

Executive Council Meeting
June 26, 2021
Waycross Camp and Conference Center

These minutes were approved at the September 18 2021 meeting

Members Present: The Rev. Mary Bargiel, Dr. Mary Ellen Brown, Master Jeffrey Dreyer, Ms. Lara Dreyer, Mr. Dick Frey, Dr. Rose Anne Grasty, Ms. Sally Hardgrove, The Rev. Paul Jacobson, Mr. Isaiah Kuch, Mr. Michael McGraw, The Rev. Rebecca Nickel, The Rev. C. Davies Reed, Ms. Mariann Scott, Ms. Susan Steigerwald, Mr. Sean Sullivan, The Rev. Holly Rankin Zaher, Canon Brendan O’Sullivan-Hale, The Rev. Canon Kristin White, Dr. Laurel Cornell, the Rt. Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, Ms. Janet Brinkworth.

Members Absent: The Rev. Jan Oller, Mr. John Steele, The Rev. Suzanne Wille, Miss Ellie Zaher

The meeting was called to order by the Bishop at 10am. The Bishop welcomed everyone back to meeting in person at Waycross. We all participated in a Liturgy of Return on the property. We returned to the meeting room and the Director of Waycross, David Ramsey, gave a report of the camp status since the pandemic began. Among the items he mentioned were the new employees, current camp totals, building updates for air circulation and safety measures undertaken.

The Bishop asked us all to introduce ourselves since we are meeting in person for the first time in over a year.

Organizing for Business. Canon Kristin White reviewed our diocesan mission and the norms that are used in our meeting.

2022 Budget Formation. The Rev. C Davies Reed gave opening comments and indicated that this draft is out of balance, typical for this time in the process. Adjustments are continuing to be made. C. Davies asked Canon Brendan O’Sullivan-Hale to speak more in-depth about this budget. Canon Brendan advised that an approval is not needed at this time since last year’s canon amendments no longer require a release of the draft budget in the spring. Brendan highlighted items needing further analysis, such as what a normal level of travel spending post-COVID will be. The budget anticipates the conclusion of the 2-year subsidized curacy at St. John’s Lafayette, and two new subsidized curacies (locations to be determined). Income assumes congregations resume full apportionment payments and a 4.75% endowment draw. A new line item is the launch of the Mission Strategy Commission Grants Program. The current draft of the budget anticipates an expenditure of \$110,000. That will be augmented by a grant of \$40,000 from the Episcopal Church Center. Each diocese in the church is eligible for the grant, which is being offered as compensation for the fact that diocesan PPP loan proceeds will be subject to the assessment to the Church Center. Canon Brendan concluded with an explanation of an increase in the bishop’s staff line. 1.5 full-time equivalents were allowed to remain vacant through the pandemic. We will soon be seeking a Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator, and there is a need for additional administrative support for Canon Kristin and Jen Phelps. Also estimates have been made on increases to medical insurance (10%) and dental insurance (5%).

Updates on Hybrid/In-Person Worship. The Bishop indicated that a review of the guidelines was made at the last meeting (5/8/2021), giving over more control to individual churches. Congregations have been working on their own terms and set up for their worship. Leaders have been ready to lead. The Bishop advised that the Executive Team frequently checks the vaccination numbers and are ready to modify these guidelines if needed. Several questions were answered by the Bishop.

Episcopal Fund for Human Need (EFHN). Bishop Jennifer began by reminding the Council of the work of EFHN – to provide grant funds to small nonprofits to assist in various ways. Longtime leaders of the EFHN program had stepped back, and new leadership had not come forward. The Bishop asked the Council what they think we should do. She spoke about the proposal for Executive Council members to go out to solicit feedback from around the diocese about what should happen, which was derailed when the pandemic hit us. She says now that everything is “on the table” – possibly the work could be done through our Neighborhoods listening to needs in their area. The Bishop thinks feedback on past priorities could be useful and nonprofits can always use money. In the past, EFHN planned fundraising to be combined with diocesan funds to make grants, but the fundraising lost momentum and the diocese was funding all grants. There was an extensive conversation on this topic and a committee was created to evaluate this. The committee is comprised of Sally Hardgrove, Lara Dreyer, Rose Anne Grasty and Dick Frey.

Took a short break

Leadership & Diocesan Updates. Several members of the Council gave updates regarding various items including their excitement for the Episcopal Women’s Council which is going strong, the Racial Justice & Education committee’s sponsorship of a service commemorating the Rev. Pauli Murray (July 1 at All Saints), Sacred Ground starting up a new “train the trainers” group, and there were several comments on the upcoming diocesan convention.

Bishop Jennifer offered her report-

- Commented on having multiple confirmation services and returning to in person visitations. It shows health and vitality.
- She recently hosted the New Clergy dinner at her home. It was a nice evening and there was good energy.
- She was invited to lunch with Senator Mike Braun, joining community leaders concerned about hunger. There may be more conversations in the future.
- Looking forward, she is caught in a tightly scheduled calendar, and this is on her mind. She has considered moving her visitation schedule to a two-year schedule, replacing an 18-month schedule. She is carefully choosing what committees she serves on.
- Her next Mutual Ministry Review should be in 2022. Her Sabbatical was moved out one year and is currently scheduled for 2023.

Canon Kristin offered her report-

- The Mission Strategy Committee will meet for first time this coming week.
- She is very grateful to the Rev. Holly Zaher for her work with the youth and Jeffrey Dreyer for serving on the youth steering committee. We are moving forward in looking for a shared position of youth minister at Christ Church Cathedral and the Diocese.
- Churches are reaching out more to reconnect and welcome newcomers.
- College for Congregational Development (CCD) is three weeks away, held at Waycross.

Canon Brendan offered his report-

- The Thriving Congregations grant has been rebranded as Church Buildings for Collaborating Partnerships (CBCP). Each congregation in both dioceses (Indianapolis and Northern Indiana) will be visited. This will be done in four cohort groups. The first group has already been formed and the second group will be formed soon.
- Standing Committee members (the Revs. Drew Downs and Hilary Cooke) will begin looking at the Speedway building and how to best use it, using the knowledge they gain through their participation in CBCP's first cohort.
- Deacon Jim Stanton retires tomorrow from Jeffersonville.
- Canon Brendan has been approached by several congregations to come to speak on stewardship.

Minutes from the May 8, 2021, meeting was reviewed. A motion to accept was made by the Rev. C. Davies Reed, with a second by Michael McGraw. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. No abstentions.

Financials. Canon Brendan began by indicating a proposal by a company called Springreef, (known to Canon Brendan) has been received after we submitted a Request for Proposal (RFP) to be our financial advisor. The Investment and Finance subcommittee will meet next week regarding this proposal. The goal is to narrow down a list of advisors to a few finalists who will then make presentations of their proposal for services to the diocese. The cost for this is \$45,000 plus travel expenses with a \$47,000 cap. He indicated this is a fraction of what we pay in annual fees right now. Canon Brendan reminded us that we need an outside company, clergy and others do not have the capacity to do this; these proposals can be quite complicated, and volunteers need a certain set of skills to read and manage our money. This firm will assist us to select a new advisor. A motion was made to accept the proposal from Springreef to assist us was made by Michael McGraw with a second by Mariann Scott. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. No abstentions.

We took a short break for lunch

Additional Financial Updates

Canon Brendan noted the housing allowance resolution that was sent to all by email for the Rev. Joanna Benskin. A motion to approve was made by the Rev. C. Davies Reed with a second by the Rev. Rebecca Nickel. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. No abstentions.

Indiana Ave update: A letter was included to Council members in the pre-meeting email. Canon Brendan advised that there is an offer under consideration by the Madam Walker Legacy Center. The diocese is participating in a back-up offer if the current offer does not go through. Canon Brendan indicated that we are trying to protect these assets and wanting to do the best for the neighborhood. The diocese and St. Philip's have strong leverage, whether or not the diocese is ultimately a part-owner of the 719 Indiana Avenue property.

Treasurer's report. Dr. Laurel Cornell presented her treasurer's report, emailed to the Council members in advance. A motion to approve was made by Sally Hardgrove with a second by Michael McGraw. It was PASSED UNANIMOUSLY for audit.

At this time, the Council went into Executive Session to discuss a confidential matter. No action was taken during the session.

The Bishop closed our meeting with prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:41pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Janet Brinkworth