

# Trinity Rutland Vestry Minutes

December 18, 2025, 5-7pm

Present: Rev. Sarah Ginolfi, Shannon Hill, Diane Novak, Brandy Blosser,  
Cassi Whitcomb, and Holly Webb, Clerk  
Online: Judy Hall, Lois Castonguay, David Rugger  
Absent: Melissa Alarie

- I. Call to Order/Opening Prayer 5:02 p.m.
- II. Rector's Report – Meeting went straight to Business Session.

## BUSINESS SESSION

- I. Approval of November Minutes  
Motion to approve made by David, seconded by Diane. Discussion led by Sarah as to edit of minutes pertaining to grant funding for her sabbatical since she will not have the capacity to pursue the (very competitive and time-consuming) grant in time for the due date. Sarah has corrected minutes presented for approval.  
Vote to approve the November minutes was taken and passed unanimously.

- II. Treasurer's Reports for November  
Motion to approve made by Diane; seconded by Brandy.

Discussion led by Sarah. Things to note:

- a. Income for 2025 is on track to have our income meet our expenses.
- b. The Smith and Benson Fund disbursement was received and that is reflected in the Nov. treasurer's report. Sarah explained how the \$50K was distributed to repay funds borrowed so from the Jubilee Fund.
- c. We are over budget on fuel expense but that was expected. Linda is secure in her estimate for fuel for 2026 and notes the fuel contract is at \$.10 less per gallon for 2026.
- d. Diane did not have anything new or different to comment upon from the finance committee doings/discussions.
- e. Questions about Rectory projects: to be discussed in IV.f below.

Vote to approve the November treasurer's report was taken and passed unanimously.

Additional note to this section: The vestry approves the members to serve on the finance committee. Steve Singeiser and Katya Cooke have agreed to serve another year in 2026. JoAnn O'Hagan has agreed to fill in the one-year term that was vacant. Motion to approve the slate of finance committee members was made by Judy, Seconded by David. A vote to approve slate of members of finance committee was taken and passed unanimously.

- III. Second Budget Draft for 2026

Sarah called vestry's attention to the second draft of 2026 the budget.

- a. There is still a higher draw from investments than desired. Proposal for 2026 is \$22,000 and it is desired to be \$0.

The biggest concern is the investment transfer line item. Note that this year we are projected to not take any; however, in 2026 budget, it is projected that we will need to take \$22,000. However, there are still some things to come into play – we are still waiting on some regular pledgers to submit their pledges. We potentially may not exactly hit our goal for a 10% increase in pledge income, so we may need to figure out ways to diversify our income resources. We are on track to meet, if not exceed, our 2025 pledges. There are about eleven pledges yet to come in. Wendy Grace projects those to be at least in the range of \$6,000 to \$7000. The objective is to bring \$22,000 transfer from investments down to zero.

There is a possibility that we could have some extra money in the holding fund at end of year.

Budget increases for 2026 are mostly due to increased salaries – Sarah’s is up 5%; the staff salaries are up 11%. There needed to be an increase for supply priests due to Sarah’s sabbatical time. Nanci and Liz will only fill some of that need.

It is important that we look at the operating budget alongside our non-operating budget because that is where a lot of our program budget is addressed. That is where there is a lot more of the missional work of our parish is occurring rather than simply as operational expenses.

- b. Finalization of the Clergy Compensation component is still in process. There is still some continued work to get Sarah’s salary details worked through with the diocese. The various guidelines in how clergy salaries are calculated—especially for part time clergy have expanded and become further complex. Sarah realizes there might need to be some negotiation on her salary and benefits structure, though these negotiations should be between Sarah and the Vestry.

A vote is not intended be taken at this time. The finance committee will be meeting again, and the budget will (hopefully) come before the vestry in January, and final approval will be at Annual Meeting.

#### IV. Ministry Oversight Team Updates

- a. Stewardship (Diane and Sarah+)
  - i. Campaign Check-In: Sarah: We have raised \$142,000 from forty-six pledging units. Last year we had a total of \$147,000 from 58 pledging units. If 10% were added to last year, that would bring us to \$161,500. Wendy does not think we will reach that figure but hopes we will get above \$150,000. Katya will follow up with Sarah on reaching out to lagging pledgers.
  - ii. Parish Administrator LOA  
Diane reported that the LOA for Wendy had been sent out to the vestry for review and approval. A motion to approve Wendy’s LOA was made by Shannon, seconded Cassi. This represents a 5% merit increase on top of the 2.7% COLA for 2026 to acknowledge her change from a secretarial job to make it an administrative position. Wendy elected to convert that increase into benefits and then accepted an extra \$2000 contribution to a 403b plan in lieu of health insurance. A vote on Wendy’s LOA was taken and unanimously approved.

b. Worship

Lois: Noted nothing new to report. She has put all her efforts into addressing Property needs. Sarah feels there are some good possibilities amongst parishioners for becoming members of this team in addition to Sarah, Wendy, John, and Liz.

Sarah wondered if the parish would like to return to having a midweek healing service.

Judy asked: How do we get others involved? She suggests that at Annual Meeting we mention the need for members in our congregation to offer their support/assistance in this ministry.

Sarah suggested a better time might be following the vestry retreat at which time the vestry members might figure out if a specific invitation might be more helpful rather than a generic one at annual meeting.

c. Evangelism (David R. and Melissa)

David: Reports as to Trinity Presents that we are set for the March concert. He is working on our next season. There is some “cool stuff” in progress. He is in discussions with Noam Pikelny, one of the top banjo players in the world. He lives in Danby now and his wife, Caitlin Canty is also a well-known musician who grew up in Proctor.

d. Education (Melissa, Brandy, and Sarah+)

There was an after-church discussion group at the Sunday Formation on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Dec. – Sarah noted that the parish hall is not really a good place acoustically to host these sessions. Transition time for moving the session to library made the meeting run overtime, which was problematic for some in the group. The problem is that people with hearing aids cannot hear in the hall, can hear better in library, but that has its limitations. Attendance in parish hall was much better than in the library. That said, formation sessions after church are going well overall.

Youth Missioner Position – It has been slow going restarting something that has been dormant for a quite a while. Sarah is making connections and feels that the position with the Diocese compliments her work here, though. Our youth are leading the way.

e. Pastoral (Shannon)

Shannon: This group did have a very productive meeting for getting going with the prayer shawl ministry. The group is going to try to garner interest during coffee hour. They may set up a table and demonstrate what they are working on.

The Prayer Tree has been very active. Sarah suggested that it would be good to remind the congregation that we have this ministry. Sarah would like to see us incorporate some quiet space during intercessions to provide an opportunity for folks desiring to speak of those needing our prayers.

f. Property (Judy and Lois)

- i. Pest Control: Lois sent the quote from the Eliminator to the vestry and finance committee. At this point we need to move forward with something. This firm was brought in, and they did a very thorough evaluation. They use their own evaluator, and they sought and obtained permission to not do the initial blow-test evaluation because it would contaminate living space with existing bat guano present in the attic. Their evaluator will come in after the work has been done and do a post-completion evaluation of work done.

The cost difference between the Nature's Way bid of \$6500 and the Eliminator's bid of \$16,653 is not insignificant. However, Eliminator is going to do a lot more work (as described in detail in their quote), including substantial work in both the attic and the basement. Judy and Lois both recommend that we move ahead as soon as possible with the Eliminator bid. The overall health and safety for Sarah and her family is a significant consideration. Better long-term results, as well as acknowledgment that this represents responsible stewardship of the Rectory as a parish asset dictates that we do so. (A copy of the quote from the Eliminator is attached to these minutes for the record.)

Proceeding with Eliminator opens the door for rebates because they work with Efficiency Vermont. Nature's Way does not. A potential rebate is up to \$10,000. If we receive the full rebate, the end cost could be about the same cost as Nature's Way—with significantly more work achieved. But receiving the full potential rebate is not guaranteed. It should be recognized that we will get a lot more effective treatment, a better experience, and overall, more bang for the buck.

Lois made the following motion: *I move to accept the \$16,653 bid from the Eliminator to remediate pest waste, re-insulate the attic, and insulate basement rim joists, funded by a permanent gift from the Jubilee Fund to the Building Fund, with any Efficiency Vermont rebate returning to the Jubilee Fund.*

Diane seconded the motion. Lois noted that we need a 50% deposit at the time we accept the bid. We cannot get a date for commencing the project by Eliminator without the deposit. Shannon notes the improvement to the rectory is a worthy investment, not just addressing the pest problem.

Sarah affirmed that insulating the attic and basement rim-joists will likely lower fuel costs and thereby reduce our carbon footprint. This justice-initiative aligns with the mission of the Jubilee Fund. It also aligns with the diocesan resolution for all parish buildings to eliminate fossil fuel use by 2036. That's going to be a steep hill for us. Regardless, we've been utilizing the secondary use of the fund—the internal line of credit—frequently. This indicates that we may not have adequately taken the myriad known building project needs into consideration when we formed the Jubilee Fund with all \$150k of the undesignated bequest from the Severance estate.

David noted that remediating bat problems is necessary before Spring. By law, it cannot be done after April. He stated he throws his support towards moving forward with this now.

A vote was taken and all lay Vestry members approved the bid from the Eliminator. Sarah abstained from voting. Sarah asked Lois to report this to the finance team, copying the

vestry. Sarah also asked that it be made clear that there is no intention of using money from the Jubilee Fund for a siding project at the Rectory. That is a different thing even though insulating the house properly could also help reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

- ii. Siding: Lois reported that we have two good bids to compare: Primo and TwoBirds. We went back and asked TwoBirds to take another look at the quote they gave us and the costs decreased a couple thousand dollars (since the recommended vinyl rather than another pricier material). Rich Jones has looked at both and felt like TwoBirds was very competitive with their bid. If we don't want to utilize the Smith and Benson fund for this, we may need to proceed with looking into a loan from the Diocese for this project. Just dragging out a decision whether to do this does not make sense in the long term (and bids will become obsolete if we delay decision-making too long).

Lois indicated that it is time for the vestry to talk about when the time is to do a capital campaign. Rich also mentioned the need for rain gutters (currently missing from the TwoBirds quote). Lois added that the other piece is to look at heating/cooling, mini split options. Heat pumps could be tricky because it is not an open-concept house.

- g. Service and Outreach (Cassi, Judy, Brandy)

Women of Trinity and Friends (WOTF): There has been some discussion about combining O&E with WOTF as there is some overlap. WOTF is out of sync with its bylaws since many of the original committees are no longer operating. Combining the two ministries might potentially return WOTF to a structure that is more like its historic organization and participation. Some discernment on this will continue to continue to ensue.

David asked: Who schedules their meetings? Sarah responded that the group does, but they've been inconsistent. She noted that it's not ideal for a newcomer incorporation process for the church to have meetings during coffee hour. Many core members of the group could not attend an evening meeting in person or online, so this one is permissible given the issue of accessibility. David suggested we host a meet and greet style meeting and introduce people to these groups and what they do, with the goal being to figure out what structurally might be the better time for one or both groups to meet. Suggestion was made that perhaps we might "rebuild the wheel" and have sub-committees for each of O&E and WOTF,

Sarah posed the question: How are you sensing that things are going? Cassi mentioned she thought the last meeting was tense with anxiety about the future. Brandy noted that meetings where they decide where monies will be directed often become tense. Judy asked: How might this be done better? It is a big chore. Brandy: Wendy did a good job emailing an explanation of potential recipients for this year's donations. It was noted that any in the WOTF group do not use email, necessitating paperwork be manually delivered. The group needs a President to keep the meeting structured and productive.

Wendy was proposed as possibility to be president. Wendy is considering that. If it could be quarterly meetings, that might be more doable. Brandy suggested Co-Presidents or vice-president might make this a more doable option. Sarah suggested that having a chairperson for each of WOTF and O&E might be an option if those ministries combine. There needs to be generated a clear outline of what is required of the position. Wendy suggested maybe it be an

interim position to get the structure of the position identified. Judy suggested that the WOTF could make the job a little less complicated and thus more attractive to someone.

Judy also suggested groups who are seeking funds from WOTF provide their mission statement and an image (picture), so people understand what their group is about. Sarah commented that suggestion could be beneficial and productive.

Rutland Neighbors: Sarah reports that Rutland Neighbors continues to plug along. Trinity volunteers seem to be a couple of consistent groups. There is an early morning group consisting of David Castonguay and Diane Novak, and the regulars of the Tuesday group.

Rutland Neighbors has advised that a sleeping bag coat is a very useful thing for homeless folks. Judy suggested we might buy one to show folks and give them an opportunity to contribute towards purchasing one for this purpose. A motion was made by Judy, seconded by Cassi to purchase a \$150 sleeping bag coat with funds from Jubilee Fund - as a sample as motivation for parishioners to buy or donate towards purchase of more. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Katos Kids: Cassi noted that a woman known as “Peace” has been referred to her. (She is known to Judy) Peace has an organization that travels to Uganda. Peace’s objective sounds like it is a different kind of outreach than financial. But it could offer something to meet the needs of Katos Kids other than just sending money.

## V. Vestry Team Discernment

- a. Noted that we are in the works of redoing the policy manual. Given a capacity issue in recruiting new members to the Vestry, we may discern another way to compile our vestry—to honor that it’s wise to have a mix of new members with fresh insight as well as vestry “veterans.” Many members who have served multiple terms on the Vestry, no longer want to serve a three-year term. There are certain canons that we are required to follow, but is there a different way to utilize our people resources to staff the vestry?

Perhaps we could include a “special oversight” role and consider one candidate each year for the vestry who might serve for a limited period solely with the goal of achieving the purpose of that special oversight responsibility. All current members now have oversight areas, though this short-term opportunity would be for help with a high-energy project like overseeing a capital campaign or the creation of a new ministry.

- b. Meeting Schedule Check-In and Vestry Retreat

Sarah questioned the vestry as to whether the Thursday 5-7 meeting time for monthly vestry meetings work for members of the Vestry. The consensus is yes.

Vestry Retreat: A proposed Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> (Sat). from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. time frame. Sarah noted that she is going to be on sabbatical at our Feb. meeting and the Retreat needs to occur beforehand.

- c. Potential vestry candidates:

Ministry Roles: Are our categories covering the work of the parish? Cassi noted she feels she got off to a slow start, but she seems to be settling in. Others noted the areas seem sufficient and helpful. Still adjusting to the new format, but it's been effective for delegating projects. The following individuals were mentioned though all have some barriers to participation: JoAnn O'Hagan is now on finance committee and thus not a potential candidate for vestry. Also noted that Ernie Hathaway is leaving to move to Nova Scotia. Brittany Gilman is new to the Episcopal Church and community. Sarah will chat with her in January about getting more involved but feels Trinity needs someone who has been in our congregation for at least 3 years before serving on the vestry. Brandy suggested Patty Searles. Sarah agrees that a non-female perspective might be a good balance to our current group. Other possibilities: Rich Carlson; Larry Patrick; Marc Brierre; Bruce Howard; Tad Kemnitzer.

VI. Critical Projects for 2025 Check-in

- a. Organ Project
  - i. Scheduling Larry Nevin's Evaluation – David mentioned that this something that John Riddle should be coordinating. Same with the tunings/
- b. Rectory (Siding/Soffits & Eaves/Heat Pumps, Paving, Loose ends from Phase 1) – See above.
- c. Paving Rear Lot/Updating – Sarah has a message out to GW about getting an updated bid. She has not heard back yet but will follow up. Options are sparse and we lost out on a bid last year because we waiting to long to make a decision and the company (Bendig) folded their paving operation.
- d. Inclement Weather Sunday Snow plan- Currently the big hang up appears to be how it will be communicated effectively.

APPENDIX A: Inclement Weather Snow Plan for Sundays. *Updated draft plan forthcoming*

VII. Adjournment: 7:07 p.m. *The Next Vestry Meeting will be January 15, 2026.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Holly Webb, Clerk