

**St. Francis Episcopal Church
Potomac Parish
February 20, 2024 Vestry Meeting**

The Vestry convened online via Zoom on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 7:30 p.m., Fr. Mark presiding. Members attending: Ms. Tendall, senior warden, Mr. Feagles, junior warden, Ms. Byam, Ms. Hurdle, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Maroulis, Mr. Ruf, Dr. Schneider, Mr. Tester, Ms. Warren, and Mr. Whitlock. Also attending: Mr. Hough and Mr. Smith.

Invocation

Fr. Mark led the invocation.

Bible Study

Mr. Feagles, Junior Warden, led the Bible study. He said with a new year and new Vestry members beginning their service, it was important to take a larger view with faith and optimism, and he read Romans 15:13 “May God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” He said that we should trust in the Lord and have hope when confronted with every day realities at St. Francis and elsewhere. The role of the Vestry presents us with challenges that confront all of us and in any context, longer term, today’s problems cause us to lose track of the good things. You must have faith and hope to solve these problems, but good things will predominate. Mr. Feagles then asked two questions: 1. What do you do when confronted with challenges? and 2. Do you ever take time to think about things from months back that have resolved themselves? Fr. Mark concluded the Vestry’s discussion saying that as a church community we meet not only for worship but in other ways like Bible study and gatherings like meals that help us to relate to each other.

Welcome to New Vestry Members

Fr. Mark welcomed new Vestry members, Ms. Ann Warren and Mr. Kenneth Tester. Ms. Tendall, Senior Warden, also extended her welcome to these two new members and said the Vestry is always there to help them.

Motion to Elect Mr. Kenneth Tester to the Vestry

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tendall, to elect Mr. Tester to a two-year term on the Vestry. The motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Parochial Report

Fr. Mark presented the Annual Parochial Report to the Vestry and asked for questions and concerns. There were none.

Update on Changes to the Procedures for Property Management

Fr. Mark explained the proposed changes to the property management procedures, which give approval roles for minor expenditures to a member of the projects committee instead of the junior warden (which has partly been actual practice for some time). He noted in response to a question that we do still have a vestry member with a property-related portfolio, Tom Whitlock,

who also serves on the projects committee. Ms. Nanan works regularly with him and Ken Hurdle for guidance on property issues. The revised procedures will be placed in the Vestry Resources folder in the Google Drive.

Vestry Retreat

Fr. Mark said the Vestry Annual Retreat will take place on Saturday, February 24th at 9:00 a.m. The Vestry discussed details of this meeting.

Safe Church Compliance

Fr. Mark noted that all vestry members should aim to complete the online safeguarding class as soon as possible.

Finance Office Transition

Ms. Aileen Kim is replacing Ms. Krajcik, who is on maternity leave. Ms. Kim's tour of duty should be limited to 2 ½ days per month, which would keep expenditures well within the budgeted amount. There will be some additional expenses in February because of the audit and issues arising from the frozen bank accounts.

St. Francis's Operating Accounts

Mr. Maroulis, church treasurer, thanked everyone for their help with the recent fraud incident – someone deposited a fraudulent check using the church's account number. PNC Bank noticed this, stopped payment, and froze the church account. The church can meet its payroll and pay vendors while the church is working with the local PNC branch to resolve this issue. The incident is complicated because St. Francis doesn't have a Federal tax ID number, and uses the number provided by the diocese. This makes the compliance issues more complex than they are for personal bank accounts. Fr. Mark said that registering a trade name with the State would make these compliance issues easier. This is not currently permitted for Episcopal churches due to a provision of the Maryland Vestry Act, but the General Assembly of Maryland is currently considering a bill that would make this possible.

Organ Renovation

Fr. Mark said work on the new organ console is being done in Italy and the company is not certain when this work will be finished and the console shipped to the church. Whitesel has also been working on bringing all the pipes we have back online, and Fr. Mark hopes that this will be completed in time for the Easter Vigil, which will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 30th.

Motion to Approve the Parochial Report

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Mr. Feagles, to approve the Parochial Report. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion to Approve Changes to the Property Management Procedures

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tendall, to approve changes to the Property Management Procedures. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion to Ratify Closing the Current PNC Account and Opening a New PNC Account

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Ms. Byam, to ratify changes to the church account at PNC, ratifying an emergency vote taken digitally on Feb. 5. The text of the resolution approved then is: "I move to close the PNC Account ending in x2322 known as "Operating" and open a new account, which will also be called "Operating", with the signers Tyler Maroulis, Mark Michael and Sue Tendall." The motion to ratify passed unanimously.

Georgetown Hill Elementary School (GHES)

Mr. Feagles has agreed to represent the vestry in monthly meetings between St. Francis staff and GHES staff. GHES's rent provides a substantial income for St. Francis. The committee decided to spray for mosquitos in the summer only if GHES requests it. Play areas will also be locked on weekends due to problems with improper usage, but can be opened if needed.

HVAC Updates

Mr. Whitlock met with the HVAC engineer during the last 2 – 3 weeks to discuss the HVAC Phase 2. Design issues being explored include the installation sequences for the two boilers in St. Francis Hall (one for redundancy and greater efficiency), replacement of the main boiler parts in the church, replacement of controls, plans for preventive maintenance, and decisions about how to complete Phase 2 without disruptions to GHES. It was decided possibly to vent the boiler exhaust through a wall in the church rather than through a chimney. Mr. Whitlock said Phase 2 costs will run between \$350,000 and \$500,000, depending upon the pricing of various components, which continue to increase.

Financial Report

Mr. Maroulis, treasurer, said there is a \$15,000 operating deficit in January due to timing of disbursements. GHES has not paid their January rent. Some 2024 pledges have been paid in advance and payment of the remaining pledges will start to be reflected during the year. Mr. Ruf noted that a switch to the accrual method is being considered, and asked whether annual pledges would be fully reflected on the reports in future. Mr. Maroulis said they would be. Ms. Byam asked about the variation in pension payments in 2024. Fr. Mark noted that the January payment included a missed pension payment from late in 2023.

Motion to Approve the Treasurer's Report

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ruf, to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion was approve unanimously.

Other Business

Outreach

Dr. Schneider said he and his family are hosting an afternoon party on Saturday, March 9th. They will serve hot crossed buns and other refreshments. The church will hold a fish fry on March 9, and a "garage day" to provide tips on automotive maintenance on April 7th. The Interfaith Works Women's Shelter also needs donations and help during our week of service in February

Talk of the Town

There will be a presentation in April about Little Scotland and Tobytown, historic areas in Montgomery settled by African-Americans

Executive Session

A Motion to Move into Executive Session with Mr. Hough, Church Attorney

Mr. Feagles made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tendall to go into Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

A Motion to Go Out of Executive Session

Mr. Ruf made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tendall, to go out of Executive Session. The motion passed 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.

Respectfully submitted,

Les Smith
Clerk