

Council Minutes: June 2024
Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Tuesday, June 25, 6:30 pm

1. Call to Order – Sonia Jordan, Moderator
Sonia called the meeting to order at 7:22, following the Planning & Coordination Session

Voting Members Present:

Sonia Jordan – Moderator
Rich Bireta – Moderator Elect
Scott Morgan – Immediate-Past Moderator
Stephen Carttar – Treasurer
Doug Eason – At Large Member
David Trevino – At Large Member
Norine Spears – At Large Member
Christi Houston – At Large Member

Voting Members Not Present:

Debbie Schmidt – At Large Member
Jeff Eriksen – At Large Member

Ex Officio Members Present:

Valerie Miller-Coleman – Senior Pastor
Caroline Lawson Dean – Associate Pastor

Others Present:

Larissa Long – Clerk
Mark Reedy – Deputy Treasurer
Devon Kim – Executive Director of Capital Campaign
Terry Schmidt

2. Invocation – Valerie Miller-Coleman
Valerie referenced the prayer she offered during the preceding Planning & Coordinating Session.
3. Consent Agenda
 - 3.1 Approve Agenda
 - 3.2 Approve Minutes from May 28, 2024 Council Meeting
 - 3.3 Receive Financial Reports

Scott moved to approve the Consent Agenda; Norine seconded; motion carried unanimously.

4. Church Treasurer’s Report – Stephen Carttar, Treasurer
 - 4.1 Financial Update
As of May 31, 2024
 - 41.67% of the year has passed; 5 of 12 months
 - 45.82% of revenue has been received (44.70% of pledge collections)
 - 39.13 of expenses have been paid
 - In summary, the May financial performance was slightly favorable to expectations with year-to-date net revenue (income) of \$64,172

Capital Campaign expenses totaled \$48,014 as of May 31, the bulk of which was to Generis Partners (\$25,000 of \$40,000 budget) and video production costs. As of May 31, \$156,477 of revenue has been received resulting in new revenue (income) of \$108,463.

Devon asked why a \$465 tuning and repair item (Line #5780100) was attributed to campaign expenses. Stephen said he would ask Melissa about the coding and respond to her.

Stephen said on June 5, 2024, the Finance Committee approved tracking and reporting interest earned on Capital Campaign monies as interest income to the Capital Campaign Fund. Otherwise, interest earned on those monies would have been recorded as benefitting the general operations of Plymouth under the Mission Spending Plan.

4.2 Finance Committee Authority to establish Banking Relationships – Stephen Carttar, Treasurer

Stephen said because interest rates are quite volatile, fund investment decisions must be made quickly. Scott added that the bylaws give Council authority regarding financial institutions but doesn't provide specific guidelines. The Governance Committee will work on a policy but felt approval of this authority was prudent at this time.

Scott moved to authorize the Financial Committee to establish a banking relationship with any FDIC or NCUA insured financial institution with the Treasurer informing Council at its next meeting following the establishment of a new banking relationship. Doug seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

5. Old Business

5.1 Capital Campaign Update – Devon Kim, Executive Director of Capital Campaign

Devon said \$3,282,371 had been pledged at the close of the campaign. As of today, pledges of \$3,305,071 from 259 households have been received. Alan Wildes from Generis will be here on Wednesday to review the campaign and discuss steps going forward. Capital campaign expenses are coming in under budget.

Scott expressed his appreciation for a campaign well done and thanked the task force for their work. David asked about the participation goal of 100%, which came in at around 70%. He wondered if there were plans to reach out to those who didn't participate. Devon said they heard from some who indicated they will make a commitment but want to wait for additional information. She added that communications will continue over the next three years.

5.2 Determine dates for Department of Homeland Security Overview Meeting – David Trevino, Council At-Large Member

David said Tim Morgan with DHS (incorrectly stated as Ken Morgan in May's Council Minutes) can meet virtually during business hours. David will ask Tim for some suggested dates and move forward with setting up the meeting. Valerie, Matt, Scott and Sonia want to participate in the meeting, if possible.

5.3 Modification of the Sanctuary and Organ Project Management Committee MOU – Sonia Jordan, Moderator

Sonia explained that as staff is typically designated in an ex-officio role, the Minister of Music & Fine Arts should have that status. She said Kim is in agreement with the proposed change.

Doug moved to approve modification of the Sanctuary and Organ Project Management Committee MOU to include the Minister of Music & Fine Arts as an ex-officio member. Scott seconded; motion carried unanimously.

5.4 Task Force for Sanctuary and Organ Project Management Committee Membership – Sonia Jordan, Moderator

Sonia provided the following list of proposed committee members, but said titles are only intended to describe the areas they represent:

Terry Schmidt, Project Manager
Doug Eason, Facility Committee Representative
Dave Miller, Construction/Engineering Representative
Valerie McGhee, Accessibility Representative
Stephen Carttar, Financial Representative
Doni Mooberry Slough, Financial/Grant Writing Representative
Judy Burch, Music and Fine Arts Representative

Ex-Officio: Valerie Miller-Coleman, Matt DelVecchio, Kim Manz and Moderator (Current – Sonia Jordan; Future – Rich Bireta)

Scott moved to approve the proposed members of the Task Force for Sanctuary and Organ Project Management Committee; Norine seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Terry Schmidt said an introductory meeting was held with the architectural group this morning and the first official committee meeting is scheduled for next Monday at 8:15 a.m. He hopes to bring Council a proposed contract for architectural services soon. Doug said he feels the business and legal sides of the contract will be a document that will hold up without challenges. Scott said a budget will have to be developed and the firm's assistance will be needed to put it together. Terry said timelines were discussed and that a decision regarding the organ is critical, but they understand how difficult that is right now. He added that after a contract is agreed upon, they will have the architects come back and meet with the congregation. The committee wants to follow the capital campaign's model, providing communication and transparency throughout the project.

Terry asked if a contract is ready for approval could Council meet in July? Sonia said it could be accomplished, adding that it wouldn't be a traditional Council meeting.

Doug said the architects feel we're in a "sweet" spot relative to contractors who may be interested in the project. The architects also have contacts with entities that work with historical societies, which may prove beneficial. Scott said items requiring Council's approval will include the contractor, final design and budget, but there may be others as

well. Critical decisions will come up in the next few months and the committee will get as much information to the congregation as possible in a timely manner.

Sonia said she'll introduce Terry during Sunday's mission moment.

6. New Business

6.1 Search for Director of Faith Formation Contract – Devon Kim, Personnel Committee Chair

Devon said her conversations with members about the capital campaign always included comments regarding young families and children and how good it was to see them in church. She's been working with Valerie and Caroline, the direct supervisor of the position, on how to fill Kara's position when she leaves. Devon said this position is responsible for all children and youth through high school.

Valerie did some networking in the UCC family and visited with other youth directors which led her to CYMT, which provides youth ministry staffing services. She and Caroline also met several times with a local candidate they felt could be a good fit but who ultimately declined consideration.

The search will be nationwide and may take four or more months to fill. The \$8,350 cost of the contract will be covered by the budgeted monthly salary of \$3,270.09 while the position is vacant. Kara has agreed to remotely provide 10 hours of administrative assistance each week during the interim period, so a portion of the monthly salary will cover that expense, as well. CYMT will organize focus groups with the congregation so we're sure we know what we're looking for.

Doug then moved to approve the CYMT contract to lead the search for a Director of Faith Formation at a cost not to exceed \$8,350; Rich seconded the motion.

General discussion followed:

Scott said he supports approval of the contract, as it is not a commitment to hire someone. However, going forward Plymouth will need to find ways to fund operations beyond the Annual Appeal, as giving differs with younger members. Plymouth relies on our professional staff and as we grow, we need to be at a higher level than we have experienced in past.

Norine asked what CYMT's reaction was to the position's current salary. Valerie said it would be hard to find anyone nationally at that salary, as a full-time position would be at least \$50,000 (Kara is currently at 30 hrs. weekly). Doug said we're not authorizing a job description, but CYMT would develop a job description and suggested salary range based on information obtained from focus groups, etc.

Devon said if desired, CYMT can provide mentoring, coaching and continuing education services for three years at a cost of \$7,000-\$9,000. This could be considered following a hire, but no decision is to be made at this time. Caroline said Plymouth has invested in Kara's education.

Stephen is trying to anticipate future budget expenses and sees increasing costs. Norine asked if local individuals could apply for the position using this process. Valerie said they

could, but the pool of applicants in this area is quite small. Caroline added that she's aware of UCC churches that have gone without this position for over two years, and it's hurt.

Rich agreed with Stephen that budgeting for the salary will need to be discussed strategically when candidates and salary ranges are brought to council for consideration.

There being no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

7. Moderator's Report – Sonia Jordan

Expressed her thanks for

- Pride Party collaboration/partnership examples
- Completion of successful Capital Campaign

Next quarter top priority

- Launching Project Management Committee

8. Associate Pastor's Report – Caroline Lawson Dean

- Let her know if you would like to teach Sunday School or
- Assist with Kara's responsibilities

9. Pastor's Report – Valerie Miller-Coleman

- Staff planned 16 months of programs today
- Deeply thankful for them

10. Board Chair Comments

None

11. Open Forum

Scott asked if Plymouth Language is meeting. Caroline said it is and she'll have an update in August or September.

12. Adjournment and Lord's Prayer

Scott moved to adjourn; Sonia seconded; motion unanimously approved.

13. Important Future Dates:

Next Council Meeting: August 27, 2024 at 6:30 pm (No regular July Meeting, but may have a special meeting re project)

Tentative 2024-25 Council Dates

August 27, 2024; September 24, 2024; October 22, 2024; November 19, 2024; December 17, 2024; January 28, 2025