

St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes

September 13, 2011

Attendees: David Stein, Deane Blythe, Mark Dutil, Alan Giles, Frances Hammond, Don Ingersoll, Karen Morley, Michelle Pickering, Elizabeth Roberts, Paula Somerville and Roy Waters.

Call to Order and the Sharing of Good News: After a walk-through of the process for assisting visiting clergy and leading announcements, Senior Warden Dave Stein called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. The Vestry shared good news from each of their lives, much of it relating to the quality service on 9/11 and the high positive energy surrounding worship and mission activities, including the technology project. Alan Giles led us in an opening prayer.

Clerk's Report: Don Ingersoll presented the draft minutes of the August 9, 2011 Vestry meeting for approval. Don mentioned that subsequent to sending the draft minutes for Vestry review, Pastor Manisha suggested dropping or amending a paragraph. After a discussion, **Deane Blythe moved, seconded by Michelle Pickering, that the minutes be approved as amended (paragraph dropped).** **Motion passed without dissent.** (Copies of approved minutes are posted on the Parish website.)

Finance Report: Deane Blythe reported that July was pretty good for a summer month. Our income was \$31,940 and expenses were \$36,300, for a deficit of \$4,367. Through July, our income was \$262,220 and expenses \$271,185 for a deficit of \$8,964. Last year at this time our deficit was \$39,820. Our cash on hand is \$40,079 compared to \$17,069 at the end of July 2010. Overall, our expenses are on target with our budget.

Some early numbers for August suggest our income for the month will not be as good, and expense numbers are not yet available. The bottom line is that we seem to be in good shape for this time of year, which reflects what we are seeing in terms of the high energy levels at services and throughout our various ministries and activities.

Accounting for E-Giving is presenting some problems. We are fairly certain our numbers are right, but there may be a timing issue with the posting. Former Treasurer Kevin Collins, who helped design the process, is going to work with current Treasurer David Williams to sort out the matter and enable our monthly closings to proceed more smoothly.

Moved by Alan Giles, seconded by Roy Waters, that the July financial report be accepted. Motion passed without dissent.

Recap of Vestry Retreat and HOG Update:

Consensus of the Vestry was that the retreat very useful and a good venue for

St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes

Fr. Jonathan's last meeting with us.

Dave Stein and Frances Hammond noted that they have made changes to the Household of God (HOG) presentation they presented at the retreat. They condensed it based upon our feedback and it is nearing readiness as a tool for communication the concept to the congregation. Frances is adding notes to the slides for use by those who present it to others.

A review of key slides followed which emphasized that St. Stephen's is a Household of God and showed what the responsibilities of household members are to maintaining its health and productivity. We are beginning to build terms such as "household" into our services (sermons and prayer, etc.), and we will begin having temple talks by some Vestry members and others including youth. These will lead up to the big rollout of the concept November 6th. After the service, we will have a big pot luck lunch with a presentation and various activities to set the principles. One notion is to use puzzle pieces without borders as a way to symbolize that the household is never finished. As new people come, they would add pieces.

The Vestry liked the concepts and rollout plans. One suggestion was that temple talks be given at the end of the 8:30 services as well as at the beginning of the 10 a.m. services, and that we be sure to include some of our more senior members as presenters.

Vestry Plan Review:

Grace in Action: Pastor John has invited us to a couple things, but they were not at convenient times. He will be preaching here in the near future. We need to get on top of this so we can continue to build the relationship.

Technology Upgrade Project ("TechPro"): Don Ingersoll reported that TechPro held its first meeting September 10th, and thanks be to the 15 folks who participated and the many more who sent pages of input. Don said we are blessed to have many technical experts and non-experts participating, including staff and folks from all mission areas. At the first meeting, ideas were brainstormed, categorized and prioritized. Topics ranged from "cloud computing" and social networking to voicemail and improving our ability to accommodate those who can't always hear well during services.

Volunteers are researching the top priority ideas to get more information for the October TechPro meeting as we build a plan for making us better. Don sent the TechPro minutes to the Vestry, because all areas with which they liaise stand to benefit from the upgrade, and input and support will be needed as the group progresses. In the end, the Vestry will be responsible for finding a way to fund the upgrades and it will be helpful to know how the pieces come together to support our missions and operations.

St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes

This was a great meeting! A great turnout, great skills, great contributions, and best of all, when we needed volunteers to do the work, hands went up willingly. Seeing this it is easy to conclude that God is pleased to see us undertaking this project. Praise be to God!

Website Development: Karen Morley reported that she has identified a site she thinks will work well for our needs. It allows users to drag and drop pictures and content, and has options for drop down menus. Each page can be tailored to meet its need. She is only allowed five pages for the trial, so it isn't fully tested. She plans to sign up for it at a cost of \$15 per month for the premium package. We have a temporary URL to use while we designing it, then we switch to our St. Stephen's URL. Now she needs art, pictures and content.

The Vestry supported Karen's work and plan. Karen will organize a meeting to build the site, drawing from many sources, including Phil Pierce for video and Seung for music.

Social Media: As agreed, we are testing Facebook. Pastor Manisha has set up three groups, one for youth, college folks and general (the rest of us). Dave Stein asked if we thought there was merit in having a special Vestry group, and the consensus was no.

Household of God:

Dave Stein mentioned that he is drafting a letter to the congregation to go out in early October with pledge materials.

Hospitality: Michelle Pickering said for planning purposes it would be great to know what date we plan to hold the annual meeting and heritage day. (No dates were set, but we noted the need to do so.)

Michelle also noted that occasionally groups renting our hall use our linen table clothes. They are expensive, and recently one was ruined. The Hospitality Committee is suggesting that we charge a \$40 users fee when folks want to use our tablecloths. The fee can be used to pay for cleaning and replacing them as needed. The Vestry supported the user fee concept. Deane Blythe mentioned that the Building and Ground Committee was meeting soon and it has a review of our rental process on its agenda. He will add the user fee to the discussion along with liability and other matters.

Membership and Communication: Karen Morley noted that a subcommittee came up with new pew cards, gifts and magnets. They also plan to add new member greeters. A letter went out seeking volunteers, but the response was light, so the greeters group may be small to start with.

A related idea is to have newcomers who go to Fellowship Hour get their drink in a real mug so regulars will know that they are new. Also, a new member class

St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes

was scheduled for October, but Fr. Jonathan apparently didn't leave a list of candidates. Karen thinks it might be better to wait for the new year. No one objected to these ideas.

Karen added that after SOS, she and Mark Dutil will begin production of their video on "We are St. Stephen's."

Sunday School: Elizabeth Roberts reported that Kristin Herderich has thankfully stepped up to lead the Sunday School program. Turnout and enthusiasm was great last week, which was the first session of the new school year. Confirmation classes started for the youth, which is earlier than usual due to the Bishop's visit in January. We have 9 or 10 youth and some adults enrolled. Dave Stein mentioned that he did this a few years ago and it was a very positive experience.

Adult Faith: Paula Somerville reported that programs are scheduled for October and during Lent.

Outreach: Alan Giles reported that the committee's many activities are "humming along" with no concerns to report.

Building & Grounds: Deane Blythe reported that Ray had the carpets shampooed and stretched and the floors waxed. Since the Preschool has vacated, we have moved the supplies from the classroom used for them into the storeroom the school had been using. The classroom is set up as a meeting room with adult sized chairs. The old storage room had a leaky ceiling, so Ray fixed it and replaced the ceiling. We need to replace one of our water heaters which is part of our Capital Plan, and the Rector's office needs to be patched and painted. Priorities and timing will be sorted out during the coming B&G meeting.

Deane reported that Ann Miller needs to bow out of her role as "master memorial gardener." She has converted much of the vegetation to perennials, so the amount of work involved has been greatly reduced. Ann is willing to work with her replacement to smooth the transition.

Other: Karen Morley reported that Linda Lambert is arranging a greeters appreciation lunch for October 4th, and Pastor Manisha and Diane Kenefic are organizing an ushers appreciation lunch for October 8th.

Dave Stein reminded the Vestry that Canon Gray will be preaching on September 18th. She would like to meet with the Vestry after the service. If not possible she will arrange another date. Several Vestry members are not available on the 18th, so it was agreed that the executive committee and as many of the Vestry as possible would meet with Canon Gray on the 18th. Dave Stein would arrange another date for her to return when the full Vestry is available.

Dave Stein mentioned that the Preschool has sold the playscape on our property.

St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes

Perhaps we should get one of our own as it makes a statement about our attitude toward youth. They are expensive, so we may need a fundraiser for it.

Dave Stein mentioned that we also need an archivist to help us organize videos, photos and documents in a safe and accessible way. Don Ingersoll noted that he and Fr. Jonathan were looking for someone to do this about a year ago. Phil Pierce, Mary Alice Heaton and John Morley all offered to help, but none of them were in a position to lead the effort. We need to keep looking.

Budget Process: Deane Blythe provided the following budget timeline, noting that the budget process will start early this year. Considering the complexities of the transition, we need to be very transparent and have time for discussion and input from all involved parties. As planned, the Vestry will get three looks at the draft budget, and other groups/missions two looks.

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| Monday, September 26, 2011 | - Budget Planning Material Sent to Vestry |
| Monday, October 17 | - Completed Planning Materials Returned To Finance Committee |
| Week of October 24/31 | - Finance Committee Develops Preliminary Budget |
| Tuesday, November 8 | - Vestry "First Look" at Budget |
| Balance of November | - Vestry Reviews Budget Proposal with their respective Committees |
| | - Finance Revisions to Budget Based on "First Look" Comments |
| Tuesday, December 13 | - Vestry "Second Look" at Budget Revisions |
| | - Vestry & Committee Feedback to Finance |
| Balance of December | - Vestry Reviews Revised Budget Proposal with their respective Committees |
| | - Finance Revisions Based on "Second Look" Comments |
| Tuesday, January 10, 2012 | - Vestry Final Approval |
| TBD | - Present Budget to Parrish at Annual Meeting (Final Approval) |

Deane mentioned that budgeting is never easy, but this year we face several

St. Stephen's Vestry Minutes

added complexities. He provided the following list of matters the Finance Committee is wrestling with, many of which will be up to the Vestry to decide:

- How will funds that become available with the mortgage payoff be used?
 - Capital Fund (Commitment for 50 percent)?
 - Search Process?
 - Other?
- How will the search process be funded?
- What is the cost of the compensation package required to recruit a quality rector?
- What compensation costs will be incurred for an interim rector in 2012?
- What salary increases are appropriate for other clergy and staff?
- How much will be required for St. Stephen's computer & other operating systems?
(Hardware? Software? Website? Social Networking?)
- Will we continue the \$5k commitment to Habitat?
- How do we generate other rental income to offset the Pre-School closing?
- Do we budget for realistic estimates of 2012 utility and energy costs?

Deane will get the budget packets to us next week if the August numbers are available. He asks that everyone tell us what they realistically need for their mission areas. The Finance Committee doesn't need detailed cost estimates, but it does help if you let us know in general terms what the money will be used for.

Dave Stein added that we need to be up front with the congregation so there are no surprises at the annual meeting. He will be sending a letter telling folks why we need to step up this year. We want to get in front of the numbers, that's why it is important to have numbers from each group/committee early so we can begin talking it through. We need the numbers to link the emotional and spiritual with the operational aspects.

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

Respectfully submitted:
Don Ingersoll
Clerk