

Minutes of a Regular Meeting
of the Vestry
of St. James's Episcopal Church
December 19, 2017

A regular meeting of the Vestry of St. James's Episcopal Church was held on December 19, 2017, pursuant to proper notice of time and place. Vestry members attending were Mr. Willson Craigie, Mrs. Peggy Crowley, Mr. Ralph Cummins, Mrs. Becky DeCamps, Mr. Matt Harper, Mrs. Kathe Hetzer, Mr. T.A. Hickman, Mr. Scott Hurt, Mrs. Erin Jewett, Mr. Dave Johnson, Mr. Jay Jordan, Mr. Connell Mullins, Mrs. Beth Skidmore, Mrs. Laura Strickler, and Mr. Michael Whitlow. Mrs. Louise Bald, Mr. Harry Moore, and Mrs. Tina Sherrod were absent. Also attending were staff members the Rev. Dr. John McCard, the Rev. Carmen Germino, the Rev. Hilary Streever, Ms. Suzanne Hall, Mr. Russell Lawson, Mrs. Anita Lisk, Mrs. Poconna Thiel, and Dr. Mark Whitmire. Dr. McCard served as chair, with Mrs. Lisk serving as secretary.

The meeting opened at 5:00 p.m. with a service of Evening Prayer, with the business of the meeting beginning at 5:30. Motions to adopt the agenda and approve the Minutes from the November 21, 2017 regular meeting were made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Dr. McCard reported that the services for the 3rd Sunday in Advent were great and the annual Christmas Hope service for those struggling with grief this time of year was well-received.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance

The financial reports for November 2017 were distributed and reviewed. Mrs. Thiel summarized the report, noting especially that, while approximately \$350,000 is still needed before the end of the year to meet the budget, she is faithfully optimistic that most, if not all, of that will be received by the first part of January. Mrs. Thiel said that expenses are expected to finish the year at budget.

Stewardship

Ms. Hall distributed and reviewed the current “dashboard” report for the Annual Giving campaign. She was pleased to report that 50% of the church's parishioners have made a pledge for the 2018 budget year thus far. While more pledges and contributions are needed to meet stewardship goals, Ms. Hall said she believes the goals can be met – especially if those who haven't pledged, but did last year, pledge the same amount. Ms. Hall welcomed Vestry members to join the Annual Giving Committee in making calls to those parishioners in early January.

Ms. Hall reported that a thank you letter from the Sr. Warden and Annual Giving Chairs that includes a list of all who have made a pledge for 2018 will be mailed in January.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – *One To Another*

Written reports were distributed and reviewed. Mr. Whitlow particularly drew attention to the need for volunteers for the upcoming WomanKind symposium. He also commended the Hospitality Committee for their welcome to the McCard family and the appreciation reception for Dr. Thom Blair for his service as the church's Interim Rector, and noted that the Committee will be busy with upcoming events including the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Evensong and Dr. McCard's installation in January.

There are several Buildings and Grounds projects in process, including work in the Memorial Garden.

Mrs. Strickler reported that the Communications department continues to support the various programs and services at the church by keeping the parish well-informed. The Committee is reviewing the trend of an increased use of social media instead of the website.

Mr. Whitlow distributed the report from the Safety Committee. This Committee has narrowed the focus of the prior Safety and Security Committee's work to recommendations for the prevention of bodily harm during services and events. The Committee has done significant research, including a walk through the facilities with the Richmond Police, consulting the National Cathedral's security department, and attending a Richmond Police Department workshop for faith communities. Mr. Whitlow was informed that there are three options for addressing safety, which are (a) avoid, (b) deny, and (c) defend, and that the primary focus in case of threat should be to help worshippers escape danger.

Recommendations include three areas designed to prevent or hamper threats:

- 1) Visible security – a guard patrolling the area most likely to be used for entrance by an aggressor, plus additional focus on usher team readiness;
- 2) Hardening the target – limiting unsupervised access, assessing door locks, using security cameras;
- 3) Evacuation enhancements – determining an escape plan and communicating it to the congregation.

A motion was made and seconded to support the recommendations of the Safety Committee and establish clear directions to take actions to implement a safety plan by the end of February, with usher team readiness a high priority. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made and seconded to empower the staff to expend funds as necessary to hire security for Sunday services and upcoming special events. The motion was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Clergy Housing Resolutions

Mrs. Crowley presented Housing Allowance Resolutions for the full-time clergy staff, which provides documentation that the church does not provide housing for clergy and they may allow part of their salary as a housing allowance to be exempted from federal taxes, as provided by the IRS tax code. The resolutions state that, as of January 1, 2018, Dr. McCard's allowance will be \$73,000, Ms. Germino's allowance will be \$30,000, and Mrs. Streever's allowance will be \$35,000. Upon a motion made and seconded, the resolutions were unanimously approved.

Children's Center Board Elections

Mrs. Hetzer presented the Vestry with the slate of six nominees for the Children's Center Board, as prepared by the Center's Governance Committee. The nominees are George Booth, Dick Fowlkes, Tom Horton, Trudy Porter, Biz Read, and Jennifer Sisk. Mrs. Hetzer moved that the slate be approved, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Vestry Counters

As previously discussed and agreed, a sign-up sheet was circulated for members of the Vestry to each choose a week in January or February to count the loose plate offering. Mrs. Thiel distributed a list of instructions and gave a brief explanation of the accounting of the money.

Nominating Committee

Mrs. Crowley has established the Nominating Committee for Vestry nominations. In addition to Mrs. Crowley, who serves as Chair, committee members include Brian Bald, Becky DeCamps, Erin Jewett, Carrie Montague, Newnie Rogers, Pierce Rucker, Mark Shuford, and Michael Whitlow.

The Committee will meet in early January to determine a slate of six candidates for 3-year terms and three candidates for 2-year terms. Mrs. Crowley said that the Committee will select former Vestry members for the 2-year terms so that the Vestry is better balanced with experienced and non-experienced members. Over 50 names have already been submitted for consideration.

Buildings and Grounds

Mr. Harper reintroduced the Buildings and Grounds Assessment and Maintenance Schedule and Vendor Recommendation. He reminded the Vestry that the plan is to assess buildings and grounds systems to determine their current condition and to develop maintenance repair/replacement schedules over multiple years. The Strategic Finance Committee is charged with developing a plan of action to be prepared to fund those schedules. This plan will provide a long-term vision of needs and is supported by the Finance Committee.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee recommends hiring Engineers Plus for the mechanical, engineering, and plumbing (MEP) systems and Huff Morris Architects for structural evaluations. The fees would be \$2,500 for Huff Morris and \$31,340 for Engineers Plus (\$20,000 of which would be fixed and \$11,340 of which would be variable and involve obtaining sub-contracting expenses to eventually do the maintenance and or replacement work).

A motion was made to approve the plan and hire the consultants, with an amendment that the expense would not exceed \$38,000. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

Mr. Harper reported that there is a growing list of buildings and grounds maintenance work, including:

- 1) The elevator in Gibson Hall
- 2) The stone pavers in the Memorial Garden
- 3) Insulating around HVAC duct work above the ceiling of the sanctuary.

SR. WARDEN’S REPORT

Mrs. Crowley thanked the Vestry for their thoughtful participation in the meeting and reminded members who will remain on the Vestry to mark their calendars for the Vestry retreat on March 16 and 17.

Mrs. Crowley also encouraged all Vestry members to attend the installation of Dr. McCard as the 14th Rector of St. James’s on Wednesday, January 17, 2018, at 7:00 p.m.

RECTOR’S REPORT

With thanks to the current leadership for their service, Dr. McCard announced the leadership for the Vestry beginning in March:

- Senior Warden – Michael Whitlow
- Junior Warden – Laura Strickler
- Finance Chair – T.A. Hickman

Dr. McCard distributed the poem “Mary Said Yes” and invited the Vestry to celebrate the Christmas season with a libation following the meeting.

OTHER

The attendance report for November was distributed.

Dr. Whitmire commented that St. James’s is in the position to lead improvement in relations with its African-American brothers and sisters and, to that end, invited the Vestry to attend the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Evensong on Sunday, January 14, 2018. Once again, the Norfolk State Choir will join St. James’s Parish Choir, West Gallery Choir, and Youth Choir for the event. The Honorable Roger Gregory will recite Dr. King’s “I Have A Dream” speech.

Dr. McCard reminded the Vestry to review all the upcoming events listed on the reverse of the agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned with a benediction by Dr. McCard at 7:15 p.m.

Anita Lisk
Secretary

Approved:

Rev. Dr. John McCard
Rector

Peggy Crowley
Senior Warden