

Episcopal Diocese of Montana
Minutes of Diocesan Council Zoom Media Meeting
March 12, 2022

The Diocesan Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Montana held a video meeting via Zoom Media, beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 12, 2022.

Attendance. Council members present were: The Rt. Rev. Marty Stebbins, The Rev. Stephen Day, Rick Harden, Hank Tuell, Keith Kuhn, Leo Schuman, Jean Buer-Mott, The Rev. Heidi Jones-Magee, The Rev. Jaime Leonard, Hope Stockwell, The Very Rev. Scott Anderson and The Rev. Randy Pendergraft. Council member, The Rev. Mary Alice Jones, was absent. Also in attendance were Mark Dvarishkis, Diocesan Treasurer; Barb Hagen, Canon for Administration and Finance; and Gayle Gallik Archey, Diocesan Secretary.

Call to Order / Adoption of Agenda. With a quorum participating, Bishop Marty opened the meeting with prayer. Heidi Jones-Magee led an African Bible Study by reading verses 42-43 from the 10th chapter of Mark, then asked, “What is God calling you or the Church to do or to be?” The agenda, as previously distributed, was accepted.

Presentation by Dave Ashby from Stockman Wealth Management. Dave Ashby joined the meeting and provided Council members with an overview of Stockman’s role as the new Investment Portfolio Manager for the Diocese, including the change from the prior investment firm, RBC Wealth Management. Dave stated Charles Schwab acts as custodian of the portfolio, while Stockman manages the funds in-house. Stockman is adhering to the Diocesan Investment Policy, including the “Do Not Buy” list. Dave said since Stockman took over in January 2022, the value of the Diocesan portfolio was down 6.78% at the end of February 2022 due to uncertainty in the global markets.

OLD BUSINESS - REQUIRES VOTE.

Short Term Investing Strategy for Reserve Funds. It is the recommendation of the Foundation Board to establish a short-term investing strategy for reserve funds. Keith Kuhn stated the Diocese will need \$117,000 from reserve funds for this year’s budget. We need to be cognizant that these funds come from short-term investments, not long term investments. Further, it might be useful to have funds for immediate use held in-between long term and short term investments. Upon motion duly made by Heidi Jones Magee and seconded by Rick Harden, Council members voted to table this matter until Council’s next meeting in May 2022.

Minutes of January 8, 2022 Meeting. Upon motion duly made by Rick Harden and seconded by Stephen Day, the Minutes of the January 8, 2022 Diocesan Council meeting were approved as presented.

Glasgow Farmland Sale. Mark Dvarishkis stated the 600 acres of real property the Diocese owns north of Glasgow is currently under contract for \$530,000. The sale should close by the end of March 2022. This transaction has been approved by the Standing Committee.

Jordan Land Sale. Mark Dvarishkis announced the 5-acre parcel of real property the Diocese owns near Jordan has been sold to Clint Thomas for \$1,500. Mr. Thomas owns adjacent land, so the limited access of the property is not an issue for him. The Standing Committee has approved this sale.

Normally proceeds from the sale of real properties would go into the Faber Fund Account. However, Bishop Marty suggests the funds from the Glasgow and Jordan land sales (up to \$400,000) be used to re-start St. Mark's Church in Havre, more specifically to hire a church planter for the next 3 years. The hope is to commence the Havre re-start by this summer (2022). Since the Glasgow land sale has not yet closed, Council will delay making a decision with respect to the disbursement of the sales proceeds from the two properties until their May meeting.

The Episcopal Church Relief Funds. Council members revisited ideas of how best to use the \$40,000.00 relief money the Diocese received from The Episcopal Church ("TEC"). The money comes with no restrictions, except to use the funds within the next 12 months, and provide TEC an expenditure report. In January, Council members discussed the following projects for use of the money: (1) Re-start of St. Mark's Church in Havre, (2) Solar roof on Diocesan House, or (3) Bathroom for St. Andrew's Church in Philipsburg. Additional projects to be considered include (1) Monetary support for Deacons in their ministry; and (2) Provide assistance to Indigenous persons with their medical debt. Upon motion duly made by Leo Schuman and seconded by Stephen Day, Council voted to earmark \$1000 from the TEC Relief Funds for an Indigenous Committee, as adopted at Diocesan Convention last fall. Bishop Marty will solicit members for this committee. Council members discussed the possibility of convening a special meeting for the sole purpose of discussing how to spend TEC Relief Funds. A Doodle Poll will be taken to determine a day/time for this special meeting in April. Upon motion made by Rick Harden and seconded by Hank Tuell, it was unanimously agreed to table discussion regarding ways to spend the remaining \$39,000 of TEC Relief Funds.

Proposed Changes to Canon 11: Congregations. Council members reviewed a report from the Canons and Constitution Subcommittee (comprised of Heidi Jones Magee, Leo Schuman, Brad Foster, Laura Catlin, Charlie Knuth and Barb Hagen). The subcommittee proposes the following changes to Canon 11 of the Diocesan Canons:

*** Add the following language to Section 1. "Relationship to the Diocese" of CANON 11: "CONGREGATIONS."

In accordance with The Episcopal Church Canon 6, every congregation shall be required to file a parochial report by March 1 each year.

If a congregation fails to comply with this canonical deadline, the clergy and laity in the congregation will be ineligible to serve on any Diocesan Committee for the first year of noncompliance. With a second consecutive year of noncompliance, the clergy and laity in the congregation will lose voice and vote at Diocesan Convention, and in a third consecutive year of noncompliance, the church will begin discussion with the Bishop, Diocesan Council, and Standing Committee regarding impaired congregation status.

The Diocesan Convention may allow voice and vote of clergy and laity in a congregation only after it determines that the failure to meet the canonical deadline was due to conditions beyond the control of the clergy and members of the congregation.

*** Section 4. "Status." Change to Section 3 to correct numbering."

Proposed Changes to Canon 20: Of Business Methods in Church Affairs.

The Canons and Constitution Subcommittee further proposes the following change to Canon 20 of the Diocesan Canons:

*** Add the following language to Paragraph f of Section 1. of CANON 20: "OF BUSINESS METHODS IN CHURCH AFFAIRS." "

In accordance with The Episcopal Church Canon 7, every congregation shall be required to file an audit with the Ecclesiastical authority no later than September 1 each year.

If a congregation fails to comply with this canonical deadline, the clergy and laity in the congregation will be ineligible to serve on any Diocesan Committee for the first year of noncompliance. With a second consecutive year of noncompliance, the clergy and laity in the congregation will lose voice and vote at Diocesan Convention, and in a third consecutive year of noncompliance, the church will begin discussion with the Bishop, Diocesan Council, and Standing Committee regarding impaired congregation status.

The Diocesan Convention may allow voice and vote to clergy and laity in a congregation only after it determines that the failure to meet the canonical deadline was due to conditions beyond the control of the clergy and members of the congregation.

Upon motion duly made by Heidi Jones-Magee and seconded by Leo Schuman, the changes to both Canon 11 and Canon 20 of the Diocesan Canons were unanimously approved. The proposed Canon changes will next be presented to Diocesan Convention in October for a vote of the Convention delegation.

OLD BUSINESS - RECEIVE INFORMATION.

Safeguarding Policies. Stephen Day, member of the subcommittee tasked with updating the Safeguarding Policies, presented a draft Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth, and a draft Policy for the Protection of Adults. Stephen stated the 2 policies are both working documents, and are being adjusted as needed to find best options. There is a need to be trained, but the training cannot be so burdensome and time-consuming that people don't want to participate. Scott Anderson said St. Peter's Cathedral is willing to host periodic training for Safeguarding.

2021 Year End Financial Statement. Council members reviewed and acknowledged receipt of the Diocesan financial statements as of December 31, 2021. Barb Hagen stated at year-end 2021, investments were up, and there wasn't a need to use any reserve funds. Additionally, all assessment payments were received in a timely manner.

Finance Department Minutes. Council acknowledged receipt of Minutes from the Department of Finance meetings held January 6, 2022 and March 3, 2022.

Quarterly Reports from Churches with Abatements. Council members reviewed 4th Quarter 2021 Financial Summaries from the five Churches receiving abatements in 2021. It was noted only two Churches are receiving abatements in 2022.

Long Term Financial Health of the Diocese. On behalf of the Finance subcommittee, Keith Kuhn and Mark Dvarishkis spoke of a proposed plan to ensure the long term financial health of our Diocese. The plan will (1) Restructure the financial statements to show camp salaries as a part of the Camp Marshall budget; (2) Compile a Summary Budget Statement to include the past 2 years and future 2 years; and (3) Formulate a schedule that highlights available resources. The plan for long term financial health will clarify the 3 areas of the Diocesan Budget: Administration, Program and Camp Marshall. Recommendations for a proposed plan will be presented to Council at their June 11, 2022 meeting.

Council member, Keith Kuhn, had to leave the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS - REQUIRES VOTE.

Faber Fund Application from St. Andrews - Philipsburg. Council members reviewed a Faber Fund Application in the amount of \$5,000, submitted by Linda Graham on behalf of St. Andrew's in Philipsburg. By making application for the grant, Diocesan Council will allow St. Andrew's to receive an abatement from their Diocesan assessment for 2022. The requested funds will be used for a handicapped parking pad and sidewalk, to include dirt work, cement and signage. The Finance Department recommends approval of this grant. Upon motion made by Stephen Day and seconded by Rick Harden, Council unanimously approved St. Andrew's application.

Deacons' Housing Allowances. Upon motion duly made by Stephen Day and seconded by Leo Schuman, the following housing allowances were unanimously approved.

The Diocesan Council on March 12, 2022 after discussing the amount to be paid to The Ven. Dorcie Dvarishkis, as a parsonage allowance, on motion duly made and seconded, adopted the following resolution:

Whereas, The Ven. Dorcie Dvarishkis is employed as a minister of The Episcopal Diocese of Montana, which does not provide a residence for her, the Council resolves that of the total compensation of \$300 to be paid to The Ven. Dorcie Dvarishkis from April 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022, that \$300 be designated as a parsonage allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

Although Council approved a \$300 parsonage allowance for The Rev. Connie Campbell Pearson on November 13, 2021, Connie does not need the allowance as Gethsemane Church in Manhattan will pay her housing allowance. Therefore, the Deacon's Housing Allowance for The Rev. Connie Campbell Pearson approved November 13, 2021 is no longer in effect.

St. James - Dillon. Upon motion made by Rick Harden and seconded by Stephen Day, Council affirmed a Doodle Poll previously taken wherein Council members agreed to release St. James from Impaired Congregation status.

St. Patrick's - Bigfork. Upon motion made by Rick Harden and seconded by Leo Schuman, Council members affirmed a Doodle Poll previously taken wherein they voted unanimously to allow Tom Cahill, the Sr. Warden at St. Patricks, to serve another year in said capacity.

NEW BUSINESS - RECEIVE INFORMATION.

Vision Work. On-going work with respect to the Vision of our Diocese has been temporarily tabled by Bishop Marty.

Camp Marshall. Bishop Marty announced that Camp Marshall Site Manager, Mark Clemow, is no longer under the employ of the Diocese. A waterfront manager has been hired for this summer. A full camping season is anticipated this year. A donor has offered to pay camper registration fees this summer.

Volunteers for Insurance Review Team. Bishop Marty is seeking volunteers to serve on an insurance review team. Is there a member of your congregation with expertise in the insurance world?

Personal Update from Bishop Marty. The Bishop will resume her travel schedule. This week, Bishop Marty will travel to the House of Bishop's meeting. In May, she will attend "Baby Bishop's School." Diocesan Convention is scheduled for October in Missoula. Bishop Marty will also attend the Lambeth Conference.

Upcoming Diocesan Council Meeting Dates for 2022.

April 7 - via Zoom (TEC Relief funds)

May 7 - via Zoom

June 11 - In person (budget meeting)

August 20 - via Zoom

October 15 - (New member orientation / possible extra Council meeting)

November 12 - via Zoom (Assessment abatement for 2023)

Adjournment. Upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m. with prayer lead by Bishop Marty.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle Gallik Archey, Diocesan Secretary