

Council Meeting Minutes - June 21, 2021 at 6 pm Via Zoom

Attending: Janice Koppenhaver, Beth Reavis, Jeff Voss, Mary Ballard, Laura McArthur, Gail Lund, Charlie Wallin, Pastor Steve Troisi, Carol Norris, Alan Hauser, Morgan Wright, and Sandy Moretz.

1. **Call to Order** - Mary called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. **Devotion** - Beth gave the second part of her devotion. She shared her experience at the Synod gathering and hopes that it will inspire the congregation to support and participate in the activities. There will be a summer bible study titled "Three Preachy Prophets". Camps are reopening and the Synod recognized Harwood Smith with 58 years in ministry and John Bollinger for 62 years of ministry. Participants worshiped online each evening. Beth shared her favorite quotes from the gathering: "Children of God come in every color and language." "Faith is taking your best step and leaving the rest to God." She hoped that we keep this in mind as we meet together.

3. **Review Updated Council Ground Rules**) - Mary reviewed the ground rules, especially wait to be recognized.

- Please raise your hand to indicate that you would like to speak.
- Please give your name and state your views on the matter under discussion, including any questions or concerns you may have.
- In order to allow others ample opportunity to join in the conversation, please keep any subsequent comments by you on this issue/motion succinct and to the point.
- Please remain quiet when others have the floor so everyone can hear.
- Please be respectful of those voicing differing opinions.

4. **Congregational Input** - Carol said that when OPUS met, the 13 asked that masks not be worn because of COPD. Beth wanted to make sure we celebrate Pastor Harwood and Pastor John's years in the ministry. Pastor Steve said Pastor John got a certificate from the Synod at the 60th year.. Pastor Steve has celebrated 12 years.

5. **Approval of Council Meeting Minutes** - May 13 th. Motion to approve the May minutes was made by Gail. Seconded by Pastor Steve. Motion carried.

June 14th minutes will be held until the July meeting because they were sent out late.

6. Strategic Visioning (5 minutes) - Mary

a. 2020-2021 Council Goal Setting

i. **Planned Giving Meeting Workshop** - Pastor Steve said we can plan that for July or August.

ii. **Constitution Update, Financial Policy Update** (begin in Jan) Pastor Steve said the updated Constitution will not be reviewed by Synod until September, so we won't be able to vote on it at the August congregational meeting.

iii. **Audit of COVID Ministry** (May) - Pastor Steve shared the results for the COVID Ministry Review. As we're planning for the future, some key takeaways are that we should keep online presence, some kind of service sign in, we're not sure about youth and family activities starting back, continuation of electronic newsletters except for people who don't have email and staff can work remotely some of the time.

[Link to survey?](#)

7. Policy - Mary

a. Policy Updates: Constitution Update - Update from Synod Review

8. Monitoring and Oversight

a. Reports (5 minutes):

i. **Senior Pastor Report** - Pastor Steve said he had hoped that the lay preachers would be better able to support Holy Communion. Holy Communion is interviewing another interim.

1. **Engagement Report** - What is interesting is the online attendance has gone down and weekly in person went up.

ii. **Campus Ministry Coordinator Report**

iii. **Music Ministry Report**

iv. **Administrative Secretary Report**

v. **Facilities Manager Report**

vi. **Treasurer Report - Adjusted Monthly Giving/Cumulative Giving** - Jeff reported we aren't broke, but can't buy a bus. The last month or two has been lower than usual, down \$15-20K. We're not gaining a lot of ground, but in relatively good shape. The new year end projection has us less likely to get to \$300,000. Can't give a lot of extra.

b. Old Business (15 minutes):

i. **Security Protocol Group** (Sandy and Carol) - No update

ii. **Fire Alarm System** (Pastor Steve and Jeff) - Grace has received a \$10,000 Gift.

iii. **Wilkes Property** - Solar Farm Conversation (Pastor Steve and Jeff)
Pastor Steve reported that BREMCO isn't considering the solar farm options because the property is too far from the major power lines needed. .

iv. **Carriage House Update** -Pastor Steve said the house doesn't have a foundation (wood on the ground). It might be able to be saved, but the cost would exceed its value. It might be possible to buy a new building. He's looked at some options. Bradley Dowty will check with the town about it and will look at plans.

v. **Update on the High Country Coalition** - No additional update

vi. **Nominating Committee** - Pastor Steve will remind them to meet.

vii. **AMMPARO Migrant Children** (video link) - Mary asked if members have an interest in connecting with them. Alan asked what it is that we as a congregation can tie into in Boone. Mary said that we could keep up with their social media presence. Pastor Steve said we could do some education at coffee hours, letter writing and awareness and if we wanted to connect with other Lutheran groups.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0-RPp_mXx0

c. **New Business** (45 minutes)

i. **Prepare Draft Budget for 2021-2022** - Pastor Steve suggested looking at the one page proposed budget and focus on the right column. In the current year, he has done some projected year end surplus. We're looking at a net positive of \$32,000, but it will likely be about \$15,000 in the surplus. The first step of the budget process is always the income and what is the level of income from giving. We also get money from rental property which is down because we're not renting the Councill House. Student parking nets about \$40,000 in August. Jeffcoat-proctor is a step down amount. We have about \$120,000 in other income. The Learning Ministry spending will be close to two years ago because of the addition of the intern. The Serving Ministry represents a flat move year over year and takes benevolences out, but giving from other sources. Worship and Music is a flattened amount from year to year. Campus Ministry is down \$100. Communications and Fellowship supplies are the same amount. Supporting- the power bill has been high, but the budget is tight. Positive - no Councill House mortgage, plus the Wilkes property taxes of \$6,000.

The Personnel category is the biggest. Portico Insurance would not allow Pastor Steve and Deacon Stacy to keep the same health insurance when Deacon Stacy's contract was increased. Pastor Steve's portion went down and Stacy's went up because of the change. Portico works well with a calendar year budget and sends out the estimates in September or October after our budget is set. Typically,

employees can enter open enrollment in October and we have to absorb increases in health insurance costs.

No change in salary for Pastor Steve and Deacon Stacy. A youth and family director is needed. Deacon Stacy may be able to help out for a 1 year interim because of the National Youth Gathering. We may also be able to earmark the surplus. He recommends using some of the surplus for this position. This would help reduce his work in that area and supervise the interns to get more out of the interns.

Libby's and Susan's salary will be the same. Pastor Steve recommended adding an AV person (Steve Frank) to help with AV editing and get all the pieces and put them together, so all Pastor Steve has to do is preach his sermon for the online service. The AV person would do all of the funerals for live feeds, but we'd have to pay for that separately. Reviewed salaries. Lauren was added to the budget assistant music ministry as an annual contract.

One idea is to do year end bonuses out of surplus. Combined raises for staff would be \$5000. About \$10,000 would be for the Y&F, AV and music and intern. If we look at the positive surplus.

Looking at the \$320,000 budget, we probably need to sell some of the lumber off of the Wilkes property. Laura asked about membership and giving numbers. Pastor Steve has had some members die who have been faithful givers. Jeff commented that we have lost a couple of people who have been faithful givers. We should process lumber as soon as possible and the AV person will be the biggest resource so that we strengthen our ability to get out in the community. Mary said that the online presence is vital and we should add this to the banner.

Laura asked about the process to cut the lumber. Pastor Steve said we can hire a consultant forester and they negotiate or consult with a mill. Alan said the last time the property cut was 1988 with a mature stand of timber with the right type of process. He also mentioned that there is a great support for the online services. Morgan asked about when we can sell it (Dec. 2022) and would it have more value not logged. Jeff said the property value will stay the same. Pastor Steve wants to see if the Council is supportive, we can vote on it in July. Charlie said he thought it would be more supportive of raises versus a bous. Mary asked if a straw vote would be favorable. Straw vote was unanimous. Jeff said a bonus would be a safer bet and with one more month.

ii. **Spring Stewardship Drive** - June-July 18th Stewardship Drive - Pastor Steve said we'll work on this in July.

iii. **Updates on adjustments to schedule related to COVID-19** - Mary said Gail has 63 people who want the mask requirement dropped. OPUS met and then others joined and they asked that if people are vaccinated could you make the masks optional at service. Mary asked if the 63 people are vaccinated and want the mask mandate dropped to optional. Sandy asked if that is representative of a wide range of ages? We're trying to protect children. Gail said the majority are 60+. Alan said he feels like this is an amorphous request and isn't comfortable. Beth said she was wondering if there is a way to have a gathering to have people talk with the Council. Carol said the people are in OPUS, Lizzie Estelle and quilters and she encouraged Council to look at Bethany's policy on their website which makes sense. Morgan looks up Boone cases and there are 3 which continue to drop and he sees almost no masks, but is worried more about the fall. Mary said one of her concerns is that masks only work when worn correctly. Charlie said he still wants us to continue signing in. The cases Watauga does have are all in the hospital.

Pastor Steve suggested having a listening post on July 4th weekend and Mary suggested an online listening post to get a more representative population. Gail also suggested we send out a survey to the entire congregation that also allows for comments. Mary said there has been an uptick in student cases and it's important. Pastor Steve said we have to come up with a system for masks because children are not protected. When he goes out, he wears a mask to protect children. Charlie said 42% of Watauga people with 2 shots and 50% with 1 shot. Alan said that unless people have a breathing issue, why do people resent protecting others. Charlie said once you get to July 1st, you have most of the population vaccinated until everyone, including children, can get vaccinated. Gail made a motion that we create a survey regarding COVID related issues, including vaccinations. Beth seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

iv. **Back to School Festival** - Mary said we always collect colored pencils for school supplies. Pastor Steve asked if we could do a sponsorship with the pastor's discretionary fund. Members agreed.

v. **ACTION ITEM:** Visitation Team request to resume visiting members (Pastor Steve) Sandy made motion that the visitation team can resume visiting members. Gail seconded.
Unanimous

vi. **ACTION ITEM:** Facility Use Request from Repair Hub - The requestor didn't give additional information, so we'll pull the request for now.

vii. **ACTION ITEM:** Lutheran World Relief Kits Outreach Project - Pastor Steve said a member has done disaster kits at another church and would like us to do this in the fall. Pastor Steve made a motion to move forward and put it on the church calendar for the fall after the school supply drive. Alan seconded. Motion carried.

viii. **ACTION ITEM:** Motion to Celebrate with and Thank First Baptist Church for 150 years of Service

Alan made a motion to celebrate with and thank First Baptist Church for 150 years of service

to our community. Beth seconded. Motion carried.

9. **Next Meeting:** July 19, 2021 at 6 p.m.

i. Devotion: Janice

10. **Adjourn Meeting with the Lord's Prayer** - Beth

Upcoming Devotions:

Aug - Charlie