

## **Wellesley Village Church**

### **Church Council Meeting**

**November 2, 2021**

#### **Minutes**

**Present:** Cynthia Sibold (Moderator), John Snyder (Vice Moderator), Leif Hille (Immediate Past Moderator); Sarah Sarchet Butter (Senior Pastor); Council Members Joe Yang (Community), Kathy Schleyer (Worship), Sue Grant (Welcome); Julie Barker (Human Resources) Steve Pfaff (Human Resources), Drew Spangler (Finance), Phil Carens (Properties); Mitch Coddington (Treasurer), Jim Mongiardo (Clerk); Dan Garrison (Stewardship), Mark Lenci (Vision 2021), David Oliver (Nominating) and Paul Schendel (Congregational Church Weston).

#### **Meeting Conducted in Person and Electronically through Zoom Video Conferencing**

**Opening Devotions:** Moderator Cynthia Sibold asked Senior Pastor Sarah Sarchet Butter to lead us in prayer. Sarah gave thanks to God and asked that God use us as instruments for God's work. She thanked the Moderator team and ended by praying that we can do more together than apart.

**Psalm Practice:** For this meeting's Psalm Practice, Council Member Joe Yang picked Psalm 119, beginning at verse 164. This is the longest Psalm as well as the longest Chapter in the Bible. It provides a way to always pray during the day. Joe read verses 164 through 176.

**Approval of October 5 Council Minutes:** Cynthia noted that the October 5 Council Minutes had been distributed in advance of the meeting. She asked if there were any revisions to the Minutes. Jim Mongiardo advised that the Co-Chairs of the Associate Pastor Search Committee had requested that certain specifics be deleted given the fact these minutes will become public. At this point in the search process, they wanted to keep confidential certain actions which were in the circulated minutes. Subject to these requested edits, Cynthia asked for a motion to approve. The motion was made, seconded and the October 5 Council minutes as revised were unanimously approved.

**Pastor Remarks:** Cynthia then asked Sarah for her remarks. Sarah began by commenting that the energy in the Sanctuary during the hearing this past Sunday was positive. The technology worked so that members at home could participate. She continued noting that the staff is well into planning for the November and December services. All Saints Sunday is November 7, there will be three baptisms on Sunday, November 14, new members will be welcomed Sunday, November 21 and the First Sunday of Advent is November 28. Area conference Minister for the Northeast Region of SNECUCC, the Rev. Alex Shea Will, will be preaching for this service during which we will be installing our two Pastoral Residents, the Rev. Bob Feeny, and the Rev. Megan Berkowitz.

**Discovery Workshop:** Cynthia discussed the Discovery Workshop held in the Upper Room on Thursday, October 21. David Bartholomew of SNECUCC conducted the workshop. David told participants that the number of 501 (c) (3) non-profits had dramatically grown from 275,000 in 1977 to 1.5 million in 2019. This means that there is a dramatic increase in competition for giving both financially and for people's time. The religious market share of philanthropic giving has been declining. The major donor trends/asks include (1) a desire to make a difference; (2) transparency, accountability, and data; (3) the need for strong leadership staff; and (4) the need for an easy way to give, e.g., online or through mobile devices. Donors want to know your mission, your impact on your immediate community, and how you measure success. There has been a paradigm shift from traditional giving, e.g., moral, institution centered with trusted institutions, to aspirational mission centered giving.

Cynthia said this paradigm shift is consistent with what we learned from Vision 2020/2021. There are opportunities to expand welcome, empower service and use spiritual gifts as we deepen our partnership relationships such as Congregational Church of Weston (CCW), Charles Street AME Church and SNECuCC. She then started a discussion of our current organizational structure and its possible modification asking whether each Board needs the current size of its membership.

Phil Carens said that the Board of Properties needed to cover multiple expertises before the addition of a Properties Administrator to staff. This staff person provides an opportunity to rethink the number of people needed for the Board of Properties. Sarah said that asking someone to commit to a three-year Board term is challenging. Perhaps we could think of limiting the number of Boards with three-year terms and creating ad hoc groups with limited duration to free members to participate in missions. Small group ministries are hard to populate if a member is already committed to a three-year Board term.

Steve Pfaff commented that while certain expertise is needed for the Board of Human Resources membership, its current nine-member structure is too large. Dan Garrison said that a Church our size usually has a dedicated staff member for stewardship. The model should be similar to Properties with a Properties Administrator. In response to a question about how much we staff versus use of volunteers, Sarah commented that development is a very sophisticated world and to provide what everyone else is getting from other non-profits, we should be considering a half time development person similar to a half time Properties Administrator. Mitch Coddington pointed out that finance may be a possibility for reassessment. Both Mitch, as the new Treasurer, and Marina Berga, as the new Church Accountant, started at about the same time and had to learn together. Helpful in this process was Leslie Petzing, the Church Controller, who assisted in managing Marina's growth. Consideration of a part time Chief Financial Officer should be placed in the mix of possible changes. John Snyder commented that if we outsource multiple functions, who will oversee and supervise these new staff members. David Oliver, the Chair of the Board of Nominating, advised that there are currently 46 open positions which the Board needs to fill. He said that when adding up the number of members who have served in the past or who are coming off a term, there are 174 possibilities to fill these openings.

## **Board, Ministry and Partner Updates:**

**Board of Finance:** Drew Spangler (Chair) shared a power point presentation for the 2022 budget. He began with an overview advising that the 2022 budget process has begun. The plan is to finalize it in January after the books have been closed for 2021. He reviewed seven years of data beginning with Income. The Church has been growing and each year usually has more income than expenses. Pledges account for 89% of income, unpledged giving 8% of income and loose, special collections 3% of income. With respect to non-giving related income, 67% is from endowments, 19% from rent and 15% from the T-Mobile antennas in the steeple. On the expense side using traditional categories, human resources is 70% of the budget, service 12% of the budget with half that amount being our UCM contribution, properties 8% of expenses and the reminder the other administrative and ministry functions. The Board is considering changing the nomenclature of the budget to narrative descriptions.

The trend in giving has been positive over most of the past decade. For the last three years, giving has been flat at about \$1.3 million and has been below budgeted targets. He noted that income from giving through September is pacing below average but is part of a trend. The recent giving patterns of members are back end loaded for the year. The old model was pledges being even throughout the year, the new model is larger lump sum payments at the end of the year. These trends make budgeting more challenging.

Investment income has been a bright spot with increases every year for the past seven years. We have benefitted from an increase in the stock market since the payout for each budget is 4% of the trailing 20 quarters. As the markets go up, distributions go up. In addition, there had been an extraordinary gift in 2020 which added \$900,000 to endowment principal.

For 2022, the preliminary income estimates include:

Investment income	plus \$25,000
Steeple income	minus \$5,000 (steeple repairs take offline)
Use of facilities	plus \$45,000 (Chinese Language School rental agreement)
Loose collections	no change
Miscellaneous	no change
Pledge income	no change

For 2022, the preliminary expense estimates include:

Human resources	plus \$65,000
Properties	plus \$4,000
Finance	plus \$2,000
Service	plus \$3,000

At this point in the budgeting process, this will result in a budget deficit of \$44,000. Drew said that the Church is able to absorb budget deficits since there was a cash surplus for 2020 and another cash surplus is expected for 2021. However, we still will want to move to balanced budgets in the near term.

**Human Resources:** Julie Barker (Co-Chair) said that there are three major items under consideration. These include the Associate Pastor Search, 2022 budget and staff reviews which have been completed for the year. She said that the Board is in the process of extending Interim Associate Pastor Diane Seaborn's contract through Easter, April 17, 2022. The contract extension, which is being drafted by Co-Chair Steve Pfaff, will include a thirty day out clause for both sides.

**Board of Properties:** Phil Carens reported that the update of the security systems is moving forward, and quotes are now being solicited for painting the balance of the interior of the Church. Painters Pride has been asked to give a new quote for steeple repairs without the need to remove solar panels.

**Congregational Church of Weston:** Paul Schendel reported that in person worship began at CCW in early September. The Sunday service had been moved to 5pm to accommodate staffing needs. After six weeks, there had been a gathering of CCW members to discuss how the active members were feeling about the time change. There was clear pain expressed about the loss of Sunday morning worship but also overwhelming support for the Pastoral Residents staffing program. The 5pm service gives WVC and CCW a third option on Sunday for meaningful worship alternatives to attend. Participation in the 5pm service at CCW hasn't grown but also has not shrunk significantly. CCW remains open to continuing this small, intimate, meaningful 5pm service.

**Charles Street AME Church and WVC New Initiative:** Cynthia advised that Mathew McKay has been in communication with Charles Street which is in the process of organizing itself for this new initiative. Mathew expects more details from Charles Street in the next couple of weeks.

**Congregational Ministry Initiatives:** Sue Grant reported for the Welcome/Sharing Deacons. She said that two Seeker Orientation sessions have been held. Each included individuals discussing their faith journeys which was very moving. The postcard effort appears to have been helpful in gaining visitors this fall. A second postcard effort is planned. Joe Yang reported for the Community deacons. He commented on the flower delivery after Sunday's service. Kathy Schleyer said there was no update for the Worship Deacons.

**Additional Business:** There was no additional business.

**Calendar Dates:** Cynthia said there will be no Council meeting in December. The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 4, 2022.

**Closing Prayer:** Cynthia concluded the meeting with a prayer, noting that being together in person and by video conference felt like one space listening for God's voice.

Faithfully submitted,  
Jim Mongiardo, Clerk