

St. John's Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting
April 19, 2021
Via ZOOM

In Attendance: Joseph Claro, Sara Coles, Laura Daly, Mary Davis, Veronique Dulack, Bob Futh, David Gillespie, Fr. Geoff Hahneman, Andris Kalnins, Larry Littlefield, Susan McFeely, MB Witt

Absent: Joan Beattie, Hunter Brown (both excused)

Opening Prayer

Fr. Hahneman opened the meeting with a prayer.

Voting on Minutes from March 22 Meeting

Fr. Hahneman asked to correct the double period in the section about Worship. The Vestry approved the minutes with this correction.

Financial Committee Report

Mr. Littlefield reported that, as of March 31, 2021, St. John's Balance Sheet shows total assets of \$751,341, total liabilities of \$628,746.02. YTD Income and Expenses shows actual income of \$44,443.49 vs. the budget of (\$5,388.47).

We received \$19,700 from the 2nd Draw PPP. Once this loan is converted to a grant, these funds will move from St. John's restricted USB savings account to the Church's Ops checking account.

The Easter Fund collected \$2,668, with \$250 for Easter music expenses. The remainder will be sent to New Milford and Warren food banks in proportion to their respective populations: 2/3 to New Milford; 1/3 to Warren.

Mr. Littlefield also notified the Vestry that he will modify future monthly budget figures to be more representative of anticipated costs by month vs. spreading annual expenses evenly over 12 months. Mr. Littlefield noted that this modification will not change the bottom line.

Ms. Dulack, a member of the St. John's Flower Guild, started a discussion about creating a budget for flowers. Ms. McFeely reminded the Vestry that the budget line item for flowers was removed a few years ago due to budget constraints. Flowers either come from the gardens of our parishioners or paid for via specific donations. Fr. Hahneman, Ms. Dulack and Ms. Markert, who is chair of the Flower Guild, will meet to determine the best way to plan for flowers in the future.

Foundation Report

Ms. Davis stated that there was a meeting with the Washington Historic District later in the evening to go over plans for the repairs to the doors and the addition of the awning over the East door. She thanked Mr. Futh for providing an effective rationale for the awning as protection for the handicapped. Work is slated to begin as soon as the Historic District gives their approval. Fund raising efforts will also begin at this time, although the cost of these repairs is covered in the Foundation's budget. The East door needs to be repaired off-site and this will take up to 8 weeks to complete. The Front door can be repaired in-place and should take less than 8 weeks. **NOTE:** The Historic District voted on 4/19/21 to approve all repairs/addition of the awning.

Property Report

Ms. McFeely, Mr. Littlefield, and Ms. Witt met with an electrician to investigate various electrical issues, including installation of LED lights and compatible rheostats for the Church, and sensor lighting near the Parish House and parking lot. Fr. Hahneman suggested an energy audit be done as this audit can lead to energy-saving rebates. Fr. Hahneman will look for an energy audit contractor to come and assess the Church/cottage, Rectory, Parish House.

Ms. McFeely also noted that she, Fr. Hahneman, Ms. Witt and Ms. LaVerge will meet with the cottage tenants on April 21 to discuss employment opportunities.

Warden's Report

Mr. Gillespie reported that he had received inquiries as to whether the parish would be participating this year's Give Local Campaign. He stated his recollection that the St. John's Foundation had participated in the past, but that our experience was that it did not result in virtually any participation from outside of the parish or any incremental fundraising. Parishioners contributed already committed pledges through the program. A significant amount of staff time and promotional effort went into the campaign, with little to show for it. He suggested that if the Foundation engages in a fundraising effort in the coming year, that we reconsider participation in Give Local to attempt to bring in new money/new parishioners. He noted that the successful use of Give Local by the Gunn library and the Historical Society has been based on savvy use of social media, and that we need to review and possibly recast our use of social media for this purpose and the broader interests of the parish.

During the discussion, Mr. Claro, who has already set up an Instagram account for St. John's food ministry efforts, will work with Fr. Hahneman to make this Instagram presence more robust to reach new/younger people/families. Our Facebook page also needs to have a more active administrator and to have duplicative accounts cleaned up. Ms. Coles volunteered to do this and will need to be given administrator privileges for the account.

Priest in Charge Report

The Solar Project Sub-Committee (Messrs. Gillespie, Kalnins and Littlefield) will meet with Con-Ed and will report on their progress at the next Vestry meeting.

The Music Committee (Mr. Lafleur, Ms. Coles, Marty Sauser) will work with Fr. Hahneman to determine when choral/congregational singing will return to our services, and in what capacity. Fr. Hahneman hopes that in-person worship can begin at Pentecost but will continue to adhere to current covid safety protocols.

Habitat for Humanity has yet to publish a workday for the housing in New Preston. Fr. Hahneman will notify the Vestry and our parishioners when a date has been set.

IRIS (The Immigration & Refugee Information System) will meet with the Washington Council of Churches about refugee resettlement. Fr. Hahneman explained that the refugees under this program have green cards. He will update us at our next meeting.

Holiday Bazaar

Per Ms. Witt's request, Fr. Hahneman added a discussion about the Bazaar to the Agenda. Key points made by Ms. Witt and Ms. McFeely:

The Bazaar will now be called St. John's Holiday Fete.

Dates are Friday, 12/3/21 – Saturday, 12/4/21 (Fr. Hahneman will add these dates to the parish calendar).

Donated Items to be sold will exclude furniture.

To help meet St. John's goal of \$10,000 for outreach, Ms. McFeely, on the suggestion of Mr. Pleasants, recommended that a portion of net proceeds from the Holiday Fete be given to a Mnuchin-run Covid Relief Fund. There was a discussion as to the merits of this and Ms. McFeely will get more information.

The Future of St. John's

Fr. Hahneman reminded the Vestry that he has a 3-year contract with us and that we still must convene a parish-wide meeting to discuss the future of St. John's including a decision to search for a permanent priest. He anticipates scheduling a meeting in the fall, when covid-restrictions will, hopefully, be relaxed.

Concerns

Mr. Claro recently volunteered at the Warren Food Bank and noted that supplies are depleted (the last Washington Council of Churches food drive was in December of 2020). Fr. Hahneman said that Pastor Gray was in the process of organizing the next food drive.

Regarding Bishop Ian's retirement, Ms. Coles asked Fr. Hahneman for clarification of the next steps/procedures. Fr. Hahneman reviewed the role The Standing Committee, the BTC (Bishop Transition Committee), and the Election Convention on 5/22/22. The new Bishop will be ordained in October of 2022.

Closing Prayer

Fr. Hahneman ended the meeting with a prayer.