

October 23, 2024 Council Minutes

Present: Moderator Terry Buchmann, Moderator-Elect Michael Zvara, Pastor Mark Hensley, Treasurer Jean Bocker, Secretary Joanne Himebauch, Janine Coley, Jamie & Karla Pennington, Beth Petersen, Rae-Ellen Preuss, Sue Roberts

Call to Order & Opening Prayer - Terry Buchmann

Jamie moved and Janine seconded to approve the September 11, 2024 Council Minutes. Motion carried.

Devotional Time - Pastor Mark. How does Pastor Mark (and we, as a Congregation) stay positive when we are facing problems as a church - attendance, budget worries, etc. God told him that hope is a powerful thing! Matthew's Gospel says that with God, all things are possible. He also cited many other scriptures. God knows we are planting seeds of faith, hope, and love at FCC.

Approval of 2025 Budget - Jean

Jean presented to Council the proposed budget for 2025, which she and Jamie put together. They were able to come close to presenting a balanced budget, which would be presented at the Business meeting on November 17. This is based on predictions in giving, since not all pledge forms have been turned in yet. Pledges are down for this coming year.. Capital Improvements would not receive any new money in 2025, but they already have a good chunk of money in the bank. We would not be able to give raises for our employees in 2025, but that could change during the coming year. Despite that, the proposed budget is still at a deficit of \$323.91. Joanne offered to lower the music budget by \$325 in order to balance the proposed budget.

Mark asked about the insurance. The quote listed is for the coming year. Mark called our insurance company to ask about the parsonage. As long as we keep a piece of furniture in it, it is considered occupied. Rae-Ellen talked about shutting the water to the building down, since it is not in use currently.

Jean recommends taking any surplus from 2024 to put into the Capital Improvement fund, since we haven't budgeted anything in CI for 2025. We will talk about that at the end of the year, when we know an exact amount.

Jamie moved and Beth seconded to approve the budget as presented with the change in the music line. Motion carried.

Joanne mentioned that it was refreshing to not have the Consecration Sunday format, but what worked well in the past with Consecration Sunday was the RSVP method and then calling others we didn't hear from to insure their presence on Giving Sunday. Jamie and Mark talked about how this year was very different due to the loss of so many members and the changes we

have experienced. Perhaps next year, we will consider making changes to how to approach Giving Sunday.

Jean asked how we thought the congregation would react to the proposed budget. The consensus was that they would most likely agree that we are doing what we need to do for now.

Approval of the November 17, 2-24 Business meeting agenda.

Rae-Ellen asked to be included in the agenda to reinstate her lay ministry license, with a lifetime license that either party could end.

Janine asked about voting members. How do we know who is a voting member at the meeting? No one has officially left the church with a letter. Jamie mentioned that if someone did not give financially in 2025 or didn't attend for a year, then they can be removed from the roles.

Jamie moved and Sue seconded to approve the budget with the change of Rae-Ellen's lay ministry approval request. Motion carried.

Boy Scout Fundraiser

The Boy Scouts sent us a note asking about their fundraisers to help the family of Keith Johnson, a leader who suffered a stroke and is still in the hospital 2 months later. They were specifically asking how to keep the contributions tax-free. Terry will email them back with Sue's suggestion that they give the money as a gift, which would not be taxable.

Pastor Search committee update - Jamie

The committee already had 2 meetings in October, with one more scheduled this month.

SOP updates - Janine

We looked at 2 SOPs. The first was Forming and Ending Ministry Teams. The new paragraph of the updated version will state: *If there are vacancies on the Ministry Team, the Team Lead will contact the other members of the Team and determine the need to fill the vacancy. If the Ministry Team has no members remaining, the Council will determine if the Ministry Team should be dismissed from active ministry.*

Janine moved and Jean seconded to accept the change. Motion carried.

The second SOP discussed was Duties of Officers - We need to update this SOP to include that the Treasurer position has no term limit, just like the Secretary position. It had been voted on at the same time as Secretary on November 6, 2019, but the form was never updated. Janine's second recommendation was to put the line about missing Council meetings once at the bottom of the SOP instead of after each position. This line reads: *Note: Any voting member who misses four Council meetings in a calendar year will be considered to have resigned.*

Joanne will confirm the date that this SOP was adopted and Janine will make the updates.

Request from Memorial Committee - Janine

Arnie Fickau took the flower stands and the planter to fix them. We don't know what he will charge us yet, but the plan is to use memorial money to pay for it. Joanne moved and Karla seconded to approve the cost of the flower stands using Memorial funds when we receive the bill from Arnie Fickau. Motion carried.

Judi Weyer requested to work remotely.

Judi and her husband plan to sell their house in Mukwonago and move 2 ½ hours North from Mukwonago. Judi & Mark looked at a list of Judi's duties, with a highlighted list of what we would need to help with to make her remote work possible. Janine & Joanne offered to help with things like folding bulletins, etc.. Jean offered to do the accounts payable and payroll for at least 6 months. A date for this to happen has not been decided upon yet, but might happen in December or January or so. Janine moved and Jean seconded to accept the request for Judi to work remotely. Motion carried.

Jean felt that we need to start looking for a replacement for Judi, though, but Karla thinks we need to step back and let the situation play out for a time. Pastor Mark thinks that this will not be as huge of an issue as some of us are thinking it will be. Once the congregation knows about this change, perhaps other members will step up to help.

Tri-Skill contract - Beth. Beth took last year's contract and made some minor changes. We really need to have a liaison between the church and TriSkill. Pastor Mark accepted to be that liaison. Judi sent Beth a chart to compare water and the electric charges from last year to this year. The costs have gone down. Beth recommends that we don't raise the rent. It is currently \$600 per month. Jamie suggested raising the rent by \$25 - \$50 per month. Janine suggested that Pastor Mark discuss with TriSkill whether it would be a burden on the program to ask for that increase. Any increase and the contract would begin January 1st.

Updated Church Website.

Janine mentioned that we need to add that there is weekly Youth Sunday School. Also we need to have a link to show that we are affiliated with the Wisconsin Congregational Association (WCA) and the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC). Pastor Mark will talk with Judi about adding these things.

Terry asked how we access things like SOPs, since we took down the First Moderator site. Perhaps we could create a hidden link that needs passcode access. There are certain things that it would be nice to be able to see, like the list of Ministry teams, who is which director and which ministries fall under their purview, as well as all the SOPs.

Michale Zvara stepping down from the 2025 Moderator position

Michael Zvara announced that he will be stepping down as Moderator for next year. He plans to finish out his term as Moderator-Elect. Terry said that she would agree to continue as moderator for several months into 2025, but only if absolutely needed. The Nominating Committee will get to work on filling this position.

Zoom during Council meetings

Beth wants to make sure that Zoom will work during Council meetings as she recuperates from her upcoming knee replacement operation. Karla assured Beth that she would get to meetings early to make sure that it will be set up.

A Study of What Happened to our church over the last couple of years

Pastor Mark has been exploring what happened in our church as our members divided over certain issues the last couple of years when Pastor Kevin Clark was at FCC , because he believes that the struggle is not over. He wanted to explain to us what he had learned before the Annual meeting. Terry asked him to present it to us at our next Council meeting. However, this introduction and the handout that he had put together for us piqued the interest of the Council members, and we decided to stay to hear Pastor Mark's thoughts tonight.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Himebauch
Council secretary