Zion Lutheran Church Minot

Church Council Meeting

Date: Tuesday, August 15, 2023

* Meeting called to order by President John Butgereit at 6:33 PM
* Opening Prayer by Pastor Elaine.
* In attendance at this meeting: John Butgereit, John Thompson, Matt Sundahl, Melissa Helgeson, Kristi Asendorf, Rich Jensen, Sherry Broderick, Erica Atkinson, Pastor Elaine, and John Gruenberg on the phone.
* No Executive Session was needed for tonight’s meeting.
* We recognized two visitors from the Trust Committee: Mike Uran, and Dave DeMers.
* President Butgereit asked everyone to take a few minutes to review the packets in front of them containing the agenda, the minutes of the last meeting plus the special meeting of August 8th. After review, Matt Sundahl made a motion to accept the agenda, minutes and reports as presented. Second by Melissa Helgeson. Motion carried.
* New Business
  + The two representatives from the Trust Committee handed out some documents explaining the work of that committee. They explained the funding from the committee was reserved for people, programs and missions that require going over and above the annual church operating budget. It is not intended to relieve the congregation of the responsibility of funding the annual church expenses. The four targeted areas for funding are Faith Journey Enhancement, Community Service, Worship Enhancement, and Children and Youth. The current need for a new heat pump does not fall within their operation guidelines, but they said the committee would be open to helping in areas within their focus to help free up some funds for the equipment replacement. September is Trust Envelope Month. They will use this opportunity to encourage support of our heat equipment replacement.
  + Personnel Committee relationship with the Church Council. Luke Schaefer, the chair for the committee, called in and was on speaker. He talked about the work being done by the Personnel Committee, and also trying to define how the committee relates to the Church Council. Should the Council task them with items directly, or does the Committee have an authority to conduct business on its own? This was discussed later in the meeting.

Luke also reported the exit interview with Jen Barta was done the prior week and it went well. The exit interview for Crystal Larson would be done on the upcoming Thursday. At this point, the call with Luke Schaefer was ended.

* + The council discussed the relationships between working committees and the council. It was understood that the committees work on their assignments and make recommendations to the council, who has final approval. To save committees from doing unnecessary work, it was decided to have the committees submit their upcoming meeting agenda to the full church council via email, who could give it an okay or to make suggestions on what might be a better way to address an issue. More detailed instructions for the Personnel Committee will be tabled until the next Council meeting.
  + Regarding finding temporary/interim help due to the two resignations on staff, there was discussion on what the Personnel Committee could or should be doing with this effort. John Butgereit made a motion to authorize the Zion Personnel Committee to offer a part time contract to Jen Barta to do some bookkeeping evenings. That work would include paying bills, processing payroll, oversee the counting of offerings, and recording income. This contract will be for two months, will be for 5 hours or less per week, and will have a termination clause in it. Matt Sundahl seconded the motion. Voting was 7 yes and 1 no (Melissa Helgeson).
  + Rebel Give problem. In January of 2023, some families that had been automatically giving to the church were dropped from the Rebel Give system. It’s unknown how many this affects, and we’ll need to find some people to devote some time to examine Rebel Giving to see what we may have lost. This could have an impact on the deficit we are running this year but we won’t know how much until we’ve had the opportunity to look it over. This does have a significant impact on the inactive membership list we are currently working on.
  + Freezer proposal, and heat pump and awning update. The Building and Grounds Committee looked at the replacement of the upright freezer in the kitchen. After going over several options, the Committee recommended the purchase of a good residential freezer at a significant savings over commercial units. Because of the number of uses per week, the residential unit will work. The committee recommended the Council authorize the purchase at an amount not to exceed $1300 including tax. The Committee will do the delivery, installation of the new unit, and the removal of the old unit. Regarding the proposed awning on the southwest door, the Building & Grounds Committee felt the church was not able to complete this project because of cost and because we only received one bid. Instead, the Committee recommends the installation of two runs of snow fence at that corner of the building, and asked the Council to authorize the purchase of fence at an amount not to exceed $100. (The church already owns steel posts). The Committee will do the installation. Because the motion came from a committee, there is no second to the motion required. Motion passed. Regarding the heat pump, we are still waiting for a second bid or even a third bid. The Committee is also looking at funding options, and will look into a building and/or improvement loan resource through the ELCA.
  + Nursery Policy Adaptation was tabled to the next meeting.
  + Outdoor Enhancement Concrete Contract. There will be a work day scheduled for September 10th and will be looking for volunteers to help out that day. Jeremy Boehm has agreed to complete the northbound sidewalk from the stage area to the north perimeter for $4,500. There is money available for this, and the Outdoor Enhancement Committee recommends the signing of this contract so the project can be completed this fall. Motion by Melissa Helgeson to approve the contract, second by Kristi Asendorf. Motion carried.
  + Council Retreat Change. The Council retreat originally scheduled for the first weekend in September will not be held. Instead, it was decided to have some form of planning session in March when the new Council is in place.
  + Christmas Worship Times, tabled to next meeting.
* Old Business
  + Sabbatical Policy Revision. The Personnel Committee had looked at the policy that was in place for sabbatical and at a revised version that would include program staff in eligibility for sabbatical leave. In hindsight, the Personnel Committee felt rushed to make a decision/recommendation. The Council approved this policy change at the end of the July meeting. Now, after conversations with the committee and time for council members to reconsider, it’s apparent we all should have spent more time on this policy. And because there really isn’t a precedent to base it on within the ELCA, to be more thoughtful in defining what sabbatical leave for program staff members may look like. We don’t want to make snap decisions on any of it. Item is tabled to the next meeting.
  + Staff Request for Sabbatical. We need to communicate to Chris Torgeson that we need to revisit the policy, and that we are not comfortable with the decision made in July because neither the Personnel Committee nor the Church Council had enough time to make a good decision. Both entities felt rushed to make a quick decision, and now we need to take the time to make a good policy that will work for all parties. For now, nothing has been changed.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM

Submitted by Rich Jensen

Church Council Secretary