

Administrative Council Meeting, 12/10/2020, 7:30 pm via Zoom

Minutes – APPROVED 1 6 2021

In Attendance: Edie Wiarda, John Seto, Kerry Plank, Brenda Beck, Rodney Gasaway, Jim Alford III, Charles Schmunk, Sandy Schmunk, Joy Barrett, Mike Vanderspool

Guests: Nolan Peterson, Heather Hay, Bill Ruddock

Note that Minutes for meeting on November 12, 2020 were approved via email.

1. Opening Prayer – Edie. From “Divine Hours” book of daily prayers, for the time of Advent. Psalm 37:1-7. Be still and wait patiently for the Lord. Prayer: Make your presence known in this difficult time; keep us focused on our real work of being the hands and feet of Christ.
2. Finance Report – Kerry.
 - Proposed budget was approved unanimously by Finance team.
 - This is a “leap of faith” budget; more so than any other year I’ve been involved.
 - We expect more uncertainty than typical, so we need close monitoring and flexibility to adjust as needed.
 - Propose \$683,235 total budget expenditures for 2021 calendar year. This is a slight increase over what was approved for 2020, which was \$681,725.
 - Per SPRC, budget includes merit increases for the staff
 - Per Trustees, includes assumptions about how we expect to utilize the facility in 2021 due to COVID -19
 - Biggest additional expense for 2021 is a line item placeholder for Social Media / Website / Communications / Branding upgrade. This line item is set at \$32,500.
 - Income: \$598,000 is the budgeted estimate. Based on estimated pledged income of roughly \$525,000, and unpledged income of \$75,000. This unpledged amount is significantly less than a typical (non-COVID) year, which is usually at or above \$100,000. So far as of end of Nov 2020, actual unpledged income is about \$67,000. So the \$75,000 seems a good estimate.
 - So we anticipate spending will exceed income in 2021 by roughly \$85,000. This will be financed by drawing down from the Operating Surplus which currently stands at \$199,520 as of end of Nov. By the end of December, we expect the Operating Surplus to be between \$180,000 to \$190,000. So by end of 2021, we anticipate Operating Surplus will be drawn down to approx. \$100,000. (Operating Surplus is accumulated surplus amounts from the church’s operating account; this is available for discretionary spending.)
 - The Finance Team’s thinking is that we want to move aggressively forward on the goals of the church, but also want to be careful and prudent.

Charles: please clarify line item amount for Branding/Website/Marketing. In the version that was distributed by Edie in advance of the meeting, I am seeing an amount for this of \$12,500. But your presentation indicated this would be \$32,500.

Kerry: Edie distributed a prior draft version by accident; it has been superseded by the version that I sent out on 12/9. Correct amount is as I presented, \$32,500.

Mike: It is tough to propose a budget like this; a deficit of this size is unusual for our congregation. Certainly within the past 3 years we've tried to bring a balanced budget. I am comfortable with this budget because we are in unprecedented times: this is the rainy day. The \$32,500 for web/communication I see as investment in our congregation and our people. We have to find new ways to increase our connectedness. I am in support.

John: Because of the PPP loan we have received and that was forgiven, our Operating Surplus actually increased in 2020 by roughly \$40,000. So how do we appropriately use this money? The government intended that we use it to support salaries, and we have done that; and now this proposal involves adding part time staff. This proposed budget feels to me like an appropriate use of these funds, both in terms of being aggressive and in terms of not sitting on the PPP money.

Bill Ruddock: Finance Team felt that this is clearly a 1-year process – they feel that next year we will need to come back with a balanced budget for the following year.

Kerry: Correct. And monitor carefully and make course corrections as needed.

Motion by Kerry Plank to adopt Operating Budget for 2021 in the amount of \$683,235,28. Second by Jim Alford. Approved unanimously.

3. Objectives for 2021

Edie – Last set of updates on 2020 objectives:

- LGBTQ initiative Task Force has had its first meeting; expecting first set of recommendations early in 2021.
- Web/branding task force is evaluating bids for web/branding/design work.
- Safe Sanctuaries policy revisions expected early in 2021.

Edie – Draft Objectives for 2021, based on last meeting. Anything you'd like to add or change? Many of these goals do not belong directly on Ad Council's plate: several are staff-led, or for which Ad Council is not the logical leader. So how do we work with John and SPRC to communicate these objectives to staff? And will we need to create more work groups to take the lead on some of these, analogous to the LGBTQ Task Force?

Mike – I like this list. Are these in any order of priority?

Edie – no attempt at prioritization yet.

Mike – we have some great committees that we can task with these; our job should be to focus and help and ask how we can help resource those groups.

Joy – this list can be a communication tool to help groups know what direction we are going, keep everyone pulling in the same direction. Edie, you and I should discuss with whom this should be shared and timeline. SPRC has a new staff assessment tool and process; I could imagine this list of goals being incorporated into that.

Kerry – Regarding “Congregational Care and Connection” – is this meant to capture the sense of isolation and mental health concerns due to COVID, is this captured here?

Edie – That was the intent of that first bullet, yes, but suggest that this is an issue that existed for us even before COVID, tho' now certainly magnified.

John – This is something that could be a link between Ad Council and SPRC, as we've been discussing with staff; I could see this being a specific goal for some staff members.

Brenda – As we ID who will be leads for particular activities, it will be good for us to be clear about their objectives – have some metrics, some tracking that occurs month-to-month, and we can ask regularly what support they need.

Edie – There is a lot of work to be done to pull together staff, volunteers; lots of communication is needed. Relates to leadership development.

Brenda – this is long term and evolving as we move thru next year.

John – For next meeting, think about using a google doc / comments approach, so that people could contribute ideas of who might be the owner or sponsor or lead. E.g., for that first bullet, we might suggest that SPRC be the owner, with Joy as lead in her role as staff supervisor. Or for Safe Sanctuaries, we might suggest that SPRC is owner, with Susan as lead staff person. If we did this, we might be close to assigning this out.

Kerry – I want to provide an update on the work of the Web/Branding team. Good people on the team; great potential. We have reviewed 2 proposals from firms on new branding design, web platforms, communication strategies: we are very excited about one of them in particular. Expect to have picked a vendor by end of next week; hope to execute a contract before the end of the year. If so, timeline would be to end roughly end of April. Kate led a workshop and created a Positioning and Marketing strategy document; this has been input for discussions with vendors.

Charles – one of our objectives is to educate the congregation on likely separation of UMC. We need to provide our congregation with a better understanding and what the separation actually entails, and what the differences are between likely segments. We need to move on this activity. We have the capacity within our congregation to prepare and present this info; doing so will address the requests we have received without the need for involvement of outside groups.

Joy – we have done this type of information sessions where this information and detailed resources have been shared, this was before the last GC, which then got postponed.

Charles – We need to get this information out to large numbers of the congregation. There has been an issue of poor attendance to these events in the past; they are not an effective means of sharing the alternatives with the greater portion of our congregation.

Edie – Note that this is about more than just two groups, Traditionalists and “everyone else.” A third group was announced this week. Info for congregation can include how to connect to local congregations or groups that are likely to go into various affiliations.

4. New Business -- None

5. Closing Prayer. Joy – You have poured out your Spirit; we know we are taking a risk in order to be more vibrant in ministry. Keep our hearts soft, so that we may see where we can come alongside in help and support. Thank you for the saints of this church that we have recently lost.

(Prepared by Edie Wiarda)