

## Minutes for Church Council

August 2, 2014

**Members Present:** Hal Salwasser, Rick Garvin, Nita Phillips, Terry Bolin, Dave Straub, Rick Schroff, Cindy Dahl, Elizabeth Nielsen, Julie Christianson, Anne Foltz and Rev. Barbara Nixon

**Also Present:** Marie Benham

**Opening** (Barbara)

"Together We Serve"

Reading from Hebrews

**Approval of Minutes** (because of a necessary amendment to last Church Council minutes, these items were taken out of the Consent Agenda)

Minutes from June 17 Church Conference: Elizabeth made a motion to approve the minutes, Nita Philips seconded, passed unanimously

Minutes from May 3 Church Council: Elizabeth made a motion to approve them, Cindy seconded. One 'friendly amendment' needed to list Cindy Dahl as present. Elizabeth asked if any other amendments were necessary, and after none were brought up, Elizabeth moved to pass the amended minutes, and Cindy seconded it. This motion was passed unanimously.

### **Reports:**

Rick S. on lawsuit: After a hiatus due to the plaintiff's bankruptcy, the lawsuit in which the church is being sued for negligence in connection to alleged abuse perpetrated by the Boy Scouts has resumed activity. It is in the 'Findings' phase right now, and if there is a trial, it would happen in Portland some time on or after April 15. Rick reminded us that the Boy Scouts are paying our legal fees and could still decide to settle this outside of court. Additionally, Rick asked that we keep the members of the congregation involved in this in our prayers. There was some discussion in the Council regarding if and how the congregation should be informed about the lawsuit. It was decided that Rick will write an update and send it as an all-church email and also have it printed in September's newsletter. Additionally, it was clarified that as past Lay Leader, Rick will act as the church spokesperson with the media.

Hal on Annual Conference: Hal was excited to report on the "spirit-filled" Annual Conference that took place in Salem in June; Corvallis FUMC received an award from Gwen Drake for our action on social justice issues. Hal cautioned the Council that we should view such an award as a call for further action and Rev. Barbara also expressed the sentiment that there is much more work for our church to do in this area.

### **Communication**

Report from Barbara on Meet-n-Greet input: Barbara has participated in 11 meet-n-greets. One area that has come up is the use of the Community Center. Is its use as Room at the Inn restricting its use as conceived in its original vision? Additionally, people's feedback regarding new worship style has been positive.

How to improve communications – This is a continuation of an ongoing conversation about how to improve our Council’s communication with the congregation at large. This need was highlighted after the last Town Hall when it came out that many people would like more frequent communication, and people are not reading the newsletter. Better communication is especially crucial right now as there will be changes in staffing as we shift from having two pastors to one.

August 10<sup>th</sup> – On this date in church, Elizabeth Nielsen will introduce the Church Council in worship.

Discussion ensued around how often the Church Council meets, how often we have Town Hall meetings, how we communicate to congregants about who is on the Council, etc. One Idea: We need to have more frequent updates for the Congregation regarding decisions that are relevant for the whole congregation. It was suggested that the Lay Leader and/or other Council members could stand up and make announcements about what is happening on the Council, and/or in Executive Committee. We also discussed when it would be best for this to happen, and for now, we will try doing it at the beginning of the church service.

We will re-visit this issue as needed, but for now, the next steps of specific actions are:

Once a month- A Council member will make an announcement about what is happening in Council and/or Executive Committee

Possible weekly email blast updating people about what decisions are being made and what is happening at the church.

**Personnel and Staffing Plan** (Barbara) – See Appendix A for breakdown of each role.

(Note: These descriptions are the committee's best guess of what needs would be met by each position, and there is room for flexibility as we see fit.) Barbara made some additional clarifying comments about each role as noted below:

- **Business Manager/Treasurer:** Current bookkeeper's job would likely be absorbed by two of these positions (essentially this position is replacing Ken Hilton, who has been an unpaid volunteer)
- **Facilities Events/ Manager:** Jim Swinyard is willing to try this on as a volunteer until April so that we will know what is required of the position; ultimately we will need a paid person in this role. Ideally, a sound/tech person would also be paid. The system we have now is functional but it is limiting to the structure of worship.
- **Congregational Ministries Director:** The only explanation in this category was to clarify that the Youth Director is doing a wonderful job, but for the size of our youth group, only 20 hours a week is needed. There was some discussion around why it was originally assumed that 30 hours was necessary, and some members agreed to seek further clarification regarding this matter.

After Barbara gave her thoughts regarding the Plan, Council members each shared their own thoughts. What follows is a summary of the discussion:

There was general agreement that the current system does not allow for enough accountability, and many members felt that the proposed Plan addressed this issue. One member expressed concern that we have traditionally relied on volunteers to do many of the tasks outlined in the proposal and we have not explicitly invited church members to step forward to this work in a volunteer capacity. It was suggested that we should solicit help from church volunteers before filling the jobs. Another Council member suggested that a the previous system of multiple committees, especially the Board of Trustees, allowed for the fostering of a certain camaraderie that is lost in the current, as well as proposed, Plan. While many Members expressed understanding of the importance of volunteers' work, most also expressed support for the Plan. Members especially expressed urgency around funding the Business Manager position. Although it was suggested by one Council member that the Director of Congregational Life is truly the "future" of the church, the Council ultimately recognized the need to fill the Business Manager position as a crucial first step. See Appendix B for a breakdown of finances for FY 14-15.

Another area of discussion was who was going to be responsible for building relationships with the community, and Barbara pointed out the wording under the job description for Director of Congregational Life. Current wording is "publicity for activities" and Barbara suggested she would rephrase it to include the word "outreach."

Hal moved to endorse Rev Barbara's staffing recommendations; Rick S. seconded it.

Some discussion ensued that amended the motion as follows:

Step One: Email congregation (written by Barbara) describing each job position; if there are members of the congregation with the skills and passion to fulfill the positions in a voluntary manner then they need to step forward by the following week. (An explanation that Jim Swinyard has already stepped forward as interim Facilities Manager would be included in this email.) In addition, Barbara will talk to Shauna about her reduction of hours and Jim about his increase of hours (and change to title of position from Choir Director to Director of Music).

Step Two: hire the Business Manager ASAP (or train the volunteer who has stepped forward as Business Manager)

Step Three: Assuming no one steps forward to volunteer for the position, we need to figure out a way to build into the budget for next year how we will pay for the position of Director of Congregational Life.

With one abstention; the motion passed.

Rev. Barbara brought up the fact that Jim Davidson comes in and opens the building on Sunday, scouts the building, etc. Barbara thinks there should be a stipend for this duty and it should rotate among some members of the staff. She will proceed with this idea on her own.

### **Financial Policies**

It was originally proposed that the Council would consider changes to financial policies as suggested by the Financial Operations Working Group and that came out of the audit performed by Darcy Miller. However, at least 26 financial policies need to be examined, and such a task was overwhelming for a one-day Council meeting. Thus, Elizabeth presented a motion that we establish a working group to look

at the policies and make their suggestions part of the Consent Agenda at October's Council meeting. Cindy seconded the motion.

Discussion centered on whether or not there was a need to deal with this immediately rather than just waiting until the next meeting. However, because it has already been sitting for a while, the Council agreed that moving ahead with a smaller task force would be preferable. Cindy, Nita and Rick G. volunteered to be on this task force.

We reviewed the motion as follows: Establish a task force to deal with financial policies as suggested in the Financial Operations Working Group (also known as Linda Myers' group) and the audit done by Darcy Miller. It was passed unanimously.

### **Property**

Elizabeth: Scott Ponder has resigned as chair of Property Ministry Team. The plan for now is to not fill the position. Jim Swinyard is going to develop a team as part of his role as interim Facilities Manager. The two current priorities are updating the nursery and cleaning up/"decluttering" the main floor. Barbara is working to establish a culture where church members feel empowered to tackle projects in the building if they think it's needed.

One concern Jim has is the Room at the Inn is currently storing items for the Inn (such as beds, mattresses, a refrigerator, etc.) in the "rec room" in Community Center. The room was not designed as storeroom and this practice could send the wrong message to people who donated to the capital campaign to build the Community Center. The Inn needs to have the room set up by late September for next year. For now, the room will remain as is. After April 15 for 2015, when the shelter is closed, the room needs to be emptied and returned to its function as a rec room rather than a storage space. Such an action is especially important for 2015 as there is a greater likelihood that the Inn will not be returning 2015-16.

Introduction to discussion about space use task force: Jim Swinyard has suggested that we need to determine which rooms are "multi-use rooms" and which are "single-use rooms." This is an important inquiry because the answer informs a plan for how we use the funds (\$50,000) from the Raab bequest that are specifically earmarked for "building maintenance."

Elizabeth's motion: We need to establish a task group to do space use/utilization study (to inform developing a plan for Raab bequest for building maintenance); Julie seconded the motion.

Discussion revolved around whether or not this is a room-use study or a how-to-use-the-funds study. This task force does not need to do both of these jobs, although they can. We established that when we vote on this we are assuming that members of the Council will be part of this task force. Both Terry and Julie volunteered for this, and it is assumed that Jim Swinyard will also be part of this task force as well. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Raab Bequest for Social Outreach**

The terms of the bequest are that close to \$50,000 would "be used for social outreach, assisting limited resource individuals and families in the community with food, housing, and other needs ..."

Elizabeth presented a motion that we need to create a process whereby people can use the funds available. Nita seconded the motion. Dave and Anne volunteered to be on this task force, and it was suggested that Roy Arnold would be a good addition to this group. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Faith Sharing – Activity** (Barbara)

Barbara led the Council in a “Freeing Theology” activity where the group listed all the words we use when we talk about church. Next, the group was challenged to take one of those words and try to define it without using any of the other words on the list. We discussed ways to use this to fulfill our goal of making disciples and sharing our faith.

### **Update on the Goal for Mentoring**

Elizabeth asked these questions to stimulate conversation around this goal:

- Are we looking for a curriculum or “method” to implement?
- What are our next steps?
- Do we need to re-word or rewrite our goal? What IS our mission? What is the sense of the group?

Discussion was around whether or not this goal has been met or whether it has been tabled. Some people feel like a lot of the programs are doing something to grow discipleship. Others feel like the programs we have are missional rather than feeding people's personal spiritual growth. After further discussion and input from the Council, Elizabeth re-worded the goal to read:

**We foster personal, spiritual growth and development as followers of Jesus.**

Elizabeth motioned that we amend the goal of the church as worded above. Hal seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously.

### **Review**

What are tasks? Deadlines? Who will be doing them? Here is our plan for future steps:

- Monthly updates about Council in church - starting August 10.
- Possible weekly email blasts.
- Barbara is empowered to move forward on the staffing piece.
- Space study: Terry, Julie, Jim S. (report presented Oct. 25)
- Financial Operations Recommendations: Cindy, Rick G. and Nita (report presented Oct. 25)
- Raab Bequest: Dave, Anne and Roy (report presented Oct. 25)

### **Closing** (Elizabeth)

#### **Upcoming Events:**

Executive Committee (Aug 5 and 19; Sept 2, 16, etc.)

Town Hall – in September

October 25 – Church Council

All Church Conference in November