

	<p>Presbytery of Boston Council Minutes</p>
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May 21, 2020

Attendance:

Voting: Mark Wells, Jane Wilson, Kristin Rinehimer, Sarah Hathaway, David Dorer, Katie Cole, Thatcher Freeborn, Su Young Kim

Non-Voting: T. J DeMarco, Cindy Kohlmann, Meagan Manas

The council gathered electronically at 7:05 PM. The stated clerk declared that a quorum was present. David Dorer opened the meeting with prayer. The council approved the minutes from its meeting in April.

Personnel Task Force

Meagan Manas

Meagan Manas reported that due to the pandemic, they waited to begin their work. They have asked the staff to report what staff does. Staff will report back on Monday. After that, 2 individuals from personnel will meet with each staff member to discuss the reports. This will be in order to get a full understanding of all that the staff does. After this, personnel will report back to council.

Budget Task Force

By: Ivy Turner

As part of eliciting Presbytery membership input into the budget priorities, the Budget Task Force has:

- Created an Area of Activity form for Presbytery Committee chairs to complete. These forms identify committee vision, how the committee contributes to meeting Presbytery goals, and annual budget needs. Three committees (Treasurer, CPM, Personnel Task Force) returned Area of Activity forms of 7 requested. Overall, expenses are quite minimal and generally fluctuate based on needs (CPM – background checks, Personnel TF-none anticipated for 2020).
- Hosted 7 visioning focus groups conversations with 29 individuals, including 7 TE and 10 churches to invite members of Presbytery to share their vision and priorities for Presbytery, individual and congregational needs from Presbytery, suggestions for Presbytery mission priorities, and discuss the per capita and budget shortfall.

- To broaden participation in the visioning focus groups, an online survey has been developed and sent to the pastor and clerk of session for each congregation. As of 5/18, 7 individuals from 2 congregations have completed surveys.

Ivy Turner, chair of the budget task force, submitted the results of the focus groups that BTF hosted and they are as follows:

- At its best Presbytery is congregations working together, opportunity to access resources (financial, support/guidance, information, etc.) Bring national trainings back to churches
- Clinton needs help with the Brazilian group (cross training)
- Establish an IT support team for churches.
- Help needed from Presbytery is to develop into strong congregations – how develop lay leaders/pastors, support members taking/becoming leaders – training & guidance
- It was suggested that the Presbytery produce videos to be sent to churches on The role of Presbytery and on the other churches.
- Members want to give money to trans-formative work, not salaries
- More information on what the Communications Coordinator does
- More virtual meetings with the times available to members
- Need for accurate information from Presbytery
- People aren't connected to Presbytery and that shows in participation, giving, and in ability to work together in crises (if have relationship prior to crisis, easier to connect with, ask for needs, integrate/use advice)
- PoB has self-perception & mindset of being poor, weak, not having enough. Not fully engage or connect with PoB members (retired TE) – lost opportunity
- PoB Seem have more transactional rather than inspirational interactions. meetings are efficiency or power focused/driven (exclusionary)
- Presbytery has an identity crisis by newer church members, mostly due their lack of background in Presbyterianism They come from no church background or from some other tradition.
- Presbytery's most important mission just might be the vision of promoting and fostering 21+ congregations to grow, thrive, etc.
- Strong commitment to contribute to Presbytery given support received from Presbytery
- Suggestions for per capita – engage TE not in pulpits to give (not regularly asked), ensure budget is operating efficiently to mission, have churches send in more frequently than once a year (huge hit)
- Support for local missions, Yoking of churches in a common interest, Support needs from PoB on resourcing and connecting (information, people/relationships, resources)
- Support for the multilingual fellowships
- Would like to see PoB more engaged in churches and help churches connect with one another (not walk journey alone, collaborate)

She verbally highlighted a few points:

1. Those who participated felt there was an issue of communication about and within the Presbytery. Since COVID 19 started, the Presbytery has been helpful.
2. There is also a sense that people are not sure what the Presbytery is and what they do.
3. There is also a sense that we need vision and leadership.
4. We need to learn to talk about leadership. We need to talk about what the struggles have been. We have not talked about how difficulties have affected the level of trust within the Presbytery.

As part of this conversation, Resource Presbyter, Cindy Kohlmann reported that given the long-term effects of the pandemic as well as the current financial situation of the Presbytery, she will not be asking the Presbytery to renew her contract at the end of 2020. She feels that this will free up the Presbytery to make decisions it needs to make with regards to budget and leadership. While the Presbytery may decide that it needs a Presbyter going forward, she wants the Presbytery to have freedom to decide exactly what it needs without basing those decisions around an individual.

Treasurer

Andy Parmelee

The treasurer submitted his reports in advance of the meeting. The Presbytery has paid the Synod per capita and will likely pay part of the General Assembly per capita in June.

Moderator

David Dorer

The moderator submitted a letter that he recommended be submitted to the Presbytery. He felt it was important to send a letter in addition to what the Resource Presbyter and Stated Clerk already sent to re-iterate the recommendation to refrain from opening for face to face worship at this point.

The council **decided** to not send the letter at this time. The moderator, David Dorer, cast a dissenting vote on this decision.

Future Meetings

The Council **voted** to hold Presbytery Assembly meetings electronically until a date when it is safe to meet in person when all votes made electronically would come before the Presbytery for a ratification vote.

The council **voted** to hold the Presbytery's September Assembly meeting electronically following the process above.

The council will vote on the December meeting in August.

Resource Presbyter

Cindy Kohlmann

The Resource Presbyter reported that the staff is working on a few ways to support members electronically. One of those is to put together a way to have choirs sing electronically while still in their own homes. Another video will be on how to utilize zoom for posting on YouTube and Facebook live. The staff also plans to put together a July 5th worship service as a way to give worship leaders and pastors a break.

The Resource Presbyter also reported that the Needham congregation will be planning a Presbytery wide service to celebrate the ministry of Needham as they plan to close.

Committee on Ministry

Jane Wilson

COM continues to reach out to congregations and validated ministers. The validated minister check-ins will help to keep the Presbytery in compliance with Book of Order Requirements

Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Kristin Rinehimer

CPM is working with a few candidates who are moving closer to ordination. Another conversation for candidates is what internships look like in the upcoming summer, especially for Clinical Pastoral Education students in hospitals.

Mission and Ministry

Katie Cole

M and M plans to have a conversation with the Resource Presbyter about a Pentecost celebrations.

Trustees

Thatcher Freeborn

The trustee were able to help Hyde Park in getting a PPP loan through a partnership with Rockland Trust. They plan to meet tomorrow over Zoom and will report back to council at its next meeting.

Nominating Committee

Sarah Hathaway

Nominating committee has not met.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned with prayer at 8:25.