

St. Alban's Parish, Washington, D.C.
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of March 18, 2008

Scott Benhase, Rector; Ron Hicks, Parish Verger; Kate Bouvé, Senior Warden; James Sottile, Junior Warden; Nathalie Bramson, Bill Edgar, Marc Fetterman, Kammie Hedges, Keith Jones, Danette Kauffman, Sam Lewis, Susan Morris, Jon Sawyer, Mark Shima, Bob Woolfolk, Vestry; Chase Felker and Colin Mahaffey, youth Reps; Bill Hall, Barbara Manard, Diocesan Delegates; Andrea Farr, Secretary.

Guests: Gordon Avery

Opening Prayer

At 6:35 pm Scott Benhase called the meeting to order and offered an opening prayer.

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the February meeting were not available. The minutes for the February and March meetings will be available at the April Vestry meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Jim Sottile presented the Treasurer's Report in Chris Holmes's absence. Jim reported that there were variances from the budget—some positive and some negative—but that overall there were no major variances. The negative variance with respect to designated income occurred because of a temporary delay in an event that precipitates a scheduled payment. The variance with respect to clergy compensation was the result of a timing issue. Pledging is running about 5 percent below budget. The parish received a refund from the D.C. government as a result of an overstated Workers' Compensation assessment.

The Vestry expressed some concern with respect to certain negative trends. Scott Benhase reported that some of the negative variance occurred because certain payments that historically arrived in February had come in March. The Vestry suggested that information regarding total pledges and the budget should be published. Scott Benhase reported that the budget and pledging information would be published in the next *Chronicle*. It was suggested that the budget be put on the parish website. The Vestry commented that it is important that the parish understand that the balanced budget in 2007 occurred in part because of certain one-time gifts, such as the gift from the Diocese of North Carolina in connection with Erin Hensley. Scott Benhase reported that there would be staff reductions in order to have a balanced budget for 2008.

Motion: Nathalie Bramson moved that the Vestry approve the Treasurer's Report.

The motion was seconded by Bob Woolfolk and carried.

Special Order of Business: Proposed by-law changes

The Vestry considered two written proposals concerning amendments to the by-laws. Amendments approved by the two-thirds of the Vestry will be presented to the parish for consideration at the Annual Meeting.

Gordon Avery spoke on behalf of the By-law Committee concerning the first proposal. The By-law Committee endeavored to revise the process by which the parish elects the Senior and Junior Wardens as set forth in Article IV of the by-laws. The parish's current practice of having two candidates for Senior Warden with the person receiving fewer votes appointed Junior Warden meant that the Nominating Committee effectively selected the Junior Warden. A draft of the proposed changes was forwarded to the Vestry in advance of the meeting.

Motion: Sam Lewis moved to approve the revisions.

The motion was seconded by Bob Woolfolk. A discussion of the changes to Wardens election procedures as reflected in the by-laws followed. The Vestry discussed the possibility of establishing a two-year term for the Wardens. Gordon suggested that the length of the Wardens terms should not differ from that of the Vestry. The selection of the Nominating Committee, as well as the selection of its chairperson, was discussed. The Vestry considered changes to limits on the number of consecutive terms of service as well as the length of time between terms of service.

Several amendments were offered to the proposed by-law changes.

Motion: Bill Edgar made motions for four changes to the proposed by-laws:

1. Section 1: Delete language added to end of section. Seconded by Susan Morris.

Sam Lewis offered, Kammie Hedges seconded, and Bill Edgar accepted, a friendly amendment that would leave the proposed language in but add "Senior" after "for" and before "Warden." Bob Woolfolk called the question and the motion carried. Accordingly, the final sentence in Section 1 reads as follows: "Candidates for Senior Warden must have completed at least two years of Vestry service either currently or in the past."

2. Section 3: Revise the second sentence of the proposed Section 3 as follows: "At each election, two candidates will be presented for both Junior Warden and Senior Warden, ~~recognizing that the two offices have different responsibilities and somewhat different qualifications.~~" Susan Morris seconded the motion. Jon Sawyer called the question and the amendment carried.
3. Section 3: Where the proposed revision reads "after which a lapse of four years" change "four" to "three." The amendment was seconded by Jon Sawyer.

Keith Jones offered, and Bill Edgar accepted, a friendly amendment that changed "three" to "six."

Danette Kauffman offered a friendly amendment to make it clear that a former Warden could run for the Vestry. Bill Edgar noted that because such action was not prohibited in the by-laws and because the restrictive language is limited to “these offices,” the friendly amendment was unnecessary.

Nathalie Bramson offered, and Bill Edgar accepted, a friendly amendment to substitute “an interval” for “a lapse.” Accordingly, the amendment before the Vestry read “after which an interval of six years.”

Jon Sawyer called the question and the motion carried.

4. Section 6.a.: return language struck from this section. Nathalie Bramson seconded the motion. Susan Morris called the question. The amendment to the proposed revision did not carry.

Motion: Danette Kauffman made motions for two amendments to the proposed revisions:

1. Section 6: To the first line, replace “or in his/her absence” with “and” as follows: “At the stated meeting of the Vestry in January, the Rector, ~~or in his/her absence~~ and the Senior Warden”. Jon Sawyer seconded the motion.

Nathalie Bramson offered and Dani accepted a friendly amendment changing “and the Senior Warden” to read “and both Wardens.” Accordingly, the first part of the first sentence in Section 6 reads as follows: “At the stated meeting of the Vestry in January, the Rector and both Wardens”.

Bob Woolfolk called the question and the amendment carried.

2. Section 1: on the third line, change “21st birthday” to “18th birthday.” Bob Woolfolk seconded the motion. The question was called and the amendment approved.

Motion: Mark Shima made a motion to revise Section 6 so that the chair of the nominating committee would be designated by the Rector and both Wardens, similar to the procedure for appointing the nominating committee. Accordingly, the passage after the added language would be revised as follows: “The Rector and both Wardens, ~~or the Senior Warden in the Rector’s absence~~, will...” Bob Woolfolk seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Motion: Jon Sawyer moved to accept the revisions to the by-laws, as amended. Sam Lewis seconded the motion. Bob Woolfolk called the question and the motion carried.

Barbara Manard presented the second written amendment proposal. Barbara suggested that, absent a good reason, the parish’s procedures for the appointment of assistant clergy should be consistent with Diocesan Canons and to that end presented a proposed

amendment to Article III (“The Vestry”), Section 4 (“Selection of Rector and Hiring of Assistant Clergy and Staff”) of the by-laws.

Discussion of the proposal as well as the need for the change followed. The Vestry noted that the By-law Committee considered changing the current procedures but after careful consideration and consultation with Paul Cooney concluded that no changes were needed. It was noted that the Vestry’s control over the budget means that it has the power to eliminate the salaries and, thus, the positions of assistant clergy selected according to the current procedures that do not meet with its approval. Accordingly, the Vestry has time to refer the proposal to a committee.

Motion: Sam Lewis moved to approve the proposed amendment to Article III, Section 4 of the by-laws.

Danette Kauffman seconded the motion. Following additional discussion the question was called and the motion carried.

Junior Warden’s Report

Jim Sottile’s report addressed two topics:

1. *Stone House Report.* The Stone House Group has noted that the Satterlee Hall HVAC needs to be replaced. Stone House estimates that the cost of replacing the system and making any associated renovations will be approximately \$600,000. The Property Committee has asked Stone House to provide the following figures:

- i. An estimate of the cost of maintaining the failing system for five years--money that will not be recovered when the system finally is replaced; and
- ii. An estimate for replacing the HVAC without making any of the associated renovations.

Stone House’s initial estimates of the cost of maintaining the current system for five years is \$100,000. Jim noted that replacing the HVAC system without making associated renovations could save money in the short term but risks necessitating additional expenditures should the renovations be made at a later date. The Property Committee expects to digest the Report and make recommendations to the Vestry at the next Vestry meeting.

The Vestry suggested that it would be helpful to know how much the parish has spent on maintaining the system for the past five years. Jim responded that that would be helpful to know and that it would also be helpful to know the potential cost of responding to a catastrophic failure. Jim also stated that he will circulate the report that was issued 10 years ago.

The Vestry asked whether providing the additional information we have requested will increase the cost of the study. Jim responded that it would not. It was asked whether this

matter should be discussed at the Planning Weekend. Scott Benhase responded that that decision should be left to the participants.

The Vestry suggested that the company performing the parish maintenance provide a second opinion concerning the costs.

2. *St Alban's Employee Handbook*. A draft has been provided for comment. The revisions focus on the following:

- i. Bringing the handbook into compliance with D.C. and Federal law, particularly with respect to family and military leave requirements; and
- ii. Removing issues that are not relevant to the parish.

Between now and the next Vestry meeting comments should be forwarded to Scott, Kate and Jim. As a general matter, final decisions with respect to the handbook rest with the Rector and Wardens.

Senior Warden's Report

Kate Bouvé reported on the activities of the committee organizing the Parish Planning Weekend (May 30- June 1). Royster Hedgepath will be the facilitator, and is waiving his fee. Approximately 90 names are under consideration. Our original target was 40 participants, but Royster thinks we can accommodate 50. Kate noted that the entire group must fit in Nourse Hall or Satterlee Hall. Once the list is finalized the Committee will contact those to be invited and ask if they can make the necessary commitment.

It was suggested that those invited to stand for the Vestry who are not elected should be invited to participate in the Planning Weekend. Scott Benhase commented that the results of the Planning Weekend should be incorporated into all Vestry meetings going forward.

Rector's Report

1. *Parochial Report*. Scott Benhase presented the 2007 Report of Episcopal Congregations and Missions According to Canons 1.6, 1.7, and 1.17.

Motion: Jon Sawyer moved to approve the Parochial Report.

Kammie Hedges seconded the motion and the motion carried.

2. *Cuba Trip (6/23/08) and visit of Cuban Priest at Pentecost (5/11/08)*. The list of participants is still under development. The Overseas Mission Committee is responsible for organizing this trip. We will be hosted in Cuba by Fr Juan Exposito who will visit and celebrate with us at St. Alban's on Pentecost Sunday, May 11. Bishop Ulises Aguero, the suffragan bishop of Eastern Cuba, will visit this fall and will be hosted by Rev. Sarabeth Goodwin. He will visit St. Alban's on Sunday October 5.

Scott noted that Cuba does not have a Bishop right now; the Rt. Rev. Miguel Tamayo, Bishop of Uruguay, is the acting Bishop.

3. *Erin's Ordination (6/29 @ 4 p.m.)*. The Rt. Rev. Michael Curry, Bishop of North Carolina, will be here for Erin's ordination and will preach at the 10:30 am service.

4. *Salon St Alban's*. It was noted that the first gathering was scheduled for April 27 at the Westchester with the Reverend Martin Smith.

5. *Stained Glass*. Scott reported that the Stanford Family, whose recent offer of a stained glass window was declined, is upset that an earlier donation of stained glass is now hidden by the organ's pipes and would like the piece moved. The Vestry discussed various options to ameliorate the situation. It was suggested that the parish obtain an estimate of the cost to have the obstructed piece relocated. It was noted that there are groups such as the Arts & Memorials Committee and the Stewardship Committee addressing the appropriate treatment of and standards for gifts.

Old Business

1. *Nominating Committee Report*. Jon Sawyer presented the following nominees:

Vestry candidates

Sandra Barker
Joanne Brainard
Andrea Farr
Chuck Holmes
Gray Maxwell
Eric Melby
Stephanie Kinney
Jennifer Thorson Martin

Delegate candidates

Dee Dykstra
Mark Edwards
Bill Hall
Cay Hartley

Jon noted that the candidates' forum will be held on April 20 and the photos and bios will appear in the next *Chronicle*.

Motion: Jon Sawyer moved to approve the slate of candidates.

Bob Woolfolk seconded the motion. A discussion followed. Kate Bouvé noted that, because there will not be a traditional Vestry retreat this year, on May 17th there will be an orientation/business session involving the current and new Vestry. The Sottiles will host a dinner in their home that evening for the new Vestry.

The Vestry voted and the motion carried.

2. *Handicap accessible ramp for Church.* Marc Fetterman reported that more drawings of the design are in production.

3. *Arts & Memorials Committee.* There was no additional information reported by the Arts & Memorials Committee.

4. *Signage.* Marc Fetterman reported that once the signage proposal and ramp designs are completed he will take both projects to the Historical Preservation Office.

The Vestry noted that the railing into the Rectory is broken and a piece of slate outside the OpShop is missing. Ron Hicks we investigate repairs.

5. *Covenant Committee.* Bill Hall reported that the Committee was scheduled to meet the next day and that a draft document had gone back and forth between the Cathedral and St. Alban's. A document should be available for Vestry review in time for the next meeting.

Compline began at 9:15 pm.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:20 pm.

Andrea F. Farr, Secretary.