

FCUCC Board Meeting Minutes

June 11, 2023: 1:00- (~)3:15

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF ASHEVILLE



Board Members: Chris Cain, Larry Burke, Peggy Grant, Maggie Thomas, Carol Austin-Janssen, Joanne Roudebush, Chris Nealis, and Other Participants: Rev. Derryberry

FCUCC's mission is to

1. **Embody a forward-thinking, courageous, and diverse Christian community.**
2. **Follow the ways of Jesus the Christ as a grace-filled, spiritual congregation.**
3. **Practice affirming and radical hospitality.**
4. **Engage our local and global community with acts of love, mercy, peace, and justice.**

FCUCC's vision is to be an embracing community, public sanctuary, and prophetic Christian voice.

PLEASE NOTE:

The Dropbox referenced in these minutes can be viewed at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/ibskzeh17sbx1h4z0epwj/h?dl=0&rlkey=9t64lhev9qa3r0ldbcealtpf>

Moderator: Chris Cain

Start Time: 1:00 PM

Location: Room 204 at FCUCC

Note Taker: Kathleen Carter

Agenda:

1:00 Welcome & Facilitation – Chris Cain

The meeting was called to order at 12:27 p.m. The following were in attendance: Joanne Roudebush, Chris Nealis, Chris Cain, Peggy Grant, Carol Austin-Janssen, Larry Burke.

1:05 Devotion – Chris C

Minutes of Board Meeting

1:10 Approval of Minutes from May 21, 2023, Board Retreat: Dropbox

Verbally approved unanimously

1:15 Pastoral Report: Dropbox

Pastor noted that attendance on 5/21 was 66, but the report says 6.

Verbally approved unanimously

1:20 Plans and Proposals for Ministries: Dropbox

Verbally approved unanimously

1:25 Approval of EOM May Financial Report: to be posted in Dropbox

Verbally approved unanimously

1:30: Personnel Committee Report: Dropbox

Verbally approved unanimously

1:35 Approval of May Building and Grounds Report: Dropbox

Verbally approved unanimously

Discussion Agenda

1:40 Is the Pastor's support group a team or committee?

It's a team – a support ministry for the Pastor. It's also a trial, likely to evolve. There has been such a team in the past, but it had difficulties. Continuity has been an issue. Chris N, Gene, David O, and John W have submitted a draft of a proposed structure, how members are chosen, who should be included (e.g. what skills are needed).

Larry had been asked by a congregant: What does support mean in this context? Larry responded that it's about helping the Pastor and the congregation work together more effectively.

Per Chris N, there's a statement similar to that in the existing draft.

Gene asks that, if the Board is going to appoint some of the support group members, Board members start submitting candidate names, so that this can get going soon. Chris N suggested that, given a list of candidates, after discussion with Gene, some might be allocated as Board-suggested, some as Gene's own suggestions.

1:50 Solar Inverter

Larry described the need to replace the inverter associated with the solar panels (as discussed in the Building & Grounds Report). The church's system was installed in 2010. A group of donors supported it, expecting that rebates, etc., would pay back the initial cost. About six years in, it was deemed that the system paid for itself. The solar inverter has been broken for a

few years. Since the system does pay for itself, the sooner we replace it, the better – should pay for itself in a year.

When we get the new inverter, we need to know the warranty terms.

The new inverter has advantages that the old one didn't have; for example: If it stops functioning, we can tell via WiFi rather than having to go up on the roof to check it. We can tell how much electricity it's producing, so will more easily be able to track what the system is saving us.

Joanne says that the cost of replacing the inverter can't come out of the operating budget, which is for repairs and maintenance; this would be a capital expense. If pledges come in as expected, will have about \$24000 for the Building Fund. Joanne suggests taking the remaining cost from the Building Fund.

Joanne said we could have noticed earlier when the solar inverter failed, based on power bills. Larry pointed out that we had a pandemic which would change power usage.

Chris N moved that we appropriate \$4300 from the Building Fund to replace the solar inverter. Larry seconded. Motion passed verbally.

The inverter will be funded as follows: \$1000 donation, \$300 Earth Team fund, \$3300 Building Fund.

2:00 Kathleen Stigmon asked for us to include the monthly ministry team reports via the Minutes from our meetings.

We could make it an attachment to the minutes. Joanne suggests that it would be better posted separately on the website, so that people could get whichever statement they want without getting them all. The group agreed that was a better idea.

2:05 Rev. Gene's housing allowance of \$41,400 for his new contractual year

Joanne moved to approve. Carol seconded. Motion passed verbally.

Per Gene, David Ourisman mentioned that members might be encouraged to leave a house to the church on their death. That would address one of the big challenges of calling a new pastor – the high price of local housing.

Per Joanne, the Finance Committee has discussed further encouraging estate gifts. The church has substantially benefited from some. David O is motivated to organize the stewardship drive. He is willing to be part of a team to encourage estate gifts, but doesn't want to run the group. It was suggested that anyone leaving a house to the church really ought to leave it to a trust, for tax reasons.

Per Gene, one of the best ways to recruit a team is to just send a letter to members and active people saying this is what's expected, can you suggest three or four names of people who might join?

2:10 Behavioral Covenant – Discussion Continuation – Carol: Dropbox and this website (pages 6-9) <https://wxq122.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/A-Sure-Foundation-Ethical-Codes-and-Behavior-Covenants.pdf>

Per Carol, the process of defining a behavioral covenant started years ago but was tabled due to other issues. Carol read an excerpt from "Behavioral Covenants in Congregations" by Gilbert R. Rendle, regarding the value of a behavioral covenant.

Carol proposes getting together a team to work on one of the modules in the book, and is willing to lead the team. Its purpose would be to propose to the Board a covenant that reflects our mission and vision.

Once it's presented to the Board, the Board can present it to the congregation and ideally have a congregational conversation about it.

The group agreed that it would be good to be able to show a behavioral covenant to pastoral candidates.

Chris N suggested that the letter Gene proposed should ask for members for all three new teams – for pastoral support, stewardship, and the behavioral covenant. There was substantial discussion about alternatives to sending a letter – handing out the letters at church (then mailing the remainder), email, online survey to be done at home, online survey while participants are in friendship hall, Microsoft form, Snapchat, forms available to pick up at church, and so on.

Chris N volunteered to draft the first letter, then the Board can see what can be adapted for the newsletter. We can look at using Snapchat (as Chris C had mentioned).

Carol will send Chris N info about the behavioral covenant for her draft.

2:15 Update on Safe Conduct Policy and Procedure Training

Item was tabled for the next meeting.

2:25 Update on B and G and Bylaws – Roudebush (Dropbox)

Joanne summarized the changes in the Bylaws document. A few small edits were made.

One significant change was discussed: The Officers would be Moderator, Vice Moderator, and Secretary – the Treasurer would be appointed by the Board. There was concern that there might be a good reason for the Treasurer to be a Board member. Decision was deferred. Those involved in the last revision might be able to say why the Treasurer was part of the Board.

Questions were raised about Article X, Ministries. Larry will update the Dropbox file based on phrasing agreed with Peggy.

Joanne will revise the bylaws and provide a new version for the July meeting.

Agenda item for next meeting: The bylaws state that there is to be a financial audit every three years; has not happened in 12 years.

2:30 What are the long-range planning goals for the board? Chris N

Item was tabled for the next meeting.

2:35 Who is our Delegate to The Southern Conference – June 23 and 24

Joanne volunteered. Group agreed.

2:40 Official job application and example forms for the youth (forms in Dropbox) – Chris C

The church does not have an official job application. Chris C proposed to send sample forms for the Board to look at. The group agreed.

Chris C showed another church's website with all forms posted. He is willing to contact that church regarding actually using some of their forms, and will send youth forms to Andrew for input.

3:00 Update on Gene's final contract extension – Roudebush

Done.

3:05 Do you know of and have access to data and suggestions concerning community needs? – Chris C

During last ministerial search, the church had access to a service that could provide this sort of information, but no longer has a subscription.

Various possible sources were mentioned: City of Asheville; census group for demographic info; county Board of Education (e.g. how many free lunch and so on), maybe also schools; information in a grant proposal; two churches within a mile of us have just settled ministers, so might have such info.

3:10 Any other items?

Carol: Does the Board want to continue meeting on Sundays? Switch officially to 12:30? (Brief discussion; no change for now.)

Carol: New name for behavioral covenant? Covenant for Christian Communication? Christian Covenant for Honoring Differences? Generally the group wanted to stick with Behavioral Covenant, which is a familiar term (for example, to a prospective new pastor). Chris C will email the congregant who raised the issue.

Gene: Need a new signing page – each staff member signs when they read each policy.

The next Board meeting will be on July 9 at 1:00. Larry will open the meeting. Peggy will do the closing prayer.

3:15 Closing Prayer and Adjourn: Joanne

The meeting adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Carter