

Minutes of the Vestry
St. Mark's Church Capitol Hill
January 25, 2009
Adams Room
Approved February 22, 2009

Present:

Clergy: Paul Roberts Abernathy, Rector

Wardens: Louise Walsh, Senior Warden; Jack Richards, Acting Junior Warden

Vestry: Kenn Allen, Doris Burton, Kristen Hartke, Don Mosher, Joe Calizo, Bruce Sherman, Mary Thuell

Treasurer: Kathryn Powers

Co-Counsel: Michael Knipe

Human Resources: Ed Cousins

Acting Register: Hank Donnelly

Also present: Sian Jones, Raiford Gaffney

Absent: Susan Pinkerton, Mary Lee Watts Susan Sedgewick

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm, followed by an opening prayer by Joe Calzo.

1. Outreach Pillar Report

Jack Burton offered a report of the activities of the Outreach Pillar, in which he discussed current projects, reflected on the past decade of community concerns efforts and expressed regret about a lack of an "outreach ethos." On a positive note, co-counsel Michael Knipe reported that the DC government has cleared a looming obstacle to the Shelter Project, which has offered food and a place to stay for homeless families in Baxter House for a time each summer. The city has agreed to waive rules requiring such undertakings to offer bathing facilities, which Baxter House does not have.

2. Canvass Report

Based on the latest pledge information, canvass chair George Meng is projecting 380 pledge units for 2009, pledging a total of \$820,000, Louise Walsh reported. That compares with a 2008 figure of \$866,000.

3. Parish Priorities

Members discussed the parish priorities worked out by the Vestry last fall, and the role of those priorities in the strategic planning process, which was underway under the leadership of Bruce Sherman.

Looking at the strategic process, Paul emphasized the importance of bringing policy and programs together, as well as the two separate

circles of leadership as embodied by the Vestry and Pillar Heads respectively. "We have to figure out how to make sure policy and program are hand in hand, and to integrate program people into the process. If we're not in the same direction, this process will produce nothing but nice confetti," he said, noting that a 2007 decision to make Capitol Hill Group Ministry a priority had not led effectively to action, in part because outreach leaders had not been included in the discussion.

Louise and Bruce urged that the Vestry priorities be used as a basis for strategic planning, and Bruce offered a motion to disseminate the priorities to Pillar Heads and others as input into the process. Members unanimously approved the motion, which included a call for the strategic document to be written and ready for approval by the March 15 meeting.

4. 2009 Budget

Treasurer Kathryn Powers launched an extended discussion on the 2009 budget with a recap of an earlier joint Finance Committee/Vestry meeting in which a draft budget had been reviewed and several items marked for further debate.

Youth Director. In discussing funding for the post of youth director, which is expected to be made vacant by the planned departure at mid-year of Sian Jones, Vestry members considered a number of issues, including the role and importance of the position, the division of responsibilities among parish employees, and the inherent uncertainties involved in working for a voluntary-contribution-dependent organization such as a church. For example, there was discussion about whether the position was truly full time, or whether the next person could also be asked to coordinate volunteer activities and provide staff support to the Pillars.

The nub of the issue was a motion by Don Mosher that, while extending the position as full time, with the addition of Pillar support, would make clear to applicants that the position could be dropped or cut back in the second half of the year in light of a budget shortfall. Kenn Allen then proposed a substitute requiring that no position that comes open in 2009 would be filled without Vestry approval, based on current financial conditions.

The motions were subsequently withdrawn, after several speakers suggested that the constraints and uncertainties of current economic realities were already obvious to any job applicant.

Parish Life. On a motion by Doris Burton, funding for Parish Life was cut to \$1,000, from \$2,000. Paul indicated his intention to provide \$1,000 from the Rector's Discretionary Fund for parishioner Otis Gaddis, who will be attending seminary.

Building Supplies. The line item for building and cleaning supplies was cut to \$7,000, from \$8,000. Paul noted that the Junior Warden has authority to supervise the Sexton's spending on supplies.

Working Capital. After the above changes, Louise noted that the deficit for 2009, based on Canvass projections, stood at \$38,000. To close the gap, Vestry members turned to the working capital fund, which is basically the financial cushion carried forward annually from the previous year in order to cover cash shortfalls during the summer, when pledge payments slow. Although the amount of the budget cushion was projected at \$163,000, Kathryn indicated that the parish could probably get by with about \$108,000. That freed up \$55,000, which was more than enough to cover the projected deficit.

That left an additional \$17,000, however, and Vestry members held a vigorous discussion on what to do with that amount, with major options including reserving it for the building fund, restoring some of the cuts in Outreach, or return it to the working capital fund. Arguing that the needs of the building and facilities were frequently not funded adequately, Don Mosher proposed that the \$17,000 not needed to cover the projected deficit be put into reserves for unexpected building expenses. Other members including Kenn Allen and Bruce Sherman, however, urged that some funds be used to restore cuts in Outreach support of outside organizations.

Louise noted that an additional \$5,000 was available from building security deposits. She then proposed an amendment to provide money for both building and Outreach. After Don's motion was rejected by voice vote, the Vestry then approved a proposal offered by Kenn as follows: \$11,000 for building, \$11,000 for outreach, and \$38,000 for budget balancing, while also transferring \$5,000 from security deposit funds to the regular budget. Members then approved the entire budget without objection.

5. Rector/Assistant Rector Housing

Resolutions stating the amount of compensation to be designated as housing allowances for the Rector and Assistant Rector in 2009 (appended below) were approved without objection.

6. Pillar Heads Meeting

Louise noted that an off-site meeting of all Pillars Heads is being planned for March 28.

7. Race and Reconciliation Contractor

The search continues for an outside contractor to lead training and parish events concerning the topic of race and reconciliation, Louise reported, after an agreement could not be reached with a previous candidate.

8. Annual Meeting

A resolution (appended below) calling the parish Annual Meeting and appointing members to the nominating committee was approved without objection. In addition to the ex officio members, they included parishioners Amber Palmer and Dave Johnson.

10. December Minutes

The minutes of the December 2008 Vestry meeting were approved without changes.

11. Junior Warden's Report

Acting Junior Warden Jack Richards offered a wide-ranging report on current repair projects, including windows repairs that have been carried out and those that are under consideration. He also gave status reports on a number of other projects, including the parish signs, Columbarium, and Nave floor.

12. Human Resources Report

Ed Cousins outlined a new initiative on career management, designed to assist those who have lost their jobs or are feeling threatened during the current economic problems. He explained that a survey of needs would be distributed, in order to find out what kinds of assistance and support St. Mark's members are most interested in.

The meeting adjourned at 5 pm after a closing prayer offered by Ed Cousins.

**Respectfully submitted,
Hank Donnelly for
Susan Sedgewick
Register**

Approved as amended by Vestry, 2-22-09.

Housing Allowance Resolution 2009

Whereas, Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code permits a minister of the gospel to exclude from gross income (in computing federal income taxes) a church-designated allowance paid to him/her as part of his/her compensation to the extent used by him/her for actual expenses in owning or renting a home; and

Whereas, the Reverend Paul Roberts Abernathy is compensated by St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Capitol Hill, exclusively for the services as a minister of the gospel; and

Whereas, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Capitol Hill, does not provide the Reverend Abernathy with a rectory, therefore, it is hereby

Resolved, that \$ \$58,053 (Fifty-eight thousand fifty-three dollars) of the total compensation paid to the Rev. Abernathy for calendar year 2009 is hereby designated to be a housing allowance, and be it further

Resolved, that, after the date of this resolution, should the Vestry approve a cost of living adjustment to the Rev. Abernathy's total compensation, the same percentage of distribution between the Rector's Compensation and the Rector's Housing budget line items in the 2008 General Fund Expenditures shall be maintained in 2009.

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Whereas, the Reverend Susan B. Pinkerton is compensated by St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Capitol Hill, exclusively for the services as a minister of the gospel; and

Whereas, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Capitol Hill, does not provide the Reverend Pinkerton with a rectory, therefore, it is hereby

Resolved, that \$23,700 (Twenty-three thousand seven hundred dollars) of the total compensation paid to the Rev. Pinkerton for calendar year 2009 is hereby designated to be a housing allowance, and be it further

Resolved, that, after the date of this resolution, should the Vestry approve a cost of living adjustment to the Rev. Pinkerton's total compensation, the same percentage of distribution between the Assistant Rector's Compensation and Assistant Rector's Housing budget line items in the 2008 General Fund Expenditures shall be maintained in 2009.

St. Mark's Capitol Hill

Resolution Concerning the 2009 Annual Meeting

Whereas the Bylaws for St. Mark's Episcopal Church Capitol Hill provide for an Annual Meeting to be held on the Friday evening immediately following Easter Sunday or on such date and time within three weeks after Easter as the Vestry appoints by resolution; and

Whereas the Vestry has elected to follow the trend established in recent years to hold the Annual Meeting on the first Sunday morning immediately following Easter; therefore

Be it resolved that the 2009 Annual Meeting for the election of Wardens, Members of the Vestry, and a Lay Delegate shall be held on Sunday, April 19, 2009 immediately following a single 10:00 am service.