

Fountain Street Church Governing Board Meeting Minutes
April 18, 2022

Board Members Present: Steve DePolo, Win Irwin, Shellie Jeffries, Kristen Loch, Kristin Mayer, Brad Miller, Katie Mitchell, Amy Preston, James Taylor, George Zuiderveen, Jerrod Nickels, Matthew Huizing, Geoff Kempter

Staff Present: Rev. Christopher Roe

Guests: Buzz Wynbeek, Carole V., Judith's iPad, Kathy Higgins, Kirsten Lundeen, Merrily Holladay, pamelaschwaderer

Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm.

Amy updated on our efforts to make meetings a better experience for those joining virtually. New tech, etc. and we want feedback from attendees.

Announcement: Chip Wall submitted his resignation on March 22, 2022 to run for the Senior Minister Search Committee

Call to Community: Jerrod shared 3 poems, read by the poets themselves via YouTube.

Congregant Comments: None

FSC Thank Yous: Brad thanked the BeFrienders, especially as they spent time with his wife, Nessa.

The BeFriender Ministry at Fountain Street Church is something I have come to know as a wonderful resource for members of this community. For over two years, as my wife was enduring a debilitating, incurable disease called Multiple System Atrophy; and, as COVID shut down most of the world; a BeFriender with the program started spending an hour a week with her.

BeFrienders are trained to listen and be a friendly presence with people going through just about anything. It doesn't have to be a serious illness, it could be a job loss, societal pressures, or a difficult time in life of almost any nature.

And it works. My wife could get away from the disease whenever the BeFriender session happened. The process is confidential but whenever a Zoom call would be taking place, I could often hear laughter in the house and the mood was lighter for the rest of the day.

A BeFriender was offered to me as well. At first reluctant, I decided to give it a try to see what I could learn... about the program AND about what was so darned funny. I discovered, that while not everything

is or has to be humorous, the levity and safety my wife experienced was what can happen when people have trust and a listening ear.

I would like to thank all of the FSC BeFrienders and coordinators of the program that began here in 2004. That's 18 years of solace for many people in their time of need. And I would like to close with a quote by Henri Nouwen that someone included on a BeFriender pamphlet at one point:

"The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion,
who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement,
who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing,
and face with us the reality of our powerlessness,
that is a friend who cares."

Governing Board March Minutes: Katie moved to accept the March minutes. Kristin M. seconded. Jerrod noted a missing word on page 7 about "talking about more than words." With that correction, the motion passed unanimously.

Finance: Win updated:

- Financial Statements through the month of March
 - a. Income
 - i. Both pledges and contributions of record are positive.
 - ii. Rental income is still coming in slowly, but review of bookings indicates we are on track to meet budget by year end.
 - iii. Overall Income is still positive at \$16,376 through March, budget was to be a negative (\$13,335.50)
 - b. Expenses
 - i. All categories are under budget so far this year with two exceptions
 - ii. Properties is still over budget because of utilities – mostly heat and electric. Electricity – Analysis conducted after our meeting shows we used 31.8% more electricity and the costs are 43% more as compared with first quarter 2019. Heat – Analysis shows that we are using 13.8% less heat, but that the cost is 10.4% higher.
 - iii. Year to date total expenses is negative at \$3,799.18 to budget.
 - c. Foundation

Note that the foundation investments are at \$4,208,122.
 - d. Cash Reserve

We are still at a healthy \$203,307.
- Policy Review Follow Up
 - a. We will be revising our policies concerning designated funds to make it clear that those funds are protected for their intended purpose.
 - b. **To make sure we are following our Governing Board Policy, Win will make the following motion at the April 18th Governing Board Meeting:**

“I move that the Governing Board approve the current practice of renting our church facilities to outside groups as outlined in our Facility Use Policies and Facility Use Request Form. The signature of the Senior Minister will be required on all rentals to ensure that the group and the event are not contrary to our FSC Mission and Values.”

- c. Research by multiple committee members on finding an alternative to our current policy of ‘three sealed bids for amounts over \$20,000’ and ‘competitive pricing for \$1,000’.

Geoff asked if the *only* change was that the senior minister had to sign off on. Win answered

Jim asked about having the Executive Committee if we have no Senior Minister. Amy said the Officers Committee would do it, and Win reminded that technically right now we have an “acting” Senior Minister.

Geoff asked if this is ok with the current acting Senior Minister. Rev. Christopher said yes, and some of this happens already.

Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

- Risk Management Review
 - a. The committee walked through our Checklist for Risk Management and will be scheduling completion of the items throughout the next 3-6 months.
 - b. We just received our insurance policy renewal policies and will work on those immediately since they are due by May 1st.
- Housing Allowance and FICA changes for Ministers
 - a. The Officer’s Committee has reviewed IRS regulations and we will be making sure we are following them.
 - b. As a result, Win will offer the following motion at the April 18th Governing Board Meeting regarding Housing Allowances for ministers:
“I move that the Governing Board approve the Housing Allowances of 41% of salary for Reverend Christopher Roe and 62.5% of salary for Reverend Greta Jo Seidohl.”**
 - c. Ministers may select to participate in FICA participation; however, they must do in as an individual and not as an employee of the church. We have made this adjustment as well but will honor our commitment to the employer contribution by directing those sums to them as separate check.

Kristin M. asked for clarification, this is not a salary increase but a tax adjustment. Win said yes, and we’ve done this for previous ministers.

Geoff asked if this is a one-off for each minister. Amy said we should do it every year, as things can change.

Win reminded that a housing allowance was in Rev. Mariela’s contract. This is done, in part, because churches used to provide housing.

Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

- Analysis of plate receipts and policy of 50/50 distribution
 - Win and Tim will research this for the Finance Committee and the Governing Board.
- GB request on cost for two full time ministers
 - Win, Melissa, and Christopher will get numbers to report to Governing Board for May GB meeting when, hopefully, our staffing vacancies will have been addressed.

Motion to accept the Finance report was seconded by Shellie and passed unanimously.

Stewardship: Win updated:

Pledges received to date – 270 pledges for a total of \$570,122.

Additional fund-raising activities:

- Goods and Services Auction – in process
- Letter to past pledgers and ‘contribution of record’ contributors to go out in late April/early May.
- Saturday, May 21st ‘Fountain Street and Friends Showcase’
- “Welcome Back Soup Day” – September
- October 22nd – Halloween Dance
- Others are in the works 😊

Please take time to thank our stewardship pledgers – from the google list.

Shellie asked the board to please take the remaining names of pledgers to thank, for Win’s sake :)

Bell Tower: Win updated:

The structural analysis work for the Bell Tower performed by OAK and Quinn Evans is currently scheduled for May 3rd & 4th, wind and weather permitting.

Quinn Evans plans to complete the structural analysis report and the bell tower assessment by the end of May, provided the tower work is performed on schedule.

Oversight: Steve updated:

The committee had a meeting in March to discuss suggestions for the ByLaws. The committee will meet in May to finalize changes that will be submitted to the Gov. Board.

Communications: Kristin M. updated:

Been working on suggestions from Listening Circles for ways to name and recognize losses. Some, including former board members, have taken on the project with the paper chain and other endeavors. Groups are hoping to let it organically grow into what it will be.

Staff Report: Rev. Christopher updated, opening floor for questions:

Amy asked if there's anything about replacing Jake? We have made an offer, waiting to hear their response.

Geoff asked about updating Covid protocol. Still working with the CCT, but... Rev. Christopher said one of the things we were looking at were positivity rates, which of course went up right after we relaxed a few things. The doctors have been of the mind that we all have to live with this and make our own decisions.

He said we have to move the Showcase concert to May 22nd. Desire to have a reception afterward, CCT said it's a good time to "practice" having something like this. Private events will start having receptions.

New Business:

George updated as liaison to Foundation Board: He doesn't carry too much info back and forth. FB is discussing a fall event, probably October 4th, meet and greet sort of thing. Point is to invite people to learn more about the Foundation. Person who manages the account for us may speak.

Amy said she'd gotten a question - would the board be willing to attend a private house meeting about living in GR (part of a larger west Michigan). One of over 200 meetings happening in town. We have some scheduling options. Looking to gauge interest.

Amy discussed Community Support, reminding that Brad had put forth the motion for a Rapid Response Team to help us respond more quickly to events. After a few votes where it did not pass, but eventually it did and now it's the Issues Advisory Committee. The group had to meet recently to discuss our response to the killing of Patrick Loyola. Someone from BLM asked if FSC would be a safe space during the response to video being released. With this, we were a safe space, a medical staging area, and people ready to help and join the march.

We got media requests and continued to participate. In all that, we had a well-attended Good Friday service. And we had a great, well-attended Easter service while continuing to serve the community. Everybody came together and made things work. Good job FSC.

With that, we can do this every week. We're here for a lot of reasons. Thank you to all who made this possible.

Kristen L. added a thank you to Rev. Christopher and Rev. Greta Jo for consistently showing up, as one of the only predominantly white churches doing so.

And thank you, Brad!

Permanent Committee for Communications Committee: Kristen L. moved:

I move that the FSC Governing Board Communications be recognized as a permanent committee of the FSC Governing Board and that the Chair of the Governing Board, with the advice of the Governing Board shall annually appoint at least three Governing Board members and at least three additional persons from the voting membership to the Communications Committee. The Communications Committee shall be responsible for facilitating communication activities between the Governing Board and congregation through town hall meetings, inquiry tables, listening circles, and other such group congregation interactions, along with such other duties as assigned by the Governing Board.

Motion was seconded.

Amy reminded of the history of how much the Communications Committee has expanded. It will be permanent, not ad hoc. Has to be in the bylaws to be standing.

Geoff said that the Comm Comm is integral to promoting transparency. All in favor of it.

Win said we need to be clear that this isn't to tell the clergy how to communicate, but more about how the board communicates with itself and the membership/congregation.

Discussion on language details about what the Committee facilitates and for whom.

George asked if this included communication among congregants. Kristen L. said she wouldn't think so. What about a digital platform for a directory to support this? Win said this is ideal because it's a way for the board to support this but have their hands too much in everything.

Shellie asked when this would take effect. Amy and Kristen L. said immediately.

Call the question - Motion passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee vacancy - Katie moved:

In accordance with FSC Bylaw 3.5, I move that Fountain Street Church member Jon Spalding be appointed to fill the balance of the term of Chip Wall, becoming available upon Chip's resignation last month.

Motion was seconded and passed unanimously

SMSC Election: Kristen L. moved Special Meeting for Sr. Minister Search:

I move that pursuant to FSC Bylaw 8.2, a Special Member Meeting shall be held on Sunday, May 15, 2022, immediately after the 10:00AM service, in the FSC Sanctuary and via Zoom, for the purpose of electing the members of the Senior Minister Search Committee from the slate provided by the Nominating Group, with ballots and notice mailed to members pursuant to FSC Bylaws.

James checked that we do have to do this and can't just name Christopher. Amy said yes, we have to do this according to the bylaws.

Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Congregant Comments: Kirsten Lundeen suggested that we advertise to reach people who really want community based services. Our support for the family from Afghanistan, for instance, would be a great thing to make more visual. The research, and the congregation, says this is what people want.

James Taylor thanked the Fountain Club kids who put on a great Alt Prom this past weekend!

Adjourn: Geoff moved to adjourn. seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.