



MINUTES
Parish Board Meeting
May 19, 2020

Present: Gene Thompson-Grove (co-chair), Janet Britcher (co-chair), Karla Baehr, Ellen Blaney, Micaela Coady, Dave Demerjian, Steve Pratt-Otto, Charles Sandmel, Bob Williamson
Others: Rev Lisa

Gene called the virtual meeting via videoconferencing to order at 7:00pm. Rev Lisa lit a virtual chalice and Gene shared a poem by FPB member Karen Campbell, *The Great Pause*. Members took turns reading portions of our Covenant. Our “fun activity” was a variation on “Quarantine Zoom Bingo” using the annotation tools in Zoom.

Budget Recommendation for FY 21

Gene shared highlights of the Finance Committee’s review last night of the FY 21 budget when it considered issues and questions raised 1) during the three congregational budget conversations, and 2) since the recent communication from the UUA and Governor Baker about the likely duration of social distancing and other restrictions on building use due to COVID-19.

Gene summarized feedback from Congregational Budget Meetings:

Given our mission, what works?

- Shows restraint without sacrificing mission
- Endowment draw is reasonable given the unexpected \$65,000 federal CARES Act “Payroll Protection” pandemic loan/grant, COVID-19 circumstances, and strong pledging
- Maintains staff positions and compensation
- Reductions are shared: no one program bore the brunt

What are the concerns?

- Need to maintain music in livestream services
- Welcoming committee needs \$300 more
- Climate justice is not sure their budget will be enough
- Rental income is overly optimistic
- Denominational contribution is too low
- Consider adding sliding scale fees for RE

To further the Board’s commitment to transparency, Gene reported that she has drafted a Q & A in response to questions raised at the budget sessions to send to the congregation and welcomes Board members’ feedback.

Of particular concern to the Finance Committee at its meeting last night was the likelihood that rental income will be dramatically lower than the Board’s preliminary recommendation of \$36,000. The Finance

Committee concluded that 1) rental income needs to be lower and 2) we have to identify potential savings to offset the reduced income in order to ensure a balanced budget.

Rev Lisa reviewed an analysis of potential rental income in light of the newest guidance from the state as well as potential cost savings she had identified in collaboration with staff.

Board members reviewed the analysis of potential rental income and potential savings and, after considerable discussion, decided to make these changes to its original FY 21 budget recommendation:

1. Add \$300 to Welcoming Committee budget to increase to \$800
2. Reduce projected rental income by \$21,000 to \$15,000 from the original estimate of \$36,000
3. Reduce spending by \$21,000
 - a. Other Building Operations by \$13,000 due to less need for heat and electricity, snow removal, and cleaning as long as services and most activities are held virtually
 - b. Reduce payroll (while services are virtual)
 - i. Reduce section leader hours while services are virtual (from \$20,000 to \$16,000)
 - ii. Eliminate livestream tech

The Board discussed the possibility of reducing or furloughing staff because of the likely longer-term closure of the building. The Board concluded that that is not a wise action to take now. We concluded that the congregation's generous response to this year's Canvass seemed to make clear that the congregation seeks stability, continuity and compassion in these uncertain, unsettling times. Our endowment gives us a "cushion" for just such times. In addition, our successful application to secure \$65,000 in federal funds through the federal Payroll Protection Plan this spring has provided an unexpected reduction in our endowment draw for 2020. Board members expressed interest in exploring the possibility of expanding job responsibilities of certain staff whose regular responsibilities might be especially curtailed because of the building closure.

Members reached consensus on the budget recommendation: 4 5's and 5 4's

Next Steps:

- Charles will update the budget and send to everyone
- Karla will turn the budget into a PDF with row and column labels
- Karla will update building blocks
- Gene will update Q&A
- Karla will ensure the Annual Meeting notice with updated recommended budget is emailed to the congregation and posted.

We closed the meeting watching on YouTube the NYC Virtual Choir singing "How Can I Stop from Singing"

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38pm

Respectfully submitted,

Karla Baehr, Clerk