

Diocesan Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 12, 2014 4-6 PM
Grace Church, East Concord

Present: Jack Lewis, Ray Bonin, Sue Poulin, Roger Nichols, Anne Milne, Susan Langle, Sue Bauer, Bill Exner, Joan LeBaron, Jason Wells, Rob Hirschfeld, Margaret Porter, Richard Davenport, Gloria Gallant, Kevin Nichols, Gail Avery, Pete Cross, Chris Porter

Bishop Rob Hirschfeld called meeting to order at 4:00 PM followed by vespers centered on the theme of Forgiveness. Gail Avery was thanked for volunteering to provide snacks at short notice. It was noted that approval of May minutes would be approved later when available. All were asked to remember Carol Twomey and family in their prayers.

Discussion & Action

Canon for Mission Resources/CFO Kevin Nichols and Finance Officer Gloria Gallant presented the draft budget to 2015. Developed by Finance Committee members, it reflects missionary objectives. The Fair Share assessment for 2015 is calculated to be 16.5%. Compared to 2014 this is a decreased budget. Gloria explained some changes recommended by the auditors—i.e. escrow items (Bishop's replacement car, General Convention, transition funds, and Title IV monies.) By having special accounts for placing these amounts there is no distorting the budget in order to create cash reserves.

There followed a review of the budget narrative. Committees and commissions submitted requests, the role of the Mission Resources Committee was explored. Investment income shows a slight projected increase for 2015 due to strong performance during '12-14. On the expense side there is a reduction to Evangelism as recommended by that commission: the annual forum is discontinued, likely to be enfolded into the Lay Leadership Institute. A part-time missionary for communications is added, along with an \$18,000 reduction to *New Hampshire Episcopal News* to reflect new ways of communicating to our diocese. Richard Davenport described how North Country ministry is becoming less costly as the group learns to be more efficient. The summer intern will be housed in Lancaster. The Commission on Ministry has 9 individuals in the process. Retired clergy health benefits will adjust when information becomes available, using historical costs to project. Possibly there will be a convention resolution addressing this matter, but without a shift in benefits to current recipients. Staff salaries are determined by the Bishop in consultation with Canon to the Ordinary Hannah Anderson. The Finance Committee has increased the Canon to the Ordinary's and the Bishop's salaries by 5%, with a 3% increase to the Finance Officer. New staff members begin at a flat rate. We are not in a health care marketplace and therefore not eligible for tax credit in this year, which is a loss of about \$13,000 for the year.

Items noted during a line by line budget review:

Revenues: There will be a charge for clergy gatherings. In the Letter of Agreement there is a requirement to participate in these, and there is an ongoing effort to boost clergy collegiality and involvement. Someone suggested increasing the Fair Share assessment to cover costs of Clergy Days. In the past the diocese fully funded Midwinter Gathering, now clergy pay partial expenses. The lower revenue for convention comes at the request of Convention Business Committee. There will be a boxed lunch instead of hot lunch. Because of the new venue the convention fee rose from \$15 to \$25.

Expenses: Our annual assessment to The Episcopal Church is currently 19% (in the past was higher, might someday be lower). There were reductions to diocesan commission budgets, Lay Leadership Institute, *NHEN*. Currently the paper is produced every other month at 12 pages, and we have a \$35,000 subscription to Episcopal Journal. All this information is available online. It seems more sensible to let congregations or individuals pay for their own subscription of *Episcopal Journal*, and we will continue to produce our own Episcopal News. Editor Cate McMahon's stipend remains—we aren't trying to get out of print, just make it more local. The increase in Clergy Development includes grant monies (sabbatical, conferences) with \$25,000 available. Other clergy-related expenses are Midwinter Clergy and Spouse event (\$19,000+ for facility), Fall Clergy Retreat at Purity Springs (\$14,000+ plus speaker costs, based on 60 participants). Compliance on safe church has expanded. The Bishop's expenses were reduced by the car escrow now going below the line.

Reporting to Council: Council receives and approves the audit report. In future we will receive 6-month actuals rather than quarterly actuals.

Bill Exner moved adoption of the Draft Budget for 2015. Anne Milne Seconded. Motion carried.

MDG Subcommittee

Gail Avery reviewed the parameters of the decision about recipients previously presented to Council in resolution form in May. The re-opened process brought forth 8 applicants. These were narrowed to 4, with 2 of them selected for 2014 and 2 for 2015.

2014 Grants. The St. Paul's Jamaica project in Chantilly is allocated \$3000. This well-established ministry fosters education, provides medical services, involves the St. Paul's youth group and vacation Bible school. Mark Pendleton, rector at Chris Church, Exeter, has outreach to Cuba, in connection with the Seacoast Partnership Churches, and \$7000 has been allocated to this ministry. Their work is tied in with Episcopal Church Foundation and the Episcopal Youth Corps (working to improve sanitation.)

2015 Grants. Christo Sol in El Salvador, proposed by All Saints, Wolfeboro, will receive \$2000 in support of human rights and community development for people on the margins. St. Thomas, Hanover requested and will receive \$8000 for St. Vincent Center for Handicapped Children in Haiti, providing academic, clinical, and residential services for the physically and learning disabled.

Explanation was given for why the other four applicants were not chosen, with description of the good work those parishes are doing: educating a Kenyan individual, funding for families living on dump sites in the Philippines, support for a single child, and the same Juarez project that the diocese funded last year. These worthy and inspirational contenders will appear on the diocesan website so congregations can assist these efforts.

Jack Lewis moved that the Council allocate MDG grants for 2 years according to percentage arrived at by the MDG committee. Joan LeBaron seconded. The motion carried.

Province 1.

Pete Cross, lay delegate to Province 1, attended Synod's 2-day retreat at the Barbara Harris Center. Questions on the relevancy of the Synod system turned out to be energizing. Our province is unusual in that it is small and contiguous, and it's relatively easy to gather in person or electronically. Participants felt that Synod's best function is to foster networking and all kinds of ministries outside the walls of our churches, focusing on ministries not necessarily known to one another. It's an opportunity to learn what's working in other places, what we could try in NH. Consensus was sought on fundamental ministries and the ones identified were: Violence, Human Trafficking, Economic Justice (poverty and income) Environmental Issues, Deacons, and Anti-Racism/Cultural Awareness. Information is available on the web and on the Facebook page. Synod could play a significant part in the way the church is trying to de-centralize. A Council member asked about the Province 1 budget: part is provided by TEC, part by the dioceses.

The function of a delegate: facilitate (common ministries, connecting people), invite (Tom Brackett and Art of Hosting, Once and Future Church in December), promote (sowing seed grants). Funds are offered to any initiative crossing diocesan borders or ecumenical in nature within one diocese. The retreat was attended by 2 representatives from the Task Force to Re-Imagine the Episcopal Church (TREC). Any resolution they create goes to General Convention next year.

Updates, Reports

The Bishop has approved a new call in Wolfeboro—Bill Petersen, a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Their 2-year interim process, led by Ted Rice, ends in August. Keith Patterson is the new part-time curate at St. Paul's Concord at half-time, from the Diocese of Vermont and previously in the Diocese of Albany.

There was a request for support of Commission on Ministry Resolution Draft

The Council Retreat will take place on Saturday, September 20th at St. Methodios Faith and Heritage Center in Contoocook.

The Bishop's visioning documents have been shared in Council, with committees, commissions, and convocations.

The Clergy Day location for June 19 was changed from St. Peter's, Londonderry to St. Andrew's Hopkinton.

Following closing prayers and the meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret Porter, Moderator

Events

Diversity Potluck, Church of the Woods, Canterbury NH, 11-2 Sat. August 9

Fall Clergy Retreat, Oct. 15, 16, 17

Diocesan Convention Eucharist, St. Paul's Church, Concord, Friday, Nov. 7

Diocesan Convention, Grappone Center, Concord, Saturday, Nov. 8

Lay Leadership Institute, May 2 2015

2014 Council Meeting Dates & Snacks Volunteer/s

August 14 (Kate Atkinson), Saturday September 20 (Retreat at St. Methodios Center, Contoocook, 9-4), October 9 (Ray Bonin), November 13 (Roger Nicholls & Sue Poulin), December 11 (Anne Milne)