

Fountain Street Church Governing Board Meeting Minutes
August 16, 2021

Board Members Present: Steve DePolo, Will Gallmeyer, Kathleen Higgins, Win Irwin, Shellie Jeffries, Geoff Kempter, Amber Kilpatrick, Kristen Loch, Kristin Mayer, Brad Miller, Katie Mitchell, Amy Preston, James Taylor, Chip Wall, George Zuiderveen

Staff Present: Rev. Christopher Roe, Rev. Greta Jo Seidohl, Melissa Hoezee, Lydia Stubbs

Guests: Paul Arnold, Judy Botts, Sherron Collins, Tim Creamer, David D, Patrick Eaman, Todd Johnson, Carol Kooistra, Catherine Kriegbaum, Peter Lundeen, Kirsten Lundeen, Bruce Reges, Pamela Schwaderer, Buzz Wynbeek, Carole,

Meeting called to order at 7:01 pm.

Call to Community: Amber Kilpatrick

Congregant Comments: No comments

Minutes: Brad moved to accept the minutes from the June meeting, Amber seconded. Motion passed.

Financial Committee: Win Irwin reported. The big news for the July financial report is that the PPP loan was forgiven. Pledges are ahead, but only by \$10,000. Rental income is coming, will show up in August. Expenses are well under budget so far, except for heat and electricity, which are over budget. The Properties people will try to figure out what is going on (incorrectly budgeted or more use?)

Foundation has taken in \$111,231 in gifts, which is good news.

The 2021 year end operating budget is based on nine months of being closed and three months of being open.

The Finance Committee will come to the Governing Board with a recommended minimum 'Unrestricted Cash Reserve' amount, as well as an optimal amount later this year. They will also begin the budgeting process for 2022, in October, reviewing salaries.

The Finance Committee sent a Risk Management Checklist to Governing Board members for their review. Win encouraged the GB members to let him know if they can think of any other risks that need to be included in the assessment. Send an email to Win and/or Melissa. The goal is to identify any major item that can do harm to the church and make sure we have in place policies, practices, insurance to lessen the likelihood of its occurrence.

The Committee wants to coordinate with the Communications committee about holding a Town Hall in late September.

The Committee is going to be working on a 3–5-year financial plan for a secure financial future. Our intention is not to make this strategic, but to detail out conservative yearly financial projections with attention to policies, capital needs, income projections, and limitations on future staffing. Properties,

the Foundation, the GB, the congregation, and the Stewardship committee will be involved in the process.

Amy moved to accept the finance report, Geoff seconded. The motion passed.

Nominating Committee: Kathleen Higgins reported. Five people are rolling off the board. Three have agreed to run again: Steve DePolo, Kristin Mayer, and Amy Preston. The committee will be meeting next week and are following the By-laws to determine the rest of the nominees. The goal is to have a slate of 8 candidates, meaning five more congregants are needed to run. They hope that Zoom meeting attendees can be recruited. They also want to get the message out online and would like to approach people directly, but COVID protocols may make this difficult. Send suggestions for potential board members to Kathleen. membership@fountainstreet.org. Geoff volunteered to serve on the Committee.

- George: Asked for clarification about which current board members are running.
- Kathleen: One person declined, one person is not eligible to serve again, and the bylaws state that only three returning board members may run in each election. So things actually worked out, but we will miss Will, who contributed enormously to the Board.

Communications Committee: Kristin Mayer reported. The Committee is planning on holding a Town Hall in September, which will include a financial update from the Financial Committee. They will be sharing good ideas that arose at the GB Retreat. Moving forward with planning listening circles, which are groups of congregants who share their hopes, dreams, fears, where they want to go as a congregation. Listening Circle are 5-8 people with a facilitator, attendees will respond to three questions. Each person has the opportunity to share their perspective with no interruptions (these events are not a dialogue). There is no problem solving or discussion, facilitators will take notes and look for themes that emerge. Notifications about the Circles will come out in September, they'll be held in October, and reports from the Circles will come out in November.

- Kristen Loch: Any thoughts from the group about the impact and limits of Zoom technology on the Circles? Kristin: Hope to have them in person with masks and social distancing, according to whatever COVID protocol is in effect. Some will probably be Zoom meetings.
- Chip: Emphasized the importance of holding them on a variety of days and times so the Committee can hear from as many people as possible. The premise of the Learning Circles is that everyone has a chance to speak.
- Chip: Will you provide the GB with the list of questions that will be asked? Kristin: Yes, and the Committee will prepare a flyer ahead of time so everyone can go into the meetings ready.

Communications is looking at some adjustments to the policy regarding responding to congregant comments. This will be addressed at the September GB meeting.

Executive Team Report: Rev. Christopher Roe reported. Looking at two major things: staffing and reopening. Re: Motions passed in June, the BLM statement has been added to the FSC website, under About, [Mission and Vision](#). Also, the Issues Advisory Committee (created during the June 2021 GB meeting) discussed GR Climate coalition [Declaration of Climate Emergency](#), felt it was good for FSC to align with, and [FSC officially joined](#) the coalition. FSC is the downtown pick-up spot for the Climate coalition yard signs.

Staffing: Danny Heck obtained a full time position, but operationally his departure won't be too disruptive because he is helping with the transition. A Choir Director has been hired, will be announced to the choir and then the congregation. A win for everyone, the person will be a fantastic team member.

Melissa: Jaime is becoming an FSC staff member, starting September 1, with a bit higher pay and slightly better benefits. This change is budget neutral. Admin Assistant (Thanks to Amy for being part of the process) candidates declined because of salary. Re-jiggered the salary and made another offer to the top candidate, waiting to hear back. Currently looking for two part-time custodians and also need childcare workers.

Samaritas will be starting in mid-September, going back to the original lease, paying \$1725/month rent.

Oversight Committee: Amy Preston reported. Has worked on developing two motions.

Foundation trust agreement changes reflect how the Foundation has been operating, will make the agreement consistent. GB and Foundation Board have to pass the changes with a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote.

1. Move that the FSC Governing Board approve the proposed amendments to the Trust Agreement Fountain Street Church Foundation dated August 16, 2021.

Amy moved that the GB accept the proposed changes, Win seconded.

- Geoff: What is your opinion as a GB member and a legal professional? Amy: The Oversight committee has come up with great ideas. Collectively, they've contributed some good insights, and they all approved the motion, no one had issues with the proposed changes.
- George: Changes are lending more clarity to what's happening? Amy: We should make the trust agreement reflect what the Foundation has been doing for many years. There was ambiguity that left the agreement open to interpretation. Steve: It is more accurate language, which is helpful when you're dealing with money.

The motion passed.

2. Move that the FSC Governing Board allow an exception to Policy Group No. 3 FSC Financial Policies F(7) and allow only one quote for needed work to be performed on Catherine the Great, Fountain Street Church's legendary organ, at a total price not to exceed \$2,500.

Amy moved that the GB accept the proposed changes, George seconded. The motion passed.

Amy: If the GB wants to revise and clarify the bid process, let the Oversight committee and they will draft a really cool proposal.

CCT Report: Christopher Roe reported. Kirsten and Peter Lundeen wrote some recommendations, based on scientific data. Also the CCT is looking at inclusion and equity, particularly around children and families. How can we open the church safely, with equity, inclusion, love and resilience. Peter: In late June, the CCT was feeling good about the COVID situation, now the average number of cases has been increased in Michigan, likely the Delta variant. Hospitalizations have not increased as drastically as in the spring. Mortality has decreased. Cases mostly affecting the unvaccinated. Need to review how to reopen in the fall. Universal masking seems the best way to address infection and pastoral concerns. Safest places to meet in person are the Sanctuary and Social Hall. If things change, this can be revisited.

- Kirsten: Shared two online resources: [Michigan Start Map](#) and [Kent County Health Department COVID Dashboard](#)

- Kristen Loch: Is there evidence to suggest that distancing and masking eliminates the majority of the risk? Peter: We are not significantly increasing the risk of vaccinated people by requiring masking and social distancing. Kirsten Lundeen: Schools are using standard protocol, Melissa and Christopher have those; The issue of Sunday School is addressed in the recommendations. GRPS is requiring masks, in addition to social distancing, hand washing, good ventilation -- all things we've done for the last 18 months.
- Christopher: 2nd floor classrooms not large, well ventilated, or able to be socially distant. Chapel also small and enclosed. Working on figuring out how to deliver programs usually held in those spaces. Not recommending returning to coffee hours after services yet.
- Kristen Loch: Are there something we're looking for to mark change? Peter: Two things to look toward -- hope the increase in cases of the unvaccinated will encourage people to get vaccinated and hope children will be able to receive vaccines soon. Kirsten Lundeen: Michigan Start Map displays where the highest exposure is.
- Melissa: The church is open Monday and Wednesday nights, with only Social Hall and Sanctuary usable. Most meetings will have to be done via Zoom.
- Kristin Mayer: Feel we're going to need ushers and others to remind people proper mask wearing techniques. Any recommendations on types of masks should be worn? Peter: Surgical masks best, cloth mask over surgical mask is optimal. We should be able to find sensitive ways for people to remind each other and that it's important to take care of each other.
- George: About being open Mondays and Wednesdays-- has anyone talked to the choir? Christopher: It'll be like in the past, with the choir letting themselves in and out. They will have to rehearse in the social hall or sanctuary.
- Kirsten: Might be helpful to have a verbal orientation as we start with Sunday services, emphasizing we are still serious about the virus.
- Chip: Thank you for your continued work, we appreciate your staying on top of this.
- Christopher: There will be a formal communication with details about reopening sent to the congregation.

New business:

Brad: About the Senior Minister search process. The GB followed by-laws by naming a temporary Senior Minister. Brad believes the GB should initiate the process of appointing a nominating group for a Senior Minister search committee, as stated in the bylaws.

Brad moved that the GB begin to search for members of a nominating group for the Senior Minister search process and that by the September 20 meeting GB meeting the Chair will identify the three GB members to serve on the nominating committee, according to section 6.2 of the bylaws. Geoff seconded.

Clarification: Board members rolling off the GB are not eligible to serve.

- Amy: Are you proposing that we appoint members tonight? Or that we start the process to start identifying who will serve on the nominating group before we constitute a search committee. Brad: Not looking to appoint members at this meeting. Just want to get the process started. Chip can appoint. Kathy: Listening circles are a good idea, we need to wait to hear from the congregation at them; don't want to start the process now, we are in the process of healing.
- Jim Taylor: I agree with waiting as we really need to get the process right this time. We failed the first time around, and I think we need to get buy in through communication in the listening circles. Brad: Not mutually exclusive to start the process and wait to hear from learning circles.

- Kristen Loch: Is there a time limit for the committee to present a slate of candidates? Chip: No
- Kristin Mayer: There are a lot in the bylaws. The Communications Committee can share what the process is during the September Town Hall. There is a 6 person Nominating Committee comes up with a slate of candidates and the congregation votes on them. Whoever wins constitutes the Search Committee. We have some healing and processing to do, no need to rush.
- George: Been wondering how to get started. What does the congregation want to do? Can explore both things at once. Getting started seems like a good idea.
- Will: Likes the idea, no harm in getting started

The motion passed.

Kristin Mayer moved to adjourn the meeting, Amber seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:57