

VESTRY BUSINESS MEETING
June 16, 2020 Minutes

Present on Zoom

Rector: Chad McCabe
Sr. Warden: Deb Heseke
Jr. Warden: Howie Gelles
Treasurer: Janet Wilcox
Clerk: Cathy Terwedow
At-Large: Sally Kazarian, Cindee Morin

Absent

At-Large: Sean Nelson
At-Large: Ted Flanagan
At-Large: Aaron Ting

Consent Agenda

The May minutes were approved as is. The April financials, which were discussed but not approved at the May vestry meeting, were approved via email after the requested updates were made.

The May financials were discussed and approved as is. Discussion points included the following:

- The definition of 'PAX' on the balance sheet. PAX is a group based in Essex that supports Spiritual Direction. The amount on Nativity's balance sheet is the remainder of a grant.
- The need to rename the 'Other' fundraiser category to make it more specific. The amount in question turned out to be the Shrove Tuesday dinner, so we'll move that amount to line 2007, "Food Functions." Going forward, all food-related income, including goodwill offerings from Simple Socials, should be on recorded on line 2007.
- Pledges. EFT and general pledges are slightly behind budget. The difference between prepaid and one-time pledges was reviewed and we discussed how their accounting led to the apparent budget difference.
- Expenses. Diocesan and payroll assistance end the first week of June so our expenses will return to normal soon.
- Line-item increases. Janet will look into the increases in lines 4007.1.3 (sexton supplies), 4007.1.7 (water & sewer), and 4007.2.7 (rectory alarm/security).

Rector

- *Rebranding.* Chad discussed the new branding plans and the vestry voted unanimously to approve the second option. Chad will ask the designer for a list of brand guidelines and for his ideas on rollout. We'll communicate the new look in the newsletter.
- *National Guard.* Round two of Chad's active-duty service is complete! Chad was brought in to support the guard at various state armories during the civil disturbances that followed the Black Lives Matter protests. He still has his monthly drill weekends and will attend annual training (AT) in August. He will be swapping out of his unit into Engineers.
- *Anticipated reopening plans.* The diocese is broken up into "corridors." and "deaneries." If the bishop green-lights any degree of reopening for July 1, our deanery (Worcester) and the Berkshire deanery might have different timetables. Although there was some concern that we might lose people to other churches that have reopened already, we will follow the bishop's guidelines. Nativity's reopening task force has been meeting regularly and states that Nativity will be ready whenever we're allowed to open. As a result, the vestry approved the filing of Nativity's paperwork to move into Stage 2 (with various dates listed for opening the office, allowing parking-lot services, and small, indoor services).
- *Lawnmower & yardwork.* After \$100 in repairs and pickup/delivery, the lawnmower is back in service. The problem was not covered by the warranty. Dean's job description has been updated and clarified to

include mowing the entire lawn (including the back), weeding the labyrinth & memorial garden, and trimming the hedges near the Stations of the Cross. Chad offered to clear out the poison ivy and extra shrubs and to continue chopping the Back 40. Howie recommends trees be trimmed so that there are no branches below six feet.

- *Arbor vitae*. The vestry decided to research the cost and care of planting *Arbor vitae* as a barrier along the 'Back 40' and along the rectory's yard (behind the labyrinth) to provide privacy and to prevent neighbors from driving through our property.

Treasurer

- *Budget updates*. The Finance Committee plans to meet and review where we are at the half-year mark. To assess where each church in the diocese stands financially, Steve Abdow, Canon for Mission Resources, wants has asked each church to provide a mini-parochial report. Janet will review our report with Steve and invite Deb as an observer.
- *Copier contract*. Marlborough-based Conway Tech Group will send a detailed proposal with prices and an offer to buy out our contract.
- *Sunwealth/National Grid*. National Grid is still sending us a bill for \$1K/month but we're not paying it. The way it's supposed to work is that Nativity pays Sunwealth when we use more electricity than we generate. Sunwealth, in turn, pays National Grid. However, National Grid says they're still not being paid by Sunwealth. Fortunately, this hasn't affected us since we budgeted \$1000/month for electric and we're not using it. However, we need to get this resolved. We'll ask Aaron to call his contact since Sabina hasn't been able to make progress on her own.
- *Financial SOP*. Henry and Cathy sent a draft out for review and are starting to receive updates. They'll compile the input and send it to Bruce Rockwell for feedback. Once received, the document will be brought to the vestry for approval.
- *Community Meals*. As an alternative to in-person dining, Community Meals is setting up to provide 'to-go' meals. The vestry agreed that Nativity would support this initiative by donating ~\$175 to cover 35 meals every 5-6 weeks. The program should be up and running in three weeks.

Sr. Warden

- *College scholarships*. This year's scholarships were awarded to Brandan and Kevan Flanagan. Sabina will print the checks and Chad will set a date for acknowledging them in person. The presentation might be videotaped. Going forward, Deb requested that the application form also ask for the applicant's email address (since completed and posted on Nativity's shared drive).
- *Content source for Bible 101 class*. The vestry voted for an app called "Through the Word." The audio guide, which goes chapter by chapter through the bible, offering readings and more, can be done online or on a smartphone. Deb says the app has an intriguing, user-friendly approach to provide useful context for those who aren't familiar with the bible. Next steps are to draw up communication plans and talk to Sabina about how it could be put on the website. A corresponding Zoom bible study is possible.
- *Parking lot insurance*. Sabina looked into it and found that we weren't covered for liability. At \$85/year, it's a no-brainer to add. We also need to find out if the playground is covered. Chad will ask Stacy whether the preschool has its own insurance. Separately, the diocese is looking into insurance in case people become infected with Covid-19.
- *Preschool issues*:
 - Payroll expenses – Stacy is concerned that costs will be higher than usual because she's spending more time with the teachers and will be working over the summer to rework the space and do paperwork to prepare for the fall. Chad will clarify.
 - Reopening concerns – To accommodate the new restrictions, Stacy plans to use more of our classrooms. If the preschool doesn't open, Nativity will lose the rental fees.
 - Online activities and virtual classes – Stacy is investigating options, including a possible summer camp, to see how these activities could work for the fall.

- Playground – Stacy is concerned about dogs in the playground and things being broken. She'll put up a sign. Also, the playground needs to be cleaned. Howie took care of the fallen branch.
- *RenewalWorks* – Sally was asked to look into RenewalWorks, a program that explores the spiritual vitality of a congregation as a whole and refocuses it on a tailored path toward spiritual growth. A decision needs to be made soon as the fall program begins 9/20, with registration due by 8/10.
- *Live-streaming equipment proposal* – As we move toward in-person services while simultaneously continuing with Facebook Live, Larry put forward a proposal for new cameras to cover multiple presenters (e.g., Chad, lay readers, music), a new computer, lighting, etc. The vestry agreed on the need but opted to go bare-bones for now as we have other large expenses coming up.

Examples of upcoming large expenses:

- Live-streaming equipment
- Protecting the nave
- Furnace replacement (we've been told that we can't replace the compressor)
- AC – Howie pricing out repairs to the hall AC
- AED – would Walmart or urgent-care organizations donate funds?
- Windows
- Move electric panel – no code violations have been noted but the fire department complains at every inspection. We need to get an estimate.
- Bathrooms!

Jr. Warden

- *Hall readiness.* We discussed the requirements and timetable for completing the work in the hall to get it ready for in-person services. Howie will rehang the doors. Sabina is waiting on three quotes to get the floors and carpets cleaned, preferably in the last week of June. Sabina has a friend who might take the pews; if not, they'll go in the dumpster, along with the little cabinet and the large credenza (that currently holds Boy Scout stuff). Chad will talk to Karen about whether or not the Altar Guild still needs the cabinet in the corner of the hall. The 'library' bookcase will be returned to its original space. We're still working on a solution for the windows in the hall. Duct cleaning should be done after the hall AC is fixed in case compressor oil is sprayed into the ducts. The first aid kits will be put up when Chad decides where he wants them.
- *Protecting the wood around the nave.* We have volunteers and a partial plan, including an estimate of \$1200-2200 for digging out the area. Howie has a Rototiller that could provide a less-expensive option. We need to get the guys together to finalize a plan. Howie also discovered that the windows on the south side of the nave are in really bad condition so he applied something like super glue and then wood putty.
- *Yard updates.* We discussed the spring-cleaning volunteer list and the possibility that the Boy Scouts could help with tree and brush removal.
- *Sabina's wall air conditioner.* This was not a simple job! The old unit turned out to be custom framed and too large so Howie had to rebuild the area and figure out a way to support the new unit. Aside from some caulking and some work and painting on the outside, the job is almost done. Thank you!
- *Electric panel.* We need to move the electric panel. Although we haven't been cited for code violations, you have to crawl to access the panel so the fire inspector complains about it every year. We agreed to add the problem to a future capital campaign.
- *AED recommendations.* As part of updating Nativity's readiness capabilities, we would like to have an AED on site. We'll ask Ted for recommendations.
- *Black Lives Matter.* Jackie Blair asked whether anything is being done to support the protesters. Chad discussed an initiative by Trinity Episcopal Church in Shrewsbury to hold a peace and social justice vigil every Tuesday this summer. The event is described in our weekly email blast.

Women's Ministry

- The Prayer Shawl ministry plans to honor new mothers with homemade baby blankets that Chad will bless.

Children's Ministry

- Sunday School ended on June 14. Cindee attended Jenny Otto's last Zoom meeting. Last Friday, she delivered gift bags to each of the five children. The kids in Godly Play received goodie bags from Deb.

The meeting opened and closed with prayer. We adjourned around nine o'clock.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Terwedow, Clerk

Upcoming Dates:

- The following events can be viewed on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/pg/NativityNorthboro/videos/>, (Facebook account not required):
 - Every Sunday: Facebook online service, 10:00AM
 - Every Tuesday: Facebook "Tiny Desk Concert," 7:00PM
 - Every Wednesday morning: Facebook story time, 11:30AM
 - Every Wednesday: Facebook noonday prayer
- Other weekly events, contact lead person for a link
 - Every Wednesday: Rachel Manley's prayer group, 10:00AM
 - Every Sunday: Zoom coffee hour, 11:00AM
- July 7: Executive meeting
- July 21: Business meeting
- Sept. 26: Vestry retreat