

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
VESTRY MEETING
MINUTES
October 26, 2023

Present: Senior Warden-Marlo Pratt, Treasurer-David Brierley, Clerk-Mattie Gustafson, Cory Thurston, Richard Updegrove, Lee Ferreira, Anne Wood, John Corbishley, and the Revs. Meaghan Brower and Jennifer Pedrick. Rita Verespy attended via Zoom.

Absent: Junior Warden-George LeBlanc, Lauren Lema, and Alex Simmons

Jennifer began the meeting at 6:00 p.m. with a prayer.

Vestry Discernment re Music Program

It is Jennifer's hope to hire a new music director by February 2024. This position would be ¼ time, and we would establish benchmarks to be discussed with the new director at 6-month intervals. The Vestry then discussed the various issues involved in shaping our music program moving forward.

Over the next few weeks, the congregation will gain some additional experience with music

- The Choir School of Newport County will lead the music on two Sundays
- Peter Berton will direct St. Mary's choir for 3 Sundays

On November 19th we will hold a "Coffee and Conversation" that will invite the congregation to share their thoughts on the music program.

Member Transportation Ministry – Carole Nicodemas

Carole is a representative from the Pastoral Care Team, and has been looking into the issues surrounding a potential transportation ministry for St. Mary's. There is certainly a need for transportation for people who cannot drive – to doctor's appointments, to the hospital, etc.

Issues involved are waivers that people would have to sign; insurance issues in case of accidents and liability claims; responsibility of both the driver and St. Mary's, etc. After much discussion about all these issues, Richard made a motion, seconded by Cory that the Vestry will not move forward with a transportation ministry at this time. The motion passed.

The Vestry thanked Carole for all her hard work.

Update on Gibbs House – John C.

The property has been shown 4 times, with one party showing an interest. The process continues.

Associate Rector's Time – Meaghan

Meaghan has been investigating the possibility of offering St. Mary's as a wedding venue. There are many issues involved with offering the St. George's chapel for a reception venue, especially if liquor is to be served. Rita will send Meaghan a copy of a "liquor liability rider" that should be attached to any caterer's insurance.

2024 Budget – David

David presented a draft of the proposed 2024 budget. He is still working on a final document. The figures do assume the request for an increase in the pledging amount will be successful. The Vestry was encouraged to really get the word out that we need an increase in pledging for next year. The budget will be voted on in December.

Rita and David continue to work on a narrative budget. The goal is to have it go out in a separate email shortly.

Assistant Treasurer – David

David B. made the following motion, seconded by Richard.

I move that we create a new position designated as Assistant Treasurer. This position will be filled by an existing vestry member so it will not increase the size of the vestry. The assistant treasurer will not be a member of the Executive Committee. This person will work with the Treasurer to become familiar with the procedures and reports related to finances. This person will be authorized to sign checks in the absence of the Treasurer. For any checks which are over \$1,000 and therefore require two signatures, one of the signatures must be either the junior or senior warden.

Richard suggested and moved an amendment that we delete the phrase "The assistant treasurer will not be a member of the Executive Committee." John seconded this motion, which passed.

The motion now reads

I move that we create a new position designated as Assistant Treasurer. This position will be filled by an existing vestry member so it will not increase the size of the vestry. This person will work with the Treasurer to become familiar with the procedures and reports related to finances. This person will be authorized to sign checks in the absence of the Treasurer. For any checks which are over \$1,000 and therefore require two signatures, one of the signatures must be either the junior or senior warden.

The motion, as amended, passed.

Stewardship - Rita

Rita announced that all Vestry members had sent in their pledges, and she thanked everyone for doing so. 2023 pledges are coming in well.

The Stewardship Committee is planning a Harvest Dinner for Nov. 11. Most of the food will be coming from Rocco's.

Nominating Committee – Marlo P.

This committee is working hard and making good progress.

Junior Warden Report – Marlo, for George

Mattie made the following motion, which was seconded by Dave.

I move that we replace the community garden posts, gate and fencing in the Fall 2023 & Winter 2024 at a cost of \$7600, funded from St. Mary's Reserve Fund.

Discussion –

John asked if we should be spending money on fences when we need such an increase in the operating expenses for next year. It was explained that the funds spent on the garden fences would be reimbursed in 2024. The motion passed.

There was further discussion about the "reserve fund" – how much was in it and where this amount was recorded. In the interest of transparency, it was decided that this fund should show up somewhere on the Balance Sheet Dave creates monthly. Dave will calculate the current amount of this fund and what has been paid for thus far.

Consent Agenda

Dave made a motion, seconded by Richard, that we pass the Consent Agenda, consisting of the Minutes and Treasurer's Report for September 2023. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mattie E. Gustafson
Clerk