

Church Council Minutes
Union Church, January 19, 2015

Present: Jean Boyce (Clerk), Jenny Bromley (M&S), Shirley Carlberg (Treasurer), Eric Dodson (Admin), Abigale Embry (Worship), Joan English (recorder), Kent Gilbert (Pastor), Betty Hibler (CL&G), Doug Hindman (Vice Mod.), Dave Kobersmith (Church Admin), Debbonnaire Kovacs (FD), Paul Smithson (PRB), Bill Stolte (Properties), Gail Wolford (Moderator)

Devotion:

Betty offered the devotional, a reflection on the origin and timeliness, still, of the phrase and sentiment “We Are the Ones We’ve Been Waiting For.” December minutes were approved.

Financial/Budget Planning

Shirley reported first on the end of 2014 – we are ending with a \$15,000 surplus (as she had estimated). \$10,000 of this will be included in the 2015 budget, with \$5,000 retained for other purposes. The 2014 books will officially close about the end of February, latest.

Borrowing Policy & Promissory Note (att) This idea was approved by the Congregation several years ago, therefore doesn’t need approval again, but perhaps a blessing to begin the program.

Steve Connelly suggested some changes, which were incorporated into the documents. Finance Board has determined that this is the time to go ahead. The note will be printed on letterhead. We would pay simple interest once a year, and return the entire amount at term. Cancellation before the term is over requires 30 days’ notice, 3 months of interest will be forfeit.

Finance Board does not expect to cover the entire line of credit amount, some will be retained in case loans need to be paid back early. Treasurer and Moderator shall be signers, and our agents in this matter. Blessing the process was moved and agreed to.

The congregation imposed a borrowing limit of \$170,000 (expenses tied to Capital Campaign, moved and passed at May, 2014 meeting) Interest rate is 4.5%.

Annual Meeting was set for March 22, 2015, after worship service and Lenten lunch, 12:15 pm. Board chairs should be identified at that meeting and will ideally be continuing, not new, Board members.

Discussion of increasing the number of Board members – that is allowed by the Constitution, but the group was reminded that the Boards’ work can be done by people who volunteers, and not elected members of the Board – they cannot be Church Council reps, but can perform any other tasks.

Discussion of 2015 budget meeting (held on January 11, 2015) – what are implications/tasks for Church Council? Finance Board has taken up some of the issues raised, and have submitted an article for February’s Consider addressing them. They do plan to begin thinking about the 2016 budget much sooner than has been ordinarily done. We need compensation guidelines for Admin to use when making their salary recommendations. There isn’t A fair scheme, there are MANY fair approaches. We had discussed “doing justice in our pay structure,” we need to decide what we mean by that. Do we need a Task Force, Thinking Group, some group that can help us “plan to plan?”

Berea College, local nonprofits, may have policies we can see.

Dave and Rev. Rachel are going to a workshop on Church Finance later this month, they are asked to keep their eyes open for anyone considering these same questions.

CL&G is doing a follow-up meeting with our many new members, including tithing, using the video by Pinnacle Productions. This kind of work is precisely what a program- (rather than pastor-) led church ideally does. John Culp gave Betty and Gail some very helpful books as resources as well.

Admin discussed putting a plan in place to judge our employees in terms of hitting their marks in meeting what is expected of them. We all want to do the right thing, but the bottom line is that there is a limited amount of money. We are doing well at spending wisely. We need to increase revenue – grow the church in terms of people AND money. Will we give merit increases; if so – what will guide that decision, what is the rationale? Admin, ideally, would like to look at a draft budget in July/August

Discussion of grant-seeking. There is a class taught at Berea College on grant writing. Reminder that grants do not fund on-going expenses, but particular projects (mention that WCSC might be one of these).

We are using some one-time money to fund 2015’s budget. The danger is that we aren’t spending on one-time expenses, we are committing to salary increases for the long term.

Betty suggested a rough calendar outline of the year, working backward from the December budget meeting. All agreed this would be very helpful, staff is tasked with beginning that process.

Discussion of separating special projects from general operating expenses for special appeals (example -\$13,000 to repair Cowan Chapel windows). If we have a special project, could we seek a grant for funding it?

We know that we will need to re-roof, HVAC will need repair, we need to plan ahead for those expenses – have we got a fund to handle depreciation of equipment, does Finance track these expenses? Answer, no, they do not track other Boards' projects, Boards will come to Council with requests. We do have funds one can contribute to (Hutchins, Lambert) that are not depreciation funds but finance large projects. We must be diligent in replenishing those funds if we use them -- we should budget that yearly.

Doug summarized the discussion as focusing on 3 pressing needs --

1. 2016 and beyond budgets
2. Guidelines for raises
3. Grow church (revenue and people)

Proposed solutions (or beginnings of solutions)

Year + calendar, Dave & Rachel's workshop, proposed task force

Helpful discussion, big projects are already being time-lined, the recent renovation is the first project of large scope recently undertaken.

To start the calendar with a way to work backward – it was decided that the 2015 budget meeting will be December 13 (avoiding the 6th because it's likely the weekend of the Berea College Christmas concert). 2016 Annual Meeting will be March 13.

Dave distributed the Sustainability report/task list. He will do this monthly, to keep our minds on these ideas and we all understand that not every project will be done.

We are starting to plan to move toward an electronic newsletter – with paper copies being made available to those who want them. We currently spend about \$40 on postage, \$44 on paper and a few dollars on labels a month. We'll save wear & tear on the copier and our volunteers by making fewer paper copies.

Lenten lunches – coming up again Feb. 22 – March 22. Boards are asked to sign up to prepare one. If 2 Boards team up each Sunday, they'll all be covered. Betty asked if the Boards would prepare a short statement for the bulletin highlighting some element of their budget the luncheons are supporting (as part of the general budget – a particular luncheon does not glean funds only for the Boards that cook). A menu would be helpful as well.

Board Reports

Faith Development: Hard at work on Lent projects in general, and specifically the series on Stewardship Education (working title only). The topics will include budgeting, how to make our finances match our beliefs, tithing, small group discussions about money, bequests – still seeking an expert on investing wisely (Charlie Hoffman and John Stanley were suggested) . This year they will specifically offer programs, and a booklet, for children.

Pastoral Relations: have submitted a useful summary of Evaluations for the newsletter

Pastors: Pastoral concerns -- Leslie Small Stokes is having a surgical procedure on 1-20, Toby Wilcher has had hip replacement, Dorie Hubbard's spinal surgery went well, Deborah Martin at the loss of her father, The Easton Hogg family, at the separation of Wren Cecilia from their family.

Dave and Rachel are going to a Church finance workshop the 26-29, Kent is attending the Earl Lectures 23-30. Marian McClure Taylor is retiring as Executive Director of the Kentucky Council of Churches, and Kent seeks approval from Church Council to send a letter wishing her well, all agreed.

Gabe is performing a concert on Sunday, 25th, at Church of the Good Shepherd in Lexington. We will research details and put the info in the weekly announcements.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan English