

St James Episcopal Church

Vestry Meeting

January 21, 2025

Present:

Barbara Bateman, Ryan Collins, Sarah Deacle, Gene Goff, Sharon Hansen, Marilyn Hastings, Kathy Hutchinson, Tanya Millet, Sue Rice, Mark Schultz, Fr. Mike Sowards, Francois Springuel, Janice Tabbut

Absent:

Noone

The Meeting was opened with a prayer by Father Mike.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. November minutes were approved as written unanimously.
2. The December meeting was cancelled.
3. One e-vote was taken since the last meeting. A **Motion** was made and unanimously approved to approve the 2025 St. James employee salary compensation, including benefits.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Finance Monthly Reports
 - a. October reports were previously distributed to vestry members. Mark indicated that we had a net gain of \$11,800, primarily due to Hofsas trust distribution and a large Outreach donation. The church foundation did reflect a loss of \$10K which was recovered in November. A **motion** was made and unanimously approved to accept the October financial statements.
 - b. November reports were previously distributed to vestry members. St. James had a net gain of \$215. There was a duplicate October vanco entry of \$982 in quickbooks that was backed out in November. A subsequent entry will be made to allocate it to the correct location. We had a large \$12K increase in Outreach House donations which offset a \$7K deficit in pledge income. On a positive note, Mark indicated December appeared to be a very strong month. A **motion** was made and unanimously approved to accept the November financial statements.
2. Finance Other
 - a. Sacred Gifts – We received an invoice for \$31,076 from the diocese, which reflects 6.5% of our operating income assessed on a 2 year lag. We had budgeted \$30,371. A **motion** was made and unanimously approved to pay the invoice as billed. For next year, we need to be aware that the assessment will be raised to 8%. This increase, along with the income from the Montessori school, should raise our contribution to approximately \$35K.
 - b. Cash - We currently have over \$100K in cash. This includes the \$30K match on pledge increases, as well as the \$20K donation for the sound system. Starting in August, we should start recording \$2K in revenue for the school. We should also see \$4K in annual savings from Father Mike becoming Medicare eligible for Part A in October. The baker's contract is also under review this year.

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- c. Capital Campaign – discussion will be postponed until updated bids received for the parking lot.
3. Diocesan Updates
 - a. Father Mike informed the vestry that pending vestry approval, Suzanne Clune would be ordained a deacon in June. Father provided a template form for review. A **motion** was made to endorse Suzanne to be ordained to the Transitional Diaconate and was unanimously approved. Father Mike will fill out the form, place in his mail slot, and asked every vestry member to sign.
 - b. Father Mike stated that our project to develop the Glebe House and adjacent acreage is one of 31 projects in the diocesan's hands. The transformation team is seeking new developers to partner with. Tanya offered to provide some names if they are interested.
 4. Outreach House
 - a. Barbara indicated that a new mission statement was drafted which ties the Outreach House Mission to St. James' mission statement. The new mission statement: *The mission of St. James' Outreach House is to help improve the day-to-day lives of local area individuals and families in need by providing basic necessities of food, personal care items, cleaning supplies, and clothing, with the generous support and assistance of our community.* A **motion** was made to accept the new mission statement and was unanimously approved.
 - b. The Outreach House is looking at cost cutting measures. It currently absorbs 100% of the weekly expense for trash and recycling pick-up. No costs are allocated to either the church or the Montessori school tenant. Since the school's contract includes waste removal, no additional costs can be charged. Barbara indicated that the dumpsters are rarely full each week. Gene indicated the current contract for waste removal is weekly, but the vendor may be open to modifying it for our loyalty. Father will have Sara call to find out the cost differential if we are able to go to bi-weekly pick-up. If that occurs, any special events (Scout food drive) requiring additional pick-up would be handled by storing overflow trash elsewhere.
 5. Building and Grounds
 - a. Father informed the vestry that we will be changing electric and gas suppliers to obtain better rates for both the church and the Outreach House buildings. This will result in a cost reduction.
 - b. A \$20K donation was received to purchase a new sound system. Father, along with parishioner John Bartol, a sound engineer, have been meeting with vendors to obtain bids. Father also indicated that the donor indicated that any funds not used for the sound system can be moved to the general fund.
 - c. Francois informed the vestry that the 3rd phase of the cemetery restoration project would involve 74 headstones, which were rated in groups 4-6, could begin in spring or summer. To ensure we are on the vendor's calendar, we need to provide a \$25% deposit of the total \$15K. A **motion** was made to approve the funding and was unanimously approved.

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- d. To provide an opportunity for further clarification and questions on Eagles Scout projects, Francois will send out the proposals to the vestry and an evote will be called on for approval. Gene and Sarah will inform the scouts that a 72-hour turn around response is needed for approval. Francois did ask us to keep in mind that not all proposals will be detailed, but that any key tasks will be identified.
 - e. Gene will obtain updated bids for the church parking lot. The bids will include laying the conduit for lighting, ensuring the infrastructure is in place in the event the lighting itself needs to be deferred to a subsequent phase.
6. Annual Meeting and Vestry Membership
- a. With Easter being late this year, May 4th, the 3rd week of Easter, has been selected as the annual parish meeting.
 - b. Rolling off the vestry this year will be Marilyn, Sarah, and Francois. Combined with the open position, we will need to replace 4 members. Father asked us all to consider parishioners for candidacy.
7. Scout Sunday has been set for 2/2.

Committee Updates:

1. Lauren had provided an education report, along with some stats on church school attendance. She is focusing on how to improve attendance in an environment when overall church attendance has changed. She has been working on a customized education curriculum specific to St. James with Father Mike's input. The vestry acknowledged the hard work and talent that Lauren brings to St. James. A **motion** was made and unanimously approved to accept the education report.
2. Marilyn provided an Outreach House report. Highlights included a \$10K donation from St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Audubon, specifically for non-food items. A separate \$2500 donation was received from a friend. 2 New members were appointed to the advisory board: Michael Harrison and Gina Levin. They are also trying to emphasize the Redner's receipt program, which will donate 1% of the total to the Outreach House. A **motion** was made and unanimously approved to accept the Outreach House Report.
3. Sue provided a Fellowship report. They have been surveying parishioners to see what type of events they would like to participate in as part of our church community. Expect to see changes to the website section soon. Some of the membership directory photos are very outdated. Father will get back to Sue if there is a professional resource available for new photos. ECW will be taking a vote during their February meeting on whether to fund a deep cleaning/waxing of Platts Hall and kitchen floors. ECW will also be conducting a thorough cleaning of the church as a Lenten project and will open it up to all volunteers. A **motion** was made and unanimously approved to accept the Fellowship Report.

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Next Vestry Meeting will be held February 18,2025.

A **motion** was unanimously passed to adjourn the meeting.

The Meeting was closed with a prayer by Father Mike.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Hutchinson

Vestry Secretary