

KVCC Church Council Meeting Minutes

August 23, 2022

Present: Pastor John Sampson, Debby Rice, Charlotte Lichtenberg, Barbara Merle-Smith, Liz Jaques, Derek Prill, Dre Roebuck, Anne Runyon Hurd, Susie Allen, Naj Wikoff, Nancy McArthur, Fritz Sabbow, Pam Gothner, and Deborah Mitchell.

Absent: Linda Bogardus, Jimm Collin, Chris Blaicher, Paul Osenbaugh, Henrietta Jordan, and Erica Swift

Debby Rice opened the meeting via Zoom at 5:05 PM.

Opening Prayer: Pastor John led the group in prayer, inviting God's spirit to join us and give us inspiration.

Quorum: We had a quorum at today's meeting.

Approval of Last Month's Meeting: Dre made a motion to approve the last month's meeting minutes, and Nancy seconded the motion. A discussion followed, and the motion was passed.

PASTOR'S REPORT – August 23, 2022

Pastor John has been spending a lot of time wrapping up Pastoral responsibilities prior to his Sabbatical.

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

August 22, 2022

Attending: Nancy McArthur, Fritz Sabbow, Elizabeth Davidson Derr, Larry Shipp

The meeting opened with a presentation by Mike Onorato, Managing Director of Boston Private, the investment manager of the Rev. Frederica Mitchell Legacy Fund. Highlights were as follows:

- Our less favorable performance relative to comparable institutional investors was mainly a result of KVCC's decision not to invest in energy stocks which led the market in performance. The Russian attack on Ukraine created an energy shortage due to not only sanctions but also the actions of energy producers.
- The impact of the Fed's rate increases and the flight to quality prompted by international events resulted in aberrative, negative fixed income performance relative to trends.
- KVCC's withdrawal rate from the endowment exceeds prudent guidelines for the preservation of the investment. This year's \$7,000 per month will fall to \$5,700 monthly in 2023 based upon current values. This reduction will result in nearly \$15,000 in funding for 2023 expenses.

The manse was the next topic of discussion noting that the tenant has departed. The committee requests that an estimate for the needed repairs and replacements be submitted in order for us to reserve the needed funds.

The bazaar proceeds net of costs will total approximately \$12M. A final accounting will be provided by our bookkeeper.

The group discussed the definition of membership as it pertains to our assessment of per capita fees by UCC entities. KVCC was charged based upon 187 members despite having many fewer giving units and confirmed members. The committee requests a definition of “member” before paying these or future charges.

Finally, the budget cycle is beginning, and committee heads need to identify their funding priorities. On September 17 at 10:30am, the Finance Committee will meet to create a forecast for 2022 and a budget for 2023. Within the next few days, committees will receive financial history to facilitate their planning for the coming year.

Attached to the minutes, Nancy provided the Council with the financial performance of KVCC for the seven months ended July 31, 2023.

At tonight’s Council meeting, we discussed what is the definition of a member as there is a financial aspect to the number of members of the church. The bylaws have a definition of what a member and a shared member of the church is. There has been an effort to get clarification on this in the recent past.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

GROUNDS REPORT

In mid-August Ingrid Carmen spent time in the memorial garden cutting back plants that were hiding the memorial stones and pruning the overgrown bushes. A Grounds Work Day was held on the morning of August 19. Seven volunteers worked on weeding and thinning the beds. One of the evergreens was removed from the bed on the south side of the steps and some of the hydrangeas were also removed. The bed under the cross was thoroughly weeded and ferns in the bed near the manse were cut back. Edging around the pollinator garden has begun. Cedar trees that were arching into the parking lot were cut back as was a broken apple tree. Most of the brush was hauled away.

More pollinator plants will arrive in mid-September.

BUILDINGS REPORT

Derek said building projects are progressing as planned. The back steps out of the kitchen are a big improvement. Derek will be addressing projects at the Manse apartment. He is exploring the need to replace floors and countertops. The more volunteer help we can get, the better.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

There is no new information since the last Council meeting. The next meeting is August 26 at 10 AM.

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Mission & Social Action has been encouraged to shift from mainly giving out modest grants to various organizations (excluding Advent) to using funds to leverage action, as was done with the efforts to support relief for Ukraine, and to a modest degree with Open and Affirming and more so with Creation Justice. As this will change the focus a bit, and we hear and see that value of that shift, we seek advice from the Council.

Also, Henrietta has asked to step down from her role as co-chair as she has a lot on her plate being a Town Justice, so we have an opening.

We have been asked to make another contribution to World Central Kitchen’s efforts in Ukraine.

We noticed in a NYT article that the Haudenosaunee National Lacrosse team, ranked third best in the World, has been denied permission to compete in the next Olympics because the IOC does not recognize them as a nation. That led to me wondering if they participate in the annual lacrosse tournament in Lake Placid, one of the largest in North America. As lacrosse was invented by the Haudenosaunee (aka Iroquois) and we live in Haudenosaunee territory (Turtle Island), it seemed to us that their lacrosse teams should participate in Lake Placid, and that the website etc. promoting the event should provide information on the history of the games. I reached out to the event organizer and he enthusiastically agreed. Next up, I will reach out to the head of the Haudenosaunee national team and see what needs to be done to make this happen. Nancy let us know that UCC has asked us to produce more disaster kits for Kentucky flood victims, as the immediate specific need has passed, but not the ongoing need to address victims of floods and other environmental disasters plaguing people across the nation, the suggestion is M&SA make a contribution to UCC disaster relief fund.

The Council spoke at length about the focus and purpose of the Mission and Social Action Committee and how to identify the needs within our community and provide needed supports. We also talked about different policy issues and maybe having Naj be a part of a mission moment in the church to address the Committees purpose and needs.

FLOWER COMMITTEE

There is no new information since the last Council Meeting. Flowers on display are from the Flower Committee member's garden.

RE-OPENING TASK FORCE REPORT

- Group continues to monitor updates to health guidance, and the state of the pandemic.
- Meeting monthly.

2022 BAZAAR COMMITTEE REPORT

Dre and those involved in organizing the Annual Bazaar will be meeting 8/24/2022 to debrief about the bazaar. Results of that meeting discussed will be at next month's Council meeting.

The Manse Discernment Group

The group met on August 16. Present: Derek Prill, Elizabeth Derr, Liz Jaques, Debby Rice
Absent: Henri Jordan, Paul Osenbaugh, John Sampson, Nancy McArthur.

The Tenant has vacated the apartment.

Short term

The group decision to rent the apartment in the near term while we discern what to do long term with the asset was reaffirmed.

- The group conducted a walkthrough of the apartment. Derek took notes and made a list of needed repairs. He kindly agreed to follow up with contractors for an estimate. Some of the work will likely be completed by volunteers (e.g., painting, deep cleaning).

- The group reaffirmed their preference to engage a realtor to manage the property, including rental application reviews and lease. Derek will make contact with a possible realtor.
- Finance committee will be involved in any decision requiring repairs/updates in addition to any rental agreement decisions.

Long Term:

- Members of the group brainstormed some ideas. "How can we make a difference in the neighborhood if we were to fully use our assets?" (see last minutes on April 9 for a starting list of options)
- We recognize that this process will be challenging as we will need to engage the church community for any possible changes.

Next meeting: after Derek contacts the realtor. and he/she agrees to meet with us or the contractor estimates are available (whichever is first)

SABBATICAL REPORT TO THE COUNCIL

JULY 2022

Plans for John's Sabbatical are pretty well set. We have a full roster of Worship leaders and a 4-page information sheet available in the Narthex that should answer all questions about what will be happening and who to contact for any issues.

Plans are underway for the Barbecue following worship on John's last Sunday, September 4. Please look for the sign-up sheets for set up, food and take down on that day. It will look much like the bazaar set-up and many hands make for a comfortable and fun Farewell to John.

PERSONNEL GROUP FORMED TO CARRY OUT EVALUATIONS

OF THE PASTOR, CHURCH SECRETARY, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND MUSIC ACCOMPANIST

Report submitted by Debby Rice (who will not be a part of this group)

Fritz reported we discussed some of the charges this group would need to consider for the church. Some of the charges discussed were:

- The evaluation process for employees
- Nuts and bolts of employment (such as benefits, raises, expectations)
- Job descriptions leading to possible job placements in the future
- Volunteers and contractors and what role this group may need to address

We discussed the process for evaluating John. Susie Allen's book "Completing the Circle" may be a good book to review to make the pastor's evaluation meaningful and thorough. We will obtain copies of Lorraine's evaluation form and the last evaluation for John so we have more knowledge of what happened in that process.

We are also asking at the next meeting to ask Debby to help us navigate the employee structure for the church currently (who reports to who, who is responsible for who). This will allow us to create an organizational chart which will also help us in the evaluation process.

Plattsburgh Pride Event: Debby said the KVCC will have a presence at the Pride Event held in Plattsburgh on Saturday, October 1st.

Other Business:

Council Retreat – January 2023: We talked about when to have the Council Retreat, considering John's time on sabbatical. We talked about having it around February 2023.

Request for Active Involvement – Solstice Services: Susie Allen informed the Council that there will be a gathering for the fall equinox on September 22 at 5 pm. Those members who gather for these events find it is a time to be in nature and reflect upon our understanding of the divine in the natural world. Susie will provide Council and congregation with more information in the near future.

Sermons and Social Media: Debby led a discussion around having some of Pastor John's sermons posted on line. This topic came up after John's recent sermon on Christian Nationalism. The Council discussed the benefits of being able to voice our sense of the truth and the possible risks of doing so. The Council agreed to continue to post Pastor John's sermons on line.

September 4th – Service and Cookout: There will be a service and cookout on Sunday, September 4th at the church in celebration of John's upcoming sabbatical. This will give people an opportunity to see John before he leaves. There are sign up sheets for this event at the church.

Next council meeting is Tuesday, **September 27, 2022** (fourth Tuesday of the month) at 5:00 PM in person at the Keene Valley Library.

Debby made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Mitchell, Clerk