

St. Mary of the Hills
Vestry Meeting Minutes, October 19,2021

Members Present: Doug Galke (Junior Warden), Chip Monroe
Present via video conference: Tim Silver (Senior Warden), Roy McCraw, Patty Patella,
Marjory Holder, Faith Jones, Sterling Hutcheson, Lisa Kaufmann

Others Present: Fr. Andrew Hege (Rector), Fr. Sam Tallman (Priest Associate),
Elizabeth Sudderth (Clerk)
Incoming Vestry Members: Buddy Fore, Leslie Billingsley
Present via video conference: Amanda White (Treasurer), Joe Doswell and Bob Finney
(Incoming Vestry Members)

Members Absent: E.B. Springs, Jim West, Gigi Poole

Fr. Andrew called the meeting to order at 5:35pm.

Fr. Andrew shared the agenda for the meeting.
Sterling Hutcheson made a motion to accept the agenda as presented.
Marjory Holder seconded the motion.
The Vestry approved the motion.

The minutes of the prior meeting were shared.
Marjory Holder made a motion to approve the minutes as presented.
Faith Jones seconded the motion.
The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew led a devotion for early evening.

Fr. Andrew led a leadership check-in. He asked for those present to share where they have experienced grace unbidden since our last meeting. Some examples shared were Fr. Andrew relating how wonderful it was to attend the Diocesan conference last week where those present had not gathered all together in person in 2 years. It brought to mind for him how much we need each other and was a powerful sign of grace. Someone shared the joy of making a new friend recently; another person shared that even though moving out of a home lived in for 24 years has been exhausting they are full of grace and gratitude at a new opportunity. Another shared the grace and joy of attending a 90th birthday party at a nursing care center after COVID visitor restrictions have been lifted.

Amanda White presented the Treasurers report.

Amanda reported the parish continues to be in a very positive financial position. She pointed out that the PPP loan forgiveness added to our revenue which will be documented on the balance sheet. The trust and endowments are down a little but will rebound.

Year to date 79% of pledges have been received.

The \$50,000 gift from Ed Springs' estate remains in the temporary holding account. Fr. Andrew noted he is in conversation with some folks on the best use of this generous gift. More information will follow soon. Investment of the funds will be done through the Episcopal Foundation.

Amanda reported the Finance committee has begun preliminary work on the 2022 budget.

Roy McCraw made a motion to accept the Treasurers report.

Faith Jones seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared information on the Stewardship effort.

No numbers on dollar amounts pledged are available today as Greta is away at the Parish Administrators Conference. The church has received between 25 and 30 pledge cards thus far. He reminded everyone that pledge cards can be returned to the office in various ways. A question was asked as to which individuals know the pledging status of parishioners. Andrew answered only 3 people have access to that information: the Rector, the Financial Secretary, and the Parish Administrator.

A first draft of the 2022 budget will be shared at the November Vestry meeting. No action on the budget will be taken at that meeting.

Fr. Andrew shared the 2022 Diocesan Pledge Endorsement which must be approved by the Vestry.

The Diocese requests that we contribute 10% of the parish's normal operating income.

The 2022 Diocesan pledge is based upon this figure on the 2020 Parochial report.

This amount for the 2022 Diocesan pledge would be \$51,567.

Tim Silver made a motion to approve this amount for our 2022 Diocesan pledge.

Doug Galke seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared an update on the Tour of Homes revenue.

Andrew reported additional contributions are still coming in. Also, it has been decided that we have held back more starting funds for next year's TOH than is necessary. Right now, \$6,000 has been held back, but it has been determined that only \$2,000 needs to be held as starting funds for 2022. Of that current surplus, a proposal has been made to contribute \$2,000 to the Back 2 School Festival, a year-round effort to ensure that all school children in our area have the school supplies they need.

Marjory Holder made a motion to approve this donation of \$2,000.

Faith Jones seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew brought the subject to the Vestry of Tour of Homes future leadership planning. He shared that there has been quite a challenge the past two years in getting parish members to step forward and take leadership roles in the Tour of Homes. In looking ahead to the 2022 effort, some people who have been approached to lead the project have declined for a variety of reasons. Fr. Andrew asked for a discussion of ideas on this topic.

One suggestion for leaders of the 2022 TOH was Bob and Sabine Miller. It was noted that there are homeowners already willing to open their homes for the tour if the effort is in person. The need to set a deadline for a final decision on the feasibility of holding a tour, either in person or virtually was expressed.

A suggestion was made to offer training sessions from previous Tour leaders for those interested in leading this effort in 2022. It could be helpful to make available “job descriptions” of the various leadership roles and the responsibilities entailed to help people determine what area best suits their abilities and talents.

One person noted this would be a good time to look at the goal of what we are trying to accomplish and what works and what doesn't in the current process.

It was suggested to share with the congregation the struggle to find leadership; the congregation as a whole is probably not aware of this yearly struggle.

The suggestion was made to share the project with Rumble Presbyterian and/or other area churches to increase the pool of available leaders/volunteers.

It was noted that at least nine areas of duties make up the Tour effort; therefore at least nine leaders or teams of leaders are needed to make the effort work.

The broader topic of how to sustain the TOH going forward was brought up; Will it be necessary this year at least to hold back some funds in the 2022 budget to make up for the potential shortfall of TOH proceeds to donate to the many local groups who depend on this yearly contribution in the event the Tour is not able to be done in 2022?

Fr. Andrew will follow up with those who expressed these ideas and questions in the coming weeks.

Fr. Andrew shared the allocations approved by the Outreach Committee for this month.

\$1,000	Watauga Opportunities for a new special-needs art program
\$ 65	Compassion International for an annual child sponsorship
\$3,415	Rise Against Hunger an international hunger relief

organization

Marjory Holder made a motion with a second from Faith Jones to endorse these allocations approved by the Outreach committee.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Doug Galke shared the Junior Wardens report.

Doug reported the ad-hoc Grounds work group continues their effort to evaluate the outside spaces of the church property. At least ten members of the parish have given input to the group in walking tours around the grounds. They are planning to share the first draft of their report with the Vestry at the November meeting.

The report will include plans for a playground structure with a permeable ground surface underneath. It has been determined the shed can be moved. Adding the playground would require the removal of some trees which is not inexpensive. The Fall workday to do outside maintenance on the grounds is scheduled for November 13. Raking and clearing out flower beds will be the focus of the effort from 8:30-11:30am.

An estimate of \$485 has been obtained to repair the ramp under the office windows. The potholes in the stone surface and the large bump at the bottom will be repaired and it will be pressure washed.

The Technology committee is working on a solution to address the livestream issues. The computer network in the church is aging. DougNet is coming to do a review of our hardware. The current thought is to replace Joe Raulerson's computer and move Joe's computer to the choirmaster.

The phone system recently went down and there is not really a feasible way to fix the current system. DougNet submitted a proposal to provide a system with 8 phones which was cheaper than the proposal from SkyBest which would have replaced only the 4 existing phones.

The sound quality issues in the Sanctuary continue to be a problem for clergy, readers, and the congregation. Marjory Holder reported that 4 vendors have been consulted thus far to improve the issues. Two of those vendors have submitted proposals. One plan being considered is a sound reinforcement system to address the issue of poor hearing of readers and clergy behind the cross aisle by the congregation. The system being looked at would equalize sound from the front to the back and the back to the front of the Sanctuary. Marjory stated she would like feedback from Vestry on this issue and how it impacts worship.

Doug Galke expressed his thanks to Marjory and the Technology committee for all their efforts on these projects.

Tim Silver shared the Senior Wardens report.

Tim will be sending an email to Vestry asking for feedback on a "Vestry Person of the Day" project which would rotate duties among Vestry members involving greeting visitors, etc. on Sundays.

Tim noted several parishioners have expressed to him that they are missing the social aspects of church which we have been unable to enjoy during this time of COVID. Three people have contacted him just this week on this issue. Are there ways we can connect safely? One suggestion is to have fellowship of some kind masked without food or drink. Tim will continue to explore ideas and would be happy to have feedback.

Fr. Andrew shared the Rectors report.

The parish continues to monitor the COVID situation in our area. The case numbers are down here recently but not dramatically. The town still remains under an indoor mask mandate including in churches. All churches in our Diocese continue to ask everyone to wear masks indoors. Some churches in the Diocese have started having indoor Coffee Minute gatherings again.

The Diocese has made the decision that the Diocesan Convention will be online only on November 12-13. There will be no formation activities this year; business only. Plans are underway to have a collaborative event with the Eastern Band of the Cherokee in person in January or February pending COVID status. This would be part of the Diocesan Centennial in 2022.

Fr. Andrew will be attending the final classroom portion of the program he has been participating in through Wake Forest in November in Wilmington. He will complete projects for this program in the Spring.

All Saints Day will be celebrated with a festive Eucharist in early November and Choral Evensong in the later part of the day. The names of all the departed who have died in the past year and have been prayed for in our parish will be shared at an All Souls service.

Chip Monroe made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:57pm.

Sterling Hutcheson seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry