**Diocesan Council Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, December 14, 2023 4:00 PM**

**Via Zoom**

**Present:** Bishop Rob, Margaret Porter, Emily Drake, Chris Porter, Greg Anderson, Alanna Van Antwerpen, Lauren Tennett, Kathy Boss, Benge Ambrogi, Shelley Kesselman, Richard Davenport, Reed Loy, Alan MacRae, Bill Petersen, Sue Poulin, Mary Sturtevant

**Call to Order and Opening Prayer**  **4:00 PM**

**Bishop’s Time**

The Bishop opened with the prayer for the Fourth Sunday in Advent and a brief reflection. This is a season of ordinations: Joe Rose at St. Andrew’s, New London, now deacon-in-charge at St. John’s, Dunbarton; Aaron Jenkyn at St. John’s Portsmouth; Fred Chisholm at Walpole Congregational Church, now serving St. John’s, Walpole. All were formed by our own School for Ministry. The reflection included the question of how to prepare a mansion for Jesus in our hearts when our the world suffers from turmoil and distress. He quoted from Hymn 661 (William Alexander Percy): “The peace of God it is no peace but strife closed in the sod.” This real peace gives courage, we know God is with us, giving strength and comfort.

**Reallocation of Commission Funds**

Alanna Van Antwerpen reported that Reconciliation Commission met and gratefully accepted surplus monies ($4000) as approved by the Our Kids and the Earh Care Commission. Yesterday to be allocated to the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals allocation for 2023. The total budget for UNSDG is $17,313.

Recommended allocations for applicants:

Rain, Niger/‘Out of the Box’ Outreach Group, St. John’s, Portsmouth $3,950

Head to Head, Inc. in Belle Vue, Haiti/St. Andrew, Hopkinton $6,413

St. Vincent Center, Haiti (SVC)/St. Andrews, New London $6,950

Richard moved approval of the requestion reallocation, Greg seconded.

Discussion: Chris asked how confident we are that monies go where intended? According to Alanna, this is a primary concern of the subcommittee, which relies on the personal congregational relationship with the recipient abroad. Each application is based on a long-term committee relationship or a personal on the ground relationship and is part of the vetting process. Greg moved approval of recommended disbursements to UNSDG applicants, Shelley seconded, the Council approved the motion, with Reed abstaining.

**Mission Resources Committee Request for Reallocation of Funds**

Reed Loy presented the MRC request to reallocate $5,942 of unused Fair Share Adjustment funds to mission grants, as they expect more grant requests by the end of the year. Sue moved approval, Emily seconded. During discussion, Benge reported that the total unspent portion of Fair Share funds was about $13,000 so this request only takes a portion. The Council approved the request.

**Housing Allowances for Clergy on the Bishop’s Staff**

Lauren Tennett presented the request to approve the housing allowances (the resolutions sent to Council in advance. These amounts, to be excluded when filing taxes, were decided by each staff member. Reed moved approval, Beill seconded, there was no discussion. The Bishop abstained. The motion carried.

**Resolution for ChIPs Funding**

Lauren gave a brief overview of this program benefitting children of incarcerated persons by providing Christmas gifts that are taken to the prison for the parents to wrap and give to their children. The diocese receives financial contributions as well as toys. These monies had been kept separately but not rolled forward year to year, so the amount accumulated—resulting in an audit issue. The resolution she presented will establish a sub-fund in the Diocesan Investment Fund (DIF), with certain restrictions—which could be changed as needed. The principal and interest are to be used for funding CHiPs and the Children’s Literary Program. This year’s financials will show it as an expense of $27,914.57, and we have cash reserves to cover the amount. Benge pointed out that next year Prison Concerns/Reconciliation Commission could decide to include some other organization related to prison ministry, and the matter wouldn’t require Council’s approval.

Greg moved passage, Mary seconded. During discussion, Alan asked whether the money is exclusively used for the New Hampshire state prison. Lauren explained that it could go to any of the facilities within the state, and the Bishop affirmed that the Federal prison in Berlin could also be a recipient, provided we know how to effectively donate. The Prison Concerns Committee would gladly receive any email suggestions, and welcome attendance at their meetings to share ideas. The Council passed the resolution as presented.

**Campus Ministry Grants 2023**

Benge explained that all three ministries that our budget supports put in their requests. (Requests and reports provided to Council in advance.) Their efforts have completely rebounded from Covid and they are doing new things at the University of New Hampshire, Dartmouth, and Plymouth State University. The three grant requests total $29,500, $1500 more than budgeted. Council has the authority to overspend the allocated budget. Reed moved approving the grants as requested, Kathy seconded.

During discussion, Council was told that St. George’s rector has been appointed chaplain, a religious point person for UNH faculty and administration—a significant positive change there. At Dartmouth, Egerton House has weekly gatherings that are well attended. Reed pointed out that campus ministries are a source of faith leaders, he served as co-president of campus ministry, and his predecessors in that role also became priests. At PSU, United Campus Ministries is ecumenical, unlike UNH and Dartmouth, which are distinctly Episcopalian. The grant requests were approved.

**Addition of Signatory on Diocesan Accounts**

Benge asked that the Council endorse the addition of Lauren Tennett as a signatory on the diocesan operating account, the Diocesan Advance Fund account, and the surplus designated account. As she is no longer writing checks—Lisa Laughy has taken on that responsibility—she can now be added to the accounts. This allows greater flexibility whenever Benge or Tina aren’t around to sign for amounts over $5000, or two signatories are required. This measure has also been approved by the Trustees. Alan moved approval, Sue seconded, the motion carried unanimously.

**Other Business**

Acceptance of results of the 2022 diocesan audit was deferred to a future meeting.

Chris moved approval of the October 2023 meeting minutes, Emily seconded, the motion passed.

After concluding prayers, the meeting was adjourned.

*Respectfully submitted,*

Margaret Porter

Moderator/Secretary

**2024 Diocesan Council Meeting Dates** (subject to change or cancellation as necessary):

Jan 11, Feb 8, Mar 14, Apr 11, May 9, Jun 13, Jul 11, Aug 8, Sep 12, Oct 10, Nov 14, Dec 12