

St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes

November 8, 2011

Attendees: David Stein, Deane Blythe, Mark Dutil, Alan Giles, Don Ingersoll, Karen Morley, Elizabeth Roberts, Norma Ross, Paula Somerville and Roy Waters.

Call to Order and Prayer: , Senior Warden Dave Stein called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. The Vestry shared good news from each of their lives. Karen Morley led us in an opening prayer related to the acceptance of change.

Clerk's Report: Don Ingersoll presented the draft minutes of the October 13 2011 Vestry meeting for approval. **Alan Giles moved, seconded by Roy Waters, that the minutes be approved as presented. Motion passed without dissent.** (Copies of approved minutes are filed in the office and posted on the Parish website.)

Finance Report: Deane Blythe said that the final numbers for September were very close to the estimates he provided at our October meeting. October numbers are in, and they are great. Our revenues were up (\$40,253) and our expenses down (\$24,997). Revenues exceeded expenses by \$15,256. Year to date our revenues are \$358,666 and our expenditures are \$373,598 for a deficit of \$14,932. Deane projected a graph that showed cumulatively we are tracking our budget with revenues and expenses just slightly under budget. Deane noted that it would be great if we ended the year in the black, as it would ease the pain going into 2012 when our expenses are less predictable.

Deane also noted that we have sorted out the E-Giving reporting problems, and have gained \$4,200 in the process. This problem is fixed thanks to the dedicated efforts of David Williams and Kevin Collins.

Recap of HOG Presentation to the Congregation:

Consensus was that the meeting went very well. Frances Hammond did a great job presenting the concept, the questions from the floor were very good and everyone seemed to accept the concept.

Norma Ross asked if anyone took notes during the Q and A. She thought the content of the questions and answers was very good, and we should try to get it out to others. Sadly, no one took notes. Dave Stein volunteered to try writing up what he could remember. Karen Morley suggested that we put out a blog on the website that people could use.

The next step for the HOG initiative will be the "in gathering" on Sunday November 20, when pledge forms are offered and blessed.

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Other Matters:

Survey: Dave Stein projected a slide showing the results from the first 31 surveys received. At every service we should remind folks to fill them out and turn them in.

Karen Morley noted that our recent **temple talks** were excellent and she suggested that we have more of them. The Vestry agreed that it would be good to have more on weeks when the services were not going to be long due to special events.

Dave Stein projected our **Vestry Plan** spreadsheet with goals, actions and status. He noted that despite all the things we have going on, we seem to be on track. We walked through all the ongoing activities. Vestry members provided updates, which Dave recorded into the spreadsheet in real time.

Dave suggested that for next year, rather than starting with a blank piece of paper at our retreat, we might wish to continue with the goal setting and tracking process we have been using. He said he will send each of us an electronic file for our use with our committees. We should return our updated plans to him. This would not preclude adding new areas or closing out areas that have run their course. The Vestry agreed with this approach. Dave also noted that the Executive Team has been considering whether it might be appropriate to reevaluate our current committee structure and Vestry liaison roles. The team has some thoughts which can be a topic for our February retreat.

Dave Stein noted that no one is making **nametags**. We have a laminator in the office, but no one seems to know how to work it. He suggested there might be an easier way to do name tags, such as buying the clear plastic clip-on holders that printed tags can be inserted into. The Vestry thought this approach would be acceptable.

Dave Stein reminded us that we need to **replace four vestry members** in January. So far two people have agreed to serve.

Deane Blythe provided the latest **draft 2012 budget**. Beginning at the bottom, Deane noted that this preliminary cut has input from each Vestry member and committee and it has been put together with lots of prayer. Our overall target is \$471,570. This is more than 2011, but less than 2010. If our prayers are answered and we end the year with a surplus, we might get our total down to where we are this year.

Deane suggested that as we evaluate the budget we ignore revenues. These are just plugged in to cover the expenses for supporting the operations and programs we have planned for 2012. We are assuming we will have to pay the same for the new rector as we were paying Fr. Jonathan, but this could change.

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For the other staff positions, Phil Pierce did a review of their salaries compared to the market. Based on this, the committee is suggesting some increases. The biggest involves Pastor Manisha. Her salary and allowances total \$56,375, whereas the middle point of the market is \$64,000. We are proposing to bump it up to \$63,375. Another bump would go to the Choir Director. A 5% increase would move her up by \$1,372, which is still below the mid-point of the market range. Similarly, we are asking to increase the Sexton's salary by 15% to take him to \$22,425. This is still below the mid-point of the market range, which is \$29,000. Deane noted that we are fortunate because Ray is able to do many things that we previously had to contract for. Also bumped up in the proposal is an \$648 increase for the office assistant to bring her close to the mid-point for her market range. The other office positions are already at or very near the market rate, so no increases are being recommended.

We are proposing to give each mission area the full amount they asked for. We also added \$1,000 to the Communications budget to cover any extra costs that might bubble out from the Technical Dream Team's work.

We have boosted utilities because for the past year we have been lucky to have had kind weather.

Deane noted that our debt service (mortgage) will be paid off in September. Our long-term plan was to put half of that monthly savings into our Capital Contingency Fund, and keep the rest in our operating budget. However, because we will likely have extra costs associated with the Tech Dream Team's recommendations and extra roof expenses, we are proposing to put the entire amount in the Capital Fund in 2012. It will be \$11,132 in total.

Deane asked the Vestry to consider these recommendations, pray about them and discuss them with the groups with which they interact. Let him know if any questions arise or if you have suggestions or concerns.

Dave Stein noted that we don't have anything budgeted for our delegates to the Diocesan Convention. Historically, delegates have covered their own cost with Fr. Jonathan picking up some of the meals from his discretionary fund. We shouldn't assume all potential candidates to be our delegates will be able to assume these costs. If we budget for them, delegates can always donate their reimbursement back if they wish to do so.

Karen Morley noted that our street sign needs some work. Perhaps it should be moved higher, etc. Paula Somerville suggested looking into an electronic sign. Alan Giles noted that the sign needs refurbishing and these ideas will be considered along with the improvement already identified.

Alan Giles wanted the Vestry to know that the Outreach Committee voted not to ask for the \$5,000 donation for Habitat for Humanity this year. There is a long story behind this decision that stems from changes Habitat has made regarding

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the benefits Habitat used to give to those entities that commit to a \$5,000 donation. That doesn't mean the Outreach Committee will not support Habitat. Rather that the up-front commitment will be reduced to a \$1,000. We will still encourage people to give and help Habitat. Outreach will also look at reconfiguring the charities it has been donating to.

Dave Stein reported that he has not received the **criteria for selecting interview team members** from Canon Gray. Therefore, we will defer this discussion until our next meeting.

Dave also mentioned that we need to get clarification on the **narrative questions** we are required to complete as part of our parish profile. He said the info he received says to complete 5 of the 9 questions, but Canon Gray said we would need to complete 9 of them when she met with us.

Dave asked if anyone had suggestions for how we might proceed to complete however many we must do. Karen suggested that we all just jot down a few words or phrases for each and see what develops. Norma Ross noted that it is important that all our answers have one voice, so we might wish to have one or a few people responsible for harmonizing the final products.

Our responses are probably not due until the end of January, so we have some time. We will bring this back as a topic for our next Vestry meeting.

Dave reported that Kevin Collins has agreed to become **assistant treasurer** working with David Williams. David will focus on doing the monthly closings, and Kevin will handle the bank reconciliations.

Dave asked us to pray that the Bishop's meeting with the **potential interim rector candidate** goes well. If so, Dave will try to arrange for the Vestry to meet with the candidate as soon as possible.

Don Ingersoll summarized the **Tech Dream Team's** approach, progress and **recommendations** to-date. The Vestry was very pleased with the Dream Team's thoroughness and progress. After a full discussion,

Roy Waters moved, seconded by Karen Morley That the technology committee is hereby authorized to transfer our phone and internet service to Comcast, and to make any necessary internal wiring changes needed to support that change.

Motion passed without dissent.

Roy Waters moved, seconded by Norma Ross That The Vestry commits to supporting the upgrading of our ACS System to the "ON Demand" level, and empowers the Technology Committee to effect that change when it determines we are ready to effectively do so; with the proviso that the set-

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up fee for data migration, etc. not exceed \$1,200.

Motion passed without dissent.

Karen Morely asked Don why he wasn't asking for approval to upgrade the hardware and software for the staff and clergy at this time. Don said he was not aware of any reason, other than the notion that the Vestry would want to see a full plan before approving pieces in case trade-offs needed to be made.

After a discussion, the Vestry's sense was that considering the importance of upgrading our capabilities, they would be willing to immediately approve the funds to purchase the staff and clergy hardware and software as recommended by the Tech Team. They viewed this upgrade as essential and independent from any tradeoffs we might need to make related to other aspects of the project. Thus, they believe funding it now will simplify future funding considerations related to the other aspects of our project.

Don said he appreciated the Vestry's support, and suggested that he first confirm with the Tech Team that there is no technical reason for not proceeding with the purchase at this time. None had been mentioned by the team, but it had been assuming that the purchase wouldn't be made until 2012.

The Vestry thought this made sense, and agreed to vote for approval via email if Don determined that the Tech Team supported doing so. Everyone recognized that we would have to work out the timing of installation with the affected staff and clergy, and it may be 2012 before that can happen. However, if we have the items in hand, we can control our schedule to our maximum advantage.

Don thanked the Vestry for its confidence in and support of the Tech Committee. He noted that the Vestry's action tonight was powerful. It

- signals to our staff and ministries that contributed input to the team that we are moving ahead;
- enables us to put some solid numbers in the draft budget;
- will energize the Tech Team that will see action on their work; and
- provides real evidence for rector candidates that we are moving ahead on technology, which is more credible than having a committee studying it or a plan on the shelf.

Adjournment: The meeting closed with a prayer at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Don Ingersoll -- Clerk

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Actions taken subsequent to the November 8, 2011 meeting:

Having confirmed with the Technical Dream Team that there was no technical reason to delay the purchase of computers and software, and many logistical benefits from doing so, Don Ingersoll submitted the following motion for email voting as the Vestry had previously directed him to do.

Roy Waters moved, seconded by Norma Ross and Karen Morely, that the Technical Team be hereby authorized to purchase hardware, software, and warranties not to exceed \$3,000. The general purchase plan is to update all St. Stephen's administrative hardware for the seats currently provided as follows:

1. **Replace three of the six desktops currently in use.**
2. **Transfer Associate's desktop to the 4th desktop seat.**
3. **Add two laptops for the Associate's seat and Rector's seat.**
4. **Upgrade all Operating Systems to Win7Pro – 64 bit**
5. **Upgrade to Office 2010**
6. **Purchase incidentals such as cords and other items necessary for installation and networking.**

The Technical Team may make adjustments to this plan if deemed desirable as implementation proceeds, and in consideration of the needs of the interim rector, so long as the \$3,000 maximum is not exceeded. (End of motion.)

When submitting the above motion for email vote by the Vestry, Don Ingersoll noted that Ken Fuhr can get items 1 thru 5 above for \$2,730, leaving the remainder for incidentals. This assumes we are successful at getting the "501(c)3" prices for the software as we expect will happen. If not, we could be bumping up the limit.

This motion passed unanimously. However, subsequently, Ken Fuhr found that Microsoft was not making the software the Tech Team specified available to the reduced price program for charitable organizations. The Tech Team believes it is important for us to hold to our specs and not get a lesser quality software. **Through an email vote, the Vestry unanimously voted to amend the original motion by increasing the cap to \$3,600.**

Action taken on November 14, 2011:

On November 14, 2011, the Vestry met for evening prayer led by Fr. Walter LaBatt who Bishop Gibbs proposed as the candidate to be our interim rector.

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After the service, the Vestry had a conversation with Fr. Walt (as he prefers to be called). After he left, the Vestry discussed the desirability of having him become our interim rector.

Moved by Don Ingersoll, seconded by Roy Waters, that the Vestry hereby approves the calling of Fr. Walter LaBatt to be our Interim Rector, contingent upon reaching a mutually agreeable contract. The Senior Warden is empowered to negotiate and sign the contract on behalf of the Parish.

Motion passed without dissent.

As is customary, we agreed not announce this selection until the contract is signed.