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**MINUTES**

**GOVERNING BOARD MEETING**

**Monday June 18, 2018**

**Location: Social Hall**

**Present:** Paul Arnold, Jean Reed Bahle, Tim Creamer, Patrick Eaman, Win Irwin, Carol Kooistra, Brad Miller, Katie Mitchell, Dana Munk, Amy Preston, Bettegail Shively, Mark St. Amour, Chip Wall

**Absent:** Jim Ayres, Kathleen Delp Higgins

**Staff:** Jack Woller, ~~W. Fred Wooden~~

**Guests:** Jon Spalding, Wesley Beck, Kirsten Lundeen, Don Wheeler, Jim Winter-Troutwine, Todd Johnson, Judith Kienitz, Gregory Kurylowicz, Keith Isenhart, TJ Wiggins, Steve Nagel, Kevin White, Mike Grass, Cheryl Mellblom, Virginia Anzengruber, Judy Botts, Lisa Nadziejka, Roxanne Sherwood, James McNorton, Sharon Morley, Sallie Boer, Nessa McCasey, John Considine, Bruce Morrison, Carolyn Morrison, Meredith Bradley, Marie Maher Penny, Heather Palmer, Yolene Moore, Buzz Wynbeek, and a few other guests who chose not to add their names.

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by the Chair, Win Irwin.

1. **Call to Community** Carol Kooistra Contemplation

Brad Miller read from a list of "Twenty Five Principles of Adult Behavior" by John Perry Barlow ([https://kottke.org/18/02/a-list-of-25-principles-of-adult-behavior-by-john-perry-barlow](https://kottke.org/18/02/a-list-of-25-principles-of-adult-behavior-by-john-perry-barlow" \t "_blank)).

1. **Congregant Comments** Guests Comments

Bruce Morrison spoke of the value of Character School, requesting financial support for it and getting the new Education Director. Bruce offered parent help with the candidate screening process if needed.

Nessa McCasey supported the pending motion on Fountain Street's role in addressing homelessness. She said that each person matters and it is important to speak directly with the people using the church grounds when making the proposed changes.

Lisa Nadziejka spoke about being a former Fountain Street Church social worker  
and asked for more particulars about what enforcement of sleeping on the porch would entail. Lisa asked whether we want to reach out to them or push them away.

Virginia Anzengruber, the Content and Communications Manager, said that she is opposed to enforcing building use without more specifics and time for overlapping services. Virginia said that a church is a place that welcomes everyone and the kind of love in the Bible asks us to actually serve our community. She offered to do work on this topic, such as a possible committee.

James McNorton identified as someone who sleeps outside the church. James said there are people who can't go to shelters because they have a disability, can't think right, or who find there are limited beds at Mel Trotter for women. James said everybody needs a safe place to sleep. James offered ideas to ease tension in the social hall, such as setting up more tables or putting up reserved signs. James said that God is here at FSC.

Cheryl Mellblom said that as a mother of a gay, black, LGBT, person who is homeless, she does not see how FSC can "free the mind, grow the soul, change the world" without addressing housing insecurity.

Yolanda said she has been sleeping outside at FSC as a place of refuge, that provides safety and shelter. Yolanda said that many of the people taking advantage of these services are working on bigger things, trying to connect to resources, seeking their dreams, and dealing with obstacles they can't control. She said that Degage and Mel Trotters are not enough resources. She said that some people are surviving and some are not. She says she doesn't want the doors closed on her opportunities to speak.

Keith said they left Mel Trotter due to the uncleanliness. He thanked everyone for letting them attend services and lie their heads down.

Steven, Keith’s son said he is very grateful for being able to stay here with there being few places at Mel Trotters. He is looking for somewhere dry to sleep.

Roxanne said she has been sleeping outside FSC for a few days because it makes her feel safe when her husband isn't here to protect her, as they recently moved from out of state.

Don Wheeler said that the church's attitude toward marginalized and LGBT folks is one of the major reasons he has a home in this church. Don added that while it is very important to work on the housing issue, there is a difference between helping the homeless and allowing them to sleep on the porch.

John Considine said that he has no answers but he is glad that the church Board and congregation is having the conversation. John said that whatever decision was made, it should add meaning and dignity. John said that it is key to collaborate with the broader community's resources.

1. **GB minutes – May 21, 2018\*** Paul Submit to File

***MOTION*** by Win Irwin to submit the April minutes to file. Motion passed.

1. **Financials** Tim Approval

Tim Creamer said there are several ideas to counteract the anticipated $30,000- 35,000 pledge income shortfall for this year. Tim said there will be a Great Lakes Scrip giftcard sale fundraiser. Tim said Jack Woller is working on a July grant application to the Grand Rapids Community Foundation that could help cover costs of providing church space to small groups, with funds possibly available in 2018. Tim said that the Finance Committee is looking into funds in the balance sheet that have been dormant. Finally, Tim said that certain church groups may be willing to contribute to operations to offset the administrative cost of running their group.

Tim Creamer said that utility expenses for the year are currently at $60,000 to date out of the budgeted $80,000 for the whole year.

***MOTION*** by Carol Kooistra to approve the Finance Report. Seconded by Brad Miller. Motion passed.

1. **Executive Team Report**  Jack

No comments.

Carol Kooistra asked whether there has been a final report from the interim Education Director, now that Dana Lee has finished out her contractual time period. Jack Woller said that there has been no report to his knowledge.

1. **Transition Committee Report**  Jean

Jean Reed Bahle said that the Nominating Committee met on May 8th and set goals to come up with the slate of the Search Committee for the Senior Minister search. Jean said that the goal to have chosen those Search members is September 15th. Carol Kooistra said that the deadline is June 22 for nominating sheets to be submitted, from which they will choose 14 candidates to present to the congregation at the annual meeting in November.

Jean Reed Bahle said that there have been two Connections circles meeting this spring on the subject of change. Jean said that there will be two four-week Connections series starting in the fall. Jean asked for formal Board support of the Connections circles as a vehicle to connect church members and strengthen the social fabric.

1. **GB Foundation Representative**

***MOTION*** by Brad Miller to approve the nomination of Michael Wolfe for the Foundation Board. Seconded by Tim Creamer. Motion passed.

1. **Nominating Committee Report**   
     
   Patrick Eaman said that the Nominating Committee has a list of potential future Board candidates. Patrick said that there is currently one person willing to go on the ballot in the fall for the five positions coming open on the Governing Board. Bettegail Shively said that the goal is to have eight people up for the five open positions.
2. **Portico Direction/ Discussion of the Motion**  All Reflections

Win Irwin introduced the topic of building use by our neighbors facing housing insecurity and the background of the three-part motion proposed by Brad Miller at the May Governing Board meeting.

Brad Miller said that the Board has received about 63 written letters, in addition to several public discussions among several church groups. Brad said that the majority of input was in favor of his motion, which he presented again in a modified version. Brad said his amendments stressed that enforcement (step one) be “regular and sustained”, removed the direction of where funding should come from (step two, second sentence), and deleted the suggestion that “church staff” could represent FSC at the Coalition To End Homelessness (step three), leaving the option open for a Social Action Committee member to participate.

Brad Miller said he is proposing a task force within the Social Action Committee centered on housing, which he invited anyone interested to join.

***MOTION*** by Brad Miller to amend his tabled motion to the following:

1) Regular and sustained enforcement of the building policy against sleeping on the church grounds should commence at the earliest opportunity but no later than September 1, 2018.

2) We should immediately contract with someone knowledgeable of homeless programs in the area that could be available on Sunday mornings in the Social Hall to answer questions, direct people to appropriate local services, and help staff in dealing with any problems that may arise on site.

[3) Fountain Street](https://maps.google.com/?q=3)+Fountain+Street&entry=gmail&source=g) Church should formally join the Grand Rapids Area Coalition To End Homelessness. Sixty other community organizations are members of this coalition and work together to identify gaps or overlap in services. FSC should be at the table to fully understand the scope of this problem in the region and truly meaningful actions that can be taken. There is no fee to join the coalition and FSC could be represented at their meetings by a member of the Social Action Committee.

Seconded by Tim Creamer. 1 abstention. Motion to amend passed.

Jean Reed Bahle said that her takeaway from reading the congregant comments to the Board is a strong endorsement of the second and third points of the motion. Jean said that her remaining questions were largely about the first part of the motion, that any enforcement would need to happen slowly, carefully, and with strong communication.

Katie Mitchell agreed that she supported the second and third points of the motion. Katie said that she did research into liability and insurance and could not find any instances of church liability but that she would not want to have anyone hurt here at the church.

Katie Mitchell referred to many letters from congregants saying the church has been "taken over" by homeless neighbors. Katie said this might be because people have stepped back instead of engaging with neighbors. Katie said that if congregants are stepping back because they are afraid, the question is: "*what we are afraid of*" and how to deal with that discomfort.

Patrick Eaman said that many people have been silent because they did not know what to do. Patrick said that we are not prepared to have a specific, detailed action plan. Patrick said that he appreciates the work done by Brad Miller and supports a process to making things better.

Brad Miller said that "respectful enforcement" could start with the posting of signage stating the rules and the Executive Team would have to determine the details of the enforcement.

Chip Wall said that this is a complicated issue many people have struggled with. Chip said that by speaking to many members from both the 9:30 and 11 am services, he heard that "*something needs to happen*." Chip said that FSC is not a shelter and lacks facilities to be one. Chip said he researched two local churches' approaches: United Methodist has a lottery-based work program and Westminster Church has a food pantry. Chip said both churches said that when people have slept on their property, those people left when told rules and asked to leave.

Chip Wall also said he had reached out to two other couples who have left FSC because they did not feel included here, aside from this issue. Chip said that there does need to be enough members and funds to keep the building open.

Carol Kooistra said that this is the hardest issue she has dealt with in her many years at Fountain Street Church, with much pain around it.

Mark StaintAmour said that this meeting is not transparent or indicative of the May meeting. Mark said that a lot of the discussion at the last meeting was about physical barriers and many of the letters included hurtful 'other'ing. Mark said that the church has been failing to live up to its mission. Mark StaintAmour spoke to their experience, personally and in nonprofit leadership.

Bettegail Shively said that it seems the people sleeping on the portico have developed into a community. Bettegail said that, by doing nothing to stop it, everyone in the church has colluded to create a false sense of home on the portico, which it might now be cruel to abolish, even though it is an unhealthy place to sleep. Bettegail added that this is also difficult because of fiscal responsibility, given that these ideas have no teeth when the church has no money.

Amy Preston spoke as an attorney, to the potential risk of being sued. Amy said that it is important to mitigate the risk-- and that FSC has no plausible deniability if there ever *is* an issue. Amy said that she does not take any pride in letting people sleep outside without bathrooms or kitchens. Amy said there is nothing in the motion on the table keeping people from attending church or otherwise participating in FSC events or programming. Amy said that September might be too soon for a feasible timeline.

Jean Reed Bahle agreed that September might be too soon for a hard deadline.

Paul Arnold said that his impression of the letters to the Governing Board is that they are largely respectful and in favor of the motion by Brad Miller.

Tim Creamer said that Board represents the mission of the church, not specifically representing the congregants. Tim said that he cannot vote for this motion until he knows what it will cost. Tim asked for more input from Community Rebuilders.

Brad Miller said that the Board cannot afford to not take action tonight. Brad said that there has been significant criticism of the church for not enforcing the existing building use policy and that more money will be lost if a decision is not made. Brad emphasized the "at the earliest opportunity" language of his motion.

Bettegail Shively asked if it would be an option to contract with someone local and available more than Sunday mornings, so that they might be able to help decide how to enforce it.

Jack Woller spoke from a personal viewpoint, asking the church to live up to its idea of being different than other churches (not merely researching what is being done by other churches) and living up to its own mission.

Win Irwin said that he is willing to vote for the motion, only with the understanding that the church will work as hard as they can to find a place for everyone from our housing-insecure neighbors who wants a home.

***MOTION*** by Bettegail Shively to amend the motion to say "no later than December 1st" instead of "no later than September 1st." Seconded by Patrick Eaman. Motion passed.

Overall motion passed. Katie Mitchell and Mark StaintAmour opposed.

1. **New Business**

Bettegail Shively brought up the topic of hiring a new Education Director. Jack Woller said that the job description is up, posted widely and intentionally to be inclusive, and will be an anonymous process. Jack said that the application deadline is July 6th; there will be an assignment asked of all candidates due the 13th, with several rounds of interviews to follow. Jack said that an offer could be made by the end of July, assuming there are quality candidates.

Carol Kooistra confirmed that there will be no July Board meeting.

1. **Adjourn & De-brief** Motion to adjourn All

***MOTION*** by Paul Arnold to adjourn at 8:55. Seconded by Carol Kooistra. Motion passed.

**Upcoming GB meetings and events**:

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| Next OC/ET meeting | Monday, August 5, 5:30 -  6:30 p.m. | OC, Sr.Minister, Ex Dir  Board Room |
| Next GB meeting | Monday, August 20, 7:00-8:30 p.m. | GB, senior staff, Room 109 |

**Secretary Paul Arnold  
Scribe Katie Assarian**