

St. John's Episcopal Church
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting
May 16, 2021
Held In-Person

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

Absent: Joan Beattie, Joseph Claro, Larry Littlefield (all excused)

Opening Prayer

Fr. Hahneman opened the meeting with a prayer.

Voting on Minutes from April 19 Vestry Meeting

Minutes were approved with one change to the recap of the Easter Fund.

Finance Committee Report

Fr. Hahneman thanked Mr. Littlefield and Jane Marin for the excellent job they are doing.

Mr. Littlefield provided the following summary:

Income and Expense Report

St. John's continues to beat budget expectations on income and expenses. Income YTD end of April was \$127K vs. the budget of \$84K as pledges have arrived sooner than forecasted (60% of pledges are now in).

Balance Sheet as of April 30th

Total assets are up 4% mainly due to increase in pledge income and D&B performance.

PPP Update

The 2nd Draw PPP of 19,700 is in the restricted account. The "forgiveness process" for that amount has not begun yet.

Foundation Construction Update Report

Ms. Davis reported that the temporary doors for the East side entrance have been installed. The awning will be installed in the fall after the East doors are put back in place.

The color of the doors (a shade of red) will be selected by Rod Pleasance.

Ms. Davis also reported that the Foundation's fundraising effort was successful, with \$19,000 raised toward the current cost of repairs of \$20,000.

Ms. Davis also noted that after the repair to the doors and the addition of the awning, the next big project will be the church windows and mortar repair.

Holiday Fete Report

Ms. Witt said that the Save the Date postcards will be mailed in late May and will go to every household in Washington, Roxbury, Litchfield, and surrounding towns.

Ms. Witt gave an overview of the Holiday Fete:

December 2nd and 3rd

To be held in the Parish Hall (no tents this year to expand the space)

Couture Closet returns to the Blue Room

Main room will feature the Larder, Silent Auction, The Greenhouse, Arlene Glantz's jewelry, Pam Scott with Catch All Gifts and Maria Alfaro with Che Bellissimo

Friday night Preview Party

Saturday will feature a book signing with Wendell Minor, noted local children's book author

The Holiday Fete will pay back church for expenses incurred and will donate unrestricted \$10K to the General Fund. The balance of the profits will go to a charity chosen by the Holiday Fete Committee with Vestry approval.

Property Report

Ms. McFeely reported that the Rectory tenants will be moving out June 18th. Ms. McFeely expects to work with a broker to find another tenant.

While the Rectory is in great condition, it needs some minor repairs, repainting and the removal of a dead tree, all within the budget. Ms. McFeely also mentioned that cookware and small furniture are needed and will alert the parishioners of these needs.

Ms. McFeely thanked Sarah Lee Martin for the beautiful planters.

Warden's Report

Mr. Gillespie reported on a letter that the parish received from Robin Hammeal-Urban of the ECCT regarding screening and training protocols under the ECCT's 2019 Model Policies for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults. The parish must be in compliance with these protocols to be in good standing with the ECCT. The Model Policies require that staff, parishioners serving in leadership position or in ministries to children youth or vulnerable adults have a public records background check every 5 years. The ECCT requires that the parish establish an account with a service called Active Screening Faith to perform the checks. In addition, all staff, Vestry members and parishioners who are in contact with others as representatives of St. John's to complete Safe Church Training every 3 years. Fr. Hahneman will attempt to arrange for session of Safe Church Training to take place at St. John's. This training is available online, but on a limited basis. Mr. Gillespie is exploring whether the ECCT will agree to make the online version of Safe Church Training more readily available, and he is in the process of establishing a parish account with Active Screening Faith.

Priest-In – Charge Report

Solar Project:

Fr. Hahneman and the Solar Project sub-committee met with Con Ed. Con Ed has provided a preliminary proposal that would involve a combination of solar panels to be installed on the roof of the parish hall and a battery installation. The project would be financed through the C-PACE program adopted by the Connecticut legislature and the Town of Washington. The economics of the project are based on a

combination of a cash subsidy provided by Eversource for the batteries, CT renewable energy credits (which would be paid to the parish in cash), and a subsidy indirectly derived from a private investor, which would own the equipment and claim the associated 26% federal income tax credit on the capital cost of the project of approximately \$140,000. Under the proposal, and the C-PACE program, the parish would owe a fixed annual fee of approximately \$12,500 to purchase all of the power generated by the panels for a period of 20 years. The parish's obligation to make the annual payments would be secured by a lien on the parish's real estate. ECCT approval will be required for this. The parish would be expected to own the equipment after 20 years. The projected economics of the Con Ed proposal, including the Eversource subsidy, the CT renewable energy credits and the federal tax subsidy, imply a cumulative savings of approximately \$110,000 over a 25-year period versus the projected cost of continuing to buy electricity in the market. In addition, the project could provide some level of electricity in the event of Eversource outages, through the combination of battery storage and the potential to continue to produce solar power during Eversource outages. The parish campus would still be connected to the grid and would purchase power in the normal way in the event of a failure of the solar panels and batteries, or if its consumption exceeded the project's production.

The proposal requires that Con Ed secure private investors to own the solar equipment and claim the associated federal income tax credits, which are not available to the tax-exempt entities such as St. John's. Also, because the project would involve the installation of solar panels on the roof of the parish house, the project also would require historic district approval. Fr. Hahneman is to follow up with Con Ed regarding the availability of potential investors, as well as Con Ed's views regarding obtaining historic district approval. An update will be presented to the Vestry at the next meeting.

Lighting in Church:

Fr. Hahneman also reported that the lights in the nave were replaced with LED lights. Ms. Davis asked about the wiring in the church and the outside lights and recommended a full assessment of all wiring. Ms. McFeely is meeting with the electrician the week of May 17 and will ask for a full assessment of the current electrical system, recommendations, and costs. An update will be given to the Vestry at the next meeting.

In Person Worship:

In-person worship will resume on May 23, and, for now, masks will be required as not all are or can be vaccinated. Communion will be given in the pews. Quiet singing with masks on will be allowed and coffee hour will resume, outside for the time being. Choral singing will begin June 6 with 4 singers, vaccinated and unmasked.

Stewardship:

A stewardship plan will be developed in the fall.

Fr. Hahneman closed the meeting with a prayer.