

Knox Council

March 23, 2021

7 pm

Zoom Meeting due to COVID 19

Attendees: **Executive Committee:**

Beth Martin (Chair - Council), Vanessa Voerman (Vice-Chair - Council), Rainie Murphy (Secretary), Fred Gallop (Chair – Finance), Heather Robinson (Chair – Ministry & Personnel), Boyd Hunter (Chair – Trustees), Mannie Lewis (Chair – Property), Nancy Kent (Chair – Spiritual Oversight), Rev. Sandra Cox

Council Members:

Debbie Chisholm, Jean Collier, Olive McIldoon, Dave Duggan, Caroline Gallop, Gail Miner, Tony Mombourquette, Janet Mombourquette, Eleanor Lewis

Guests:

Henry Ellsworth, Gardia Voerman

Absent: Kevin Webb (excused)

Minutes

Agenda item: Welcome Prayer & Lighting of Christ Candle

Rev. Sandra led the group in a welcoming prayer, the Christ Candle was lit, our Mission Statement was recited and the meeting was constituted in the name of Jesus Christ.

Agenda item: Reflection

No reflection was prepared for this meeting.

Agenda item: Approval of Past Minutes

The minutes were reviewed, no changes.

Motion to Approve: James O'Connell

Seconded: Caroline Gallop

MOTION CARRIED

Agenda item: Approval of Submitted Reports

Reports submitted in advance of the meeting were:

- Ministry & Personnel
- Ways & Means
- Property
- Region 15

Call for discussion/questions did not receive any answer.

Rev. Sandra gave the Clergy Report:

- The response to the return to in-person Sunday Worship services has been extremely positive
- Rev. Sandra & John Lindsay-Botten have been working on Easter Services. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services will be pre-recorded due to cleaning requirements of COVID 19.
- Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday will be live services. Palm Sunday will celebrate 2 baptisms, Easter Sunday will celebrate 2 new confirmands, 3 new members by transfer and welcome a new Elder.

Motion to Approve: James O'Connell

Seconded: Gail Miner

MOTION CARRIED

Agenda item: Spiritual Oversight

- Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Services:
 - Services will be pre-recorded for both of these services
 - Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday will be in-person.
- Sunday Morning Process (Fellowship Committee):
 - Having a small problem with people showing up for worship service without them being registered.
 - Human error is part of issue. Sometimes people register for one Sunday and show up on the wrong one, sometimes people call in after the office is closed on Friday and they get missed, etc.
 - Some people admit that they have not registered, but want to know if there is an available seat.
 - Discussion around Knox “policy” that we require registration in advance. Other churches also have “must pre-register” requirements. Discussion around you can’t go to medical office to make appointment, appointments must be made over the phone, Doctor’s appointments are done by phone, etc.
 - Discussion around if somebody shows up without pre-registering, it’s “easy” to write down their contact information if we have available seats. Individuals who are not registered, could wait in the Narthex until worship service is about to begin, and then be seated based on attendance/availability.
 - Concern raised by E. Lewis about being a greeter and having to turn people away from worship service.
 - N. Kent raised point that on “regular” Sundays, this is manageable, but on our “big ticket” Sundays, Easter, Christmas, etc. this could be a larger issue. If we begin to allow people to wait in the Narthex to see if there are available seats, we might be able to take 4 people and have 6 people waiting, so we still have to turn 2 people away. That’s why it’s important that we have a policy of pre-registration so that it can be applied equally.
 - E. Lewis raised concerns over turning people away from greeter’s standpoint.
 - J. Collier referred to Region 15’s policy and NS Department of Health as being the standard of what must be met.

MOTION: If people arrive without being pre-registered, we will take their contact information, ask the required COVID screening questions and seat them based on capacity provided that it is not against Region 15/NS Dept. Health policy. (James O’Connell)

SECONDED: Vanessa Voerman

MOTION CARRIED

Agenda item: Community of Faith Profile Committee

- Update on Search/Selection process: James O’Connell (Chair – Community of Faith Profile Team)
 - Committee met with D. Hewitt, Region 15
 - Region 15 will advise if Knox’s profile is approved on March 26, 2021
 - Once approval is received, ChurchHub is activated and search process begins immediately.
 - For the past year, D. Hewitt has been advising any inquiries of interest in openings in HRM that Knox would be posting a position this year.
 - Discussion around the potential requirement for a budget to allow the Team to visit prospective Ministers who might be in other areas of the province, to view their preaching styles and/or to have them come to us for an interview, etc.
 - The Team will not meet in-person until after Easter.

MOTION: To provide the Search/Selection Team a budget of \$2000 to use as travel allowance or other costs involved with the search of a new Minister. (Fred Gallop)

SECONDED: Jean Collier

MOTION CARRIED

Agenda item: Organ Committee Update

- Jean Collier presented a detailed report on the various options that the Organ Committee investigated
- Also included in the report was a timeline of the process
- with the Executive Committee needing to make the decision to procure the Casavant organ from First Baptist Church.
- Financial comparisons were explained along with fundraising plans.
 - Fred Gallop asked the “young people” on Council whether or not they would be in support of taking on the financial obligation of the project.

- James O'Connell stated that he had grown up with an electronic organ in his home church, but also had the "fortunate opportunity" to visit several cathedrals and hear a pipe organ. In his opinion, there was no comparison in the sound and he fully supports the pipe organ project.
 - Katie Kent stated that while she loves the sound of a pipe organ, she is a business student, and would like further information regarding the long-term maintenance costs.
 - Vanessa Voerman spoke of how Knox sanctuary was purposefully built to house a pipe organ. She views the donation of the Casavant as a "gift from God" and spoke to how the sound of a pipe organ resonates within the soul like no other instrument. Additionally, she spoke to how the Casavant would add to the reputation of Knox's music ministry and ability within our community, HRM and the province.
 - Rainie Murphy indicated her agreement with Vanessa's and James' views.
 - Nancy Kent spoke up about growing up in a church with a pipe organ and spoke in favour of the "phenomonal opportunity" that Knox has in installing a Casavant and that the quality is amazing.
 - Rev. Sandra Cox spoke about when her family was in church a couple of years ago for Christmas and John Lindsay-Botten played our pipe organ and how her family were amazed at how different the Christmas carols sounded when played on the pipe organ.
- Nancy Kent raised the question of maintenance costs for the pipe organ. Jean replied that to keep the pipe organ in the best condition possible, it should be looked at twice a year. Each inspection would cost \$500 so maintenance costs would be \$1000 annually.
- Nancy Kent also asked about the weight of the Casavant compared to the weight of our current organ and was the weight of the millwork considered as part of the weight. Jean explained that if you are sitting in the congregation, you won't see any visible changes once the Casavant is placed. The millwork and the decorative pipes that are currently in place will remain and therefore, there is no difference in weight there. Where the difference in weight comes in, is in the interior components of the organ. Currently the weight of the organ is estimated at 10,000 lbs. and the Casavant weighs 7500 lbs.
- Boyd Hunter asked why our current organ needs to be removed instead of just being turned off.
 - Jean explained that turning the organ off addressed the fire hazard associated with the blower, but did not remove the danger of the poor construction of the interior pipes/framing of the pipe organ. Pictures were shown in the presentation that showed how the pipes are hazardly positioned at angles, that some pipes have been glued into place, and that some of the framing is not structurally sound either.
 - Jean further explained that the organ is positioned where it is within the sanctuary so that the choir can hear the notes of the organ and then they can perform at the best of their ability. Even with the piano positioned where it is, when it is being played, often the choir cannot hear their notes which makes singing to be more challenging as a choir.
- Boyd reiterated that he did not understand why the pipe organ had to be removed, and that originally the cost to remove was quoted at \$30,000 and now it was \$10,000.
 - Jean re-explained that the interior pipes are not structurally sound. She gave an example that if anything hit the front of the sanctuary, it is possible that the entire organ would come crumbling down.
 - Jean explained that the \$30,000 was a misunderstanding at the beginning of the project. Acadia Pipe Organs have clarified that the costs as such:
 - Dismantlement of Casavant, transport to Knox and inventory of current organ \$10,000
 - Dismantlement of Knox's organ (pipes, manual, blower, etc) and removal costs \$10,000
 - Reconstruction of Casavant organ within Knox's façade/footprint \$60,000
(all above are before HST)
- Boyd then questioned the actual usage of a pipe organ during our worship services. He quoted an article that he had read where in another church, they have a pipe organ, but it is seldom used. He talked about how the electronic organ offers "real-time" sound through a series of over 20 speakers.
 - James O'Connell asked if Boyd was suggesting that we now investigate the purchase of 20 speakers on top of an electronic organ.
 - Boyd presented that if the cost of an electronic organ was suggested that it would cover the speakers as well.
 - Beth Martin then spoke and said that we could debate the qualities of an electronic organ vs. pipe organ infinitely. She then reminded Council that we had asked the Organ Committee to investigate the options available to us and that they had done so and presented them in their report.
 - Mannie Lewis asked if the new organ would fit within the current façade/footprint of our organ or if there would be a change to the look of the sanctuary. Jean replied that the Casavant will absolutely fit within the same façade and that there will be no change to the appearance of the sanctuary.
 - Gardia Voerman spoke up to raise awareness that a Casavant is "a jewel, a gem, a plum that is recognized not only in Canada but around the world". If we were to purchase an electronic organ, we would have an investment of at least \$60,000 with a value of \$50,000 because of the

requirement to remove the current organ regardless of what we do. "We would be the envy of many churches who only wish they could have a Casavant."

- Nancy Kent raised the appearance of the front of Knox's sanctuary and how beautiful it is. She inquired about the casing and the pipes that are currently there and if there would be any change in appearance. It was explained that the woodwork/millwork/casing/façade is all the same thing and that the pipes that are seen on the outside of the organ are just decorative. There will be no change in appearance to the front of the sanctuary regardless of option chosen.
- Mannie Lewis asked that if the organ once completed, is worth \$400,000, should Knox be "down and out" who would buy it? This led to much discussion on the terminology of value vs. replacement value.
- Fred Gallop went through the numbers that basically we are looking for \$50,000 to fundraise for and regardless of what we put as value, we would have to go to the congregation for that type of request.

MOTION: To present the organ presentation to the congregation at a congregational meeting and ask for funding as based on the presentation. (Rainie Murphy)

SECONDED: Tony Mombourquette

Questions raised:

- Vanessa Voerman stated that 30 years ago when this church was built, the congregation voted to have a pipe organ. It was the organ committee's mandate to find viable options, which they have done and now it needs to be decided at congregational level.
- Henry Ellsworth asked that if the organ is so valuable, why did First Baptist have a problem "getting rid of it". It was clarified that there was much interest (both locally and nationally) in the organ, but the congregation of First Baptist felt that Knox was the best new home for the organ.
- Dave Duggan asked if we move forward with the organ, what happens if we don't raise the money required? Jean Collier replied that she is the last person to spend/commit money recklessly. But once in a while, an opportunity is provided that you just can't refuse. We've raised money for elevator, roof, kitchen and many other things at Knox. Sometimes a little faith is required and we do the best we can.
- Boyd Hunter spoke to need for every option to be presented.
- Heather Robinson spoke to need for \$50,000 to be raised for pipe organ, or it would require at least the same for an electronic organ.
- Mannie Lewis requested that if we go to congregational meeting, we have it in-person meeting. It was discussed that we will be able to have both in-person meeting as well as ZOOM meeting at the same time. That would be dependent on COVID 19 restrictions being the same as today. All health protocols must be adhered to at the time of the meeting.
- Caroline Gallop spoke to possibility of having someone with knowledge of electronic organs be present at the congregational meeting.
- Eleanor Lewis wondered about the use of the word donation in relation to the organ.
- Heather Robinson clarified that the money spent to date has come out of the Organ Fund.
- Beth Martin stated that the donation was explained in the presentation tonight.
- Dave Duggan questioned how \$10,000 expenditure was approved. Heather Robinson spoke to the Executive Committee approved the spend.
- Gardia Voerman asked about the wording of the motion or whether we should clarify the ask for funding vs permission to fundraise.

AMENDED MOTION: To present the organ presentation to the congregation at a congregational meeting, along with an organ expert who can speak to the differences between electronic and pipe organs; and ask the congregation for permission to proceed with the project and fundraising. (Rainie Murphy)

SECONDED: Gail Miner

MOTION CARRIED: 11/18

Agenda item: Ministry & Personnel Request

- Heather Robinson requested that all Committees give the new office administrator a 6 -8 week breathing period to get into the position and learn who people are and what the job entails.
- Gail Miner asked that it would still be appropriate to call the office to book space for meetings, etc.
- A reminder to all that any request of work from a paid employee should first be approved by Ministry & Personnel before being asked of the employee.
- Heather Robinson requested that the exterior door at the office entrance needs to be repaired. It has not been closing properly for several weeks. The Property Team will investigate.
- John Lindsay-Botten's 2021 vacation request was approved. In addition, he has submitted 55 hours of additional time worked due to COVID 19 and various other obligations.

MOTION: To pay John the outstanding hours as submitted. (Fred Gallop)

SECONDED: Gail Miner

MOTION CARRIED 13/17 :
NAYS 3
ABSTAIN 1

Agenda item: Re-Opening of Building (COVID 19)

- Referred back to Executive Committee

Agenda item: Executive Committee – Budgetary Approval Thresholds

- Boyd Hunter read from an email that he had sent detailing concerns with decision making.
- Beth Martin said that she believed what he was suggesting would be part of Governance and would have to be examined there.
- Boyd said that it could be postponed to another date.
- Other comments/concerns were invited and none were tabled.

CLOSING PRAYER: Given by Reverend Sandra Cox.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:49 p.m.