

WINDSOR HEIGHTS LUTHERAN CHURCH
Congregation Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 25, 2025
Room 127 & Google Meet

Present: Linda Anderson, Marc Anderson, Quent Boyken, Stephanie Cox, Finn Cox, Megan Gerasch, Threase Harms, Jill Hyda, Pam Lundell, Bill Morris, Pastor Chris Olkiewicz, Maren Steensen, John Swanson, Sally Watson, Barb Waymire, Donna Yeager

Visitors: Katie Fergus

We Gather in God's Name

I. Call to Order

- Boyken called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

- Watson shared a devotion about hope and opened the meeting in prayer.

II. Approval of the Agenda

One item was added.

Harms moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Linda Anderson. Motion carried.

III. Secretary's Report

Yeager moved to approve the January 2025 minutes as corrected. Seconded by Watson. Motion carried.

IV. Treasurer's Report

- Waymire provided the report to Council. A strong net income occurred in January due to higher general offering. Expenses were in line with the budget. Morris asked about any implications of possible increased inflation. Waymire explained many planned items are based on contract; however, offerings and utilities could be affected.

Harms moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Seconded by Swanson. Motion carried.

V. For the Good of the Order

- Gerasch shared an idea to bring back name tag Sundays, which supports inclusion. March 30th will be the first Sunday. Gerasch will share a communication in the Weekly Window.

VI. Pastor Report

- Pastor Chris shared he received a phone call from Global Refuge thanking WHLC for their recent donation. Pastor Chris will also share a communication in the Weekly Window about Lutheran Day on the Hill on March 11 as a day of advocacy with the state legislature. Council discussed calling members and checking in about how they are doing. Council will target in March and April. A spring clean-up will be scheduled likely on April 12 in the afternoon. Boyken will share a communication in the Weekly Window. Pastor Chris suggested a group reading of Rowan Williams' *Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer*.

VII. Old Business

- Employee Retention Tax Credit
 - No additional credits have been received.
- Thrivent Choice Funds
 - Zach Meyer reported that Thrivent funds are not needed for the Youth Permanent Fund. Council discussed use of the funds.

Yeager moved to use Thrivent funds for the Rowan Williams' books to read as a group, the Iowa sign proposal, firewall update, and a new computer and monitor. Seconded by Harms. Motion carried.

- Funeral Luncheons
 - Anderson discussed the guidelines and about increased costs of food.

VIII. New Business

- Mortgage Refinancing
 - Waymire shared a summary on the mortgage. A monthly payment comprises of about \$7,000 from the Capital Appeal Fund and an additional \$1,000 from the 2025 budget. The new payment is about \$3,200 per month. The new ARM interest rate will be 7.125%. Finance Committee recommends making an additional principal payment of \$150,000 prior to the reset. After the additional principal payment and refinancing, the monthly payment will be less than \$2,000. Finance recommended the funds be used from the Unrestricted Estate Gift Permanent Fund and the ERTC Permanent Fund, including funds and interest expected to be received. If the remaining ERTC funds are not received prior to April 1, the Finance committee recommends using the Capital Appeal Permanent Fund, replenishing it when the ERTC funds are received. WHLC's investments and cash are earning less than 4.25%, and the Finance Committee's opinion is to pay down debt that will be three percentage points higher than what is being earned.
 - A member of the Finance Committee can provide a short talk at a March worship service to review the updates with the mortgage and ask members to continue making gifts to the Capital Appeal Permanent Fund while noting any remaining funds after the mortgage is paid could be used for maintenance as the building ages.
 - It was recommended that Finance Committee also provide a written communication.

Harms moved to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation which anticipates an additional \$150,000 principal payment to reduce the mortgage and future monthly payments. Seconded by Yeager. Motion carried.

- Central Iowa Shelter & Services
 - Waymire shared a summary of 2024 donations and the current 2025 budget. Gerasch and Watson volunteered to lead a ministry team to discuss future donations.
- Synod Assembly
 - Morris volunteered as one delegate. A female delegate is still needed.
- Lenten Offering
 - Katie Fergus joined the meeting. She is a board member for Lutheran Services in Iowa. Fergus shared updates regarding their refugee program and recent changes due to federal government funding. On January 20, 2025, an executive order was issued pausing the legal refugee resettlement programs. Additional orders ended federal funding. LSI was prepared to welcome 104 individuals with many joining family members already in Iowa. All individuals went through years of vetting and security screens. Because of a loss of federal funds, 191 individuals, which includes 108 minors, are at risk in DSM, Sioux City & Waterloo. 127 of these individuals arrived within the past 30 days.
 - As of February 17, the federal government has not reimbursed LSI for services already provided to refugees and as a result has over \$1.5 million in outstanding expenses incurred. Over 400 individuals are at risk for further programming. Services provided by LSI are highly regulated, audited annually by an independent, accredited firm. LSI fronts the money and then submits reimbursements.
 - Fergus asked for support with state and federal officials and advocacy. Fergus recommended the Lenten offering be directed to LSI's general fund to allow use with the most impact. Fergus will share LSI document with Pastor to be used for further communications with WHLC members.

Steensen moved that the Lenten Offering goes to LSI and their general fund. Seconded by Swanson. Motion carried.

- Expense Items
 - Iowa Signs Proposal
 - A quote for \$475.06 was received to update the sign on the corner of 66th & University.
 - Heat Exchanger
 - The roof heating unit has a cracked heat exchanger.
 - IT/Office Equipment
 - A new computer and monitor are needed for Heidi Hennig in the office.
 - Kitchen Fire Suppression System
 - The system did not pass inspection.

Swanson moved to pay the heat exchanger and the kitchen fire suppression system maintenance out of the multi-year permanent fund. Seconded by Yeager. Motion carried.

- Other
 - Hyda asked for approval for donations from the Easter Garden to support the DMARC Food Pantry.

Morris moved the Easter Garden donations go towards the DMARC Food Pantry.
Seconded by Harms. Motion carried.

- IX. Announcements
- Council Meeting – Tuesday, March 25, 2025, 6:30 PM

We Close in Prayer & Send in Mission

- X. Reflections & Closing Prayer
Pastor Chris closed the group in prayer.

- XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 PM.

Minutes taken by Jill Hyda
February 25, 2025