

St. Mary's Vestry Meeting

May 8, 2013

Present: Robert Oliver, C.M.Crawford, Jack Newsome, Tom Hart, Ann Gilmore, Sue Faulkner, John Cole, Libby Bluntzer, Tulisha Carson, Rev. Susie Comer, Carol Brown,(recorder)

Absent: Jan Denson, Abel Turner, Linda Joseph

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Rev. Susie. The members read their copies of the minutes of the last meeting. Robert Oliver moved to accept them, Sue Faulkner seconded and all said 'aye'.

Treasurer's Report: Tulisha Carson began by explaining the negative balance shown in the General Fund. The assets in that account are the Operating Account and the Strategic Mission Grant totaling about \$8500. The liabilities are Clergy Taxes and Pension, Employee Taxes, and the Designated Monies. When put together they show a negative balance of \$1554, but that is the Fund only, the Checking Account is not in the negative. There are quarterly expenses paid in April. Overall, the finances look the healthiest that they have in a long time. We are within reach of a balanced budget. This time last year we were already overbudget. We may reach a point where we will need to transfer funds to pay bills, but we're not there yet. She inquired if someone had erased "Pest Control" off the white board in the Parish Hall, where she had written it. We will need money for that expense which is \$116 a quarter. Susie wondered about the Office Supplies debit, and Tulisha explained that there is no place in the budget for office supplies, and we needed letterhead stationery. Susie suggested the report be accepted.

OLD BUSINESS

Vestry and Warden's report, continued: C.M.Crawford attended a talk by Bob Biehl, Diocesan Treasurer, and he reports some ideas that we might use. One would be a revised report to the Vestry of one page, made by the Finance Committee. That one page would contain all the pertinent information needed by the Vestry. The Treasurer would report to the Financial Committee and they would prepare the one-page report for the Vestry. Biehl suggested a committee of 3, all of whom are Vestry members. C.M. proposes a committee of 3-5, at least 3 of whom are on the Vestry plus the past Senior Warden. John Cole is now on our Finance Committee, he would head it. Robert Oliver said he personally likes to see a list of the checks written each month. Tulisha said that the pages that show the check details from the ledger are given in response to a request from last year. She would suggest just printing the first 4 pages of her report. Then C.M. pointed out a Purchase Order form that would be made out when a

check was written. There followed a discussion of the practicality of that method. Tulisha cautions that the report needs to be one that can be made out of our software, so that whoever volunteers to be Treasurer has that tool at hand. Rev. Susie asked C.M. to once again explain his suggested makeup of the Finance Committee. Ann Gilmore said that she thought it important that the Vestry have the first two pages of the current report as well as pages that lay out the expenses. That would be the next two pages of the current report. C.M. and Robert talked about their ideas as to the job of the Finance Committee versus that of the Vestry. Susie said that a decision on this matter was not likely to be made tonight, so perhaps it could be thought over during the month and brought up again in June. C.M. had another point to share. Bob Biehl said that church credit cards had become a horror story. Tulisha said that we have one credit card with Walmart and it has \$1000 limit. It can be used at Sam's also. However, now that we ask for donations for goods, the card is rarely used. John Cole suggested we keep the card for emergencies and that the Treasurer have it, as she writes the checks. C.M. had two more points. One is that we have an annual audit. Tulisha said we usually do, but it had not taken place yet. Next point was that a Vestry member witness the counting of the collection. Tulisha said that we have forms in a binder for that. On a page, the usher records the checks and the cash, signs it and the Treasurer signs it. Checks that come in the mail, Tulisha logs separately in the binder. Robert said that often there is only one usher, and he asks either Tulisha or someone else to count with him. The ushers do not look at the names on the checks. Susie said it was important to know the Diocese's standards on these matters. There have been embezzlements in all sizes of churches, and these are steps that can prevent that crime. Jack Newsome wonders if this is a "one size fits all" approach, and is it really well suited for our small church. C.M. says that the Diocese is proposing that we look at the path we need to insure that the Vestry is in charge of the finances of the church, not the Treasurer, and not the Finance Committee, unless it is made up of Vestry members. Susie asked if Sue Faulkner's suggestion of a workshop on this matter would be appropriate. C.M. agreed, as did Ann and Robert. Susie will find a time to schedule that workshop and we can move on to other matters.

Sanctuary Roof: Tom Hart has had difficulty reaching roofers. Those who have said they'd come have not done so. Robert Oliver will see about calling and getting bids for the roof and the bell tower.

Columbarium: Libby Bluntzer presented a plan for landscaping the courtyard around the Columbarium. Jane Wieser had asked to help with plantings, etc. there, so Libby began to work on this matter. The first step would be to remove the present sidewalk, which is too narrow and uneven, take out the patio and transplant the fig tree that is there. The bid from Mike Hale for removal of the old walk and construction of a concrete walk was \$5000. Hector gave an itemized bill. His charge would be \$2800 for construction of a flagstone walk. Removal of the old walk would be \$500 and removal of the patio would range from \$500 to \$800, depending

on how much we remove. She had discussed with Hector the matter of water flow where the new sidewalk would meet the walk by the Parish House. He proposed using flag and a flat stone to accommodate that problem. Tom Hart questioned where the tree would be put. Libby said we'd just have to look around the property for an appropriate spot. Its size and roots are a problem in its present location.

The item numbered #4 on Libby's plan was next discussed because it involves masonry. It would seem only wise to have all that work done before doing any planting. Libby proposes that we remove the existing carport and chainlink fence and build a stone wall and archway where the fence is. The wall would be 3' tall and the arch would be at least 6' high and 4' wide. It would provide an inviting way into the courtyard. Robert Oliver suggested the parking slab could be used as the foundation for the wall. It might save money. Libby does not recommend putting a gate.....that might be hard to maintain and present other problems. Hector's bid for the wall and arch was approximately \$4500. John Cole asked about the current city fence ordinance. Sue Faulkner said she could research that. Robert Oliver asked about building just the wall without the arch. Libby said she would imagine it would cut about \$1000 off the bid.

If we think we would not be able to fund the wall and arch, then Libby said item 2 would be the next step. We would take out the plants around the air conditioner, fix its cement pad, create beds and put in low- maintenance plants. Item 3 would be to remove the existing low stone wall in order to make mowing of the area easier. #5 is to leave the chainlink fence around the play yard. It is in good shape and small children don't climb on it. #6 would be to add a stone bench about 5' long in front of the Columbarium, with perhaps additional seating here and there. It would be a sort of "prayer garden" area. #7 would be any additional plants we wanted to add, and #8 would be to create a timeline for the project and ideas on financing each step. Libby believes we have funds available now to do the sidewalk, and if we wished to do the wall and arch also, we could present a drawing and ask for donations. We do have some memorial funds designated for this area. After thanking Libby for her hard work, it was decided that the Vestry would pursue this topic again in June.

4th Street Improvement: There is no news on this subject.

NEW BUSINESS

Pecan Tree Removal: Rev. Susie presented the problem. There are carpenter ants in the Parish Hall. The Terminix man said they are coming up the pecan tree behind the office and entering the roof. The tree touches the roof and is causing some damage. He sprayed the tree and said that would only last till the spray washed away. A space of at least 2' is needed to prevent the ants' passage. Susie suggests we take down the tree. Robert Oliver checked with EMS to see if they had any objection and they did not. He got a quote from H&H Tree Service, which is

bonded and insured. They will take the tree down and carry away the debris for \$1000. After discussion, Ann Gilmore moved that we remove the pecan tree. Tom Hart seconded the motion and all said 'aye'.

Relocation of church office: Last month Rev. Susie had introduced the subject of moving the church office to Hurst House. The receptionist would be in the front bedroom, and the second bedroom would be Rev. Susie's office. The chapel would be in the back bedroom. Is the Vestry comfortable with the move? Robert Oliver said it was a superb idea and all seemed to agree. There followed a discussion of doorknobs that lock and deadbolts. Susie will buy the paint for her office. The present offices in the Parish House will be used as a classroom and a seating area. Perhaps there will be a savings on utilities when we don't have to heat and cool the whole Parish Hall each day.

John Cole asked where the funds for the tree removal would come from. Sue Faulkner said she didn't want them to come from the Building Fund, as we're going to need that money later. Susie pointed out that there is no Repairs Fund. Sue suggested it come from the Capital Campaign. C.M. Crawford so moved, and Ann Gilmore seconded. All said aye to the tree removal being paid for from the Capital Campaign Fund.

Then Robert Oliver moved that the church offices be moved to Hurst House. Sue Faulkner seconded the motion. All said aye. Susie hopes to have it done by Pentecost, so parishioners can tour the new offices following the services and picnic.

Junior Warden's Report: Tom Hart said that he has been putting yellow tape on the steps around the property to increase safety. He has the new doorknob and deadbolt for the church office and will install them.

Senior Warden's Report: Sue Faulkner is looking into chair slides for the chairs we use. She has gone on the internet to search. It is suggested that either Lowes or Home Depot might have them.

Priest's Report: Rev. Susie has a wedding June 1. Clint Hart and Lacy Mezger are marrying at Lacy's parents' house. Millie Williams has agreed to conduct Morning Prayer while Susie is on vacation. That will save us a nice sum of money, so be sure to support Millie. Susie is required to attend an anti-racism training either at the Seminary or in Houston. It is an 8-hour day. She has selected June 5 at the Seminary, so she likely won't come to Lampasas for First Wednesday. May 15 is the Sharing Faith dinner. Janna Hammett is setting up and Mary Halvorsen will host. There has been a good response, and Susie assures us that we can pass if asked a question that is uncomfortable for us to answer. The plans for the Pentecost Picnic on May 19 are moving along nicely. It will be a fun event. We've had a number of visitors, and she named both individuals and couples who have been here. As Bishop Dena Harrison suggested, most of them

fall in the 'retired' category, so we welcome those God sends us. C.M. Crawford asked if there is a membership roster. Tulisha Carson said she and Judy Lansford were discussing that today. Judy would like to put out another pictorial directory, and there is inexpensive software available to do that.

Rev. Susie closed the meeting with a prayer for the good use of leisure.

