

**Vestry Minutes
Christ Episcopal Church
Montpelier, Vermont
March 26, 2018**

Members present: Bruce Story, Senior Warden, Chair; David Blythe, Shawn Bryan, Josh Fitzhugh, Sarah Hofmann, Diane Holland, Ted Long, Junior Warden; Joan Murray, and Liz Slayton

Others in attendance: Rev. Paul Habersang, Priest-in-Partnership; John Jaworski, Treasurer; and Virginia Catone, Secretary

Bruce called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., after which Paul read a season-appropriate passage from Celebrating the Seasons, a book containing daily spiritual readings for the Christian year.

1. Vestry governance: Bruce called attention to the “Christ Church Statement of Purpose and Vision” which the Vestry adopted five years ago and which included elaboration on the vision (“where we are going”) and strategies (“how to get there”). In his opinion, the Christ Church community has lived into that mission and vision statement very well - both the Vestry as the leadership entity and the mutual ministry teams /centers of creativity that have flourished within the congregation.

2. Consent agenda: Josh moved approval of the Consent Agenda, consisting of the minutes of February 19, the updated Vestry liaisons list, the Priest-in-Partnership report for February-March, and the February financial statement. Diane seconded the motion, which was adopted.

Paul elaborated on the subject of his collaboration with Barbara Weedon to create in time for the 150th anniversary celebration an architectural display in the Memorial Garden of the historic church spire that had been affixed to the original steeple, which was removed in 1963 due to impending structural failure. The spire is the only remaining portion of that steeple. The most expensive part of showcasing it would be the granite base, but unfortunately the cost of that far exceeds what the church can afford. Paul will continue discussions with Barbara in the hope of finding an affordable solution for displaying the spire.

Another subject included in Paul’s report which he mentioned was a recent presentation of the subject “How to Survive an Active Shooter” given by Montpelier Police Chief Tony Facos. That meeting prompted Paul to propose gathering a group from Christ Church to explore the possible creation of an internal emergency response team. Josh supported that idea. Paul also thought it would be a good idea to look into the possible acquisition of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

3. Approval of grant application request for feeding ministries: Shawn moved approval of the submission to the Diocesan grants and loans committee of a grant

application for \$2,000 for Christ Church's feeding ministries (community meals and emergency food shelf). Sarah seconded the motion, which the Vestry adopted by a unanimous vote.

4. Finance Committee update: Josh reported that Treasurer John has encountered some challenges in trying to transition to the QuickBooks software accounting system. John then described the issues, which are on the income side. He will continue working with the Recording Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer to resolve these difficulties.

Paul updated the members on the subject of the portion of the 2017 Diocesan deficit which parishes are being asked to absorb on a formula basis. Christ Church's assessment is \$707.

He indicated that after learning more details of the Diocese's efforts to contain spending, he has moderated his views on this subject.

5. Sanctuary and bell tower update: Shawn advised that Christ Church "is penciled in" with contractors for the priority external restoration projects on the street side of the sanctuary. The extent of the work depends on how much money can be raised. The Bashara family's plans for erecting a hotel along with a multi-story parking garage that would be sited close to the rear of the church have ramifications for all outdoor restoration work. Ted explained why tackling the deteriorating foundation issues at the rear of the sanctuary depends on when and if the Basharas' projects are approved and construction begins. He also pointed out that the issue of lighting the large stained glass window over the permanent altar will have to be addressed, although he thought that subject could be resolved if the church's eventual housing project comes to fruition.

Josh at this point described a recent discussion about a capital campaign that he and attorney Sharon Winn (Fannon) had with parishioner Betsy Bishop, who has many contacts in the community. One of Ms. Bishop's points was that certainty about future plans is critical to embarking on a capital campaign; i.e., we must be clear as quickly as possible as to what is going to occur behind the church. Josh pointed out that the Vestry's prior discussions about major restoration work have focused on the front side, and he expressed concern about how all the uncertainty relating to the potential impact of the hotel-parking structure may affect community support of the church's projects.

Bruce assured the members that printed materials related to fund raising will be clear about what we are asking for.

6. Housing committee: Shawn disclosed the receipt on this date of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) prepared by the Basharas' attorney relating to their project. They did not seek Christ Church's input on the MOU, which according to the church's attorney is slanted in the hotel-parking complex's favor on many points. A major issue still to be addressed is stormwater management. The project is slated for

consideration by the city's Design Review Board (DRB) on April 2, with many issues in the MOU unresolved and scant time to do so. Shawn said he would be consulting with our attorney the morning following this Vestry meeting.

In the event the DRB should rule in favor of the Basharas' project site plan, the church's negotiators may appeal if our attorney so advises. The window for appeal is thirty days.

Liz expressed the opinion that at the appropriate time it is important to inform the congregation of what has transpired with respect to the Basharas' plans and their effect on Christ Church. She also considered it important for the Vestry to express its confidence in the process as outlined by Shawn, and she so moved. Sarah seconded the motion, which was adopted.

7. Capital campaign: In accordance with authorization granted at the Vestry's February 19 meeting, Bruce reported that he and Josh have been working with Sharon Winn since that meeting and she has agreed to serve as the capital campaign manager. She also has communicated further with Connecticut consultant Maryann Doyle and has received considerable information regarding structure, responsibilities and other aspects of mounting a campaign.

Much of Bruce's update and the ensuing discussion centered on Sharon's compensation and whether it is realistic to expect her to pay out of that the cost of additional outside consulting services such as those which Ms. Doyle might provide. His position was that Sharon's 5% fee should be based on the campaign goal and that if the services of an outside consultant should become warranted, those must be funded separately. The subject of Sharon's compensation – whether based on achieving a goal or on the actual giving – generated considerable conversation and differences of opinion. Some members preferred linking compensation to performance rather than to the goal. Another point was that as the campaign progresses, the amount of incremental work is likely to diminish and therefore does not warrant the same amount of recompense. Bruce made clear that Sharon's compensation will be tied to the goal. He also advised that the contract would provide for an up-front payment to her of \$5,000, after which she will be paid monthly on the 5% basis tied to the goal.

He went on to describe other specifics of his and Josh's meetings with Sharon, including such factors as looking at models for different goals and how many families in the parish have not yet been contacted and their potential contributions. Bruce said that a committee is being formed and that they will develop an achievable - or perhaps greater - campaign goal, based on both congregation and community giving. Given the likelihood that the capital campaign will extend to the outside community, having a community co-chair for the campaign is considered a good idea. The campaign committee's tasks will encompass addressing the desirability of soliciting bequests that would be dedicated to future ongoing maintenance needs of the sanctuary.

Liz suggested obtaining confirmation in writing from the local community of support for the church's capital campaign. On the related subject of the significance of Christ Church to the community, Sarah pointed out that groups and individuals generally appreciate and use parish hall space more than the sanctuary. Shawn observed that appeals to the public must make clear that the vision for the parish hall is at least three years from realization, to which Paul added that it will be helpful to indicate that space will continue to be available for community use.

Replying to an inquiry as to whether the community co-chair of the committee will provide an estimation of how much can be raised in the community, Bruce said the group will work to develop a realistic goal. His personal sense based on what he knows at this point is that \$500,000 is achievable, especially with community contributions, and that a significant amount will be available to proceed with the most immediate work.

On the timing, Bruce indicated that at this meeting he needed authorization from the Vestry to sign a contract with Sharon to manage the church's capital campaign, based on an initial \$5,000 payment to her, with incremental payments thereafter for the duration of the campaign to be divided for the remaining months of the current calendar year according to the formula of 5% of the total goal set by the campaign committee. Sarah so moved. Diane seconded the motion and it was adopted.

Bruce's expectation was to announce the capital campaign to the congregation in June and that the every member canvass will be conducted during the fall months. There was agreement on the importance of making clear to the congregation that the capital campaign is completely separate from annual pledging.

Paul announced that the church has received the expected \$20,000 check from the State Division of Historic Preservation toward the cost of the exterior sanctuary renovation work.

The meeting then adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Virginia Catone
Secretary of the Vestry