion on Sunday and the latest revision of the Budget are on the GB shared drive. These will also be posted on the webpage.
 - The PowerPoint includes the Finance Team’s main goals for 2024:
 - Work with the Governing Board to: find new streams of income, plan the best use of funds from the parsonage sale, and take advantage of energy saving.
 - Continue to use donor-restricted funds when appropriate.
 - 3.2% COLA increase (same as Social Security COLA) for staff hired before 7/1/23.
 - Continue to invest available cash in interest bearing account.
 - All GB members should review these and contact Suzanne with any suggested updates.
 - Toby B met with the treasurer of the East Woodstock Congregational Church and decided to adopt their style of presenting the budget items. Both Income and Expense lines for a particular area of the budget will be listed together with Income (400’s items) listed first and Expense items (500’s items) listed second. This makes it easier to see the connection between certain income and expense items.
 - The Parsonage is listed at the end under “Extraordinary Items”.
 - The steeple window repair is not listed (the cost is unknown at this point) but it would fall under “Extraordinary Items” as well.
 - Charles will write a brief notice for the Friday email letting the congregation know there has been some wind damage.

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- **Bylaws Revisions (Bruce S)**

- Budget points for the Sunday 2nd Hour meeting have been posted in the GB drive and copies will be distributed at the meeting for review.
- Thanks to Sam L for her suggested corrections of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Her other concerns can be discussed at the 2nd Hour meeting.

Annual Report Prep (Rev. Kevin)

- All members should review and send edit suggestions to Rev. Kevin
- Jim N will update the Annual Meeting Agenda.
- The archivist (Bruce L) felt there was not anything worth noting, so an Archivist's report will not be included this year.

Action Items Review (Jim N)

- Charles created an update on the Parsonage sale for our website.
- Charles has not yet had the opportunity to contact the candidates for the Property Maintenance Team.
- Rev. Kevin has created a draft resolution and explanation of the January budget problem, [draft resolution.docx](#) This proposal will be added to the agenda of the Annual meeting.
 - The Finance Leader (Suzanne C) reviewed and approved this resolution.
 - This is not a bylaws change, but simply an accounting policy.
- The big screen TV that was offered, is no longer available.
- Karen Graves and Tom Duggan both agreed to be nominated to the Counting Team.
- Bruce S updated the Video and Image Use Policy.
- Rev. Kevin will acknowledge those "retiring" from church leadership positions during the Annual Meeting.

Teams and Ministries Fair

- Schedule for Sunday Feb. 4, 2024 after the service.
- Make announcements during Sunday services (starting this Sunday) and at the Annual Meeting.
- Put a notice in the Friday email.
- Bruce S. suggested "Ministry Minutes" as another way to share information regarding the teams' and ministries' work.
 - Each ministry could create a brief video to put on the website, describing what they do and how to get involved.
 - Have teams and ministries give brief presentations during Sunday services.
 - Bruce will contact the various teams/ministries, and assist in creating the videos.

Administrative Notes (Rev. Kevin)

- The second Wednesday of February, which would be our next meeting, is also Ash Wednesday. The GB agreed to move the meeting to Wed. 2/21/2024.
- MOTION: to have a brief meeting immediately following the Annual Meeting in order to elect officers for the 2024 Governing Board. Jim N./2nd Charles B. Motion passed unanimously.

Ministry Update (Rev. Kevin)

- See full report [2024.01.11 Ministry Update.pdf](#)

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- For website publication we need the Agenda (Jim) and the Minutes (Laura) cleaned up, removing names, comments, etc.
- Rev. Kevin will be meeting with Rev. Sue Foster (EWCC) next Tuesday, in part, to discuss their level of interest in collaboration.

Facilities Report (Charles B)

- See full report [2024.01.09 Facilities Report.pdf](#)
- The company that did the energy audit in August (M&M) never provided a report. Charles contacted Energize CT and Eversource who connected him with Earthlight Technologies. They are scheduled to do an audit Jan. 17th.

Financial Report (Suzanne C)

- See full financial report [FCCW Financial Reports December 2023.pdf](#)
- The 2023 Employee Retention Credit was the last opportunity for funding due to the pandemic.
- We are looking into saving money on energy with the energy audit. Some funding may be available there.
- There was a surplus of \$18,000 in the budget at the end of the year. The finance team proposed putting the \$9,000 from Ministry-related areas into the Ministry Reserve Fund and the remaining \$9k should be added to the Capital Improvements Reserve Fund.
- The budget was helped by the fact that oil was lower than expected and we were very frugal.
- The angel fund for improvements to the sound system is at about \$800 of our \$2,000 goal.
 - Rev. Kevin will ask Toby B to make another bid for funds.
- The finance team knows the next few years will be challenging and is looking to the GB for help and direction on how to sustain and improve funding.

Specific GB New Action Items are now in a separate document

Closing Prayer: Rev. Kevin offered the closing prayer.

Meeting adjourned @8:31pm