

St. George's Church Vestry Meeting Minutes **April 20, 2023**

Present: Sean Albert, Jon Ewbank, Carol Gaige, Meg Hughes, Sandee Hughes, David Kennison, Gloria Kishton, Lynn Paska, Paul Smigelski, Rich Unger, Jeff Wengrovius

Senior Warden David Kennison convened the meeting at 6:32 p.m. in the Shaw Lounge.

Sandee Hughes moved to accept the March meeting minutes; Lynn Paska seconded the motion; all voted in favor. Meg Hughes thanked Gloria Kishton for subbing as clerk in March.

Senior Warden's Report

Rectory Repairs

David Kennison had filed a report on progress at the Rectory. The first floor is mostly done, with just minor cleaning left. The primary bedroom bath on the second floor has crumbling plaster and masonry to be addressed.

Church Boiler

We are still awaiting delivery of the last boiler section. Installation will be scheduled once it is received.

New Bishop Soon?

A Discernment Retreat with bishop candidate semi-finalists was held April 17-20. This entailed in-depth interviews by the Profile & Search Committee, which includes Fr. Tom Pettigrew, Fr. Jonathan Beck, Fr. Paul Hunter, and Fr. Tom Papazoglakis.

Activities Calendar

May 21—Choral Evensong, 3 p.m. (benefit to City Mission, 50% of plate offering)

May 28—Pentecost

June 11—Corpus Christi

Advertising/Outreach

We ran advertisements in the *Daily Gazette* before Palm Sunday and before Easter. (Many thanks to Gloria for design, with support from Sandee.) Visitors have told us they came on Easter due to the ad. A flyer also was generated and posted in community.

David led a Schenectady Historical Society tour of 35 people at church on April 15 and received many positive comments.

David noted that he has refreshed our welcome packets in the pews, with assistance from Sandee. Jeff Wengrovius suggested that we might want to insert a small flyer with a QR code that leads users to the church website, and offered an example of one designed to make online giving simpler.

Web Site

The upgrade from <http://> to <https://> for security purposes has been implemented.

Junior Warden's Report

Jon Ewbank issued a report summarizing work done at the Rectory and thanked all who have helped with the yardwork there. He also noted that Bob McCloskey has been working to rectify shortcomings identified by insurance inspectors. This includes relatively small fixes such as exit signs and stair railings, and researching potentially high-cost items such as a fire suppression system for the Great Hall kitchen and roof repairs on three buildings.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Jeffrey Wengrovius reports that a new bank account has been opened at Scotia First National. The church's checking account will be transitioned there from Trustco. Pledge giving is off to a good start in 2023 and loose plate giving is also strong. Parishioners were generous with donations for Easter flowers.

The church is currently financially stable but we are anticipating some very costly projects that must be accomplished (e.g., roof repairs and boiler installation). No accumulated endowment interest has been taken yet in 2023. Gas and electric costs are beginning to ease. Our budget for supply priests is nearly nearly maxed out, but that will likely be offset by continued delay in securing a new rector.

Jeff thanked all who are cleaning up the Rectory backyard and reminded us that the church pays the City \$250 a year for trash removal at the Rectory, so we are entitled to place yard waste for pickup during the spring of the year. Garden Ministry will certainly

take advantage of that service. (Note: Bags can be put out on the day before collection. Collection day is currently Wednesday but changes periodically. *The Stockade Spy* always has an updated schedule.)

Community Liaison Report

Rich Unger had nothing specific to report on Stockade activities.

Garden Ministry

Meg Hughes, Barb Wengrovius, Gloria Kishton, and Suzy Unger have put in about 20 hours of deep raking, trash removal, and pruning at the Rectory. On April 15 Rich and Suzy Unger coordinated an effort by Paul Smigelski, Jon Pearson, Bob Paska, and David Kennison to rid the lower yard of fallen tree limbs, with the wood being added to a pile in Riverside Park targeted for pickup by the City. The effort will continue with volunteers at the Rectory on Earth Day, April 22.

Meg noted that the grass at the Rectory looks shaggy and neglected. She recommended that we hire a professional to mow the upper portion, and that we consider leaving the lower half of the yard “au naturel” with just a pathway cleared to the gate at the bottom. Meg also mentioned that some in the community are promoting a “No Mow May,” i.e., leaving yards untouched for a month while dandelions flourish and bees and other creatures recover for the year. It’s a noble idea but results in a very rustic appearance. Vestry believes it might be preferable to maintain a more manicured look at this time as new Rector candidates will be visiting.

Jon offered to mow at the Rectory.

Hospitality Committee

Sandee Hughes notes that a delicious array of food was brought in by parishioners for a reception following the Mass on Holy Saturday. She appreciates all who attended and contributed to this event. The few leftovers were used on Easter Sunday for coffee hour.

St. George’s Day is this Sunday. A luncheon will be offered following the parade through the Stockade. If anyone hasn’t already agreed to supply food, Sandee suggested that a dessert would be welcome.

Coffee hour sign-up sheets continue to be in the Great Hall for parishioners to see and hopefully pick a Sunday throughout the warm summer months and help out.

Communications

Lynn Paska announced that the website now features pictures of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, and the April 15th workday at the Rectory.

Her next deadline for *The Georgian Report* is Wednesday, May 31.

Archives

Sean Albert asked David if it would be possible to put a note in future bulletins asking parishioners to connect with Sean if they are in possession of old church documentation that could be considered historically significant and should be preserved in an archive.

Outreach

Paul Smigelski advised that we have collected 817 pounds of donated goods for SICM in 2023 to date, putting us on track to exceed our stellar efforts of last year. Carol Gaige has stepped up as the transporter of collected food to SICM.

The next collection of bedding for the YWCA will be June 11. Twin-size pillows, blankets, and comforters are sought.

Paul will work with Brian Taylor to put together an informational flyer/program for the Choral Evensong on May 21. Our guest speaker will be Mike Saccocio, executive director of the Schenectady City Mission.

Gloria inquired if we could place a small ad in the *Daily Gazette* to promote the Choral Evensong. She thought it might cost as much as \$150, which some seemed to think was prohibitive. She had some other very good ideas on cooperating with the City Mission to promote the Evensong and offered to work on a press release to support the event.

Pastoral Care

Jim Wingate and Ann Duff sent out about 20 Easter cards and delivered palms and Communion to a few homebound parishioners. They have also been in touch with Nancy Angus and got updates on Gene and Judy DeLong.

They recently visited Jamie Taft and were saddened to see that he is not doing well. Anyone in the parish who is friends with Jamie is encouraged to pay him a brief visit at the Schenectady Center for Rehabilitation on Altamont Avenue.

New Business

Consolidation of Vestry Legacy Endowment Funds

There are eight restricted endowment funds that were created by previous Vestries (many decades ago and for varying reasons, some of which are no longer relevant). In line with recommendations made by the auditor last year, Vestry may wish to consolidate and recharacterize some of these funds. The funds in question are: Chancel, Memorials, Organ, Pew Rent, Choir, Columbarium, Mission, and Education.

After a brief discussion it was agreed that the Chancel and Pew Rent funds are logical targets for change, while the others are more specific and obvious in intent. Jon Pearson (Treasurer Emeritus and endowment fund expert) has indicated that there is quite a bit of effort involved in integrating an endowment fund into the general fund, and he doesn't envision doing anything on it until the fall. In the meantime, however, should funds need to be extracted from the restricted endowment, Vestry agreed that the Chancel and Pew Rent funds, due to the nebulous nature of their intent, would be fair game for those withdrawals. There was no motion or vote, and this topic may be revisited in the future.

Asset Management Committee Motions and Recommendations

Vestry was provided with a summary of the April Asset Management Committee (AMC) meeting in advance of the evening's session. That report is appended to these minutes.

Rich proposed a motion designed to reconfirm Vestry's support for the expenditure of \$22,900 on several previously approved repair projects. Some wondered why, if the items were already authorized, we would need to have a motion and vote. It was explained that budgetary worries have served to delay these important projects, and money earmarked for them has been inadvertently spent on other needs. The AMC is interested in sticking with the previously agreed-upon spending plan, and sought a vote of confidence so the repairs can get back on track. Sean Albert seconded the motion and there were eight votes in favor. One individual abstained from voting and one voted against.

A second motion by Rich involved necessary roof repairs. One quote has been obtained but we would like to see others. Rich's original motion was that Bob McCloskey should contact Church Mutual for an inspection to determine if an insurance claim should be filed. After some discussion, it was agreed that a more straightforward approach would be simply to file a claim with Church Mutual, which would then be compelled to arrange an inspection.

Gloria seconded the revised motion, which stated that "a claim with Church Mutual should take into account any internal ceiling and wall damage or mold damage due to the roof leaks. The Senior Warden and the Chair of the Asset Management Committee, or designee, shall review estimates and select a contractor, enter into a contract and have the contractor complete roof repairs. Financing shall come from endowment funds, if necessary, and insurance, if possible, and if deemed appropriate." Vestry voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

David will direct Bob to file the claim with Church Mutual. In the absence of a rector, he is Bob's boss. As detailed in the appended AMC report, a more consistent procurement policy and a standard operating procedure for contractor selection and oversight would be advantageous for the church, and Vestry should work to implement such a procedure. In the meantime, it is critical to keep David and Jon in the loop on all property inspections and repair decisions, and Jeff with regard to expenditures.

In addition to seeking an improved procurement policy, the committee recommended that the Senior Warden appoint a sub-chair for the Asset Management Committee. While Vestry agreed that our procurement policy needs a rehaul, no particular value was found in appointing an Asset Management Committee sub-chair at this time.

In wrapping up the topic of roof repairs, Gloria noted that she has contact information for two competent slate-roofing companies. She will share this information with Jon. As Junior Warden, coordination of this type of job falls squarely within his area of responsibility. Jon acknowledges that other obligations have taken his attention away from his warden responsibilities over the past few months. He hopes to have more bandwidth for his church duties going forward.

Adjournment of Regular Vestry

Vestry adjourned its regular meeting at 7:39 p.m. and reconvened in executive session to discuss next steps in the rector search process.

Upcoming meeting dates:

Rector Search—6:30 p.m., Thursday, May 4

Regular Vestry—6:30 p.m., Thursday, May 18

Respectfully,

Meg Hughes, Vestry Clerk

Summary of Asset Management Committee Meeting, Including Motions and Recommendations

The Asset Management Committee met Tuesday, April 11, 2023, with Gloria Kishton, Sean Albert and Richard Unger present. Jon Ewbank was unable to attend the committee meeting as he has been consumed with tax preparation work as tax deadlines loom.

Committee discussion focused on five primary issues:

1. Improvement projects approved as part of the 2023 Budget.

The committee discussed the importance of following through with planned improvement projects. In the past, necessary improvements have often been postponed when emergencies occur. This has meant necessary repairs and improvements become worse and lead to more costly repairs. The cycle will never end unless we fix problems as they become known. One of the primary purposes for creating account 5088, "Planned Capital Improvements" was to provide an account dedicated to specific projects and improvements submitted as part of the annual budget approval process and not have the account depleted for other projects.

To this end, the Asset Management Committee recommends approval of the following motion:

Motion #1

Move to secure estimates, as necessary, and get contractors under contract to complete the following projects, as listed in the Asset Management Committee report, page 3, within this calendar year.

Account 5088, Planned Improvements* (\$20,595 remains in 2023 budget)

Church Roof/exterior wall needs assessment w/cost est.	\$1,000
Interior Ceiling repairs to St. George's House.	\$1,500
West side window repair to St. George's House.	\$4,500
Wrought iron railing of St. George's House porch.	\$2,500
Complete Roof leak repair over Sexton Apt.	\$2,700**
<u>Repair/repaint front Church sign; replace parking lot signs</u>	<u>\$8,000</u>
Total From Account 5088	\$20,200

*Items in account 5088 have been previously approved by the Vestry

**This can be added to the costs for all emergency roofing repairs.

Account 5422, Property Maintenance (\$7,339 remaining in budget)

Repair of running toilet in Choir Room bathroom.	\$150 ⁺
Repair south door of Cranmer House (rotted wood).	\$1,800 ⁺
<u>Repair or Replace Rectory garage door opener.</u>	<u>\$750⁺</u>
Total From Account 5422	\$2,700⁺

+These are preliminary estimates; we will get contractor estimates for the door and try to repair the toilet and the garage door opener ourselves or with Fred’s help.

Total 2023 Projects Budget **\$22,900**

2. Roof leaks and repairs; possible insurance claim

The committee discussed the urgency of making all needed roof repairs for SGH, the Great Hall, the Church and Cranmer House, even if these repairs require use of endowment funds. In addition to the roof repairs, there is also interior damage as a result of the roof leaks (especially in the sexton apartment). The committee members felt it important to contact Church Mutual to see if any claims could or should be filed for these damages.

To this end, the Asset Management Committee recommends approval of the following motion:

Motion #2

Move to receive needed estimates for roof repairs, including directing the church administrator to contact Church Mutual for an inspection of all damages to determine if a claim can or should be filed. From Church Mutual, this determination shall include any internal ceiling and wall damage or mold damage due to the roof leaks. The Senior Warden and the Chair of the Asset Management Committee, or designee, shall review estimates and select a contractor, enter into a contract and have the contractor complete roof repairs. Financing shall come from endowment funds, if necessary, and insurance, if possible, and if deemed appropriate.

3. Revenue, expenditure and membership trends; operations costs for the Church buildings

It was noted that the revenue, expenditure and membership trends for the church from 2002-2022 have been started using past parochial reports but lack the data from 2022 parochial report. The financial trends will be presented in 2022 dollars for the trend analysis.

Of specific interest to the committee was noting that, according to the Parochial Reports, St George’s Church has not expended funds for “Major Improvements or Capital Expenditures” (line 15 of Parochial Report Revenue and Expenditures) for nearly 20 years, since 2003.

For the building operation costs, the square footage estimates of each building have been calculated:

<u>St George’s Buildings</u> (excluding rectory)	31,310 sq ft (approximate)	100.0 %
<u>Cranmer House</u>	5,700 sq ft (approximate)	8.2 %
<u>Church</u>	10,300 sq ft (approximate)	32.9 %
<u>Great Hall</u>	10,845 sq ft (approximate)	34.6 %
<u>St George’s House</u>	4,465 sq ft (approximate)	14.3 %

The percentages will be used to calculate each building’s estimated share of operation costs, such as utilities, maintenance and routine repairs. It is anticipated that the average annual costs by budget accounts for 5 or 10 years will used.

4. Sub-chair for the Asset Management Committee

The committee members recognize there are instances or short periods of time when members of any committee find it difficult to be available due to other commitments. To ensure that the Asset Management Committee maintains continuity and forwards progress the committee members suggest that the Senior Warden, with the consideration of the Junior Warden (chair of the Asset Management Committee), appoint a sub-chair for the Asset Management Committee.

5. Establishing a trackable project contractor procurement process for improvements, including adopting an office procurement procedure policy

The Committee discussed the importance of adopting a system for contractor procurement that documents the process, including one that documents the individuals involved with:

- calling for estimates;
- reviewing estimates and selecting the contractor or contract employee;
- negotiating/entering into a contract agreement;
- monitoring contractor work product and progress;
- authorizing payment(s); and
- documenting completion of the project(s).

The discussion also recognized the advantages and importance of limiting the number of individuals responsible for initiating or directing a project and ultimately authorizing expenditure of budgeted funds. Though it would be good to develop an Office Procedure Manual that sets out contract procurement responsibilities, procedures and work agreement standards and requirements, the committee only discussed the issue only as it relates to contracts and expenditures for accounts 5088, 5422, 5430, and 5435.

The committee felt that the Senior Warden should establish a procurement process whereby only the Senior Warden, Junior Warden or Chair of the Asset Management Committee or designee, are granted authority to initiate any procurement, project or purchase involving account 5088, Planned Capital Improvements. Additionally, only the Senior Warden or Junior Warden would be granted the authority to initiate any procurement, project or purchase to be funded through accounts 5422, Property enhancement/Building repairs; 5430, Equipment replacement/Equipment repair/New equipment; and 5435, Maintenance and Fringe (cleaning/sexton related).