SAINT PAUL’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting  
December 14, 2019

There was a meeting of the Vestry of Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church, Chestnut Hill, on the above date following the lay leadership retreat in the education wing’s conference room.

There were present Ruth Desiderio, Rector’s Warden, presiding; also Interim Rector the Rev. Canon Albert J. Ogle, and Lisa Budd, Chip Butler, Steve Camp-Landis, Cheyenne DeMulder, Mark Duckett, Clark Groome, John Kimberly, George McNeely, Tabitha Oman, Louise Thompson, and Hugh Williamson. The Rev. Barbara Abbott, St. Paul’s consultant, was the Vestry’s guest.

Tim Albert, Steve Pearson, and Kristen Poole were absent.

The meeting was called to order at 1:21 p.m.

I. Interim Rector Albert Ogle opened the meeting with a prayer.

II. The Listening Hearts Guidelines were read.

III. The minutes of the November 18, 2019 Vestry meeting were approved without dissent.

IV. Albert Ogle distributed a 2020 Vision brochure which outlines all of St. Paul’s ministries and which will be put in the pews next week. It was also mentioned that we should encourage visitors who might be interested in joining our community to fill out the pew cards and give them to an usher or put them in the collection plate.

V. The Christmas Pageant will conclude with a Eucharist. It was decided that the congregation needs to know that this is part of the service and that while some may not want to partake and would want to leave after the pageant itself they should do so quietly. Several communion stations will be set up in the front of the nave.
VI. Albert reported that to date we have raised $487,500 of our $625,000 goal from 108 donors. That’s about 75% of our financial goal. The active solicitation will start again in January.

Albert thinks the campaign is going well. He asked the Vestry and the Stewardship Committee to contact those parishioners who give regularly but do not pledge to encourage them to pledge. We now realize about 165 pledges and it would be better as we move forward with the search if we could get that number to 200.

VII. Albert said that just to open the building – lighting, heat, etc. – costs about $290,000 per year. His hope is that rentals – organizations, weddings, funerals, etc. – would create revenue to cover most of that cost. Right now our earned revenue is about $30,000.

He presented a draft 11-month agreement (if it’s longer than a year permission would need to be gotten from the diocesan Standing Committee) for our relationship with the Chestnut Hill Music Academy which has used our facilities for many years and paid $800/month. The new agreement would increase the monthly amount to $2,000 plus one-half of the cost of utilities in Dixon House.

The proposed plan is that the Music Academy move to the Dixon House’s second floor and that the parish offices move for the next year to the Rectory, after which they would be housed in the Parish House.

It was moved and seconded that “St. Paul’s accepts the 11-month agreement with the Chestnut Hill Music Academy that they move to the second floor of Dixon House for a contribution of $2,000 per month. In addition we agree that the parish offices should be moved into the Rectory as soon as is feasible. It is also agreed that if the office move costs more than the currently estimated $8,000 the Interim Rector will come back to the Vestry for approval.”

The motion was passed unanimously.

Albert said he hopes that these two moves will be accomplished by February 1.

VIII. Albert asked that the Vestry designate $60,000 of his compensation as a housing allowance. His request was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.
He also asked that $20,000 of Assistant Rector Dan Kline’s compensation be designated as a housing allowance. That was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

IX. John Kimberly mentioned that he’s been getting questions about where things stand in the search. The vestry, after discussion, decided that there definitely is a need to communicate regularly, both online and in church, about what’s happening. This is particularly important now that John Rollins’ self-study group is about to ask all parishioners to fill out a survey, likely in mid-January.

Our consultant Barbara Abbott will be preaching on January 5. It was thought that might be a good time to have a forum so people could catch up on what we’re doing and what we think the timetable for the search will be, even if it has to be modified/updated later.

X. There have also been some questions about when the construction work will begin and how that will affect the church and its programs. This, too, is an area where communication needs to be more frequent and available in different ways.

XI. Accounting Warden Steve Camp-Landis reported that for the current fiscal year there is the possibility that St. Paul’s will face a significant deficit although the actual figures will not be known until after the giving income that arrives in December is actually received.

Discussion about how to deal with that deficit – and the estimated deficit for 2020 – included two possible solutions: taking a loan that would have to be paid back monthly and that would use the parish’s endowment as collateral or borrowing from the endowment with the requirement (already passed by the Vestry) that it be repaid.

This is one of the budget issues that needs further discussion.

In developing the 2020 budget the Finance Committee assumed a 4% draw from our endowment, the amount we’ve taken for a number of years. There was some disagreement about whether or not that 4% figure should be rigid or whether the draw could, from time to time when necessary, be changed. This is another issue that needs further discussion.

There was discussion about the health insurance that is part of our employees’ compensation. The diocesan plan we use, Anthem BlueCard PPO 90, costs St. Paul’s
about $7,000 more than Anthem BlueCard PPO 80 which some on the Finance Committee recommend we move to. Since this would increase the deductible and other costs of those covered the Vestry unanimously approved a duly seconded motion that we maintain the PPO 90 for the current staff and offer new employees PPO 80.

Among the other issues in the proposed budget that raised some concern was the increase in the parish’s voluntary contribution to the diocese (additional to the mandatory assessment). The voluntary contribution was almost doubled in 2020. While it was clear that the Vestry would like very much to support the diocese, there was some concern that at a time when we’re facing some financial difficulties we might not be able to give what we, and the diocese, want us to give. This is another budget matter that needs further study.

After much discussion Chip Butler moved that “We approve the draft 2020 budget with the understanding that we will look at it again in January or February when the financial position of the church is more clearly known.” The motion, duly seconded, was approved with 11 voting for and Clark Groome abstaining.

XII. The next meeting of the Vestry will be on Monday, January 27, 2020 In Dixon House.

XIII. Following Albert’s closing prayer, the meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Clark Groome
Secretary