

**St. Francis Episcopal Church
Potomac Parish
April 16, 2024 Vestry Meeting**

The Vestry convened online via Zoom on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at 7:30 p.m., Fr. Mark presiding. Members attending: Ms. Tendall, senior warden, Mr. Feagles, junior warden, Ms. Byam, Ms. Hurdle, Mr. Maroulis, Ms. Oleson, Mr. Ruf, Dr. Schneider, Mr. Tester, Ms. Warren, and Mr. Whitlock. Also attending: Mr. Sean Smith and Mr. Les Smith.

Invocation

Fr. Mark led the invocation.

Bible Study

Ms. Tendall led the Bible study focused on our potential as individuals. She read Ephesians 2:10 and 3:30, and Luke 1:37. She asked if we are reaching our potential, and what do we need to do to reach our potential. She said when you give yourself to God, to sit and think, and how far you can go with God's help. We need God's help to grow. Fr. Mark said that God works in us to become like Jesus, with his capacity for strength and love, and to develop with God's help.

Consent Agenda

March Vestry Meeting Minutes

The Vestry approved the March 19, 2024 Vestry Meeting Minutes as submitted, with no changes.

Rector's Report

Fr. Mark said Georgetown Hill Early Childhood School (GHES) invited St. Francis to cooperate with them on an LED lighting installation project across the campus (excluding the church worship space). KW Efficiency, a highly-recommended firm, is undertaking similar projects across GHES's campuses, and Fr. Mark asked them to also evaluate the spaces that church only occupies when they were preparing the project. GHES has proposed that we divide the expense of the project 60/40, and St. Francis' 40% share would be \$ 14,989. The rector and wardens believe that the distribution is fair. The project's cost is offset by significant rebates from PEPCO and a private charity. GHES would like to have the project completed as quickly as possible. Fr. Mark said the LED bulbs would last at least 20 years. The original estimate was that the cost of the project would be recovered in savings in less than three years, but Mr. Ruf had noticed that KW Efficiency had assumed that the church-occupied spaces would be lit for more hours per day than is likely, meaning the savings would take longer to realize, maybe 6 years.

In resulting discussion, several vestry members said GHES is an important tenant, and eventually there may be government regulations requiring a change in electric bulbs. Mr. Whitlock expressed concern about the type(s) of lighting fixtures that would be installed, noting LED lighting is brighter than what the current bulbs produce, asked if the church has a choice on bulbs (the proposal lists 4 or 6 ft. bulb types similar to the current fixtures), but he said the church should go along with this proposal as GHES has been a good tenant, and this was a good time to install LED lighting. Some vestry members also expressed their concerns about any potential

damage that may be incurred in the project, but this appeared to be covered as part of the proposal.

Ms. Hurdle pointed out that it would be very helpful to use this opportunity to install a brighter lighting array in St. Francis Hall. It appeared that KW Efficiency's plans were essentially a like-for-like replacement of the current fixtures in that space. Having the lights dimmable is also important.

There was consensus that moving ahead with the project was wise, but that Ms. Hurdle should reach out directly to K.W. Efficiency to ask about costs for brighter lighting for St. Francis Hall. If these seem wise, the vestry would approve this revision to the proposal via a digital vote.

Credit Cards

Mr. Maroulis said the Church's bank accounts at PNC have been unfrozen following the lengthy process of having the church's bank records meet full compliance standards and setting up four new accounts at the Bank.

Building Use Policy

Mr. Chris Fotis, a member of the choir, has asked the church to allow him the use of the church nave for lessons his students twice a week, which Fr. Mark said will be minimal use and not interfere with any church activities. He will provide a small payment in exchange for the usage.

Miscellaneous Projects

Fr. Mark said the semi-circular window in the youth room had been repaired; the kitchen's garbage disposal was working again; and the columbarium fountain has been rebuilt and is now working. Fr. Mark said a study would soon begin to determine the best type of flooring to replace the current flooring in St. Francis Hall. Fr. Mark had no news on the organ upgrade. He also had nothing else to report on his April monthly meeting with GHES except for the LED proposal.

Motion to Approve Items on the Consent Agenda

Mr. Ruf made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whitlock to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Approve the Bid for LED Lighting from KW Efficiency

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Mr. Feagles, to approve KW Efficiency's bid of \$14,989.00 (40% of the total LED project's cost), which is to be paid-in-full as a capital expense, with the caveat that Ms. Hurdle will contact KW Efficiency about the questions the Vestry raised in its discussion of this project. The motion carried unanimously.

Continuing Business

HVAC Phase 2 Project

Mr. Whitlock said the church has received interest from three companies for the HVAC project: NAC Group, RSC Mechanical, and Harvey Huddle. Mr. Ruf, Mr. Ken Hurdle, and Mr. Chris Stanton have reviewed the three initial proposals and determined all three comply with the bid

details. The project bids are due by May 24, 2024, and it usually takes 3 – 4 days to assemble bids for the Vestry to review, but often bidders won't have followed the deadline to validate their bids. If the bids are under what the church has budgeted, then the Projects Committee will make a recommendation and vestry will approve the winning bid by e-mail. If the bids are over \$500,000, the Vestry will have to meet in July or later to make decisions about the scope of the project before determining the winning bid.

Mr. Whitlock said the boilers need to be replaced, and that it normally takes about six weeks to fill orders for this. Typically, boilers are replaced in the warmer months when the boilers aren't used, but once the winning bid is determined, the timeline for the boilers' replacement is dependent upon the contractor's timeline and when materials and equipment can be assembled. A bid's price is typically good for 90 days, but the costs for labor and materials are expected to increase in January 2025.

Finances

Mr. Maroulis, Treasurer, said expenses in March were in line with the budget, and revenue was a little under budget, which tracks with the historic revenue pattern. March is quiet month for finances. The Lenten Appeal raised about \$30,000, which in line with past years. Mr. Feagles said the Lenten Appeal could be extended a couple of weeks since Easter came early this year. He said the Appeal had spiked during Covid, but has returned to around \$30,000 (historic pattern). He said it might be good to have the Outreach Coordinator ask the Lenten Appeal recipients to discuss their uses of this money.

Mr. Tester asked about the timeline for the transition to accrual basis accounting. Mr. Maroulis said it this is taking longer because of a misunderstanding, as he had found that the books for 2022 and 2023 had all been prepared on a cash-basis for the current audit, meaning that there would be an unanticipated amount of extra work to convert all of them to accrual. He has asked Your Part Time Controller to prepare an estimate for the cost of making such a transition, as this had not been anticipated when the vestry was asked to approve the change at the March meeting.

Mr. Maroulis said the church's year-end books will have to be changed so the year-end books can be compared, year-to-year, going forward for any given period. He wondered that if a transition to accrual accounting is needed, it might be wiser to start the new accrual-basis system in 2025. The Vestry entered into a discussion of this, and several members think this should be a 2024-2025 project. Mr. Tester said that the accrual-basis system makes sense as most companies use it, and Mr. Maroulis concurred, noting that it is the accounting "gold standard."

Motion to Approve the Treasurer's Report

Ms. Tendall made a motion, seconded by Dr. Schneider, to approve the Treasurer's report. The motion carried unanimously.

Other Business

Ms. Hurdle said the "Talk of the Town" series would feature the Scotland Community on Wednesday, April 17th.

Audio Issues in the Nave

Mr. Sean Smith offered a report, noting that a new microphone has been placed in front of the pulpit to help with amplifying readers. It can be left in place or held in the hand. He is also working with an audio integrator to research if it could be wise to invest in some sound absorption panels, which would help to cut down on reverberation. Additional microphones - hand-held ones vs. ambi-directional microphones may be added to try different schemes for their audio effects.

Some vestry members noted that it would be helpful if the microphone at the choir stalls were hung from the ceiling (depending upon the ceiling structure) or clamped to one of the choir stalls, rather than its current placement where parishioners may trip over it. Often the sound issue depends on who's speaking to the congregation, *i.e.*, some people speak louder/softer than others.

No June Vestry Meeting

The June Vestry Meeting is cancelled as Fr. Mark will be away during the month.

Motion to Adjourn

Dr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whitlock, 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.

Respectfully submitted,

Les Smith
Clerk