First Parish Cambridge Governing Board Minutes

August 20th, 2024 at 7:00 PM

(Virtual)

Present:

| Tod Hibbard Chair | Nina Lytton - Member at Large |
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| Jane Stabile, Treasurer | Rev. Rob Hardies, Minister |
| Julie Duncan, Vice Chair | Carol Lewis - Church Administrator |
| Patrick Sullivan, Member at Large | Grace Hall, Governance Advisory Committee |
| Rich Lawson, Clerk | Sophia Doescher, Assistant Minister (for first agenda item) |

Regrets: Cade Murray

Chalice Lighting & Check in

Julie Duncan started the chalice lighting with a reading. She led the check-in with the following questions:

* What are you most looking forward to in the upcoming "church year"?
* Do you have any concerns/worries about the upcoming church year.

Welcome Sophia Doescher, Assistant Minister for Worship

The Board welcomed Rev. Sophia Doescher. Rev Rob invited her to describe her role, which is limited to 10 hours per week.

She will primarily be focused on activities on Sundays. One Sunday per month she will preach and she will be at all other services except for one each month. She and Rev. Rob are still exploring other opportunities, e.g., local pastoral care in emergencies, possibly young adult ministry (18 - 35).

When she is not at First Parish she works as an interfaith chaplain at a hospital, specializing in mental health.

Consent Agenda

Jane Stabile said that she thought it was wonderful to have so many reports to read: four of the five advisory committees to the Board. Grace Hall noted that the annual reports from the teams are due in September, so there will be another significant collection next month.

Part of the consent agenda was a note from the Racial Equity Team including a request for financial support for training. In the discussion among the board there was support for the idea, but uncertainty about the cost since this request would exhaust the entire program budget for the year.

Tod Hibbard will invite them to attend the Board meeting in Sept. to discuss the proposal. Carol Lewis also agreed to investigate whether there is any money in reserve funds that could be used for this purpose.

This led to a broader discussion about inviting the teams and committees to propose potential program ideas while the budget is being developed.

Following the discussion there was a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded. There was unanimous approval of the motion.

Building Update

The full details about the building update are in Carol Lewis’ report, but she did have additional information based on a meeting after the report was submitted.

The repairs to the chimney are on hold. There is a deteriorated steel beam at the bottom of the gable where the chimney has been taken down. A structural engineer recognized that the beam is an important support for the bay window for the Mickleson room so the beam needs to be addressed before rebuilding the chimney. Options are being developed quickly. It is.likely to cost an additional $75 - 100k. This cost could be accommodated within the existing line of credit. The repointing that was planned may need to drop out of scope.

More information should be available after the Building Advisory Team meeting on Thursday. Carol Lewis will also explore whether the Cambridge Historical Commission may be able to provide additional funds to help cover this new cost.

Update on efforts to replace resigning board member

Grace Hall provided an update. She received suggestions from current board members and others. At the GAC meeting at the end of August the committee will develop a prioritized list. The next step will be to contact the individuals serially. By the September GAC there should be more information, but there may not be a new person on the board.

Overview of the Upcoming Church Year

Rev. Rob noted that the first part of his report this month provided an update on the strategy for this year. Part of it is the expanded music program.There will be a strong focus on welcoming people through worship. The Membership Team helps keep the momentum once people are in the door

It will also be important to provide a lot of support for RE. A recent idea is to have a FPC booth at Oktoberfest, with crafts, etc. (Sunday, Oct 6th) The booth is intended to draw in parents and children in the neighborhood with fun kids activities like crafts. This is also about re-introducing ourselves to Harvard Square more broadly. The staff can’t do the booth without additional volunteers.

Carol Lewis added another theme: increasing volunteerism. She plans to relaunch “Volunteer Central” from a few years ago as part of that theme. This could be an annual.event.

Y2Y has reached out re: housing migrants until Y2Y re-opens on 10/15

Julie Duncan has been speaking with Susan Shepherd and Elizabeth Nguyen about possibly using the Y2Y space as overnight shelter for migrants who are currently unhoused. She provided some background on the right to shelter in MA, and on recent political steps that are eroding that right.

Carol was approached by Y2Y about FPC contributing to the solution since we already have a space that is designed for people to live in and that is cleared to be a shelter. Decisions are needed quickly, though, since the space would only be available through Sept.

The board was supportive of the concept but recognized many practical questions that needed to be addressed: Youth on Fire, insurance, etc. A small team was developed to explore the question: Julie Duncan, Carol Lewis, Susan Shepherd, and Patrick Sullivan. Once they have a proposal, Tod Hibbard will organize an ad hoc Board meeting.

Carol Leis agreed with this approach. She added that in the long term she would like to work with Y2Y to be able to provide shelter all year long.

Thoughts on congregational communications - Julie

This agenda item was tabled for the next board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted by Rich Lawson, Clerk

Approved by the Board on 17 September, 2024

Note: Chalice lighting/check-in monthly rotation for 2024-2025

September: Patrick, October: Nina, November: Jane, December: Sharon, January: Julie, February: Rich, March: Patrick, April: Nina, May: Jane, June: Sharon. (Cade is a substitute as needed