

Board Zoom Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2020

Board Members present:

James Taylor, Chip Wall, Paul Arnold, Will Gallmeyer, Win Irwin, Brad Miller, Geoff Kempter, Jean Bahle, Shellie Jeffries, Kristin Mayer, George Zuiderveen, Amy Preston, Kathleen Higgins, Steve Depolo, Katie Mitchell

Staff present: Melissa Hoezee, Christopher Roe, Virginia Anzengruber,

Guests: Meredith Bradley, Buzz Wienbeck, Gary Eberle, Kristen McCarrel, John Considine, Jon Spalding, Todd Johnson, Patti Johnson, Jack Petiet, Kirsten Lundeen, Dave Kapolka, TJ Norris, Bunny Johnson, CB deMiller, Penny Barstow, Edgar Marty, Janet Peterson, Carol ? and Lisa? (could not ID)

Chip Wall called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

George Zuiderveen gave the call to Community with a poem by Billy Collins called The Lanyard.

Congregant comments: Meredith Bradley thanked the Board for keeping the ship afloat.

Janet Peterson asked how and when we might start church in person. Rylie (sp?) wanted us to know that she wants to come back to church when the virus is under control

Chip asked us to review last months minutes and Shellie Jeffries suggested changing "Unanimous" to "Anonymous". Win Irwin moved to approve the minutes and George Zuiderveen seconded. Motion passed.

Rev. Christopher reviewed the Staff Notes and indicated that we have been doing virtual services for over two months and the number of participants seems to be growing. Jean Bahle commented that education is on hold but is heartened by plans to cooperate with other churches, particularly on a sexuality training program. She also noted that although groups are not meeting in person, many groups are meeting virtually and hoping we are tracking that. Chip noted that Christopher has really stepped up to the plate during this transition period.

Chip reported that he and Rev. Mariela have been talking on a regular bases and reminded us that the Board will Zoom with her on May 26. Mail in voting is progressing with ballots to be returned by the the 28th. Ushers will help to count on Saturday May 30.

Kristen Mayer and others did not receive a ballot and said that this may be a common issue. Paul suggested that people reach out to Melissa who generated the mailing list.

Chip created an ad hoc task-force to help the church decide when and how the church opens up. Possible maximum occupancy should be for no more than 187 "co-isolated family units". A lot of issues need to be looked at to keep congregants safe. He read a statement from the Unitarian organization that churches may want to consider continuing virtual services until May of 2021. Chip also noticed that a group of people have been living on the portico and he has contacted the Grand Rapids Police who have agreed to add us to their list of places to check. Geoff said this is the kind of thing we could expect because of the warmer weather and the lack of traffic. Geoff also commented on the UU recommendation because, like us, they put a lot of stock on the science in how we decide to open up the church.

Melissa had also called the GRPD about the portico and was told that they are overwhelmed but will try to get to us when they can.

Omar Marty made a report about FSC's participation in ArtPrize. The committee decided to wait and make a decision to participate in ArtPrize by the end of May but his personal recommendation is that we do not host ArtPrize this year. He noted that many cultural event have been cancelled for September and some artists that we would like to attract have decided not to participate. Will Gallmeyer asked about the general decline of ArtPrize and Omar noted that "serious" art venues are less likely to want to continue to participate. Brad Miller was surprised that ArtPrize had decided to go ahead this year because of Covid-19 and supported Omar's deliberative decision making process. Omar suggest that we may have alternative options for an exhibit during September and October. Kristen asked about the financial hit if we drop out of ArtPrize and Omar noted that fund raising for the event would not take place and some of those funds are used to make permanent upgrades to exhibit spaces. Jean has some ideas for art exhibits and will relay them to Omar directly.

Kirsten Lundeen reported that she and the ad hoc Covid-19 team will be meeting this week and some of her committee members include Rev. Christopher, Dr. Peter Lundeen and Dr. Russell Lampen. She suggested that they will have some guidance for the church by June 1st. on how to open the church safely. They will be using CDC guidelines as well. She noted that finding volunteers to work as docents at ArtPrize would be difficult since most congregants are older and at higher risk. She also said that we need to take a look at overnight portico use because of the added risk of disease. Chip was thankful that the church is using science and the advice of medical professionals to guide us on reopening.

Gary Eberle commented on the Choir's plans for the Fall and beyond. The research that he is gathering suggests that Choir singing is a particularly dangerous activity. The FSC choir is meeting socially by Zoom and will experiment with Choir software for virtual group singing for the Sunday services. The Choir may not resume physical rehearsing and performing until a vaccine is available. Gary, as a member of the Search Committee, also encouraged Zoom attendance at the various Virtual Town Hall meetings to meet Rev. Mariela.

Jon Spalding gave an update of the activities of the Social Action Committee. The Committee procured 90 masks and additional funding for more that were given to local groups that needed them. Four sub-committees of the SAC have been formed: grants committee, green committee, homelessness, and social action. The Grants Committee will review the grants process and have already decided to go from two grant cycles a year to just once a year in order to be more efficient. The Green Committee is working on environmental issues in the church building as well as out in the community. The Homelessness committee will be led by Brad Miller. The Social Action sub-committee will initially work on communication issues including web site and social media messaging. The SAC this last year allowed each grant recipient organization to present their programs at the 9:30 service as well as host a Social Hall table. The goal was to have one per month. Jon is hoping that this program can be started up again with monthly presentations at both services.

Win Irwin presented a review of the church financials including a review of our insurance policy. He stated that over \$230,000 in our saving account **will** be re-invested for a better return. Midwest Capital, the firm that manages the Foundation Funds, will make a recommendation. The financials are looking good. There is a \$95,000 loan to cover salaries from the Federal PPP program. There has been a few rental cancellations but most events are simply postponed. April income exceeded budget and expenses are down because of the closed building. He noted that we are still working with **\$90,000** that was borrowed from the Foundation so if that was taken out of the equation, we would be \$19,000 in the red for the year. Jean asked about the value of the church as it relates to insurance and noticed a range of \$22 million to \$28 million and wondered how that will be resolved. Win said the ultimate decision will be made by the Board based on the recommendation of the **agent and the Finance Committee**. Our current assessment was high since the value was automatically increased year after year without much study. Will moved to accept the financial report and Kristen seconded. Motion carried. Shellie asked about the collection plate. It is much lower since the building has been closed but has been increasing steadily. It is not near where we were when we were in church physically. Will asked about the forgiveness of the PPP loan. Win said at this point we are still qualified but that could change. Fred's salary may affect the final amount that we may need to pay back.

Brad Milled asked about the hacked e-mail going to church members. This is an ongoing concern and the management of the Breeze program determined that the breach did not come from their software. There is no evidence that the hackers have credit card info. Win reassured us that the church does not store credit card information.

Paul reported that the auction is doing well with 38 items worth of over \$5000 with \$900 already earned. More items need to be donated. Kathleen suggested that gift cards would be appropriate for auction items.

Win moved to approve the Properties Committee recommendation to select a vendor to replace the carpeting in room 109. Kathleen seconded. Motion carried. Win discussed the Properties Committee recommendation for parking lot rentals. Eight spots would be available for rent at \$75/month. Win moved to accept the new policy. Geoff seconded. Motion carried. Brad questioned the time frame for rentals and Win said that would be part of the contract. Chip asked about the access code and Win responded that a new system **will soon be** installed with new codes. Christopher noted that the old code is used to reprogram the tower bells. Win presented **another Properties Committee** proposal to rent the 3rd and 4th floor to Samaritas for immigrant education. They have been using the lower level for several months already at no charge. They would rent the upstairs space for \$1100/month plus four of the eight parking spaces at \$75 each. George seconded. Motion carried. Jean asked about the rental period and Win said the contract is for a one-year. George wanted to be sure that the group would follow the church's Covid-19 policy. John Considine asked about the extra utility cost. Melissa stated that the one-year term will allow us to get a better read on that. James Taylor asked if the group would use the building when it was not otherwise open and was assured that they would not.

Chip mentioned the he is forming a Transition Committee to help get Rev. Mariela on board as our Senior Minister. He also reminded us to mail in our ballot.

Kristin moved to adjourn. Motion carried.