

**St. Alban's Parish, Washington, D.C.**  
**Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of November 13, 2007**

**Present:** Scott A. Benhase, Rector; Jim Sottile, Junior Warden; Nathalie Bramson, Bill Edgar, Marc Fetterman, Kammie Hedges, Susan Morris, Jon Sawyer; Mark Shima, Bob Woolfolk, Vestry; Barbara Manard, Bill Hall, Diocesan Delegates; Ron Hicks, Parish Verger; Mary Jane Shackelford, WSA Board Rep.; Chris Holmes, Treasurer; Andrea Farr, Secretary.

**Guests:** Bob Smith

**Opening Prayer**

Scott Benhase called the meeting to order at approximately 6:35 pm, following dinner, and offered an opening prayer.

**Minutes of previous meetings**

The minutes from the October meeting will be available at the December Vestry meeting. The minutes from the May through August 2007 Vestry meetings have been made available on the parish website. Marc Fetterman offered to assist the former parish secretary in completing the outstanding minutes (February, March and April 2007).

**Treasurer's Report**

Chris Holmes presented his report and discussed some of the highlights. He noted that there had been a slight increase in the deficit. Some of the trend was due to timing of certain scheduled payments. If the trend persists, however, the projected deficit for the year is will be in the range of \$20,000 - \$25,000 (instead of the \$10,000 - \$20,000 range suggested last month).

The endowment fund has changed little since last month. Because the building project is nearly complete and in light of projections of transformational grant expenditures, the Finance Committee is reviewing cash flow needs in order to do some planning. The Finance Committee will hold monthly meetings.

The reserve fund was approximately \$450,000 at the beginning of 2007 and was \$527,000 through the end of October. The October figure reflects an increase of approximately \$70,000, due in part to the policy of putting 90 percent of undesignated bequests in the reserve fund.

Jim Sottile reported that a resolution would be presented to the Vestry at the December meeting to expand the role of the Finance Committee with respect to the endowment.

Susan Morris reported that the WSA met and will be submitting its contribution of \$7,500. Mary Jane Schackelford also suggested that the WSA's Capital Campaign contribution would be forthcoming also.

Concern was expressed concerning the size of the miscellaneous designated offering. Chris noted that much of the fund consisted of moneys that pass through the operating budget, much like a restricted gift.

The Vestry asked what was being done to attempt to bring the parish in on budget for the year. Scott Benhase reported that he had stopped all discretionary spending. Chris noted that approximately \$10,000 of the overage was due to healthcare elections and costs associated with Norman's retirement.

**Motion:** Bob Woolfolk moved to receive the Treasurer's Report.

Nathalie Bramson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Scott Benhase reported on behalf of Tim Boggs that pledges are coming in and are somewhat ahead compared to last year's pledges for the same individuals.

### **Junior Warden's Report**

1. *Outdoor painting.* Jim Sottile reported that the outdoor painting project has been completed.
2. *Satterlee Hall bathrooms.* The authorized work on the bathrooms in Satterlee Hall has been completed. The Property Committee will come to the Vestry in the New Year with a proposal for renovating the handicapped bathroom in Satterlee Hall.
3. *Stone House assessment.* Next week the Stone House Group will provide the Property Committee with a "hot list" of items needing immediate attention. The draft report should be released in December, with the final report issued in January.
4. *Personnel policy.* There was nothing to report at this time.

Jim noted that Stone House has suggested that St. Alban's consider replacing the semi-annual maintenance inspection regime currently in place with a full-service maintenance service. The Property Committee will come to the Vestry with a proposal in this regard, probably at the December meeting.

### **Senior Warden's Report**

Kate Bouvé was not at the meeting but Jim Sottile addressed, on her behalf, the draft "seconds" circulated at the meeting. The "Seconds" is a one page summary of the highlights of the previous Vestry meeting that is to be issued quickly after the meeting and posted in the Narthex. Jim asked for comments on the format. The Vestry expressed its approval for both the idea and the format.

Kate also asked Jim to mention greater Vestry involvement in the greeting ministry. This idea came up during MMR. The names of Vestry members will be placed on a rota for this.

It was also noted that another outcome of the MMR was the intention to schedule lunches for Vestry, Wardens and parishioners.

The Vestry asked whether there was a communications committee that had approved the "Seconds" concept. It was noted that there had been a communications committee and it had been a committee of the Vestry, but that it had effectively dissolved with the end of the term of service of the Vestry member who chaired the committee. There was general agreement that such a committee should be brought back.

**Motion:** Jim Sottile moved to appoint Nathalie Bramson to develop a charter for a committee of the Vestry on communications and a roster of initial members and to report back to the Vestry.

Jon Sawyer seconded the motion and the motion carried.

### **Rector's Report**

Scott Benhase circulated two pages showing the staff recommendations concerning two sign designs created by Atlantic Sign Works. The first consists of a sign that sits on two posts and a copy is to be located in each of three places: near the lych gate, parallel to Wisconsin Avenue; in front of Nourse Hall, next to the South Road entrance, at a 45 degree angle; and on the south corner of front of the property, at a 45 degree angle. The second is for six signs identifying certain buildings, halls and the Opportunity Shop. The total projected cost for the signs, installed, is within the budget established by the Vestry.

Discussion of the samples followed. Marc Fetterman indicated that the designs were probably not within code requirements. Scott suggested that Marc talk to Jane Volkema concerning code restrictions. Scott noted that once the Vestry approves a design it will have to be approved by a number of permitting authorities.

The Vestry asked if a sample of the PVC covering for the posts, in both white and black, and samples showing the possible colors could be brought to the church for parishioners to view.

**Action:** Scott will ask the sign company to provide samples of the PVC post covering and swatches.

There was some discussion regarding when the signage would be ready and what impact paying for the project would have on the budget. Chris Holmes noted that the cost of the signs could be spread out over time because signs will last for some time.

Erin Hensley will be ordained a deacon on November 15. The parish is giving her a combined Book of Common Prayer and hymnal.

Margot Critchfield's last Sunday will be December 23<sup>rd</sup>. We are still looking for the chair of the Hospitality Commission and the head of the subcommittee for receptions, but require someone to organize a farewell reception in the meantime. Nathalie Bramson agreed to organize the event.

Scott reported that St. Albans School had given \$10,000 to the parish in thanks for hospitality in allowing the school to use the Warner Rectory for a class.

### **Old Business**

The status of the effort to install a handicap accessible ramp for the Church is unchanged.

Scott Benhase and Mark Shima spoke and concluded that the most effective way to move discussion forward would be for Scott to meet with Steve Rippe alone. Scott is scheduling the meeting and hopes to reach an understanding in time for the December Vestry meeting.

Bob Smith reported that the St. Alban's/Cathedral group is drafting a covenant covering a few items. The group's discussion has touched on four general issues: 1) boundary with respect to activities; 2) reciprocity; 3) keeping St. Alban's informed of Congregation's status; and 4) proposed joint activities.

The most contentious issue has been the boundary between the function of St. Alban's Parish and the Cathedral. The Cathedral recently created a forum that meets from 10 am – 11 am, and as a result has changed service times to mirror those of the parish. The Chapter failed to consult with St. Alban's for making these changes, and the vicar has apologized for not doing so ahead of time.

Bob indicated that the group hoped to have a semi final document for the Vestry in time for the February or March meeting.

The Vestry discussed the status of the relationship between the parish and the Cathedral. It was noted that the Cathedral will hold a baptism with a public service on January 6. The Vestry asked whether the members of the Cathedral Congregation were somehow distinguished from everyone else. It was reported that generally the answer to that question was "no", although there were some who attended who were given special buttons.

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for December 11.

At the previous Vestry meeting concern had been expressed regarding the fundraising that had been done to fund the choir trip to Italy. It was noted as a point of clarification that the concern was not so much with the choir engaging in fundraising. Rather, the issue was the apparent absence of controls on fundraising done at the Church. The Vestry expressed concern regarding the absence of Vestry oversight over group fundraising. The Vestry suggested that there should be procedures put into place for fundraising to ensure appropriate fundraising objectives. It was noted that the Stewardship Commission will develop a policy regarding fundraising and present the policy to the Vestry for approval. Finally, it was suggested that anyone with views on this subject put them in an e-mail to Alex Netchvolodof.

Compline began just after 8 pm.

**Executive Session**

The Vestry did not go into Executive Session.

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** At 8:05 pm Jon Sawyer moved to adjourn.

Bob Woolfolk seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Andrea F. Farr, Secretary.