

Diocesan Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 8, 2022 4 PM
Via Zoom

Present: Bishop Rob Hirschfeld, Margaret Porter, Lauren Tennant, Tina Pickering, Bengé Ambrogi, Gregory Anderson, Joyce Johnson, Chris Porter, Alanna Van Antwerpen, Katie Clark, Susan Eibner, Barbara Buckley, Kelly Sundberg-Seaman, Kathy Boss, Bill Peterson

The Bishop opened the meeting at 4:03 PM with a prayer (for the first Sunday after Christmas).

Bishop's Time

Bishop Rob solicited the Council's reactions to the Diocesan Convention and the visit of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. Some verbatims: "I was floating for a week after...so excited. He quoted Jimi Hendrix, MLK, and Jesus in the same sentence." "When I preached the following Sunday, I said I want a runway. Friday night felt flat for me...I'm used to being with people...I am a convention nerd, I like hearing all the voices."

Katie Clark spoke about the survey sent out a couple of days after convention, intended to guide planning for 2023. More than half of the respondents attended convocation meetings and find them helpful. Strong majority (78.1%) wants business meeting to be conducted online. For combinations of business and gathering, the top choice was to hold the online business meeting on Friday night, November 3, followed by in-person worship and workshops for whole diocese on Saturday, November 4, which is basically what we did this year. Asked about preference for central/Concord gathering or rotating around the diocese, a strong majority said central. Most liked aspects: Bishop Rob's address was the top, Eucharist, guest speaker from the wider church. What would we miss if it went away: Eucharist, Bishop's address.

Sustainable Development Grant recommendations/allocation *Alanna van Antwerpen*

The SDG subcommittee is part of the Reconciliation Commission. Our Angola effort receives \$5000 in the annual budget, and an additional \$10,000 is allotted to SDG for other global missional priorities. Two applications were received. A \$7500 request for housing funding in Navajoland (a sovereign entity in the US but is a global mission priority) was approved by the committee. The other application, from Exeter (which maintains an ongoing relationship with Cuba) provides \$2500 for water filtration. All members of the Reconciliation Commission support this funding. After a review of applications received and budget allocations for 2022 by Outreach, Sustainability, and Mission Resources, it is determined what funds remain. Our Kids has \$4000 left and Earth Care has \$1713. Next week Reconciliation will meet and consider allocating those.

Gregory Anderson made a motion that: Diocesan Council permit grants from the Our Kids Commission, the Reconciliation Commission, the Earth Care Commission, the Mission Resources Committee, as well as grants for Sustainable Development Goals exceed budget as needed, such that expenses for the all of these grant programs combined does not exceed the total combined budget. Bill Petersen seconded. Bengé pointed out that MRC will have \$19,000 available if needed for end-of-year grants. The motion passed unanimously.

Barbara moved that the available funds Navajoland with the requested \$10,000 and the Cuba water filtration project at the requested \$5000. Joyce seconded. The motion passed.

Updated Compensation Framework

Bengé offered explanations for the 7% increase in cash compensation and housing, based on year-over-year inflation for this month (it is typically done July, June, May, April). Last year, at 4%, we were low. Other dioceses are near 6%. Good news is our health care expense went up 1.7%, lower than inflation. Our congregations don't have to offer the 7% increase, they can stay within the framework, but keeping the increase

too low will have an impact when they seek new clergy: it is important to keep salaries at pace with the market. The framework allows for for congregations that provide health benefit, and for those without health care benefit which has an offset. This can alleviate sticker shock. The framework has to be approved each year.

Barbara, in a parish entering transition, wondered if there is an option for families to be on that insurance plan? Answer: Do whatever you like. The framework is based on employee only, but rates are available for including the family, although cash compensation might have to be reduced. The framework offers the flexibility. Kathy Boss moved acceptance, Joyce seconded, the motion passed.

2022 Campus Ministry Grant Requests: St. Thomas/Dartmouth, St. George's/UNH, PSU

Prior to the meeting, Bengé provided documents for the three campus ministry funding grant requests: St. Thomas, Hanover \$16,000; St. George's, Durham \$8,000, Plymouth \$5500. Our budget line item for these ministries is \$28,000 and requests add up to \$29,500. Bill Petersen moved that we meet this request, exceeding the budget by \$1500, Susan seconded, and the motion carried.

2023 Budget Adjustment *Benge Ambrogi*

When preparing 2023 budget, there was an error in calculating our fair share payment to The Episcopal Church, although TEC also made a mistake. Our actual assessment is \$221,545 so Council needs to correct in the amount of \$20,851, increasing our budget deficit to \$146,000. With \$300,000 in excess cash reserve, we can cover it. As a diocese, we have always met our commitment to TEC. Furthermore, it is a prerequisite to receiving grants. Chris made the motion to amend the 2023 diocesan budget with an increase of \$20,851, Joyce seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Joyce wondered what we have received from TEC. Answer: last year \$40,000, the prior year \$30,000, another year \$18,000. We are applying for \$30,000 on behalf of the Episcopal Mission of Franklin. The Bishop added that the Province 1 budget is offering grants for collaboration among/between diocese, and we are in conversation with VT & ME.

Housing Allowances for Bishop's clergy staff

The Bishop introduced and Council welcomed Lauren Tennent as Financial Officer, following Gloria Gallant's recent retirement. Bengé pointed out that Gloria had been appointed as a member of Finance Committee as Council's appointee, and should be "unappointed." We did so, with acknowledgment of Gloria's service on Finance.

Housing allowance approval for clergy staff is a formality for tax purposes, based on information received from them, as they are responsible for reporting it on their tax returns. We designate these in writing on an annual basis. Susan moved to approved the designated housing allowances as provided by applicable IRS statute pertaining to clergy housing, Barbara seconded, the motion passed.

School for Ministry Update *Kelly Sunberg-Seaman*

Kelly reported that there is much good news, with fourteen students from three dioceses and four faculty, plus Kelly. In the third academic year, the school is growing and will continue to grow. Half of the students are preparing for priesthood, the others to become licensed lay preachers for NH. Kelly asked Council members to let their congregations know about the lay preacher program, a third cohort will start in February for the Spring 2023 term. Not only is this program a practical necessity, is allows us to lift up and honor the gifts of New Hampshire people. Maine sends students, and in fall two from the Diocese of Western Mass. joined the school to finish their formation as priests, deepening knowledge of Anglican liturgy, and gaining a cohort of people to study with. The three seniors have at the school from the beginning, so after the ordinations we will have fully formed priests in NH from the school.

We have found support in the Iona Collaborative at the Seminary of the Southwest, which will help with the strategic planning needed after three years. We get course materials, but also important wisdom and coaching and expertise. Colleagues have monthly deans' meeting, from FL to ID to the West Coast, from across the entire TEC. It's now time for our school to have an advisory board, like our church plants, carry out best practices, and would be helpful for Kelly as dean to ensure we form people in ways that match our diocese. A group will be pulled together in the coming year.

Joyce asked about faculty, wondered if the recently retired vibrant ministers are being utilized. Kelly responded that current faculty are: Kathy George (retired from Yale and Berkley), a preaching coach with preaching lab; Jennie Gould (head of pastoral education at Boston Hospital), leading home-grown clinical pastoral formation; Steve Rugg, with a PhD in New Testament, teaching the Bible course; and Jason Wells teaching Theology and Ethics. Curtis Metzger will begin work on spiritual formation and centering prayer.

Question: How do we market the program, how to people outside NH hear about it? Through communicating with transition ministers from Province 1, conversations with the Commission on Ministry in ME and Wester MA. In our diocese, always promoting among clergy colleagues. Word of mouth. Katie has helped improved presence on the diocesan website, with video. Kathy shared that a parishioner, EfM graduate, is in the preaching program, loves it. Margaret asked if we are training for the vocational diaconate. Answer: our people attend the Province 1 school for deacons, as our school focuses on priestly ministry and licensed lay preaching

Other Business

October 2022 meeting minutes were approved.

Departures from Council (or not): Although Bill is no longer chair of MRC, he replaces Kelly as Lakes Convocation clergy rep. Barbara and Joyce have termed out. Central Convocation lacks a clergy representative.

Next meeting date: January 12, 2023 @ 4 PM

Agenda: updates on state of some missions, Gospel oriented communities, Council retreat

After concluding prayers, the meeting adjourned.

2023 Diocesan Council Meeting Dates (subject to change as necessary):

January 12, February 9, March 9, April 13, May 11, June 8, July 13, August 10, September 14, October 12, November 9, December 14