

FCC Board Meeting
First Congregational Church of Minnesota, United Church of Christ
Thursday, December 19, 2024, 7:00 – 8:30 pm
Meeting on Zoom

Minutes

Attendance: Xan Laurence, Jane McBride, Carl Dyar, Jean Anderson, Linda Valerian, Hikaru Peterson, Kris Felbeck

Absence: Mary Byers, Paul Fate, Tom von Sternberg

1. Opening - Xan
2. Check in with each other.
3. Approve minutes from November meeting (see attached, also in Dropbox).
Motion: Xan/Carl - approved
4. Approve minutes from Annual Meeting
Motion: Jean/Hikaru - approved
5. Adopt special offering calendar for 2025
Jane: Same as 2024, except that Sanctuary offering is moved to January, since there might be needs early in the year. And we've eliminated the neighborhood organization in November – we have less alignment with the newly merged neighborhood organization than in the past. Jane feels that sharing between two organizations results in small amounts (monthly amount can vary), so the November offering will focus solely on Southeast Seniors.
Motion: Approved by hand count
6. Appoint committee members and chairs, fill Board-appointed positions
Not clear about Jeff Peterson (possibly for Building Committee) and Tom von Sternberg (does he want to continue on the Investment Sub Committee?). Task Forces have all been in existence for more than a year. Jeff needs to check his calendar about Building, since it meets in the day. Jane will follow up with Jeff and Tom, and the person who has been asked for the Joint Task Force but still hasn't answered. Transition to new Financial Secretary will probably happen in mid summer. Final rosters for Committee and Task Forces will be firmed up by February or March.
Approved by hand vote.
7. Resolution setting Jane's housing allowance

The amount of the housing allowance is up to Jane, within the context of the total compensation package that we offer her.

Motion: Xan/Kris – approved

8. Capital Campaign Planning – *Linda and Jane will provide an update to the Board.*
There are several organizations that can help with capital campaigns. Besides the James Company (which we dealt with last time), there is The United Church of Christ Church Building and Loan Fund, which has not been contacted yet. Will reach out to them after the beginning of the new year and perhaps identify a third, so that we can compare and contrast to find the best fit for our congregation and campaign.
9. Insurance Premium – As a member of the Building Committee, Kris gave the background on the premium cost issue (see also the November minutes). The premium came in at \$41,000, which was a lot higher than expected. Paul Snyder has been working with Josh from the Monson Agency (see attached report from Paul), who has identified a new carrier (The Insurance Board) which was able to submit a quote that came in under the first one, with similar coverage. The Building Committee recommends that we contract with the Insurance Board for property and liability and workers comp insurance for a total premium of \$29,582, about \$11,000 less than the original quote from Church Mutual. The new coverage will involve a \$5 million umbrella and \$50,000 deductible. The thinking of the Committee was that we would not be submitting small claims, so the difference between \$10,000 and \$50,000 deductible in terms of premium was worth it.:
Xan plugged numbers into the 2025 budget that included both a recently received additional pledge and the new insurance premium number, and the result is a surplus for 2025.
Motion: To accept the recommendation of the Building Committee on insurance.
Carl/Xan – approved
10. Building Use Group and Flourish
Planned expenditures from undesignated funds were discussed in November and included \$15K for security and software and \$25K for kitchen upgrades

Security Upgrade: Flourish Task Force is currently researching security purchases and needs the authority to engage a contractor after they decide on one. There is some time pressure, and it is cumbersome to have to keep coming back to the Board for approval of expenditures.

However, it is good to keep the Board informed, even if there is no approval needed.

There are two parts to the security system upgrade: 1. electronic access and 2. camera at the entrance.

We would like to get the electronic access installed by the first of February, so that Byron and his clients have easy access to the building (February 1 is when Byron's lease of the former choir rehearsal room for his therapy practice begins.)

The camera at the entrance is a little less urgent. There is a potential grant that we might qualify for (Good Neighbor Fund) –which, if we receive it, we could use for the camera purchase. Since it is a grant, we can't purchase the camera until after receiving the grant.

Painting of Music Space Byron is renting the former choir room for his therapy practice. Both the choir room and his office need to be painted. Some of the Flourish funds (the \$25K that was originally designated for a kitchen upgrade) could be used for the painting project.

After their most recent meeting, the Flourish Task Force has recognized that any kitchen upgrade is pretty complex, and that some systems work needs to happen before any conversation about replacement of appliances or installation of cupboards etc begins. Specifically, there needs to be decisions made about where things should be stored in the kitchen and adjacent spaces, space needs to be cleaned up, and decisions made about who is responsible for what parts of the kitchen (specifically the interaction between the church users of the kitchen and the Community Kitchen team.) Once these conversations have occurred and a smooth system is in place, then possible physical upgrades can be considered. In the meantime, the money from the undesignated funds is available for other projects as they emerge. This whole Flourish process is fluid, and the Task Force needs the autonomy to direct funds towards emerging projects.

Motion: to approve funds for Flourish up to \$25,000 to use as they see fit - Xan/Hikaru – approved.

11. Reports and action – Discuss only as needed:

- Treasurer and Finance Committee
- Building Committee
- Building Use Group/Flourish
- Personnel Committee
- Preservation Projects
- Principal Minister – Discussion of Deacons Fund. This is a long time discretionary fund under the purview of the minister. Its balance currently is quite small, in part because the traditional funding was from the cash offering on the first Sunday of the month. There is relatively little cash put in the plate now, since most people give online or electronically.

During Covid there was an appeal for donations to help both members of the congregation and outside community members who were being impacted by the pandemic. These monies were kept in the larger church checking account, and current balances are \$6522 for church members and \$1920 for community members. Jane would like to transfer the church member amount to the Deacons Fund, to allow her to aid church members/attenders when they are in need. Her operating policy is to inform the Moderator if a single expense from the Deacons Fund is over \$500. Groceries and rental deposits are two examples of what we help church members with.

Motion: To move \$6522 to the Deacons Fund, to be distributed on an occasional basis to members and friends of the congregation. To move \$1920 to the Reparations Fund, to be allocated by the Board and the Justice League at their joint February 2025 meeting (along with the rest of the Reparations money).

Approved by hand count.

There was a brief discussion about perhaps changing the name of the fund to something like the Social Assistance Fund, since there is no longer a formal Board of Deacons. However, this would be done informally, to avoid the need to change the name on the checking account. Jane will publicize the existence of the fund in her next report to the congregation.

12. Thank you to all the outgoing Board members – Carl, Hikaru, Tom, Paul

13. Closing – Xan

Next Board meeting: Thursday, January 16, 2025, 7:00-8:30PM

Will open and close the meeting. Mary Byers

Recorded by Kris Felbeck