

Council Minutes: May 2024
Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Tuesday, May 28, 6:30 pm

1. Call to Order – Sonia Jordan, Moderator
Sonia called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

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
Debbie Schmidt – At Large Member

Voting Members Not Present:

Jeff Eriksen – At Large Member

Ex Officio Members Present:

Valerie Miller-Coleman – Senior Pastor

Ex Officio Members Not Present:

Caroline Lawson Dean – Associate Pastor

Others Present:

Larissa Long – Clerk
Mark Reedy – Deputy Treasurer
Devon Kim – Executive Director of Capital Campaign
Kathy Bowen – Music & Fine Arts

2. Invocation – Valerie Miller-Coleman
Valerie led the attendees in prayer.
3. Consent Agenda
 - 3.1 Approve Agenda
 - 3.2 Approve Minutes from April 23rd, 2024 Council Meeting
 - 3.3 Receive Financial Reports

Doug 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 April 30, 2024
 - 33.33% of the year has passed; 4 of 12 months
 - 39.1% of revenue has been received (38% of pledge collections)
 - 32.5% of expenses have been paid
 - In summary, the April financial performance was in line with expectations
 1. Endowment revenue totaled \$94,682 for the first quarter of 2024. Of that \$8,788 was interest income; \$19,158 gain on sale of investments and \$66,736 was

unrealized gain on investments. Having distributed \$74,675 to Plymouth early in the first quarter 2024, Endowment reflected \$20,006 of net income even after the distribution.

2. Capital Campaign expenses totaled \$41,592 as of April 30, the bulk of which was to Generis Partners (\$20,000 of the \$40,000 budget) and video production costs. As of April 30, \$24,615 of revenue had been received.
3. Note – On May 1, facilitated by Doni Mooberry Slough, who personally covered fees of \$340, Plymouth received \$32,867 net, from Silver Lake Bank from their purchase of our Kansas Historical Restoration Tax Credits.

Stephen said some particular good news is that pledged income of \$336,077 vs budget of \$294,594 is ahead on a year-to-date basis. He also pointed out that was reported from Endowment exceeded what was distributed and that the church has received proceeds from the tax credits sale to Silver Lake Bank. He added that Silver Lake is amendable to purchasing up to \$350,000 of tax credits from the capital campaign.

In response to David's inquiry regarding what might contribute to higher than expected pledged income, Stephen said some have paid pledges fully in advance and there are new pledging units.

Doug asked about the status of the Fundraising Committee. Stephen said Doni chairs the committee, which will meet again on June 8. He also said that under the new structure, the committee will work on the Annual Appeal, but the Finance Committee will prepare the budget.

Doug then asked if the threshold for named endowed funds is still \$10,000. Stephen said there had been no change. Regarding capital campaign funds, he asked how the \$250,000 FDIC threshold would be handled. Stephen said investments could be made in certificates of deposit to avoid exceeding the threshold and that Silver Lake has no penalty for early withdrawals of CD's held by churches.

5. Old Business

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

Devon reported that 212 commitment cards have been received. There are 350 active families at Plymouth, so there is still an opportunity for 100% participation, which is the campaign's first goal; raising \$3.2 million is the second.

Reminder communications will be sent this week to those who haven't yet contributed, but the campaign will end on June 9 when the outcome is announced. Stephen then congratulated Devon and her team on a well-run and successful campaign.

Scott said the campaign committee will continue through the next 3 years and Devon said they will meet with Generis to timeline the three-year plan.

5.2 Disaster Response Plan – David Trevino, Council At-Large Member

David briefly referenced the material he sent via email to Council members. He has talked to Ken Morgan, a Department of Homeland Security representative in Wichita who has sent additional information. Ken would like to do a site visit and give a presentation to Council, hopefully in late summer or early fall. He also suggested reaching out to emergency responders in the area to obtain their feedback regarding what should be considered when developing a plan.

Stephen asked if any there was any cost associated with his visit or a presentation. David said he didn't mention a fee but would ask. Sonia agreed that visiting with emergency responders was a good idea. Cyber security should also be addressed, as member information is maintained on Breeze.

6. New Business

6.1 Task Force for Sanctuary and Organ Project Management Committee – Sonia Jordan

Sonia referenced Scott's draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and said the intent this evening is to discuss the committee structure and vote on its creation. She then read the draft language related to "Purpose" and asked Council members for their thoughts. She modified the language to reflect changes suggested during the discussion.

Mark felt \$5,000 for change orders was a small amount to require Council approval. Scott agreed and said he didn't know what the right figure was. He wanted to provide flexibility for the committee, but also provide sufficient oversight. Regardless, if a modification increases the budget, Council approval will be required. David suggested using a percentage of the budget. Rich said the process of budget development will include a contingency fund and as long as the project stays within budget there is no reason for Council to be involved. Members agreed a defined amount would not be referenced, but that significant modifications or increases to the budget would require Council approval.

Doug said the Facilities Committee includes members who have expertise in building design and project management. He suggested leveraging that knowledge to the extent possible and having a separate Design and Review Committee which would coordinate with Facilities. Scott felt Facilities already has large areas of responsibilities and his preference would be smaller committees or sub-groups. He suggested members representing accessibility, Music & Fine Arts, etc.

Doug said this process puts more on the front-end with Facilities on the back end.

Stephen asked about the likelihood of tax credits and who is "we" relative to high confidence in tax credits, as based on his research he has some concerns. Is this committee responsible for accessing the ability to procure tax credits? Scott said the committee would create a budget that Council must approve and as a member, Stephen would be part of the approval process.

Doug added that the committee would be on the front end to understand how to maximize opportunities for tax credits, but seeking tax credits will be an interactive process between the architect and historical society, with Plymouth doing the paperwork.

He said that what was published was a framework for what we thought we could achieve, but we'll only pass a budget based on the amount raised and whatever tax credits are approved. Design decisions will be based on that. The goal was \$4.5 million, but we'll work with what is raised.

Stephen referenced congregation feedback on the design and asked if the congregation would vote on it. No - there will not be a congregation vote on the plan, but Council will approve it. Also, the MOU language will be changed to clarify the importance of communication and the solicitation of feedback from the congregation during the design process, prior to Council's approval of the design.

Devon said she and Doug have a meeting scheduled with Clark Huesemann next week. If there is a design review committee, should they hold the meeting and then transfer off to someone or cancel it? Valerie said the proposed Membership language has the Facilities Chair (Doug) as a voting member and she supports holding the meeting next week. She also feels the proposed membership of seven is appropriate.

Scott moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding to create the Sanctuary and Organ Project Management Committee as amended tonight. Rich seconded.

Sonia then reviewed the changes made to the draft MOU based on Council's discussion and asked if members could move forward with the revised document, which follows:

520.5 Council Committees (pages 13-14)

520.5.1 Overview, B. Creating a Committee

Council shall approve a policy for each new standing committee or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for each ad hoc committee. The policy or MOU shall state the purpose and membership of the committee. For ad hoc committees, the MOU shall state its expected duration.

Sanctuary and Organ Project Management Committee Memorandum of Understanding, May 28, 2024

Purpose

Council hereby creates an ad hoc council committee to be known as the Sanctuary and Organ Project Management Committee (Project Management Committee). Its purpose is to organize, direct, and execute comprehensive plans and a budget for the successful development and completion of improvements to the organ specifically and the sanctuary in general, including improved accessibility. The Project Management Committee shall:

1. Recommend an architect and general contractor for Council's approval to assist the planning and construction of improvements;
2. Work with the approved architect to develop a specific plan or plans (including timelines) for Council's approval of the design, funding, and construction of the improvements;
3. Communication and solicitation of feedback with the congregation during the design process prior to Council's approval of the design;
4. Include in the funding plan the availability and likelihood of tax credits, grants, and all other funding sources in addition to the funds raised by the capital campaign;
5. Coordinate with the Capital Campaign Steering Committee as it continues its management of the successful completion of the campaign;

6. Develop a project budget for Council's approval. The budget shall reflect the January 2024 congregational vote to approve the capital campaign that included the language "No debt, other than carrying costs, shall be incurred unless approved by the congregation at a congregational meeting."
7. Act as the representative of Council in the execution of all Council-approved plans with the Chair or Chair's designee acting as primary representative;
8. Obtain Council approval of significant modifications to design plans or timeline; and increases to the budget;
9. Define the parameters for approving change orders and when they return to Council for approval;
10. Develop and implement a process to promote communication and transparency with the congregation and to encourage feedback from the congregation regarding the improvements; and
11. Provide regular updates to Council.

Membership

The Moderator and Senior Pastor shall jointly name a Chair to lead the Project Management Committee and its efforts. There shall be seven voting members including the Chair. The Chair shall work with the Moderator and Senior Pastor to suggest additional members to be approved by Council. Members shall include the Chair of the Council's Facilities Committee. The remaining five members will be representative of Plymouth members who are involved with facilities, music, accessibility, or other relevant backgrounds, such as finance or the organ committee.

In addition to the seven voting members, the Senior Pastor and Facilities Manager shall serve as ex officio members without vote.

Duration

The duration of the Project Management committee shall be until Council determines the completion of its efforts. Council will annually review the progress of the Project Management committee to determine the need for the committee to continue. It is envisioned that this will be a multi-year effort.

Following a brief discussion regarding budget development and change order parameters, the motion carried unanimously.

6.2 Roof Insurance Claim Agreement with Schwickert's – Doug Eason, Facilities Chair and Council at-Large Member

Doug said Schwickert's found hail damage on the roof and that a claim has been filed with the insurance company. Council is asked to approve a contract to approve Schwickert's acting on Plymouth's behalf and working with the insurance company to maximize our claim and complete roof repairs for the amount negotiated. If we don't utilize their roof repair services, we would pay up to \$5,000 for time worked. The \$7,500 deductible will be paid from Operation's Endowment Activity Fund.

Scott moved to approve Schwickert's working with the insurance company on the claim and to complete the roof repairs for the amount negotiated. Rich seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

6.2 Update from Facilities Committee on Sidewalk Repair – Doug Eason, Facilities Chair and Council At-Large Member

Doug said metal plates in the sidewalk in front of the church are slipping and becoming a hazard. Because safety is the highest concern, repairs are required. Six to eight feet will be removed and replaced with concrete. Facilities has approved the expenditure and repairs will be paid from the operating budget, so Council approval isn't required.

7. Moderator's Report – Sonia Jordan

Sonia reminded members that the second Planning and Coordinating Session will take place immediately preceding the June Council meeting. She received good feedback from the first session and may try a new format in June.

8. Associate Pastor's Report – Caroline Lawson Dean

No report.

9. Pastor's Report – Valerie Miller-Coleman

- Summer is planning season for Fall
- Summer worship series is in place

10. Board Chair Comments

Cathy said Kim's working diligently on organ procurement. He's traveled to Omaha and Tulsa where he's played and listened to organs and will be visiting Quimby.

11. Open Forum

Rich asked about the Deacons' decision to continue providing communion service at stations, which was noted in the May minutes. Valerie said Deacons spent three months of discernment, carefully considering the advantages and disadvantages of each type of service. They based their decision on hospitality, as they felt passing the elements may not be comfortable for new members or visitors. Valerie will visit with members who expressed interest in returning to passing the elements.

Doug asked for volunteers to coordinate street barricades at the Pride Parade on Saturday.

12. Adjournment and Lord's Prayer

Doug moved to adjourn; Debbie seconded; motion carried unanimously.

13. Important Future Dates

Next Council Meeting: June 25, 2024 at 6:30 pm

Tentative 2024-25 Council Dates (fourth Tuesday except third in November and December)

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

