

PORTLAND UNITED CHURCH Council Meeting via Zoom

October 14, 2020, 7:00 pm

Call to Order: Hansen Downer, Chair, called meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Attendees: Norma Cummings, Duncan Pickard, Larry Cochran, Connie Cochran, Blaine Tackaberry, Katy Gibson, Joan Kelly, Jan Haskin, Bruce Haskin, Hansen Downer, Chair, Patti Evans, Secretary

Guest: Jim Allen

Regrets: Betty Hoogenboom, Will French

Opening Prayer: Reverend Allen offered the opening prayer

Approval of Agenda: Moved: Jan Haskin Second: Blaine Tackaberry Carried

Business Arising from last meeting:

M&P: Jan Haskin gave a recap of the M&P exit meeting with Reverend Takouhi and commented it was a good conversation. Gifts were presented to Takouhi and Gary on behalf of the congregations of both Portland and Elgin.

Trustees - Will French was not in attendance. Three nominations for new trustees were accepted by the congregation. The new trustees are Katy Gibson, Norma Cummings, and Anita Cox.

Memorial Chair: The trustees will take on management of the memorial fund. Norma will continue to prepare thank you and acknowledgement cards.

Profile Committee: Jane Pickard, Katy Gibson, Rhonda Elliott.

Profile for ministerial search:

Hansen asked Jan Haskin (M&P) if she could provide the committee with the minister's salary as set by the United Church, and what are the requirements of the United Church for vacations, education time, etc. Hansen asked Rev. Allen for his advice regarding building our profile. Rev. Allen said the council is on the right track; however, a profile cannot be built until the decision is made by Elgin. Hansen suggested an end date of December or January. Rev. Allen feels this is a comfortable time span, a couple of months should be sufficient. Having a focus group meeting of about two hours with the congregation is one of the main sources of information for this selection. It is absolutely necessary to know what are the most important attributes the new minister should bring to the position. Because of covid, a survey will be prepared asking the congregation what is important in the role of the new minister. A deadline for response will be included.

Committee Reports

Finance – Duncan Pickard: presented the year-to-date budget, reports included with these minutes. Requested and received \$6k from the long- term fund. Applied for and received the HST refund. Continue to apply for monthly subsidy and suspect it will go to \$2k from \$4.3K when Takouhi leaves. This is the last month for the donation to Elgin for music. Custodial and energy costs have begun to climb due to the church being open. Costs for snow removal, etc., will be incurred as in other years. Donations are usually highest in the last quarter. September donations were ~80% of last year. Month ended up in the black. Duncan Pickard presented the 2021 budget. We need to approve the 2021 budget before the AGM for 2020.

Sharing and Caring – Betty Hoogenboom was not in attendance. She is practising isolation (immediate family only).

Cemetery – Blaine Tackaberry – trying to keep the grass mowed. Very quiet, interments are being held off due to Covid-19.

Envelope Steward – Norma Cummings – no changes

Fundraising – Hansen Downer – no changes – all events are still cancelled

Memorials – in future will be handled by the trustees

Outreach – Liz Church is interested in this position. Norma Cummings has asked if it is possible for the food bank to have a one-page website of its own with its own donate button. Larry Cochran, Norma Cummings and Duncan Pickard will look into this.

Regional – Liz Church is replacing Margaret Martin as the rep.

Property: Duncan Pickard will attempt to break up the expenses between inside and outside.

(Inside church) - Larry Cochran – furnace squared away. Church set up for Covid-19 precautions. Waiting on a part to repair the elevator. Hansen thanked Larry for all of his work to get the church set up to accommodate the Covid-19 restrictions. Kudos to Larry!

(Outside church) – Bruce Haskin submitted a detailed report of outside work, which is included with these minutes.

UCW – Connie Cochran – sold 296 pies \$3,652. Total raised on pie sale after costs (\$750), was \$2400.

Included in the costs is the purchase of turkeys for the turkey take-out which has been postponed but not cancelled. A donation will be made to the general fund and UCW still maintain a small balance in the bank account.

Worship – Joan Kelly reported that they have chosen three virtual services. The selection will be included in the ENews which issued on Saturday. We will begin with Kemptville service for October 18, 2020.

M&P – Jan Haskin – not much more to be added other than Jan will be taking a recommendation to the OB to continue Annette Clarke’s employment.

Music – Joan Kelly

Bell Choir Update: Jan reported that when the covid numbers started to rise, the bell choir was put on hold for 28 days. However, there are four pealers continuing to prepare music to play in the church - perhaps for Christmas.

Motion to Accept Committee Reports: Moved: Connie Cochran Second: Duncan Pickard Carried

New Business

1. Attendance at in-person services...same people attending at the three services since the reopening. When asked, thirteen of the fifteen people want to continue to attend these services. We will continue to hold in-person services. Duncan Pickard recommends we keep our eye on the number of covid cases in our area (West Grenville). If the numbers reach 5, we will reconvene to discuss.
2. Draft PUC Operations Manual – moved to next meeting
3. Benevolent Fund Guidelines – Rev Takouhi was managing this fund. With her departure the fund requires new management. Larry Cochran has updated the operations manual for the benevolent fund. He has changed from the fund being managed by the minister to being managed by a committee. The guidance for this comes from the United Church Financial Handbook. Suggestions/comments: change the wording for approval of donations from “council” to the “benevolent committee”

Next regular meeting December 9, 2020 at 7:00 pm Via Zoom

Closing Prayer – Jim Allen Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm

Outside Property Report – Submitted by Bruce Haskin

1. Tree trimming in parking lot- all the row of trees on the north side of the lot were trimmed up, some were only 6 ft off the pavement. Thanks to Duncan and his brush chipper and thanks to Jane and Jan for all their hauling of brush. (no cost).
2. Septic tank modifications - the 2 covers on the septic plank were completely dug up and risers were installed to bring the covers above grade for access, if and when tank pumping will be required in the future. (covers and risers were generously donated by The Septic Store, Portland).
3. Queen St. brush cutting and bottom culvert hazard - Dan Chant at Rideau Lakes Township was contact and he agreed to schedule cutting back the brush on the east side of Queen St. from Hwy 15 to the church and erect a hazard marker at the lower end of the parking lot at the culvert.
4. Railing from parking lot to the church - met with Fred James (Jamesview Builders) and a railing contractor for railing suggestions. The biggest problem is to install something that won't disturb the walkway paving stones which are in excellent condition. Options that were considered were, driving pilings in beside the walkway, pouring a ½ metre high concrete curb to support a railing or installing large concrete curbstones for railing support. All the options would be an estimates 5,000\$. (not recommended at the present).
5. Trees on or near the roof on the back, east side on the church - 3 tree services were contacted, 2 did not reply and 1 was going to visit the site and quote but has not replied yet. This may be postponed until spring.
6. Parking lot sweeping and line painting - a quote 380.92\$ was received from Ronmar Sealing Ltd for painting the lines and markings. The Township has swept the parking lot in the past during the spring street sweeping and bill PUC for the parking lot. This is budgeted for the spring.
7. Painting of window frames, fascia and exterior doors - a local painter will be quoting on this work next week. This will be budgeted for the spring.
8. Exterior signs need to change minister's name - will check with sign painter. Will budget for spring.
9. Kitchen exhaust duct needs exterior terminus and screen - will co-ordinate with interior property chair.
10. Change exterior security lights to LED's -
11. Exterior stone and brick need minor re-pointing - nothing urgent, spring work.
12. Exterior railings need some paint touch-up - again, nothing urgent.
13. Additional handicap parking space needed - for future discussion.
14. Screen repairs - some window screens need the screen retaining splines replaced.