

**Trinity Episcopal Church**  
Vestry Minutes in-person and via Zoom  
September 21, 2023

**Present in Person:** Holly Webb, Sr. Warden, Rich Jones, Jr. Warden, Dave Thurmer, Mother Sarah; Melissa Alaire joined the meeting late.

**Present via zoom:** Elizabeth Bushey; Jay Slenker joined the meeting late.

**Not Present:** Judy Hall, Cassie Whitcomb

- I. **Call to Order:** Mother Sarah gathered us in prayer. We did not have a quorum until 5:45pm and then Jay joined at 6:30pm. Note: No motions were made, or voting conducted until Melissa and Jay joined the meeting and a quorum was present.
- II. **June and July minutes:** Minutes for both meetings were discussed insofar as any clarifications or corrections needed. When a quorum was present Rich made a motion to approve both the June and July meeting minutes, including the email vote on the sound system; Dave seconded; motion was called with unanimous approval, no abstentions.
- III. **June and July Treasurer's Financial Reports:** When a quorum was present Rich made a motion to approve the July and August Financial Reports; Dave seconded, motion was called with unanimous approval, no abstentions.
- IV. **Priest's Report:**
  - The work of the Stewardship Committee is off to a great start. The first meeting was held 8/21/23. Members of this year's committee are: Tom Huebner, Katya Cooke, Daisy Chew and David Rugger, Joanne O'Hagen, Brandy Blosser, Larry Jensen, and Dana Peterson. Mother Sarah reported that the feeling was it was time to refocus the theme of "hope" as Trinity has successfully achieved a lot of what it has hoped for, and for us to move toward what our dreams are for the future at Trinity.
  - Advised us of the yellow jacket (bees) infestation at the rectory and steps taken to address the problem.
  - Advised us of a mouse/bat infestation at the rectory that needs to be addressed.
  - Advised that several outlets at the rectory need to be repaired or replaced.
  - Advised that it appears that a lot of general maintenance items at the rectory have been deferred or overlooked, with the result that more than a usual number of issues have been identified and have had to be addressed for the responsible care of the rectory. Jim Cruise did a walkthrough of the space to make and prioritize a list of projects.
- V. **New Business:**
  - A. **Heat Pumps.** Rich met with one vendor to discuss heat pumps that could be placed in the living room, dining room, master bedroom; other rooms not configured favorably, but there is another system that includes a system of duct work through the attic connecting to a single exterior unit, but that system is considerably more expensive. Further investigation into the use of heat pumps will be pursued.
  - B. **Furnace cleanings.** Ryan (the plumber) is cleaning all the furnaces at Trinity and the rectory and will be working to resolve the problem with the toilet that keeps flooding the basement level of the parish house.
- VI. **Old Business:**

- A. Organ Project.** Work is progressing sufficiently that John Riddle feels confident enough to schedule a concert to showcase the mostly completed Phase I on November 12th. It appears that the roof leak is holding up work on the choir division. Sarah, Rich, and Holly met with Peter and have advised him that we need an end game for the project with the goal to be that we complete items as discussed in our meeting with him and have requested him to provide an updated plan with associated costs within the parameters outlined to him. We will have more to report when we receive that information from him. Peter provided some information and recommendations for Phase 2 and 3. We have not yet committed to proceed with either Phase 1 or 2. Dana and Sarah met with Larry Nevin, one of our organ consultants, last week. Larry strongly recommends that we have him take a day to do a thorough inspection of the organ. He also recommends we reach out to an independent reference (Foley) to have them check this as well. In conversations with Peter as well as Larry, it was made clearer that this project is closer to an organ rebuild than the organ repair/restoration we thought was originally communicated to us. This news may be upsetting to some since there are still some items that need to be fixed even though enhancement projects have moved forward. Larry will give us some guidelines on how focus the project and bring it to closure.
- B. Paying for the Sound/Video System.** Sarah, Wendy, and Linda are putting together the final pieces of the grant application for the diocese. We are applying for a grant for \$20K of the \$42K systems. We will follow the guidance given to us by Dana, on behalf of the Finance Committee, as to immediate sources for the funds to pay for the system when due and reimburse those funds if and when grant funding is received. Dana has assured us the funds are available. An email between Holly and Dana regarding funding for the project was provided to the vestry and a copy attached to these minutes.
- C. Operation Dolls.** The vestry was advised that we have a professional recommendation from Jim Cruise that the Dolls set up in the basement is a fire hazard. Given our recent flooding in the basement, we also have the lived experience of the increased level of volunteer work it took to clean around/move around items from the Dolls Group. As sad as it may be, we need to strongly consider asking the program to vacate the space. Additionally, the decision needs to be made before some other event that costs Trinity more money to mitigate occurs. The delivery of the doll packages takes place at the end of November. Perhaps we could give them to the end of the year to complete the distribution and remove all their other belongings. Jay will be a vital voice in this transition since he's on the RSVP board. We are unable to host the group in any of the other parish spaces, and we acknowledge that the group may have a very difficult time finding another organization that is willing to host them rent-free.

Motion was made by Rich, seconded by Dave to sunset the arrangement with the Operation Dolls folk, giving notice to them within the next month that they need to vacate by 3/1/24. Discussion followed. Motion was called with unanimous approval, no abstentions.

- VII. Fence along parish office-side north perimeter:** We have been made aware of the drug use/presence of needles problems we're having in this area. We have a responsibility to our priest, congregation, and visitors to Trinity to make it as safe as possible for people to exit our building(s) and access parking lots (particularly after dark) without more concern than necessary of coming upon persons who may be a danger to them accessing our property from this area. We are in the process of obtaining information regarding removal of the cedar trees and construction of a chain link fence

to better mark our property. We hope to have more to report by the October meeting, if not sooner. Sarah has been reaching out to various city officials and local health services to gain information on how to lessen the potential for neighbor upset. Specifically, Sarah has been in touch with Matt Prouty from Project Vision and she's getting in touch with Kyle Dawson, the officer assigned to check on this location. Kyle has been in touch with the property owners and that connection will help us communicate everything. Holly emailed the City Zoning Admr. to find out about a permit. The Zoning Admr. responded:

“That fencing that is six feet in height and located on your property does not require a zoning permit, as those projects are exempt from the zoning regulation. Given that the property subject to the inquiry is located in the Downtown Business District, which is also considered a historic area of the City (and does contain design review criteria), the Planning & Zoning Department would respectfully request reconsideration of the chain link fence in place for another type of fencing that better suits the historic character of the area. Any modification would be very much appreciated.”

Further discussion ensued as to other options than chain link. Inquiries will be made of some local fence vendors for suggestions and pricing.

Holly is following up with Ray Page at Vermont Survey Consultants to obtain a copy of survey of the main church parcel. We have the survey of the parking lot parcels and that may be sufficient for the fence project.

**VIII. Sarah and FTE.** In preparation for Sarah's upcoming Mutual Ministry Review with Rev. Susan Ohlidal (a routine practice), the Vestry checked in about their hopes and dreams for the mission of Trinity and what Trinity needs to thrive at this time and place as it regards clergy presence. To ensure everyone could speak freely, Sarah left the room at 6:45 for the vestry to discuss this issue. Sarah rejoined the meeting at 7:10.

**IX. Report of Email Voting** The parish office computer (Wendy's) has not been performing well. To take advantage of Amazon's Prime Day sale, Wendy requested we consider a new model that was \$800. We both examined the 2023 office budget line item and had good confidence that we would remain within budget with this unexpected purchase. Given the time constraints, Sarah reached out to the Executive Team via email on 10/11/23 for approval. There was unanimous approval and affirmation of the model.

Sarah reminded us all that Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> is Homecoming Sunday and set-up will be Saturday morning at 10. The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Holly Webb (substitute clerk)