

St. John's Episcopal Church

Vestry/Junta Parroquial

January 23, 2024

7:00 pm

Present at the meeting were Mother Minerva Camarena Skeith, Deacon Victoria Mason, Vestry Members Maria Caballero, Sandra Ward, Mary Anne O'Brien, Kevin Flegal, Henry Welles, Patricia Mata, and Carlos Lugo (by Zoom), and Treasurer Noreen McMahan. Prospective Vestry members Brian McGiverin, Sarahi Giron, and Mary Cree (who arrived at 7:20) were also present.

- I. To expedite the number of issues on the agenda, Mother Minerva proposed waiving the Bible Study for this meeting and changing the order of business to accommodate the discussion of the budget and other agenda items. There was no objection.
- II. New business/Nuevo Negocio:
 - A. Vestry Member Nominees for 2024
Mother Minerva listed the nominees for vestry: Brian McGiverin, Sarahi Giron, and Mary Cree. A motion was made to accept this slate of new vestry members. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.
 - B. New Clerk for 2024
Mother Minerva asked for any volunteers willing to serve as vestry clerk. There were no volunteers. Mother Minerva suggested asking Mary Cree, who was not present at that moment, but was on the slate for the 2024 vestry. There was no objection.
 - C. Vestry Retreat Date:
Mother Minerva brought up the previous discussion of a date for the vestry retreat. Proposed retreat dates were February 18 – also the date for the bishop's visit – or February 25. Upon further discussion, vestry members expressed a preference for Sunday February 25 from 3:00 pm until 6:00 pm. There were no objections.
- III. Old Business

A. Nominees for Diocesan Council

Mother Minerva: Carlos Lugo, Kay Harry, Alfonso Hernandez, and Catherine Turner have expressed interest in attending Diocesan Council as delegates. [Sandra Ward would also attend (as president of DOK?)] Henry Welles moved to accept these four as delegates for the Diocesan Council. Motion was seconded and approved without unanimously.

B. Update on partnership with the City of Austin – Parks and Recreation

Mother Minerva: The City of Austin wants to do a survey of the church land to be used for a partnership with the city and St. John's for a city park. The city wants to know how large a buffer the church wants to create between the church parking lot and the proposed park. Scott Hiers and Hal Hughes have indicated that a 10-foot buffer would be sufficient.

There is also the issue of whether to include the community garden as part of the city park or to retain the community garden within the land controlled by the church. The more land the city controls, the more they would pay the church for the use of the land. However, the community garden is a ministry of the church, and the St. John's Community wants to continue using the garden land in a way which supports/continues the ministry of the Community Garden. Hal Hughes and Scott Hiers, representing the Community Garden, want to speak with the city to determine the pluses and minuses of including the Community Garden as part of the proposed city park. They have a list of specific questions to ask the city regarding the community garden.

Question:

Does the vestry approve allowing Hal Hughes and Scott Hiers to meet with the city on behalf of the Community Garden organization and report back to the vestry with recommendations on this matter? Approved without objection.

At this point, Patricia Mata and Mary Cree, having arrived late, introduced themselves.

IV. Adoption of the Minutes

- A. A motion was made to adopt the November minutes with a small grammatical correction. This was seconded and passed unanimously.

B. December Minutes: A motion was made and seconded to adopt the December Minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

V. Senior Warden

A. Senior Warden Maria Caballero noted that the current vestry of the day schedule ends at the end of this month and the new senior warden will need to create a new schedule for vestry member of the day.

B. Mother Minerva announced that she is appointing Brian McGiverin as the new Senior Warden for 2024.

C. Mother Minerva also noted that the 2024 Vestry will need to elect a Junior Warden. The new vestry will meet immediately after the annual parish meeting to elect the Junior Warden.

D. Mother Minerva asked for a volunteer for clerk of the vestry. Mary Cree offered to serve as clerk of the vestry. Mary was named clerk of the vestry by mutual agreement.

VI. Treasurer's Report and Review of Proposed Budget

A. The following changes were discussed and proposed for the 2024 budget:

1) Outreach budget reduced from \$7000 to \$5000.

2) Kitchen Supplies reduced from \$1500 to \$1200.

3) Bulletin Printing reduced to \$300.

4) Communication/Advertising/Subscriptions increased to \$1000.

5) Vestry Expenses reduced to \$500.

6) Janitorial Services reduced to \$5000.

7) Office Furniture and Furniture Maintenance reduced to \$0.

Furniture maintenance actual was \$0 for previous years and the need for new Office Furniture will need to be assessed as Parish Hall needs become clear.

B. With the proposed changes, the projected budget shortfall of \$60, 353 would be reduced to \$51,063.

C. The St. John's Operating Fund (cash on hand January 1, 2024) is \$69, 608.61. The 2024 Budget is in deficit, but there is currently cash in the operating budget (the starting balance this year) sufficient to make up this shortfall if needed – leaving \$18, 545 in the operating budget. This is separate from the restricted funds in savings of about \$130k, which we are not using.

- D. We can adopt the deficit budget now with the plan to revisit the budget in June 2024, when we have more information regarding funding sources such as the possible leasing agreement, and expenses such as the building maintenance.
- E. Fundraising: A motion was made to increase the goal for the annual fundraiser (St. John's Festival) from \$2000 to \$4000. There was general agreement that we can have a church picnic for fun, but we want to hold the St. John's Festival to raise money.
- VII. Deacon's Report:
Deacon Victoria Mason reports that her ministry at St. John's is racial and social justice and assisting in liturgical planning and implementation. Voter engagement is a major focus of this year's racial and social justice ministry.
- VIII. Rector's Report:
Mother Minerva reports that as our budget planning nears completion, she is looking forward to ministering with the congregation individually and through worship and other church ministries.
- At this point, Mother Minerva and Deacon Victoria left the meeting, and vestry members remained to consider remaining business.
- IX. Motion to increase the rector's compensation by \$2101.22, a 3% Cost of Living raise. Motion passed.
- X. Motion to accept the budget. Motion was seconded and passed.