

Minutes of Congregation Council Meeting
March 17, 2020
7:00 PM

- I. **Call to Order** at 7:02pm. Note that this meeting was a virtual meeting, with members of Council calling in via a Zoom arrangement, allowing for audio only or audio-visual participation.
- A. **Attendance:** M. Binkley, M. Blower, F. Casciano, R. Doty, Pr. R. Elliott, K. Ervin, S. Mathieu, C. McGrath, K. McNally, N. McNally, C. Pirrotta, Pr. T. Reichley, D. Rohrbach, Pr. S. Steele, M. Stanziola, R. Stevens
- B. **Excused Absences:** There were no absences.
- C. **Devotions:** Bob Stevens
- II. **Approval of Minutes**
- A. **January 21, 2020 Council Meeting - Motion:** To approve January monthly council meeting minutes as presented - by Mark Stanziola, second by Rick Doty. Motion **Approved.**
- B. **Minutes of February 12, 2020 Council Electronic Vote** on 2020 goals and **Minutes of February 13-14 Council Electronic Vote** on clergy housing allowance requests for 2020 – Motion: to approve minutes for the two electronic votes as presented – by Mark Blower, second by Mark Stanziola. Motion **Approved.**
- III. **Staff Reports**
- Sharon McCabe may need a second surgery on the shoulder receiving treatment in 2019.
 - Pr. Elliott moved and Rick Doty seconded a motion to add Kyle David and Faye Casciano to the Staff Support Team, replacing John Letts and Pam Harshey who had been serving for many years on the Team. Such moves are a part of a planned rotation of personnel onto and off the Team. Motion **Approved.**
 - A Campaign Building Team has been formed to oversee contract development and construction scheduling and performance under the Capital Campaign. Chris Carter is serving as the Staff Liaison for the Team.
 - Although the Nursery School is closed due to the COVID-19 situation, Nursery School staff will continue to be paid for now per the current contractual language.
 - Mark Stanziola discussed a letter received from Deacon Jane Elliott, requesting Council accept her intent to retire effective July 1, 2020. Her plan would be to be absent for the summer months and return to Holy Spirit in mid-September 2020 as the Senior Pastor's wife and a retired deacon. Mark moved that Council accept the retirement as planned and notify the congregation of the retirement. Faye Casciano seconded the motion. After discussion, Council **Approved** the motion. Per Council discussion, Bob Stevens will notify the congregation on or about March 18th, noting Council's acceptance of Jane's plan and noting also that there is no plan

for Pr. Elliott to retire at this time. Council agreed that care will need to be taken in drafting the communications, given for example how the COVID-19 related considerations might affect planning of a celebration of Jane's time with the congregation and might affect finalization of planning for appropriate staff changes and/or alignment of responsibilities. As an aside, Council understands that Jane is on Medicare as a primary medical insurance plan, but may be eligible for supplementary insurance under the ELCA plan covering Pr. Elliott.

IV. Mission Team Reports/Items for Council

Finance Mission Team– Rick Doty observed that February net cash flow was slightly better than expected, driven primarily by expenses being lower than expected. Operating cash reserve remains near \$156k, so we are in a reasonably good position starting a time of financial uncertainty, given LCHS will likely be unable to hold services in the facility for a number of weeks. That being said, with average monthly expenses on the order of \$80k, discussion under agenda item VI will touch on how to maintain revenues over the next several months. (See the minutes regarding agenda item VI.)

V. Old Business

No items of old business were discussed.

VI. New Business

A. Coronavirus Response

Bob Stevens noted that the facility is closed for services, meetings (except for staff meetings) and Nursery School until March 29th; the facility is locked except for times when paid and unpaid staff are working within the facility (office area and Fellowship Center); and no outside groups are using the facility until March 29th. Upcoming baptisms are likely to be held in home settings, and funerals would be expected to be services only for close family, with larger celebrations of life scheduled for later dates. No weddings are scheduled for the church in the next several weeks.

By sense of Council, the staff and Executive Committee have the authority to make necessary decisions on extension of the closure beyond March 29th, to the time of the next scheduled Council meeting.

Financial ramifications would potentially be large if the closure would extend to about eight weeks or longer. Given expenses on the order of \$80k/month and only Simply Giving revenues of about \$20k/month, the operating cash reserve would be depleted in the 8-10 week time frame. Ideas are requested from Council members about means to maintain the needed revenue stream in the coming weeks. Communications to congregation members about financial support will certainly be needed, written in a way sensitive to the changing financial conditions in which congregation members may find themselves during the COVID-19 turmoil.

There are some volunteers to help needy or vulnerable congregation members with shopping or other errands over the next few weeks. Needs should be brought to the

attention of the Pastors. There may also be a way to let people drop off donations at the church for the local benevolent groups our congregation routinely supports. Loneliness and the need for the faith community were also discussed. The idea is to develop or use already developed online and similar resources to get information to and engage members. Ideas are also being developed regarding ways to hold services or discussions, either virtually or “drive-in” or by means still being defined. Those could be aimed at large audiences or at specific demographic groups or individuals/families. Pastor Reichley will be forming a group to brainstorm ideas to be developed. Initially, there are plans to send out congregation-wide email texts and videos and to upload sermon and other worship-service related information to the church website. Phone calls initially will replace home and hospital visits while visitation restrictions are in place.

VII. Next Steps

A. Next Meeting Date: Special Council meeting on March 31 at 7 PM. Another virtual meeting via Zoom or equivalent technology is planned. The primary topic is expected to be updating plans given the COVID-19 situation.

B. To Do/Assignments: Devotions for March 31 – Rick Doty

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned with prayer by Pr. Elliott.

Time of adjournment: 8:32 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Doty, Council Secretary