

**St. Francis Episcopal Church  
Potomac Parish  
August 15, 2023 Vestry Meeting**

The Vestry convened online via Zoom on Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at 7:30 p.m., Fr. Mark presiding. Members attending: Ms. Tendall, senior warden, Ms. Bahar, junior warden, Ms. Byam, Mr. Hudson, Ms. Hurdle, Mr. Jannotta, Mr. Maroulis, Ms. Oleson, Mr. Ruf, Dr. Schneider, and Mr. Whitlock. Also attending: Mr. Smith.

**Invocation.**

Fr. Mark gave the invocation.

**Bible Study**

Mr. Hunter led the Bible Study. He read a passage from 2 Corinthians, and talked about looking for certainty in his life, especially in times of stress. Mr. Hunter posed two questions:

1. How have you depended upon faith to find confidence during times of uncertainty?
2. What are some ways that faith has helped you/the Vestry guide St. Francis through uncertainty?

The Vestry discussed how their faith had guided them through the years at St. Francis, how it had given them confidence in deciding the best course of action to take in making important decisions for the parish, and that the weekly services served to inspire confidence, to provide feelings of happiness, and to remove anxieties. St. Francis also inspired parishioners to look out for others in the parish. Fr. Mark said that St. Francis had remained open during the Covid pandemic, providing an anchor amid the uncertainty that had impacted our lives

**Consent Agenda** (*previously circulated electronically*)

Minutes of May Vestry Meeting

The July Minutes are part of the Consent Agenda. These were approved with two edits.

**Rector's Report** (attached)

Georgetown Hill School (GHS) Space Rental Lease

Fr. Mark said that GHS is ready to take possession of their leased space with the new GHS Lease Agreement upon a satisfactory report from the County Fire Inspector's review of the fire alarm upgrades, which is scheduled for August 21st. The lease amendment will be circulated for approval electronically once the upgrades are approved.

Financial Committee Reports

Investment Report

Mr. Ruf presented the new Investment Report policy. He said that there were "two buckets" for these funds – one for long-term investments, and the other for short-term investments. He also said that there will be a settlement account fund for transactions that are in the process of being settled and then the money is moved to the appropriate investment bucket as part of the budget

process. Mr. Maroulis is the only person authorized to execute financial transactions with these accounts, and the Finance Committee feels that the finance portfolio holder on the vestry and at least one member of staff should be given this authority, to allow for the smooth conduct of business when individuals are away.

Fr. Mark said that Ms. Krajcik is preparing a resolution with the necessary language to remove old signatories and add new ones for our accounts. This should be ready for vestry action at the epte for those authorized to oversee the financial accounts.

#### Audit Proposal

Mr. Ruf said that the Finance Committee had decided on Hozik & Company, P.L.C. as the outside auditors to perform the annual church audit. He said that various churches have used this company's services, and that the firm has experience with the audit requirements for non-profits. Fr. Mark said that Prentiss Feagles had conferred with St. John's Church, Norwood Parish, who had used Hozik & Company. The firm performs two different audits – a “modified cash audit” and a “full accrual audit.” Mr. Ruf recommended that the Vestry accept the proposal from Hozik & Company for a modified cash audit.

He said that accounting for property, plant (facilities), and equipment were the “sticking points” in most audits, although they do not anticipate any problems with the audit, and Ms. Krajcik has been providing high quality financial reports, *e.g.*, year-end statements, etc., throughout the year. The estimated cost is \$12,500 for the modified cash basis audit, with a one-time start-up fee of \$1,500. Fr. Mark will notify the Diocese about the delay in submission of our audit for this year.

#### Brenda Bell Donation

Fr. Mark said that St. Francis has received notice that Brenda Bell, a long-time member of St. Francis had made a \$50,000 unrestricted bequest to the parish in her will. This bequest will be deposited in the church's Schwab account in the short term “bucket,” where it can earn the best return, but still be available for use if necessary (perhaps on the organ project). Mr. Maroulis also said that the organ renovation project is relying on the church's Employee Retention Grant money to go towards this project.

#### Boy Scout Troop #773 Request

Mr. Mark Whisenhunt, the committee chair for Boy Scout Troop #773, has asked St. Francis to become their charter organization now that the national United Methodist Church has told its parishes that they can no longer act as charter organizations for Boy Scouts due to the issue of liability for sexual abuse. A charter organization oversees a Boy Scout Troop, but there is no financial support required nor would the troop need a meeting place at St. Francis. Fr. Mark said that one goal of the Boy Scouts is to build character and having Troop #733 at St. Francis for various services would provide an opportunity for the parish to reach out to the boys and their families. The Vestry expressed concerns about insurance liabilities related to sexual abuse and use of St. Francis's buildings for meetings and related activities, as well as the Diocese's guidance on church's accepting this role as a charter organization and how this responsibility would comport with St. Francis's mission. It was noted that other Episcopal Churches do act as charter organizations for Boy Scouts. The Vestry asked Fr. Mark and Adam Schneider to confer with diocesan leaders, our insurance company, and Clay Hough, our legal counsel, to learn more about the issues involved.

### Organ Renovation

St. Francis has met its fund raising goal for the organ renovation, but Fr. Mark, Prentiss, and Leigh Alexander may still reach out to some of those solicited who may be interested in participating in the appeal..

### Indians for Christ

Fr. Mark said that he had spoken with Mr. Jay Kasi of the Indians for Christ about the church's decision not to move forward with a lease agreement, but to continue to allow them to use St. Francis for occasional seasonal services.

### Budget Planning

Fr. Mark and several parishioners will conduct a walk-through on September 12<sup>th</sup> of St. Francis's plant and facilities to prioritize spending for the next two years.

### Facilities

Mr. Whitlock said that Chris Stanton is working on a quote for Phase 2 of the HVAC project, but that the total cost is estimated to be around \$40,000. Phase 2 will include replacement of parts of the ductwork and temperature regulation systems. The boilers will also be replaced in future. The new HVAC system's thermostats can be monitored electronically to keep the system's costs lower, although Mr. Whitlock does not expect any substantial increased efficiencies since the HVAC will use the same ductwork. There are no rebates from Montgomery Country for the HVAC improvements and upgrades. We should expect a more detailed report in September.

### Grant for Youth Programs

Dr. Schneider said that St. Francis has received a \$12,000 grant for a speakers' series that will include various topics related to youth and their families, *e.g.*, drug abuse, etc. He is working with Pastor Allison and Ms. Herrman to set up the speakers for this series. Dr. Schneider said that there will also be a series of events this fall in which St. Francis will participate, including the church gathering at Antietam, MD on September 29<sup>th</sup>; the church's booth on Potomac Day on October 21<sup>st</sup>; Holy Ghost Wiener Roast; and a youth group gathering at Dr. Schneider's home on November 5<sup>th</sup>. He said that there was a need for Sunday School teachers, particularly men, given the number of male children that were attending St. Francis, and also a need for greeters before the Sunday service.

### Grounds and Fencing

Ms. Byam said that the Grounds Committee had spent all the budgeted funds on several improvements around the campus, especially the resodding of gardens on the North side of the walkway between the church and St. Francis Hall, a project that had been budgeted for 2023. She said that there had been various plantings and other improvements made on the grounds around the church buildings and that the new fencing looked very good.

### Financial Report

Mr. Maroulis said that July financial report was not very different from the June report. The church has received 62% of the amounts pledged.

Georgetown Hill School (GHS) Lease Amendment

The date of the new GHS Lease Amendment and the amount will determine the final amount listed in the new lease agreement.

Motion to Approve the July Financial Report

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tendall, to approve the July Financial Report. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bahar, to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Approve the Investment Policy

Mr. Ruf made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tendall, to approve the Finance Committee's draft of the Investment Policy. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Approve Hozik & Company, P.L.C. as the Outside Auditor

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hudson, to approve the Financial Committee's recommendation to hire Hozik & Company, P.L.C. to conduct the annual financial audit. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Ruf made a motion, seconded by Dr. Schneider, to adjourn the Vestry Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Fr. Mark led the Vestry in the closing prayer:

*Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give thine angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for thy love's sake. Amen.*

Les Smith  
Clerk