

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

- I. **Call to Order** at 7:03 pm. 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, C. McGrath, K. McNally, N. McNally, C. Pirrotta, Pr. T. Reichley, D. Rohrbach, M. Stanziola, Pr. S. Steele, R. Stevens
- B. **Excused Absences / Absent:** S. Mathieu
- C. **Devotions:** C. Pirrotta
- II. **Approval of Minutes**
- October 20, 2020 Council Meeting - Motion:** To approve October 20th Council meeting minutes as submitted - by M. Stanziola, second by F. Casciano. Motion **Approved**.
- Minutes of Council Electronic Votes of October 28, 2020 and November 6, 2020 – Motion:** To approve the minutes of the Council electronic votes of October 28 and November 6 as submitted – by K. Ervin, second by Pr. R. Elliott. Motion **Approved**.
- III. **Staff Reports**
- Pr. Elliott talked about the apparent stability of numbers of participants attending the Zoom-based services on Sunday over recent months, including the Rejoicing Spirits events. He also mentioned a conversation he had with incoming Synod Bishop C. deForest regarding the Bishop’s speaking at a CFL session in the spring of 2021 and the possibility of Holy Spirit’s being an “Anchor Church” as the concept of sharing ministries moves forward.
- Pr. Elliott observed that plans for the first quarter of 2021 are being made assuming that most if not all services and events for Holy Spirit will continue to be on line for that time period. Related to that continued primary use of on-line opportunities, Pr. Elliott noted the many pastoral care needs of the congregation, both for physical and mental/social issues. There is a need for discovering better ways to handle fatigue, lack of connectedness and the need for authentic relationships. On the positive side, Pr. Elliott recognized the blessings of the many outreach activities of the congregation that continue to be well supported.
- IV. **Mission Team Reports**
- A. **Staff Relations** – Recommendations of the Team were brought forward. The first is for base salary increases for staff to be allocated at 2% for 2021. The second

recommendation is for addition of a “Director of Communications” or similarly titled part-time position in 2021. The incumbent would assist with audio and visual production and with electronic communications, including those on social media. It was stated that staff believe that addition of a communications specialist would be appropriate.

By sense of Council, (1) the +2% to base salaries is to be used in developing the draft budget for 2021 and (2) the draft budget is to include a communications specialist line initially set at about \$10k (e.g., one-half year position at \$20k/year).

B. Faith Formation for Youth and Young Adults – K. Ervin noted that youth are being engaged and should be encouraged to further engage in some of the Outreach activities of the congregation.

C. Finance (R. Doty) – (a) October operating income was about \$3.9k lower than expected, while October operating expenses were about \$9.1k lower than expected. This resulted in a net income of about -\$22.9k as compared to the expected -\$28.0k. An operating cash balance of about \$124k was held at the end of October.

(b) The Payroll Protection Program loan forgiveness application has been approved by the Federal government, changing the loan to a grant.

(c) The capital campaign cash balance is about \$431k.

The Finance Mission Team made three separate motions for Council approval:

1. Finance moves that contributions designated as Advent gifts in 2020 be given by the congregation to the World Hunger Appeal. Pr. R. Elliott seconded the motion, which was **Approved**.

2. Finance moves that in 2020 a non-budgeted benevolence gift of \$180 be sent to United Lutheran Seminary, in line with the resolution adopted for congregations during the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly in October 2020. Pr. T. Reichley seconded the motion, which was **Approved**. An additional motion of the Finance Mission Team then was made, that a supplemental benevolence gift of \$180 per year to United Lutheran Seminary is to be placed in each year’s congregational budget, to help address the shortage of rostered leaders in the ELCA. This is in line with the resolution adopted for congregations during the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly in October 2020. The motion was seconded by Pr. T. Reichley and was **Approved**.

3. Finance moves that the amount of money granted to the congregation via the Payroll Protection Program process be allocated as follows:

a. \$20k to be used as a maximum offset to reduce a potential Nursery School budget deficit for the 2020-2021 school year (as previously discussed by Council);

b. ~\$19k (~\$18k principal, plus interest at 1% per year) to be used to pay back the congregation’s loan (for roofing repairs) to the congregation’s general endowment fund;

c. ~\$37.8k to be used to reimburse the amount paid for the congregation’s deposit for a replacement organ, this amount to be returned to the operating cash balance when the anticipated contributions specifically for the organ replacement are realized;

d. ~\$16k to be used to pay the remainder of the congregation's budgeted benevolences for 2020 (excluding that for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod) as soon as reasonably possible; and

e. the remainder of the grant amount (potentially ~\$35k) be placed into the congregation's operating cash balance.

This motion was seconded by M. Binkley. After discussion regarding the operating cash balance projections and the means the congregation used to fulfill the requirements of the PPP process to turn the loan into a grant, Council **Approved** the motion.

V. Old Business

A. Capital Campaign – Congregational Meeting -- R. Stevens will be discussing the status of the project planning during the CFL session on November 22nd. A congregational meeting is proposed for December 20th, to put the capital campaign project to a vote regarding project scope, price, and schedule. If there is not a vote in December 2020, a month-by-month delay in the project schedule is estimated. Best available project info is expected to be available by December 3, and notice of the proposed meeting date is expected to go out by December 6.

Voting will be done electronically, likely using Google Forms or a similar platform. For those few people without electronic access, voting by mail, with results to be received in the church office before December 20th, is to be made available.

By sense of Council, the plan as described above is deemed acceptable.

B. Potential Cub Pack / Scout Troop Sponsorship – Final discussion of this topic was tabled due to the absence of a key contributor to the discussion. There was limited discussion of the potential for any legal liability issues that might arise via the congregation's sponsoring an existent pack / troop previously sponsored by another organization, given the numerous legal and financial issues of the Boy Scouts of America at this time.

C. Council Election Nominees – Input from the Nominating Team is as follows: Nominating moves the Council approve four persons for the ballot for election to Council at the congregation's annual meeting in early 2021: N. McNally and M. Stanziola for a second three-year term, and M. Epperly and A. Grubb for a first three-year term. C. Pirrotta seconded the motion, which was **Approved**. Nomination of a youth representative to Council awaits action by Pr. Steele.

VI. New Business

A. Endowment Trustees – Holy Spirit is required to have three trustees administering its endowment funds. The following motion was made by R. Stevens: Endowment Trustees for the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit as of January 1, 2021 are M. Casciano, R. Doty, and T. Wotring. Pr. T. Reichley seconded the motion, which was **Approved**.

B. PPP Loan / Grant – See the discussion under IV.C.3 above related to approval of a motion from Finance to allocate the monies received via the PPP grant process.

C. Director of Technology / Communications – Staff Relations had provided for Council review a letter of recommendation regarding the proposed position and also a draft job description for the proposed position. See the discussion under IV.A above related to Council’s actions to take a first budgeting step toward filling such a position.

VII. Next Steps

A. Next Meeting Date: December 15 at 7 PM

B. To Do/Assignments: Devotions for December 15th meeting – M. Blower

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned with prayer by Pr. Steele.

Time of adjournment: 8:35 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Doty, Council Secretary