

Christ Church Vestry Minutes

Tuesday, February 16, 2021, 5:00 PM

Online Zoom Meeting

Attending: Harrison McLeod (Rector), Dena Benedict (Senior Warden), Nelson Arrington (Junior Warden), Milton Bates, Emily Davis, Jordan Earle, Betsy Elliott, Sam Erwin, Elizabeth Fletcher, Norma Givens, Bill Hardaway, Nancy Kennedy, Chris Klasing (Co-Treasurer), Wade Kolb (Asst. Chancellor), Russ Miller (Secretary of the Vestry), Cecil Nelson (Chancellor), Cindy Poe, Dan Seaman (Co-Treasurer), Reid Sherard, Penn Williams, Sherri Allred (Clerk of the Vestry).

The Rev. Dr. Harrison McLeod opened the meeting with prayer at 5:04 PM.

Executive Summary of Actions:

- The Vestry approved a motion to transfer \$11,175 from the operating surplus to the Deficit Reserve.
- The Vestry approved a motion to accept endowment draws of \$160,766 for the first quarter as presented.
- The Vestry approved the January minutes as presented.

Community Moment:

- Dena opened the meeting with a discussion about the Mission Statement, Core Values, and themes CC wants to highlight based on work from the 3rd Century Commission. She hopes that the Vestry's work will help in Ministry Area committee meetings and help the staff parallel with the Vestry as CC lives into what those values mean. This year's concentration will be on community. As the parish talks about CC, the hope is that it looks at community being nurturing relationships within and beyond the parish. At the beginning of Vestry meetings this year, Vestry members will take a few minutes and share how community shares back in their lives and in their communities. Tonight, Harrison will talk about community and how it affects the parish and the Vestry. The wardens have not yet decided on a schedule, but the expectation is that the Vestry becomes just as familiar and accountable as they are asking the staff to be.
- Harrison said it will be a valuable exercise in holding those values in front of the Vestry and helping everyone remember that the mission, values, and themes are all intertwined. As an example of community, Harrison discussed the phone calls that the staff and Vestry all making to stay in touch with parishioners to reach out to them several times a year to remind them that the Vestry and staff are interested in them and invite them to be fully involved in the church. He gave two examples from those recent calls.

- He thanked the Vestry for helping with the phone calls. The church is committed to making the calls every trimester because it is committed to the parishioners. “It makes us more responsive and more connected—it makes us a community. It is a very worthwhile endeavor,” he said.
- Norma shared that she made some new friends and had some good success. She reflected that maybe she needed to talk with them as much as they needed to hear from the church. It was a good experience.
- Cecil also had good success. He had great conversations and was told how very much the calls meant to them.
- Harrison pointed out that what each was describing is the definition of a successful ministry. You think you are doing something for someone else and you actually receive a blessing because of it.

Rector’s Report

- Rob Townes and Gina Snider are in town today and tomorrow interviewing major donors from last year’s capital campaign feasibility study prior to when everything came to a halt because of the pandemic. The information will help the Vestry decide if a capital campaign is worth undertaking. The Capital Campaign purposes would be the Markley Chapel renovation, Stephenson courtyard, and some renovation to the Parish House. Harrison will provide a report at the next Vestry meeting.
- ELT has a retreat February 18-19. They will be looking at their goals and talking about how their Ministry Area goals align with Vestry priorities. Most of those goals have been defined in conversations with Vestry representatives, and he is very pleased with the goals the leadership team has put together.
- Next week Lathrop Mosely will be in town interviewing for the Adult Director position. She will be ordained in December and the fact that she will be a priest is an added bonus. Several Vestry members will meet her and Harrison looks forward to input and feedback. He said this is a critical hire; at this juncture in the life of the church, it is important to make a strong hire and rebuild a ministry that has lagged for a few years.
- Please be attentive to the Easter and Holy Week schedules. There will be in-person services, but everything will also be offered virtually. Reservations are still required. There is no decision yet about an Easter Vigil. Harrison has invited other Episcopal churches in Greenville to participate in that service.
- Harrison thinks COVID protocols will continue into the fall and maybe until Christmas. The vaccination rate is up and he hopes activities will be back to normal soon. There is hope for a single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine to be rolled out soon.
- The website launch is scheduled for March 1. There will be training sessions for the parish to come in and learn how to navigate the website. Social media, church apps, and the website are the front door of the church and that is critical to Christ Church.
- Harrison has received some feedback that there have been conversations in the parish based on sensitive conversations from executive sessions as a Vestry. It has caused some tension, conflict, and hard feelings. While he wants the Vestry to be as transparent as possible, there are times that discussion of sensitive issues is necessary. He reminded members that it is important to respect those guidelines and hold sacred the confidentiality and that extends beyond service on the Vestry. Please respect the sensitivity of the issues discussed in meetings.

- Services are still limited to 100 people by the Bishop's directive, including weddings and funerals. The Bishop is a data-driven person. As the numbers of COVID cases go down, our capacity will increase. The clergy or the diocese meet every other week and that's generally the first item discussed.

Senior Warden's Report:

Dena thanked Vestry members for taking time to attend the retreat last month. She said it was a weekend very well spent that has set the groundwork for a lot of work going forward this year. She and Nelson will have a part with the ELT retreat. Going forward, Vestry reports will be sent out by the Friday before the meeting, so a little bit longer time to review documents. She encouraged Vestry members to bring any updates or changes to the Vestry's attention during Committee Reports rather than just limiting discussion to what is mentioned on the reports.

Junior Warden's Report:

Nelson reiterated that there will be ongoing conversations about Vestry members being very involved in their ministry areas especially as it relates to the budget. He is really interested in having everyone work closely with the budget numbers. If Vestry members and Ministry Area Leaders have justified their budget to the Vestry, it makes it easier to trim the budget when necessary. He wants the Vestry to be more involved in their budget of ministry areas.

Harrison said he welcomes input about creating a more meaningful budgeting process, especially from those who have worked with any other organizations.

Treasurer's Report:

- Dan reported that pledge giving is down compared to last year. He doesn't have numbers yet to compare to the 2021 budget but hopes to have them by the March meeting. He reminded the Vestry that they have compared a COVID-burdened month this year with a COVID-free month last year. There was a \$40,000 difference in pre-paid pledges. He thinks that is partially an indication that those who are making contributions from IRAs and 401(K) contributed earlier since the previous years' requirement was waived. Prior year pledges were accelerated over the last year, partially because of under-paid pledges from the previous year. There is still the potential to receive \$65-100,000.
- On the spending side, Dan reported the numbers were down \$30,000 because last year was not a COVID month. Coming into this year for budget purposes, treasurers are allocating the clergy time differently than in the past. They have not had time to go back into 2020 to reallocate that.
- Determining how to spread the budget is a difficult task. It's not clear how COVID months should be allocated compared to non-COVID months. That will leave the treasurers with a little difficulty throughout the year. Dan hopes that by next month they will have all numbers in and have a clean report going forward. He said the year starts \$250,000+ ahead because of pre-paid pledges.
- Chris reported that they transferred \$299,000 from surplus into deficit reserve as approved at the Vestry Retreat. Since then, some late 2020 pledge payments have been received. There is \$11,175 more in surplus than originally thought, so the Vestry must vote to authorize the transfer from the 2020 surplus to deficit reserve.

Motion:

Milton Bates made a motion to transfer \$11,175 from the operating surplus to the Deficit Reserve. **Elizabeth Fletcher** seconded the motion. **All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried.**

Dan presented the proposed endowment draws for the first quarter.

Motion:

Milton Bates made a motion to accept endowment draws for the first \$160,766 quarter as presented. **Nelson Arrington** seconded the motion.

Discussion: Chris explained that there are 60 funds in the endowment, all with different requirements. For this quarterly process, the treasurers have traditionally asked the Vestry to approve the entire draw. If approved, Dena and Harrison will sign the document and the treasurers will take it to Endowment for approval.

All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried.

January minutes:

Motion:

Bill Hardaway made a motion to approve the January 2020 meeting minutes as presented. **Nancy Kennedy** seconded the motion. **All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried.**

Committee Reports:

Faith in Action:

Sam reported that work from the Vestry retreat concerning the 10% outreach number has continued. After researching data with the help of the treasurers, the group is considering two recommendations:

1. Tweak 8-10% to be a percentage of annual giving.
2. Add rents back into the budget. Rent would still count toward outreach.

While this could result in less money available for outreach, Sam said it is only a reflection of the challenging budget times. He thinks it would be worthwhile for the Vestry to receive a report once a year that separates outreach into a time and talent part and a cash part. The group will make a more specific recommendation to the Vestry at a later time.

- Nelson added that it is important that the resolution will not decrease outreach in and of itself.
- Sam said it challenges us as a parish to give more. The more we have in Annual Giving, the more we have to give in grants.
- Norma likes the 8-10% because it allows some elasticity.
- Harrison thinks a specific, easily understood, well-defined purpose is great. He reiterated a point that Norma made earlier—the richest blessing may be what we experience ourselves as we do the work that is for the least of these. How do we use those outreach opportunities as a springboard to get people involved in the community as part of the parish? It helps to invigorate the recruitment process.

CCEP:

Reid asked about the existence of a lease agreement with the CCEP. Harrison said there is an agreement, though it probably looks different than what CC has with tenants in the Broadus properties. There is a monthly rent and a fee for services. He will report back at the meeting next month.

Resource Development:

Penn announced that Annual Giving is within \$7,300 of reaching the \$2.6 million goal. She said several pledges have been received in the past couple weeks. Lauren has done a great job rallying the troops as have Chuck & Angelle Reichert.

Harrison closed the meeting with prayer at 6:19 pm.