

Minutes

Vestry Meeting on May 21, 2017

Facilitator: The Rev. Charles Cannon

Present: Dorothy Marshall, Senior Warden, Penny Ranson, Junior Warden, John Whiteman Treasurer, Al Angell, Bonnie Brown, Sybil Edgar, Jo Lane, Libby Maxwell, Ruth Walters and Karin Winter.

Excused Absence: Betsey Lunsford, Ed Mathews, Ro Mathews

Guest: Sue Moore

The Vestry meeting was convened by Father Charles Cannon at 12:05 PM with a prayer

Quorum established.

Sue Moore (a visitor) reported: Sue has been a parishioner here since 1998. She is very involved with Lakes Park, where we had a parish picnic last November, and she was wondering if we want to reserve the space again at the park for a picnic this year. Even though everyone agreed that they had fun at the last picnic, the point was made that all food and supplies had to be transported to the pavilion, which was quite a distance from the parking lot. The suggestion was made to have box lunches that are easier to transport, but the budget does not allow for this expense. The consensus was that a parish picnic would be easier if it were held on church grounds. Libby Maxwell suggested that this might be an opportunity for an “inter-generational” event. This event would come under the auspices of the Evangelism, Fellowship and Hospitality Ministry, so the idea was tabled until that Ministry has the opportunity to discuss it, and report on it next month.

Treasurer's Report: John Whiteman took the opportunity to welcome Ruth Walters, the new vestry member. He pointed out that, as it has been reported in the bulletin, the church is about \$30,000 ahead in yearly revenue, as opposed to expenses, as of last month. He is also projecting that we will have a pretty good month this month; so far, we have about \$29,000 in both plate and pledges, but don't forget, we're coming to our lean months. So, he again stressed that everyone be very frugal with their expenditures. Anything that can be put off, should be put off. We sent \$2,500 last week to the Endowment Fund; the balance is around \$126,000 right now. Our loan balance, as you know, is \$26,338 right now. At the end of the month, we will most likely be making an additional \$4,000 payment. We have \$2,800 in the Capital Campaign Fund, in addition to the \$5,000 that we

are required to keep in there. There is also \$10,000 in the other reserve account. John stated that he tried to see how much was contributed to the Capital Campaign Fund in 2016 and 2017, and found a \$44,000 balance from 2015 that was transferred to the Capital Fund in 2016. This money was used: there were three loan payments, and around a \$5,000 payment to the architect. There was \$195,000 donated to date to the Capital Campaign Fund, and \$187,621 was spent this year to pay off loans. Libby Maxwell asked if the average monthly fixed costs are known and John said they vary, but he would take a look at them. Dorothy Marshall said that usually we need to borrow \$16,000 from reserves during the lean months. Libby Maxwell asked if we pay our insurance premium in one lump sum and was advised that we pay a deposit at the start of the insurance year, and then monthly after that.

Senior Warden's report: Dorothy Marshall also welcomed Ruth Walters and thanked her for her willingness to step in to serve the remainder of the year. Per the by-laws, Ruth can serve until the end of the year, at which point, she will be up for re-election. If she is re-elected, she will then serve her own three-year term. That means that this year, there will be five members going off the vestry: Dorothy Marshall, Ruth Walters, Betsey Lunsford, Karin Winter and Jo Lane. Just an FYI, the directory is finally at the printers; it will be returned in about 15 days, we proof it, and send it back and it should be printed in another 15 days or so.

The next item is the computer in the finance office, which is still running on Windows XP, which is no longer supported by Microsoft. If that computer goes down, we lose the ability to pay bills, track deposits, and all the other things that are done on that computer. All the information is backed up, but if we lose that computer, we lose the ability to print checks. Fr Charles' computer, the most recent purchase, was around \$600 and \$200 to install, so Dorothy made a motion to spend \$800 on a new computer. Motion seconded by Libby Maxwell. Motion approved. Each month, there is a section in News from the Pews, our newsletter, titled Views from the Vestry, and Dorothy Marshall has written that section for the past few years. Al Angell has written an article for the upcoming June/July issue, so we do not need another article until the end of July. It could be as simple as "think about running for the Vestry" or a more complex article detailing a ministry you are involved with. I would really like a volunteer to write this; it doesn't have to be more than 100-150 words, so just a paragraph. It would also present an opportunity to have a photo of the Vestry member writing the article to give "a face to the name." Libby Maxwell volunteered to write the Vestry article for the August News from the Pews.

Jr. Warden's report: Custom Grounds was asked to clarify their bid to fertilize the grounds at St. Hilary's; to date, we have not received a revised bid. We will begin to get bids from competing lawn care companies soon.

We are currently accepting competing bids on housekeeping services; that's not to say we are planning to change cleaning services.

We are having security issues that are very concerning: glass sliding doors were left open one Sunday, and the door to the Ed Wing was left open. Penny's number one priority is a safety of anyone who is in Browning Hall. If the doors are locked, and have magnetic locks and a buzz-in system, Browning Hall will be a very safe place. One of the bids for a professionally installed expandable security system was \$4,429. Karin Winter made the point that there's no question that security is needed, but where do we find \$4,500? There was some discussion regarding spending funds on a new security system. David Oliver moved that the issue be tabled; it was seconded by Sybil Edgar. It was approved unanimously. Fr. Charles asked if perhaps this item should be added to the "wish list" for monies raised at the fundraisers.

Penny spoke about do-it-yourself security systems. She has purchased a Ring Video Doorbell for \$198 and a Nest Security Camera for \$198. Sybil Edgar moved that the Vestry approve the recurring \$100 a year charge to buy cloud storage of the video recording by the Nest Security Camera. [At that time we thought that since the Ring Doorbell would not have an electrical connection, it would be impossible to buy cloud storage from Ring] The motion was seconded by David Oliver and approved.

Penny Ranson presented a bid from Kirkwood Electric for \$2,975.00 to add a track and three fixture heads to the track and the three spotlights located on each side of the choir loft. In January 2017, Britannia Electric's submitted a bid of \$1963 to do exactly the same work. In addition, Kirkwood's proposal added another \$1100 to install 12 LED lights in place of ordinary spotlights. A private donor agreed to pay Britannia Electric \$1963 to install two new tracks and six new fixture heads. Karin Winter made a motion to pay Britannia up to \$1100 from the operating budget to replace the 6 existing track lights with LED lights and to install 6 LED light bulbs in the new fixture heads. Dorothy Marshall seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Needs Assessment and Financial Analysis Report: Libby Maxwell presented a resolution that deals with the Reserve Fund. Fr. Charles relayed some feedback from Trevor Whitley, who wrote the Endowment Board policy. First is, the Vestry created the Endowment Board; it is not independent of the Vestry. They are charged with insuring that the money that is in the Endowment Fund grows in a

safe and secure way. Their job is not to approve checks back and forth. There was additional discussion on the Capital Reserve Fund. Then, Fr. Charles made the motion to increase the threshold for capital expense to \$5,000, reversing the March 12th resolution setting it at \$1,500. David Oliver seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The second thing we have to address is insuring the integrity of the fund. To assure this, the Endowment Board and the Vestry will work together in the following ways: the Vestry has, and has always had, the authority to approve and execute projects for payment. In the interests of transparency to the congregation, major repairs or replacement in excess of \$5,000 will require competitive three bids; all details of the process will be reported in the Vestry minutes. Then, in collaboration with the Endowment Board, we will approve the expense. That way, we are always in collaboration in large expenses, removing the perception that this occurred “behind closed doors” and causing the congregation to question our decisions. The Endowment Board will oversee the way the money is invested.

Fr. Charles made the second motion. In regards to the \$25,000 that will be funded into the regular operating budget; anything that is left over after December 31 goes into the capital expense account (the one that currently has the \$10,000 in it.) Dorothy Marshall seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Dorothy brought up the point that starting in 2018; we must start paying the Diocese on the Capital Campaign Funds: they are two years behind. So, on the funds that were collected in 2016, we must pay 10% to the Diocese starting in 2018.

Libby wanted to add a couple of updates; we have no proposal yet on the electronic sign. She, along with Bonnie Brown, is deep into forming job appraisal forms. Penny brought up the point that according to church canons, the Rector is responsible for hiring and evaluating staff, so it should not be under the auspices of the Junior Warden. It is really an Ad Hoc committee under the Rector.

Lastly, Libby talked about the estimate from Island Tree Service for trimming the trees. Some of the trees are encroaching on buildings, and it important to trim before hurricane season begins. Libby made a motion to approve expenditures of \$2,000 for tree removal/trimming. Penny Ranson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Rector's report:

Fr. Charles yielded the floor to Karin Winter, who said she was thinking about his directive to bring in new families, possibly with the fundraisers. She stated that it

is important to not just take care of the needs of St. Hilary's. While we might pay off an air conditioner, it doesn't make us a stronger spiritual community. We need to concentrate on bringing in new families and growing our spiritual community, and it is not just the job of Youth & Families. Youth & Families has taken on the job in the last few years, with the general support of the church, but not with volunteer hours, or even ideas. Karin thinks we need to focus on the fundraisers not only to raise money, but being a part of our community and bring people into our doors. The next ministry leadership meeting in July should include one person from each ministry. We usually have about 18 people in here and if we can get them excited about it, we can move to making it Parish-wide. Right now, all the ministries are shrinking, and trying to hold on to what they have, instead of us making an effort by the whole parish. Penny added that at the Vestry retreat, they talked about "going to the fish", which we do with pub ministry, and Fr. Charles going to FGCU. If Vestry approves our "Feed Ft. Myers" idea, this would be bringing the fish to us. Every ministry should have an attractive brochure; we are not going to proselytize to them, but we want to show them what we have to offer them. We think it's a great way to get people into our church, and we could do a community project; we can cook additional meals, pack them up, then donate them to an appropriate organization. An image you always want to keep in front of people is the Chalice and the Bread – in other words, the meal and our spirituality. Karin pointed out that St. Francis had an event two weeks ago; catered, with nice silent auction items, but she couldn't find it advertised online anywhere, and they only had 100 people. It wasn't advertised properly. If we have a big event, we have to get it out there. It was a shame, because they did so much work at St. Francis, and had such low attendance. Penny said she'd run style (fashion) shows for other organizations are raised money. Karin said ECW used to have fashion shows, but then it ended up being only a few people working on them. Jo wanted to know if we did do an event, could it be something that could be repeated several times. Penny answered that the cooking lessons could be repeated for different holidays, and Karin stated the community dinners could be held four times per year. Karin made the point that the Pancake breakfasts used to be held every year, but at the last one, there were only 55 people in attendance, and that wasn't enough.

Fr. Charles made the point that any fundraiser must be promoted – it has to be promoted strongly, slickly, and attractively.

Libby is excited about obtaining a UTO grant for the "Feed Fort Myers" idea, since one of the criteria is that it must be an outreach project. We could also use the patio, once it's enclosed, to have a weekly market with produce, which could tie in to the Feed Fort Myers project. Penny made the point that the community dinners should take place once a month, rather than four times a year. It was raised that the limited number of volunteers would get "burned out"; Penny said that's why all the ministries must be involved, and the congregation has to get fired up. The subject was raised that a survey could be presented to the congregation to see what kind of fundraisers would get them excited, and what they would be willing to work on.

Libby made the point that we have to stop compartmentalizing- like MAG and ECW, whose numbers are diminishing – and have to start focusing parish-wide. David Oliver made the point if people added their names to a survey, those same people could be approached to be on a committee, since they felt strongly about the idea. What is needed is to bring everyone together to work on a larger project. Ideally, potential parishioners would look at all the outreach opportunities at St. Hilary's, and would wish to be involved. Karin made the point that she would love to advertise a dinner/dance, where half the proceeds would be donated to something outside of St. Hilary's, rather than just be used to buy a new air conditioner.

The idea of a survey was brought up. David Oliver said that you could form 10 questions or less, like "If St. Hilary's is doing community outreach, which of these would you like to attend?" David said he would work on it, and send Fr. Charles an email, and asked the rest of the Vestry to email him any comments or questions.

Fr. Charles then brought up the issue of moving the 10:30 service back to 10:00 AM. He stated that 8 AM and 10 AM are more standard times for services in the Episcopal Church. Penny made a motion that we change the Rite II service time from 10:30 AM to 10:00 AM. Seconded by David Oliver. Motion passed unanimously.

Fr Charles mentioned that while he is on vacation, Reverend David Lind from Sanibel would be the celebrant on June 25.

Fr. Charles' schedule for Wed@6 for the next month is to talk about growing our church, and defining our ministries. He will be addressing fulfilling our statement of purpose. It's important the we no longer think of ourselves as "groups" but rather as a whole working together, with our mission statement as a guide. Fr. Charles said we would need to embrace our mission statement, or if we can't do that, then it needs to be rewritten, perhaps with input from the congregation. Karin Winter said she would love to see Vestry members attend those sessions and also recommended that the Vestry all read the book "Growing Young for Parishes" by Kara Powell. Each Ministry should meet and brainstorm ideas, not with the thought of who does what, but just coming up with ideas, and meet altogether again.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer and adjourned at 2:15 PM.

The next Vestry meeting is scheduled for Sunday, June 11, 2017

Transcribed via tape, and respectfully submitted.
Christine Bielski
Parish Administrator