



Presbytery of Boston Council Minutes

January 20, 2022

Attendance:

Voting: Drew Hanson, Jane Wilson, Jill Auger, Kathy Barnes, Su Young Kim, Ivy Jones Turner, Meagan Manas, Thatcher Freeborn

Non-voting: T. J. DeMarco, Andy Parmelee

From Shekinah: Zair Simmonds, Carlos Belz, Vanuza Belz, Pauloma Lourenco, Paulo Lima

Convene

The moderator pro-tem, the Rev. Dr. Jane Wilson, opened the meeting with prayer via Zoom at 7:00 PM.

The moderator declared that a quorum was present.

The council approved the minutes from its last meeting which was held via Zoom on November 18, 2021.

Treasurer's Report

Andy Parmelee

The treasurer reported that the books for 2021 are not yet closed. The council will see these reports at the February meeting.

Stated Clerk's report

T. J. DeMarco

PJC Training

I am working with PSNE and the General Assembly to plan a joint PJC training. We haven't had a training like this in some time. When I started, the conventional wisdom was to hold off on training until you have a case. But it's been several years since our last case, and I think it's time to have a basic training to make sure we are ready if a case does come. This will be an 8-hour training over 4 sessions.

Needham

At council's request, I scheduled a phone conversation with Thatcher Freeborn, chair of the board of trustees. I took notes on the conversation to provide a report to council. Thatcher will receive this report and make any appropriate corrections.

Thatcher noted that from the perspective of the trustees, the Needham building is a stable asset with more income than expenses. He understands why a member of Presbytery might be concerned with the expense of the building manager. But, he added, the building manager brings value because he knows the building and community. Because he is there, little is required of trustees for managing the building.

Conversation with Thatcher

The trustees plan to meet with Donnie before the end of the year to discuss 2022. Donnie had a cancer diagnosis and treatment this year. He is back at work, but we're not sure how he's feeling about continuing in the same capacity. With the labor market as it is right now, the salary is probably not that far out of line.

Thatcher plans to send me a building report that can be distributed to council.

The trustees have not had a long-term strategic conversation and Thatcher believes that there should be a separate task force that can work on that.

I continue to receive phone calls from a rabbi in Needham whose congregation is interested in purchasing the building. I would like some direction from council on how to respond to this inquiry.

As far as discernment on what to do with the building, I see four potential paths forward on this:

1. Council meets to discern and recommend to Presbytery what is next for the Needham building.
2. Council forms a task force to do this work.
3. Council asks Presbytery to form a task force to do this work.
4. We keep the asset as it is for now and set a date to re-visit the topic. I suggest this as an option because it isn't worth spending much of our valuable time discussing this without a workable discernment process in place.

The council **asked** that the Stated Clerk write a charge for a Presbytery task force.

Docket for March

I have attached a draft docket for our March Presbytery meeting. Do we want to decide now whether it will be virtual or in person? Or do we want to move that decision to our February

meeting? It is easier for congregations to know sooner than later. But mid-February may be adequate notice for Newton.

2022 Calendar

Below is the 2022 calendar so that we will have it available as a reference during our meeting.

Moderator's report

Trina Portillo

The moderator requested to be excused due to a family emergency and did not submit a written report.

Shekinah Marlborough and Abingdon wish to become PoB fellowships

Shekinah Marlborough and Shekinah Abingdon are new worshipping communities of the Presbytery of Boston in the Inquiry phase of the new worshipping community process. This is a three-step process: 1. Inquiring Faith Community 2. Fellowship 3. Chartered Congregation. Both Shekinah Marlborough and Abingdon have requested to become fellowships of the Presbytery.

Carlos Belz of Shekinah Marlborough expressed that he wants to be part of the Presbyterian Church (USA). As a small congregation the group that he represents would like to feel like they are part of a large church. Carlos and Venuza Belz began their faith journeys in the Assemblies of God. They had never seen a reporting system like the PC(USA). When Paulo Lima explained the Presbyterian Church (USA) they felt this was a denomination they wanted to be part of because it seems like a "serious church." They feel that the PC(USA) "takes care" of its congregations. They want to pay per capita to the Presbytery because they feel that the Presbyterian Church has cared for them.

Pauloma Laurencio from the Abingdon inquiring faith community echoed the sentiments of the Marlborough group. They wish to be part of the PC(USA) because they feel the denomination cares for its immigrant members, even those who are undocumented. They feel that the denomination will help them.

Paulo Lima expressed that it would be helpful if the Presbytery could commission lay people to administer the sacraments and moderate session. He also expressed that the groups need someone working directly with them.

Paulo Lima reported that he has taught the leaders of Shekinah Abingdon and Marlborough about the basic structure of the Book of Order. One of the challenges is that there are not many materials available in Portuguese for training.

The council dismissed the Shekinah Abingdon and Marlboro representatives and discussed the request.

The council will **ask the Presbytery** at March if anyone is interested working with the Shekinah fellowships as the discernment process for them becoming chartered congregations.

The council will continue the conversation regarding whether or not the Presbytery is able to and called to support the Brazilian emerging faith communities.

Report from COM

Jill Auger

COM reported that Beth Wieman is retiring on after Easter. COM plans to meet with the Whitinsville Administrative Commission in February.

Report from CPM

Drew Hanson

Kristen Rinehimer finished as chair of CPM and Drew Hanson will now serve as the committee chair.

Report from Trustees

Thatcher Freeborn

The trustees submitted a budget for 2022. It reflected a small deficit, which will be paid out of a fund left by the Needham congregation.

Report from Nominating

Katie Cole

The chair requested to be excused from the meeting due to a conflict and did not submit a written report.

Report from Personnel

Meagan Manas

The personnel committee distributed a revised personnel policy for council to review.

Report from Representation

Kathy Barnes

The Committee on Representation was less active during the holidays and will become more active, especially during statistic season which ends on February 17.

Old Business

New Business

Adjourn with Prayer

The meeting adjourned with prayer at 9:15. The next meeting if the council will be held on January 27, 2022 via teleconference using Zoom.