

St. Alban's Parish, Washington, D.C.
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of June 10, 2008

Scott Benhase, Rector; Erin Hensley, Assistant to the Rector for Youth and Young Adult Ministries; Ron Hicks, Parish Verger; Kate Bouvé, Senior Warden; Nathalie Bramson, Andrea Farr, Marc Fetterman, Kammie Hedges, Chuck Holmes, Keith Jones, Danette Kauffman, Sam Lewis, Jennifer Martin, Eric Melby, Vestry; Bill Hall, Diocesan Delegates.

Guests: Joe McLean, Alec Netchvolodoff, Clem Dinsmore

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

Minutes of previous meetings

April 2008:

Motion: Sam Lewis made a motion to accept the minutes as written.

Nathalie Bramson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

May 2008:

Page 2, para. 4, italicized heading: “*{WHO}*” struck and replaced with “Meehan Focus Fund”; and

Page 2, para. 4, Motion: “*{WHO}*” struck and replaced with “Meehan Focus Fund, which is distributed by Viking Fund Management, LLC,”.

Motion: Danette Kauffman made a motion to accept the minutes as amended.

Sam Lewis seconded the motion and the motion carried.

February 2008: Consideration of the minutes tabled until the next Vestry meeting.

Treasurer's Report & Junior Warden's Report

Jim Sottile was unable to attend but distributed a written report to the Vestry via e-mail prior to the meeting. In the report Jim addressed the Treasurer's Report, finance and property issues. Attached to the message also was a summary of Stone House Report.

Scott Benhase discussed the Treasurer's Report as discussed in the Junior Warden's written report.

Motion: Nathalie Bramson made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report.

Kammie Hedges seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Jim's report noted that, due to declining interest rates, the return on the \$615,000 in the Vanguard Prime Money Market Fund was significantly lower than in previous years. Certificates of Deposit would yield better returns, but the funds must remain in the CD for specified period of time. The Finance Committee decided that investing \$300,000 of the funds currently in the money market in CDs would yield more income while leaving adequate funds in the money market to fund short-term needs. "Laddering" the investments would ensure that funds would become available each quarter.

The Finance Committee also recommended that the deposits be made with City First Bank, rather than commercial banks, notwithstanding a potentially smaller return on the investment. City First is a federally chartered and FDIC-insured community development bank established to address the credit needs of the eastern half of the District. The Finance Committee urged the Vestry to consider whether the loss of a few basis points, worth approximately \$2,100/year, is offset by furthering our common community objectives.

The Vestry discussed the Finance Committee's proposal. It was noted that City First has been in existence for over 15 years, and that the bank is unaffected by the current mortgage crisis because it does not engage in subprime lending.

Motion: Nathalie Bramson moved as follows:

THAT the Vestry approve the transfer of \$300,000 now held in the Vanguard Prime Money Market Fund, for which the current 7-day yield is 2.19 percent, into Certificates of Deposit (CDs) on a schedule incorporating a "laddering" method whereby such transactions will achieve a 7.5 month duration with quarterly maturities within a year, thus optimizing yield safely;

THAT, in recognition that City First's unique lending outreach to the DC community supports good social policy and mirrors several of the Parish's own outreach missions, the Vestry authorizes the Treasurer to invest in CDs from City First in a laddered schedule because in its view the community good done by City First is more important than that our monies earn \$2,000 more each year.

Sam Lewis seconded the motion.

A discussion of the motion followed. It was noted that every dollar deposited with City First yields \$3 in lending. The Vestry observed that investment with City First was consistent with the support expressed during the Parish Planning Weekend for increasing the outreach budget. It was suggested that if the motion is approved, a short article for the *Chronicle* concerning City First and its mission should follow.

Following the discussion the question was called and the motion was approved.

It was noted that, with respect to the Capital Campaign, the amount owed to the endowment has been reduced to approximately \$278,000.

Special Order of Business: Stewardship Commission Report

Danette Kauffman, Joe McLean and Alexander Netchvolodoff, members of the Stewardship Commission, discussed the work of the Commission. The need for education on the importance of stewardship as a ministry was noted. The objectives of the Commission were twofold: 1) to raise funds; and 2) to express the joy of sharing as we do Christ's work.

The Report is in eight parts; the Vestry took each part in turn.

Part 1: Governance of the Endowment

There was discussion that what was now called the endowment should be turned into a true endowment, with all the associated rules and applicable best practices. Concern was voiced that paragraph 6 on page 4 could bind the hands of future vestries by not allowing borrowing of Endowment funds. The Commission noted that endowment best practices prohibit the borrowing of funds. However, the Vestry observed that paragraph 7 allows some flexibility in exigent circumstances. The Commission reported that it was believed that the law governing endowments required the language and allowed for the exception described in paragraph 7.

The Vestry asked whether donors created an endowment. The Commission responded that this document created a vessel that would instill confidence concerning how funds given for the endowment fund would be used to support the parish in the longer term.

The Vestry asked Scott Benhase to describe what he had learned at the conference for endowed parishes with respect to borrowing from the endowment. Scott responded that the document reflected the generally held view that the principal of an endowment may not be invaded and that only funds generated by the investment of the endowment funds may be used. He also reported the general observation that once there is an appreciation of the commitment to the endowment as a true endowment, the funds follow. Future vestries will have to be faithful in evaluating potential exigent circumstances that would cause expenditures in excess of endowment income.

It was noted that the Vestry will have to evaluate a restricted gift to the endowment to ensure that the purpose of the gift is appropriate for St. Alban's ministry. The Commission responded that if the Vestry accepts restricted funds for the endowment, the funds must forever be used for the specified purpose.

Sam Lewis offered a **friendly amendment** to the Commissions draft to add “;” to paragraph 6, line 6, after “annually” and “No” following made lower case, in order to make clear that paragraphs 6 and 7 are to be interpreted to be consistent. The Commission approved the change subject to acceptance by counsel.

Motion: Dani Kauffman moved that the Vestry accept Part 1 of the Stewardship Commission's Report, as amended.

Keith Jones seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Part 2: Marketing of the Endowment

Motion: Dani Kauffman moved that the Vestry accept Part 2 of the Stewardship Commission's Report.

The motion was seconded by Jennifer Martin. A discussion followed regarding the Commission's plan to stimulate growth of the endowment. The Vestry asked how the communications will be managed with respect to the EMP. The Commission responded that the campaigns would have to be coordinated. The Vestry commented that the marketing of the endowment could be tricky, in that parishioners could feel they are always being approached for funds. The Commission noted that a foundation of stewardship is a matter of spiritual growth.

The question was called and the motion carried.

Part 3: Celebrations Program

The Commission noted that the program provides a way for guests and friends to be generous to St. Alban's, and presented opportunities to express thanks following a wedding, birthday or following any sort of good fortune or happy event. The program provides a way for people to share joy publicly or privately (and no acknowledgment need be given). The Commission urged caution, however, to ensure that the program does not suggest bargaining with God for a particular outcome. Under "Tactics for the Celebrations Program" item 6 describes a catalog of possible gifts which will be compiled by the Arts & Memorials Committee. The catalog will be submitted to the Vestry for approval.

The Vestry suggested that, since some people are put off by extensive discussions concerning money, the Celebrations Program should not be pursued as enthusiastically during EMP. The Commission acknowledged that there could be greater and lesser emphasis on the fundraising endeavors at different times of the year. The Vestry suggested that perhaps some language could be incorporated to reflect the need for shifting emphasis. The Commission responded that once the parts of the Commission's Report are passed a communications plan will have to be developed.

The Vestry asked how the Commission saw the plan being established and administered, for example, using parish Staff or parish volunteers. The Commission responded that it will take a lot of work to get the Program established and that ultimately the Celebrations Program (as well as other programs established pursuant to the Report) will be as automated as possible through the parish website.

Motion: Dani Kauffman moved that the Vestry accept Part 3 of the Stewardship Commission's Report.

Chuck Holmes seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Part 4: Annual Pledge Drive

The Commission noted that it would like to see more involvement of Vestry members in “Lost sheep” calls.

Motion: Dani Kauffman moved that the Vestry accept Part 4 of the Stewardship Commission’s Report.

Sam Lewis seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Part 5: Phoebe Nourse Society Relaunch

The Commission related its vision that Society membership include:

- a) All those planning to make gifts to the parish;
- b) All those who make Celebrations Program gifts to the Parish; and
- c) All those making gifts to the Parish Endowment.

Historically the Phoebe Nourse Society included only “a)”. The Commission noted that there needs to be complete records concerning planned giving. The Vestry noted that just making brochures available concerning planned giving was not particularly effective, and the Commission responded that there should be a strong education program concerning bequests and other methods of giving.

Motion: Dani Kauffman moved that the Vestry accept Part 5 of the Stewardship Commission’s Report.

Kammie Hedges seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Part 6: Spiritual Growth

The Commission noted that spiritual growth is the underpinning of everything else that the parish is doing. The Vestry commented that non-Vestry members should be sought to make testimonials.

Motion: Dani Kauffman moved that the Vestry accept Part 6 of the Stewardship Commission’s Report.

Jennifer Martin seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Part 7: Time and Talent

The Commission noted that there should be acknowledgment of non-monetary gifts. Scott Benhase reported that the Time and Talent online pledge generates e-mail to appropriate group leaders and emphasized the importance of a quick response to the pledgers.

Motion: Dani Kauffman moved that the Vestry accept Part 7 of the Stewardship Commission's Report.

Chuck Holmes seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Part 8: Parish Youth

The Commission noted the importance of teaching the parish youth to be generous, as well as the importance of greater involvement of the lay leaders in outreach to youth, at area colleges for example.

Motion: Dani Kauffman moved that the Vestry accept Part 8 of the Stewardship Commission's Report.

Jennifer Martin seconded the motion. It was noted that there was a typo in the penultimate line of the penultimate paragraph in the portion of Part 8 entitled "Secondary through Rite 13 Students"; "it's many" should be changed to "its many".

The question was called and the motion, with the aforementioned correction, was approved.

Senior Warden's Report

Kate Bouvé reported that an all-parish e-mail went out shortly after the completion of the Parish Planning Weekend. Kate has discussed with Ann Ramsey Moor the scheduling a forum; Kate would appreciate comments.

Kate reported the need to convene "goal groups" and bring others who did not participate in the PPW up to speed so that the action items may be assigned.

Kate emphasized the importance of sharing insights, special moments with the parish.

The Vestry discussed some of the reaction received in response to the PPW. It was noted that it had been asked why worship and music were not among the major topics to emerge from the PPW. Scott Benhase noted that worship and music are clergy led and are foundational. It was also suggested that they were not as in need of "fixing" as are certain other matters.

Scott Benhase reported that when Royster's full report is issued, Kate, Jim and Scott will assign tasks to existing commissions and make recommendations for new commissions as needed.

Rector's Report

Scott Benhase reported on the following:

1. *Time & Talent Pledging*

Scott invited everyone to check on the website to see opportunities for ministry.

2. *Cuba Trip (6/23/08)*

Scott reported that thirteen parishioners, led by George Keys, will travel to Cuba. Scott noted that no parish money was being used to fund the trip. Scott's expenses are being paid by funds allocated for Scott's professional development expenses. Some scholarships have been paid out of Scott's discretionary funds.

3. *Review of Youth Ministry*

Erin Hensley distributed a written report and discussed various aspects of the parish's youth program. Erin reported on the three components of the Journey to Adulthood program. Rite 13 had between 10 and 13 participants, as did J2A. The Senior Youth program, which is for rising juniors and seniors in high school, was in the greatest need of development as it had recently experienced the greatest change of any of the components of the Journey to Adulthood program.

4. *Eugene Sutton's Consecration (6/28 @ 11 a.m.)*

5. *Special Parish Evensong (6/28 @ 5:30 p.m. with supper to follow)*

6. *Erin's Ordination (6/29 @ 5:30 p.m. at St. Alban's)*

Old Business

1. *Handicap accessible ramp for Church*

Marc Fetterman reported that the drawings were completed in early May. He noted that there was strong support at the PPW in the facilities group; one of the resulting action items is to schedule the project and get it completed. Marc is requesting bids from engineering companies.

2. *Arts & Memorials Committee*

Marc Fetterman reported that the Committee had reviewed the various pieces of artwork that did not have places to be displayed at the parish and Ruth Cline was asked to evaluate each piece to determine whether it should be kept. It was determined that 16 pieces should not be kept.

Motion: Marc Fetterman proposed that the Vestry authorize the Arts & Memorials Committee to dispose of sixteen (16) works of art by sale where possible. These works of art have been researched and no reasons have been found to keep these pieces of art in the Parish. Any proceeds from the sales of art shall return to the Parish for spending as approved by the Vestry.

Eric Melby seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

3. *Vote on Cathedral Covenant*

The Vestry considered the Cathedral Covenant, entitled "*Moving Forward: Cathedral-St. Alban's Covenant*" dated April 11, 2008, which was discussed at the April Vestry meeting.

Motion: Sam Lewis moved to accept the Cathedral Covenant.

Chuck Melby seconded the motion and additional discussion followed. Scott Benhase stated that he will discuss with Dean Lloyd the possibility of a partnership between St. Alban's and the Cathedral in opening a café at St. Alban's. The Vestry expressed some concern about the financial aspects of such an undertaking as well as questions regarding the location of the café, but it was noted that any examination of the issue was in the preliminary stages.

The question was called and the motion was approved.

Compline began at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Executive Session

The Vestry did not go into Executive Session.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:20 p.m.

Andrea F. Farr