

VESTRY MINUTES
September 21, 2023

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 P.M. (Shaw Lounge)

• **ATTENDANCE:**

- *Present:* Fr. Tom Pettigrew, Sean Albert, Jon Ewbank, Carol Gaige, Sandee Hughes, David Kennison, Lynn Paska, and Richard Unger
 - *Excused Absences:* Meg Hughes, Gloria Kishton, and Paul Smigelski
 - *Remote Partial Attendance via Telephone:* Jeff Wengrovius (Jeff asked to be excused after his Treasurer's Report which was moved up on the agenda to accommodate his culinary duties.)
- **PRAYER:** Fr. Tom opened his first vestry meeting at St. George's with a prayer.
 - **APPROVAL OF AUGUST 2021 MINUTES:** A motion to approve the August 2023 Vestry Minutes was made by Richard Unger, seconded by Lynn Paska, and approved unanimously by the members present (including Jeff Wengrovius).

RECTOR'S REPORT (Fr. Thomas Pettigrew) —

Fr. Tom began by thanking everyone for making his first Mass at St. George's as well as the reception so wonderful. He submitted a written report and invited everyone to read it. He highlighted several items:

1. *The September 9, 2023 election of The Reverend Jeremiah Williamson as the 10th Bishop of Albany.*

Fr. Tom outlined the consent process which it is to be hoped will bring the Bishop Elect to the Cathedral for his consecration. February 24, 2024 is the tentative date set aside for this event.

2. *Institution of the 20th Rector of St. George's Church*

Fr. Tom outlined several options:

- a. Wait until the Bishop-elect is consecrated in February 2024 and invite him to attend when his calendar permits,
- b. Invite Assisting Bishop Michael and Dean Bradly Jones to conduct the service on behalf of the Standing Committee,
- c. Ask the Diocese if the Bishop-elect might be present at the institution liturgy between now and Christmas.

Several vestry members expressed a preference to have Bishop-elect / Bishop Williamson present at the Rector's Institution.

3. *Office Hours*

Fr. Tom plans to be in his Crammer House office from 9 A.M. to 12 noon two days a week. Monday will be his day off. Tuesday is (for now) occupied by an invitation to attend a gathering at the Cathedral. Based on experience, Friday needs to be left open. This leaves Wednesdays and Thursdays. Father hopes to be there more often and is open to thoughts and ideas.

A few suggestions were made by vestry members, including that:

- office hours should be established for office staff
- volunteers could answer the phone and
- the office should be more "user friendly" and welcoming.

4. *Liturgy*

Fr. Tom hopes to find clergy to celebrate major Feast Days (e.g., All Souls' Day, All Saints Sunday, Christmas, and Epiphany) as Solemn Masses.

5. *Reestablish an Internship Program for Seminarians*

Fr. Tom floated the idea of restoring, cleaning, furnishing, and repurposing the space known as the "Sexton's apartment." Ideally, he would like to have the space ready for a seminarian to live there for two months during the summer of 2024. In tandem with the use of this real estate, he would like to use the income from the Seminarians' Endowment (approximately \$1,600) to offset the seminarian tenant's living expenses.

AMENDMENT OF THE AGENDA:

Shortly after David began his Senior Warden's Report, without objection, the Vestry decided to amend the order of events outlined on the agenda to accommodate Jeff's request to be excused to attend to his guests.

TREASURER'S REPORT (Jeff Wengrovius) —

1. *Jeff's written reports stated his usual year-to-date statistics:*

- 72% of 2023 behind us.
- 77% of anticipated pledge income received YTD.
- 73% of budgeted expenses spent YTD.

2. *Other highlights included:*

- Scotia First National bank account fully functional. TrustCo account will close out soon.
- Transition to Power Church software underway.
- First draft of the 2024 budget will be submitted to the Vestry "ASAP" and a Finance Committee review of the budget will be scheduled.
- The Art Show receipts are approximately \$900,
- Endowment interest as well as the combined balances for the TrustCo and First National Bank of Scotia checking accounts, as of September 18, 2023, were recorded in the Treasurer's Report.

3. *Income Items:*

- Pledge and loose plate giving are "OK" for 2023 and there are no negative variances to report.

4. *Expense Items:*

- Positive Variances include gas and electric costs, equipment replacement, planned capital.
- Negative Variances include security alarm, maintenance (Fred Leger's salary), property maintenance due to projects required by Church Mutual, office supplies, supply priest, telephone, and Internet.

5. *Other*

- The 2023 budget has been amended in accordance with the approved Vestry motion to accommodate Fr. Tom's compensation package.
- Church Mutual has significantly raised our deductible in response to its business costs. The cost rise is not punitive. After contacting four other insurance companies, all of whom declined to insure us, Jeff recommends that we continue with Church Mutual.
- Jeff wants to have a discussion with the members of the Asset Management Committee about the 2024 budget.

A question was asked about a \$20,000 withdrawal of money out of principal listed on the spreadsheet in January of 2023. Jeff indicated that this amount was needed for the boiler on an emergency basis.

At the conclusion of his report, Jeff asked to be excused.

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT (David Kennison) —

1. *Welcome to the New Rector*
2. *Rectory Status*
 - Fr. Tom moved in on August 26, 2023. There are some lingering small tasks to do.
3. *Status of Work Required by Church Mutual*
 - The emergency lighting and signs, handrail to side door of the church, parking lot pothole repair, and brush and trash removal from behind the Great Hall have been completed.
 - The work on the first floor Great Hall windows and the Great Hall range have been withdrawn.
 - The handrails to the Choir Loft are to be installed tomorrow, September 22, 2023.
4. *Status of Church Boiler*
 - The prep work is done, and all materials are on-site, assembly of the boiler will begin this week, and we hope to have the initial firing of the boiler in a few weeks.
5. *Ceiling Repair in the Church and St. George's House*
 - Church Mutual paid a settlement of \$15,789 for roof repairs on several buildings as well as ceiling repairs on the Church and the Sexton apartment.
 - Mid-State performed roof repairs for \$10,500.
 - Mid-State quoted two prices for Church ceiling repair: \$78,000 (full scaffold) or \$127,000 (moving scaffolds around).
 - It is to be hoped that Artur Wachala will quote a lower price. (The Asset Management Committee has a few other possible contractors in mind).
 - Church Mutual has been informed of the problem of contractor unavailability and has allowed for an extension in the repair timeline.
 - There is an amount of \$5,657 in recoverable depreciation may be available if the cost of the work exceeds Church Mutual's estimates. There may be a deadline for claiming this amount.
6. *3-Phase Power to Church*
 - A church neighbor, Glenn Houston, (201 Union Street) has requested a 5-day power interruption to the church for the purpose of allowing National Grid to move 3-phase power lines away from his house.
 - In the process of evaluating this request, St. George's and National Grid discovered that Cramer house is 100% powered by 3-phase power.
 - In addition, there is an underground 3-phase connection to the church organ blower motor which is unsafe.
 - David consulted with Jack Guarneri and Slingerland Electric.
 - He brought "show and tell" materials for the purpose of illustrating size of the newly / recently installed power cables and the white plastic pipes which enclose the wires.
 - Five options were discussed:
 - a. Remove the unsafe underground connection to church. Run 3-phase power to the church directly from the pole and remove new wiring. Cost \$31,000 to \$40,000.
 - b. Run 3-phase power to church without replacing our new lines. This option would be an experiment. No estimate yet available.
 - c. Eliminate 3-phase power. Install converter. Converter prices \$5,000+. Estimate unknown.
 - d. Replace organ blower motor with 1-phase model. May not be possible, may need heavier 1-phase wire. Estimate unknown.
 - e. Do nothing. Obviously unwise given the fact that National Grid is on notice of the situation.

JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT (Jon Ewbank) —

The only item in the Junior Warden's Report not covered by the Senior Warden was a cockroach problem in the Great Hall Kitchen. This issue is covered by Sandee Hughes in her Hospitality Committee Report.

COMMUNITY LIAISON'S REPORT (Richard Unger) —

1. "Candlelight Tours"

- The annual "Candlelight Tours," sponsored jointly by Schenectady County Historical Society and Schenectady Heritage Foundation, begin October 12th and run each Thursday, Friday, and Saturday until October 28th.

A vestry member asked Fr. Tom if he had any objection to the Candlelight Tours moving through the cemetery. Fr. Tom felt that if visitors were respectful, the tours presented no problem for him.

Separate from his report, Rich asked if anything could be done to address the poor lighting currently provided by the garden wall sconces outside the Great Hall. The lights do not work properly. He hopes the lights can be repaired in preparation for the Stockade Christmas Tree lighting in December. At that time, members of the community will visit the Great Hall. This issue will be evaluated further by David and Rich.

GARDEN MINISTRY REPORT (Meg Hughes)—No report submitted. (Excused absence).

BOOK CLUB REPORT: Patty Wareh — No report submitted.

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE REPORT (Sandra Hughes) —

Sandee highlighted a few things:

1. *Greening of the Church on December 17th*

Sandee is open to suggestions for a lunch menu to feed our volunteer work crew after the event.

2. *Cockroaches*

A cockroach "problem" in the Great Hall kitchen requires various preventative measures including:

- the use of roach traps (currently in place)
- the use of the smaller white kitchen garbage can,
- removal of garbage to the dumpster to avoid standing garbage which invites mice and cockroaches,
- signs posted over the sinks indicating that only the sink by the stove should be used to get water and that nothing should be dumped in the sink. (Fr. Tom offered to make and laminate signs to be drafted by Sandee.)
- Jon will talk to Tarik to alert the ShapeNote singers to new cockroach prevention measures.
- removal of the old freezer might eliminate a cockroach hiding place.
- a work party together to clean the dish closet and wash dishes that have been stored for a long time.

Fr. Tom suggested, and others agreed, that we should have an exterminator address the situation monthly until the problem is resolved.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE Report (Lynn Paska) –

Lynn announced that:

- The pictures are up for Dean Van's Reception, Fr. Tom's Reception, and the Art Show / St. George's Café.
- The September issue of the **Georgian Report** will be published by the end of next week.

ARCHIVES REPORT (Sean Albert) – No report submitted.

OUTREACH REPORT (Paul Smigelski) –

Paul's report indicated:

- The SiCM Food donations which should reach 2,500 pounds by year's end.
- The Stockade Art Show raised \$750 after expenses and Mum sales raised \$200+.
- Pillow Talk is shifting gears from bedding to personal items.
- Blessing of the Animals will be on October 8th at 3 P.M.

- Fall Choral Evensong will be on November 12th (Time: To Be Announced).

After a discussion of the items listed above, Fr. Tom added that he had received correspondence from the diocesan soup kitchen called, "Loaves and Fishes." He will pass the information along to Paul. He asked that the Vestry consider sending a parish team to work at "Loaves and Fishes" located on Clinton Avenue in Albany. The commitment required would be minimal (e.g., 11:30 A.M. to 1 P.M. on a Saturday) perhaps on a quarterly basis.

PASTORAL CARE Report (Jim Wingate) – No report submitted.

NEW BUSINESS:

- All the New Business agenda items were addressed in the reports and have already been recorded in the minutes (please see above).

OLD BUSINESS:

- Many of the Old Business agenda items were addressed in the reports and have already been recorded in the minutes (please see above).
- DRAFT Procurement Policy approval (distributed at the July Vestry Meeting).
 - Rich asked that Fr. Tom and David set aside some time to go over the draft. They agreed to do so.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE REPORTS: Fr. Tom Pettigrew made a motion to accept the reports submitted during tonight's meeting, Sandee Hughes seconded the motion, and all in attendance voted "Aye."

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, October 19th at 6:30 P.M.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Rich made a motion to adjourn at about 8:30 P.M.