Zion Lutheran Church Minot

Church Council Meeting

July 18, 2023

* Meeting called to order by Vice President Melissa Helgeson at 6:44 pm
* Check in. Devotion & Prayer by Pastor Natasha
* In attendance at this meeting: John Thompson, Matt Sundahl, Melissa Helgeson, Kristi Asendorf, Rich Jensen, Sherry Broderick, Erica Atkinson, John Gruenberg, Pastor Natasha Woitzel-Kolles, and Pastor Elaine Sveet on the phone.
* Executive Session will be called later in the meeting
* Approval of Agenda by Matt Sundahl, second by Kristi Asendorf. Motion carried
* Recognition of Visitors: present at this meeting – Chris Torgeson and Jen Barta.
* Meeting Minutes of the 6/27/2023 meeting were reviewed. In the Pastor’s Reports, Pastor Elaine had introduced an idea of Zion lay members helping with pulpit supply in surrounding churches because of the great need for this. The minutes said there would be compensation for these individuals. Added to this: the compensation would be paid by the congregation being served. John Gruenberg made a motion to accept the minutes with amendments along with the minutes of the online vote from June 15th regarding approval of a deposit on Hot Tot tickets. John Thompson seconded the motion. Motion passed.
* Reports
* Pastor’s Reports
  + Pastor Elaine: Upcoming fundraisers, suggested by staff, could be a church supper on Sunday, September 24th, and a Time and Talent Auction on Sunday, November 5th. Another idea thrown out was a cook-off, a music concert. Or, could we do a fundraising dinner during the blessing of the backpack service? The question is, who will take responsibility for all this? Per discussion, let’s have staff drive this backpack fundraising program.

Also, Pastor Elaine wants to address the deficit the church is running financially. She will meet with the Executive Committee on this.

* + Pastor Natasha: Talked about the upcoming Congregational Renewal. One of the initial tasks is to identify twenty people for the Bridge Building Interviews. Let’s have all council members bring at least 3 names (and what worship service they normally attend) to the August meeting of the Council. We will also need to name a group of four to plan the events. This week, Pastor Natasha and Kortni will go offsite to plan confirmation programming, etc.
* Faith Formation Report. Day camp is going on this week, then going through classrooms to get ready for fall. Chris has been working on some leadership development.
* Financials
* Jen talked about doing a more consolidated report for the council meeting to save paper and to make it easier to give information to the council members.
* At Council meetings, we routinely have to approve the transfer of funds from the building savings account to the general account. Erica Atkinson made a motion to authorize Jen to make that transfer monthly rather than getting monthly approval each time from the council. Second by Kristi Asendorf. Motion carried.
* Motion by John Gruenberg to accept the financial report. Second by Sherry Broderick. Motion carried.
* Old Business
* Kent Kirkhammer from the Trust Fund was on the agenda but was not present at this meeting.
* Safety and Security Update – working on the electric locks on doors, and the cameras will be completed after the VBS Day Camp ends.
* Outdoor Enhancement: Concrete is finished, working to finish the work around the concrete edges. Waiting for topsoil to arrive to complete the hill. The tunnel and the slides are on site and will be installed after the dirt is finished. Looking for volunteers to move dirt and finish dirt work, plus need the use of a couple skid steers. Adults and kids are all qualified to work on this. Fence will be coming when the dirt work is done. This is all funded by the special account for this project.
* Move music funds from Edward Jones Music Fund to the General Account to pay for musicians. Motion by Rich Jensen, second by John Gruenberg to approve this transfer of $9,786. Motion carried.
* SW Door Awning: Rich Jensen reported for the Building and Ground Committee. After soliciting bids for 4 to 5 years and receiving none, we did get one bid from Kolles Creative Customs to build a wooden structure with a roof and side wall, connected to the building. The budget for the project was $5,000, and the bid is for $11,300. The Building and Grounds Committee has some options to look at, including approaching the Trust Committee to fund all or part of it. The problem we have is the urgency to make a decision, or the one contractor we have will be busy with additional fall work. Option 2 would be to construct a fence on the west side of the sidewalk at that entrance that would be somewhat temporary, meaning it would be replaced in one to two years. This awning has been promised to the preschool for five years (it uses this entrance), so we feel obligated to complete it, but the finances are going to be our biggest concern. A motion was made by John Gruenberg to approve Building and Grounds Committee’s request to go to the Trust Committee for the full funding of this project, and to request a special meeting with that committee. A second was made by Erica Atkinson. Motion carried. John Gruenberg, along with Rich Jensen, will attend their meeting to give the background.
* Heat Pump/AC Repair/Replacement: It’s gotten to a critical point with this equipment where we need to act on this item this calendar year. Several firms are working on bids for this project. It appears we will now need to put a new unit on the roof that is not connected to the geo-thermal system the church has. Two contractors have come back with estimates, both in the $60 to $65,000 range. Council would like to see hard bids on this, and then can approve the amount and put together a plan on how to pay for it. John Gruenberg made the motion for the church to advertise for sealed bids for this project to be submitted by August 11th at 4:00 PM. There was a second by Sherry Broderick. Motion carried.
* Committee Reports
* Personnel Committee
  + Reviewed two staff member evaluations.
  + The committee is recommending a policy change for sabbatical leave. Currently, only rostered pastors are eligible for a sabbatical. Because some of our staff is involved in ministry and pastoral care, it is proposed we expand our definition of who is eligible for this leave. Here is the proposed update:

*Upon approval by the Lead Pastor, staff members shall be granted leave of up to five working days per year, no accruable, for training or professional development which is applicable to their position, with full salary paid, provided adequate financial resources are available. All educational leave must be considered on an individual basis. Education leave may include workshops, seminars, retreats, conventions, or any other educational event.*

*A sabbatical leave of up to three months may be requested by the pastoral staff after four years of service, and the program staff following five years of service in the congregation. Any request for such leave by the pastoral/program staff will be made to the Council President. The plan, purpose, and financial responsibility would be negotiated by the Personnel Committee and the pastoral/program staff, and approved by the Church Council. The pastoral/program staff must sign a contract or written agreement indicating their intentions to remain in their current position for at least one year following their sabbatical. If the contract/agreement is breached by the employee, the employee would be required to pay a pre-established termination fee and/or salary, benefits and costs incurred during the sabbatical. The final decision on the amount to be returned to the congregation will lie with the Church Council.*

A motion to accept this new policy was made by Melissa Helgeson, with a second by Matt Sundahl. Motion carried.

* + Melissa Helgeson made a motion for the council to go into executive session. Rich Jensen seconded the motion. Motion passed. Council went into executive session.
  + Melissa Helgeson made a motion to come out of executive session. Second by Rich Jensen. Motion carried.
  + Motion by Rich Jensen to approve the request for sabbatical leave by Chris Torgeson for May 1 – July 31 of 2024. Second by John Thompson. Motion carried.
* New Business
* Active to Inactive congregational members. To be considered an active member of Zion Lutheran, one has to have participated at least once in Communion, and to have made at least one contribution of record in a year. We will send out a letter of the list of those who would fall into these categories. The letter was reviewed and some changes were suggested. We want this to be an invitation to reconnect with Zion versus being a notice of separation. This was for informational purposes for the council. No action was needed.
* Building Fund Transfer was covered in the financial reports of this meeting.
* Hospitality/Welcoming Team item was tabled to the next meeting. It’s a needed component for us to work to grow this church by being very welcoming in a variety of ways.
* Motion to adjourn this meeting by John Thompson, second by Kristi Asendorf. Meeting was adjourned at 9:19 PM

Submitted by Rich Jensen

Church Council Secretary