

FRS Parish Board Meeting – September 18, 2024

Present: Rev. Rebecca Bryan, **Tina Benik**, Tom Himmel, Kathy Desilets, Jim Supple, Laurie Evans-Daly, Vern Ellis, Minnie Flanagan, Bob Higgins, Sarina Kahn Reddy, Andy Lobb, Lori Clark

Note: Names in **Bold** are voting members.

Not Attending: Renée Wolf Foster

Call to Order: Tina Benik called the meeting to order at 6:07pm.

Welcome/Reading/Chalice Lighting: Rev. Rebecca

Rev. Rebecca's reading focused on the dissolution of sorrow and urged not to swim against the tide.

Minister's Report

Discussion of Issues re Board Size and Other Issues:

Renée Wolf Foster suggested that we consider two-year terms for Board Chairs. This would allow incumbents time to develop an understanding of pending issues. There was support for this idea.

- We need to look at succession planning and leadership development.
- Is our Board too big? Sometimes the size of the Board slows the process. It is harder to recruit new members. Smaller boards are common in non-profits.
- Do all committee chairs need to be Board members?
- A lot Board members hold defined positions, such as chairs of committees. Is it better to have active committee members on the board?
- Do the active congregants have too much to do? We are looking at ways to engage members, which could help. Can Rev. Laurel's work help?

Other:

- Annie Maurer will continue to manage congregational meetings.
- We are having problems with sound on YouTube related to streaming of services.
- It is great to work with Nick.

Board Covenant:

We had our first reading at the retreat and should return to this at the next meeting.

Stewardship Update: Renée Wolf Foster

- Very busy summer. The committee is currently working on the auction and had many other tasks over the summer.
- It has been hard to get people involved in the ongoing work for projects.
- How can we get people more involved?
Ideas: Designate ongoing teams for each activity; look for people who are waiting to be asked.
- Yankee Homecoming activities were amazing.

Communications Update:

Kate Lamie has been contracted to work on FRS communications. She has implemented a new online calendar system which allows people to look at detailed information on meetings or events that they have a specific interest in.

Governance: Tom Himmel

- Prepared to deal with steeple lighting issue at congregational meeting. Hoping to keep to a brief presentation. Forrest Speck, Doug Latham, and Ed Budelmann will be available as subject matter experts.
- 95 members have registered so far. Helpful to recruit others to ensure a quorum.
- Governance Committees must be approved by the board. The chair is elected at the Annual Meeting. Tom presented a slate of Governance Committee members: Lori Clark, Kathy Desilets, Bob Higgins, and Rebekah Stafford.

ACTION: Approval of Governance Committee Members

Motion: Minnie Flanagan moved to accept the slate of Governance Committee members. Renée Wolf Foster seconded, and the motion passed without objection.

Budget and Finance: Jim Supple

- We ended last year with a \$3,800 deficit. This deficit was greater than expected because of the underperformance of the pledge match.
- Operational expenses and income were on budget.
- Cash flow issues can slow important projects.
- We may need to use the endowment for other urgent projects, so we are working on an agreement with the Trustees.
- Good September/October income on pledges, but we still have an issue with past year pledges.
- A local group wants to rent the second floor of Parish Hall as rehearsal space. Negotiations are nearing a close and work needed to meet their needs is underway.

4th Century Team Update: Vern Ellis

- Lark Madden has begun research on a Capital Campaign to start in 2025.
- Goals include making maintenance of the property easier and applying Green Stewardship to this process.
- 300th Anniversary planning is going well. Looking at final determination of logo and at banners for the church.
- Grants Committee has submitted two applications for steeple lighting repairs.
- A community input meeting focused on possible uses of Parish Hall was held as part of our visioning process. Attendees included representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, YWCA, Tinkerhaus, the Newburyport Superintendent of Schools, and the president of Anna Jaques Hospital. Attendees had strong support for using the Parish Hall for community events. They said that FRS is seen as a sanctuary. The group also encourages keeping our status and mission as a church.

Second Reading and Discussion of Policy on Systems Use:

The purpose of the policy is to secure and control access to information stored on our electronic systems. Director of Finance Dan O'Shea is working on various aspects of this policy such as having all the financial information on one drive and assuring that this information is available only on a need-to-know basis. Please review and make sure you understand the policy. Final vote to adopt policy planned for next meeting.

Consent Agenda:

Only notes for the May meeting are available and they have not been approved yet. It was decided to discuss for approval the May meeting minutes as well as minutes for the summer meeting at the next Parish Board meeting in October.

Adjournment:

Rev. Rebecca reminds us that we are co-creating the future of the church and that our church and its members touch many lives.

ACTION: Adjournment of the meeting

Motion: Kathy Desilets moved to adjourn at 8pm. The motion was seconded by Jim Supple and passed without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Desilets, Parish Clerk