

**Presbytery of Boston  
Council  
June 22, 2023  
Draft Minutes**

*Present:* Ivy Jones Turner (Acting Moderator), Beverly Shank, Ken Grant, Kathy Barnes, John Sweet, Drew Hanson, Trina Portillo, Lisa Carlin (Treasurer), Kate Carlisle (Stated Clerk)

*Guests from PMA:* Dr. Corey Schlosser-Hall, Deputy Executive for Vision, Innovation and Rebuilding, PMA; Rev. Dr. So Jung Kim, Office of Theology and Worship, PMA

**Call to Order**

The regular monthly meeting of the Council of the Presbytery of Boston was called to order on Zoom on Thursday, June 22, 2023, at 7:02 pm, with prayer by the Moderator, Ivy Jones Turner.

A quorum was electronically present.

Council **approved** the agenda without objection.

**LSAT Presentation from PMA**

Ivy introduced Corey and So Jung for the presentation on the potential Locally Situated Action Team (LSAT). The LSAT is a way in which PMA can partner with a local body like a Presbytery to walk with us and advance what God is calling us to do for a certain season. The team is a multidisciplinary group of PMA staff who would partner with us in a defined agreement by which we set forth: what does PoB want to work on?; where would we like to go?; how do we get there together? Some possible topics for LSAT focus discussed included re-igniting the YAV program, exploring ways to partner with neighboring presbyteries, supporting and centering our immigrant worshipping communities. Corey answered several questions about the potential process, and So Jung explained her role as a PMA staff person who is a teaching elder member of PoB.

With Council's thanks for the discussion, Corey and So Jung left the meeting. Council will take up the discussion of whether we'd be interested in further pursuing an LSAT, and what our goals in that process would be, at future meetings.

**Approval of minutes**

Council **approved** the May Council minutes as amended.

Council **approved** the minutes from the March 9, 2023 Stated Meeting of Presbytery. Elder Kathy Barnes asked that the minutes reflect her vote against this approval.

Council **approved** the minutes from the December 8, 2022 Stated Meeting of the Presbytery.

**Stated Clerk's Report**

Kate's official first day as Stated Clerk for the Presbyteries of Boston and PSNE was June 15. The position is 3/4 time, split between the two Presbyteries. Kate can be reached at [statedclerk@presbyteryofboston.org](mailto:statedclerk@presbyteryofboston.org) and is typically in the office Monday-Thursday.

Kate addressed correspondence received in response to the March 9 meeting and Council actions since then. There have been significant response delays due to various staff and officer transitions. As a brand new clerk, Kate is inclined to follow the lead of the previous clerks, but they are seeking advice on how to help us move forward. Kate and Ivy will be responding soon to correspondence received, and intend to reach out to a number of people involved.

The amendments to the *Book of Order* take effect on July 9. Some important changes to note:

- Entirely new *Church Discipline* section
- All terms of call must include a minimum of twelve weeks paid family leave
- Requirements for anti-harassment and anti-racism policies as well as regular boundary training

More details about these, especially the family leave policy, will be communicated to Sessions in the coming weeks. We will begin addressing changes requiring Presbytery action in more detail at our August meeting. We will also revisit the question of the process for nominating GA Commissioners.

Kate asked for someone willing to help lead music during worship at the Presbytery gathering on Saturday, and Trina volunteered.

### **Personnel Report**

Beverly gave a report for information on the June 6 meeting and other Personnel matters. The updated job description for Treasurer has been finished. Personnel is regularly (at least quarterly) checking in with employees of Presbytery, in order to show concern and support for all. Beverly is Boston's representative to the joint personnel group formed with PSNE to work with Kate as Stated Clerk.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The financial transition is continuing. Lisa is moving forward with Kate Witteman at Balanced Bookkeeping. Lisa will also be working on payroll transitions.

### **Trustees Report**

Ken began with a word of thanks for all of Lisa's great work in this transition! He summarized the written report from Trustees that was distributed to Council from the June 21 meeting.

The Trustees of the Presbytery requests the Council authorize the following grants in fulfilment of the bequest of Mr. John Gilchrist from the Presbytery's restricted endowment account "The John Gilchrist Fund":

- a. United Presbyterian Church of Whitinsville \$10,000
- b. Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church, Somerville Up to \$4,000
- c. First Presbyterian Church, Worcester Up to \$4,000

Where the grants to Somerville and Worcester will be capped at the amount of the outstanding loans from the Presbytery to the congregations; and

Authorize the officers of the Presbytery to extend a loan of up to \$15,000 at terms to be mutually agreed upon by the Session of Whitinsville and the Trustees of the Presbytery, the loan amount to come from and be repaid with interest to the Trustees – Restricted Operating Fund; and

Urge the Session of the Whitinsville church to refinance the Unibank line of credit, possibly with the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s loan programs, as soon as possible, at terms favorable to the mission of the church.

Motion made, seconded, and **approved** to act on the above matters.

### **CPM Report**

Drew shared that CPM's most recent meeting was with a candidate seeking guidance and discernment upon seminary graduation.

### **COR Report**

Kathy shared a written report for information with Council. COR is revisiting their charge in the Book of Order, and will be reaching out to various people for conversation in order to help Presbytery be more conscientious about representation.

COR has collected information from the 20 congregations in the Presbytery as well as from all teaching elders. We believe that at this point, we would like to interact with the following:

- Council – for input into what procedures and mechanisms should be set up to promote and review inclusiveness
- Council – to discuss who might be best equipped to develop “training” for new leadership members / committees, including training before individuals serve, to cultivate and nurture the next generation of leaders
- Council – to discuss how new worshipping communities might be included in leadership
- Nominating – for input into the demographics of all current members of leadership (officers, committees, task forces, working groups), to be able to measure leadership diversity
- Nominating – for coordination on how potential new leaders can be identified
- Stated Clerk – for input from PSNE regarding how that presbytery handles COR
- Stated Clerk – for input on how COR and the various other committees might best proceed together
- Stated Clerk – for official PC(USA) compilation of Annual Statistical Reports
- PC(USA) – for resources on how any of the above can be efficiently addressed

### **COM Report**

COM will be getting information out to churches about family leave changes to terms of call.

CLC has moved to a new website, complete with new acronyms! COM is updating PNCs and Sessions.

### **Nominating Committee**

Rev. Ben Black has agreed to serve as Vice Moderator!

Sierra Mink, a new affiliate member at Church of the Covenant, is working with Katie to rebuild the Missions and Congregations Committee. She would like to also serve on Nominating Committee,

given her connections to folks through common cathedral. Nominating Committee is conducting business via email this summer, and will resume meeting in August.

Katie also shared three Presbytery-related announcements:

- **Presbytery gathering:** Worship, food, and fellowship at HSPC in Natick on Saturday, June 24 at 1 pm. Please come!
- **GBIO Action for Housing Justice:** Monday, June 26 at Temple Israel
- **Supporting Newly Arrived Immigrant Families:** Massachusetts, along with many states across the nation, has seen an increase in migrant families arriving in need of support, particularly those fleeing violence and instability in their home countries. Migrant families arrive in the Commonwealth with a range of needs, including access to food, basic necessities, and immediate shelter. Some families without safe, alternative housing present to local hospitals in search of a place to sleep until they can apply for family shelter through the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC).

Staying at the hospital (emergency room) helps no one - it's a stressful place for families to stay, it clogs up emergency care to those who need it, and it's unnecessarily expensive. While working to implement new solutions to this challenge, the Commonwealth has asked if any institutions (not individuals) can provide temporary housing to families for that gap between when they arrive at the hospital and when the EOHLC opens.

Hartford Street housed our first family last weekend, and will take more over the summer. These families are arriving in Boston with literally the clothes on their backs. Many of the families are from Haiti (and speak Haitian Creole, French, and Spanish), but not everyone is from Haiti. We provided a space to sleep, meals, and basic amenities, and the Commonwealth provided social workers to connect with the families (and provide additional support if we ran into trouble). **Is this something your congregation could do?** If you don't have the space/full capacity to do it in your own building, could you partner with the institutions in your neighborhood to make this happen? The need is great, and short term.

### **Working Group on Synod Grant**

Ivy updated Council on the working group's progress.

A copy of the draft grant application was sent to council, in support of the potential up-to-three-years staffing for a potential transitional Presbytery leadership role. The working group is meeting again on July 6; we request that any feedback on the draft by July 5 be sent to the Council email. We are hoping to develop a finalized draft of the proposal soon thereafter. Hoping by July 20 - hold for special called council meeting to review finalized proposal.

There have also been conversations with Ken and Trustees for a second grant opportunity with the Synod. We hope to use that for the Needham project, to cover the cost of a project manager for roof work, solar company, coordinating with PI as stewards. We would love an additional person to help think about that proposal - to articulate and write out current plans, using proposal that you have in hand as a shell, need to add focus on innovation, building, community, environmental stewardship. Hoping to have a draft of that we can begin reviewing on or around July 6 and ideally bring to Council July 20.

Katie suggested a name for a potential project manager for the Needham solar project when we reach that point; she will reach out to that individual.

## **Moderator's Report**

Kate resigned as Moderator effective May 30 following election to the office of Stated Clerk.

Ivy began serving as Acting Moderator as of the Special Called Joint Meeting on May 30, and will be installed at the September Stated Meeting.

## **Old Business**

No old business.

## **New Business**

Ken Grant discussed the need for a working group for moving forward with the Needham property. This includes working towards a plan and project manager for the solar project and support for Primera Iglesia, as requested by their Session, in managing the building. What the work group learns about building and real estate management will benefit numerous Sessions in the Presbytery.

Council reviewed a proposal from Ben Chicka to change our Presbytery phone provider from Vonage to a free VOIP service, saving approximately \$1800 annually. The Presbytery office receives very few direct phone calls. The plan was **approved** without objection. If a new phone number is necessary, that change will be communicated throughout Presbytery.

The new address for financial matters at First Quincy has been announced, but the Presbytery does not have a reliable mailing address for other matters. Motion made, seconded, and **approved** to set up a PO Box in West Roxbury. The Stated Clerk will arrange for the PO Box and make sure the new address is communicated to all.

Katie Cole adjourned with prayer at 9:06pm.

The next regular Council meeting is August 17. The Moderator asked Council to hold the date of July 20 in anticipation that a special meeting may need to be called before grant proposal deadlines.

The next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery is September 14.