

Humbercrest United Church
Minutes of Church Council Meeting
April 28, 2020
Via Video Conference
(commenced 7:07 pm.)

Attendance: J. McCrae, F. Steggles, D. Gilmour, M. Garrie, B. Burke, A. McGregor, L. Steggles, C. Evans, H. Gaskin, B Packham

Gathering

1. Welcome by Beverley and confirming the video conference will not be recorded.
2. Worship: Jessica provided a moment of prayer.

Administrative Ministry of the Church

3. Approval of Minutes of the February 25, 2020 Council meeting.

Motion: Howard/Linda

CARRIED

That council approve the revised minutes of the February 25, 2020 council meeting.

4. Approval of the Agenda

Motion: Aileen/Fern

CARRIED

That council approve the agenda for the April 28, 2020 meeting.

5. Chair Report/Correspondence

Beverley presented a written report which in part reads, what is past is past and we need to move on as a team working together. These are stressful times and we need to remember that we are all doing our best. Two people on council have resigned and their positions will be difficult to fill. We need to realize and accept that our volunteer base continues to shrink and that is our reality.

David Drake has asked to mention that contributions are scarce for the newsletter and wonders about continuing with it. It was Beverley's recommendation to David that the newsletter only be issued when he has sufficient items.

Follow-up / New Business

6. Emergency Response Team (ERT) Report

Beverley advised that Melanie Steggles resigned as chair of the ERT and she then asked for a motion to appoint Linda and herself as ERT members

Motion: Brian/Aileen

CARRIED

That council accept the appointment of Linda Steggles and Beverley Burke as ERT members and that they will consult with others when people can move back into the church building.

7. Visioning Update

Continuing the Journey - our intended next steps

Shaping our Presence in the Future

Develop/Confirm an umbrella, draft **Vision** of the **Presence** we want to be. The intent is to invite the congregation as a whole, to provide input into developing a Vision, which flows from our Mission, that would provide a framework for reaching out to potential partners. This includes community partners and understanding their needs, relating to choices we make about community organizations and renters, as well as faith partners, i.e. other UC congregations with similar goals, that could lead to a closer relationship in the future. (In our report this was intended as a face to face workshop on April 19).

Example of a Possible Vision for the Presence we want to be: **HUC is committed to strengthening one another to work for a better community and a better world, welcoming people from all backgrounds and orientations.**

We know that this journey has been delayed, and is subject to revision, as factors such as public health requirements and financial viability will play a role. Please know that the VT is committed to supporting HUC's congregation along this path in the future.

Dianna S., Barb G., Marg G., Howard G., Linda S., and Rev. Jessica

Speaking for the Visioning Group, Linda expressed appreciation for the effort and time taken by people to support the visioning work so far. Visioning wants to embrace the spirit of what both Carla from Edge and Jody Maltby from Shining Waters Region and Katja Brittain from Toronto United Church Council were saying to connect to our neighbourhood in a broad sense and in figuring out the kind of Christian presence that we really want to be. Linda urged all to read the report attached originally intended for the Annual Report, which contains much detailed information.

8. Long Term Rental Report

Marg presented an update on The Meeting House (TMH) that she received from Katja Brittain noting that everything is on hold while in a quarantine. First, TMH is

interested in renting a space at Humbercrest suitable for 120 to 150 people including children for their service and children's program on Sunday mornings. Second, they are not interested in the sanctuary as their meeting space. Third, TMH has 2 or 3 building professionals who wish to come by the church as soon as possible to ascertain whether and/or how the East Hall and West Hall would be suitable for their needs.

Stewardship of Our Resources

9. Treasurer's Report

Charlie presented the March financial results which shows Y-T-D an operating deficit of \$32,295. This is \$9,464 higher than in comparison to the deficit for the same period last year. In the prior year the church was closed for 5 weeks for the heating system repair. This year church activities have been interrupted but only after March 15th. Both these events impacted operations notably donations, use of hall revenues, utility costs and cleaning services. Also insurance has a larger portion of the premium cost charged at the beginning of the year. There is in fact no increase in the premium from the prior year. For the Mission Fund, donations for the current period are lower than budget but higher than the prior Y-T-D. Going forward the real challenge for both Operations and Mission Fund will be to find ways to encourage donations where there is no weekly offering plate.

Motion: Charlie/Linda

CARRIED

That council accept the Treasurer's report including the cheque register.

Charlie continued with attention to the month of April. On the revenue side donations continue through the PAR program supplemented by givings from people hand delivering and mailing envelopes to the church. No changes have been made in church personnel so that the shortfall for April will be fairly significant. Charlie believes that we will be able to make use of federal government programs that are available. There are two payroll programs, the first being a subsidy up to 10% of our payroll. The United Church has arranged through our payroll provider, ADP, to file on our behalf and it is anticipated that some of our April payroll costs should be offset with a rebate from this program. The rebate offered is for the period from March 15th to the end of June. The second program expands beyond the first program with the government offering to pay 75% of payroll costs but using revenue measurements as a qualifier, revenues having to be down by 30% or more. Charlie is confident that Humbercrest meets this 30% test. Overall if we are accepted for these programs then the forecast is for upwards of \$15,000 in rebates. This helps offset from use of halls revenues. We have budgeted \$45,350 and have received \$8,471 in the first quarter and might receive about \$12,000 in the last part of the year assuming the church can be opened in the fall. The other area of great loss is from fund-raising where we have budgeted \$20,000 for the spring and fall sales and may not be able to generate any revenue from this source.

Charlie sees some reduction in costs such as contract and music personnel, lower utility costs and possibly a rebate for insurance costs. As to the impact of all these changes on our budgeted year end forecast deficit, Charlie sees the deficit increasing from \$6,854 to a deficit of \$20,000 or higher.

Charlie then spoke of another government program, an interest-free loan program for businesses and organizations with payrolls greater than \$50,000 which is the case for our church. There has been much discussion as to whether churches and non-profit organizations would be eligible to apply for this program and the United Church of Canada is investigating to confirm what organizations may apply. If it is determined that we can apply, then we can borrow up to \$40,000. If in the prescribed time period Humbercrest fully repays the loan then we might be eligible for a \$10,000 rebate that might follow in next year 2021. This loan program requires that certain approvals be made, by council, by trustees and by region. Charlie recommended that Humbercrest take advantage of this loan program. It would help with the anticipated challenge for the cash flow during the summer months to meet all our expense obligations. It would also avoid going to the trustees for financial support where they might need to liquidate some of the trustee investments. From discussions and questions, it was agreed that Charlie would file the application on the church's behalf. Linda agreed to provide to Charlie the e-mail address of Jody Moltby at Shining Waters region as part of the process.

Motion: Howard/Marg

CARRIED

That council asks the Trustees for authority for Charlie Evans as Treasurer to apply for a \$40,000 CEBA loan under the Federal Government relief program subject to approval from region.

Charlie was asked as to what timing of approval from the trustees that he would prefer. It was agreed that Howard would arrange for trustees approval as soon as possible.

The next matter for discussion by Charlie was e-Transfers. E-Transfers would provide an additional option for people wishing to make a donation to the church. Charlie noted that it is very easy on the banking side to set up but e-Transfers are a "one-person" system whereas most organizations including churches are accustomed to a "two-Person" system for deposits and cheques. Charlie recommended that the church's current e-mail address continue to be controlled by David Drake and that it be used to capture e-Transfers. Charlie does not have access to the church e-mails but David would pass them along to Charlie. And only Charlie would have the permission to deposit the e-Transfer so there is some element of two people being involved. Charlie also recommended that we offer the e-Transfer option only during the period of social distancing and that it should then be reviewed to approve for continued use or to terminate its use. David Drake should be asked to publicize this donation option in the weekly Beacon of Hope newsletter.

Motion: Charlie/Brian

CARRIED

Approved by HUC Council

That council agrees to give Charlie Evans as Treasurer the authority to arrange with Scotiabank for e-Transfers on behalf of the church.

The final matter for discussion by Charlie was on the status of the budget prepared for 2020 and approved by Council at the January 28, 2020 meeting. Council members concluded that the budget should not be revised but that future financial reports should be sufficient to explain the impact of the changed circumstance on our budget plan. Charlie also explained that he relies on the approved budget to retroactively adjust for all planned salary increases and asked council for guidance in the absence of the AGM as to what to do. Jessica suggested the United Church of Canada General Council directive of April 16, 2020, Governance in Congregations during Covid-19 gives church councils the authority on “temporal matters” in the current emergency to approve in the absence of congregational meetings. Therefore, the January vote by Council means the budget is approved for 2020 and Charlie can move ahead on preparing all salary adjustments but notice should be given to the congregation of what has happened. Howard recommended that the budget be looked again in September or October with a view to preparing revisions that can be presented to the congregation.

A Time of Reflection and Discernment

10. Minister’s Report

The last six weeks have been incredibly challenging as we adapt to the restrictions brought about by Covid-19 and adjust to a radically changed world.

I will be always grateful for the support and wise and decisive action of the Emergency Response Team during the early weeks of the pandemic. I am very saddened that Melanie Steggles and Mike Grayhurst have resigned from their roles in the church. I understand their decision but will miss their wisdom and dedication to this church. They were hard workers for us and will not be easily replaced.

I am grateful to Aileen MacGregor, Madeleine McDowell, Beverley Burke and Linda Steggles who have been helping me with phone calls to some of our parishioners. I am also grateful to all who have stepped forward to offer help to anyone unable to buy groceries, or in need of other items. So far we have not had this need arise, but I am glad there are people who will help if it does arise.

We have been able to continue worship through the Zoom platform which has gone very smoothly. Although I have received some complaints about music, that “Zoom is too distracting” and that we are not recording in the sanctuary and therefore not able to see the cross, for the most part people have been gracious and appreciative. Since people are able to phone in as well as connect via computer Zoom worship has enabled us to provide ongoing worship experience for a large segment of our congregation who otherwise

7/21/20

Approved by HUC Council

would have been left out if we were recording and placing the service on You Tube, or live steaming. Most of us recognize that maintain community as we share the good news of the gospel is the most important thing in these times.

The truth however is that we had very few choices about how to present worship. Unlike almost every other church, Humbercrest has never sought to invest in technology like a soundboard (we have an amp, not a soundboard), screens or proper mics for recording. We also do not have a “tech team”. These are all things necessary for livestreaming and recording, especially in a huge space like the Humbercrest sanctuary.

Zoom has been the right platform for our community given our resources and limitations. It also enabled me to offer a visitation and officiate a funeral for our long time member Helen Keown, with over 75 in attendance, many from retirement and long term care homes. It was a beautiful service and the family was grateful and appreciative.

Meredith and I were able to meet with the youth for a time of check in, sharing and support on Zoom. All of the youth logged on and it was good to make that connection. I have also been continuing my work with Region and General Council, through Zoom meeting.

I appreciate the support of M&P with regard to taking my planned time away and will enjoy my week of study leave May 18-24. As originally planned I will be attending the Festival of Homiletics which has evolved into a virtual event. I am very much looking forward to being nourished in this way.

In Christ’s service,

Rev. Jessica McCrae

Our Shared Ministries

Committee Reports -

11. Trustees

Howard provided an update specifically on the investment committee telephone conference with our investment advisor. The bad news is that value of our portfolio has declined due to the market reaction to the coronavirus pandemic. The good news is that the decline is less than the general market and that is due to Humbercrest having sold off almost all its resource based stocks in the past two years with much of the credit going to Rita Bijons for this action. Trustees still retain one small oil and gas stock but investment-wise the investments are in fairly good shape. As part of a risk management adjustment the investment committee moved from 60% equity in December to 25% equity and it is estimated we avoided a market loss of over \$50,000 at the stock market’s lowest point. Part of the reason for the meeting was to confirm that the Trustees could support the current cash flow requirements of the church working very closely with Charlie.

7/21/20

Howard shared also an observation about how families with young children in the neighbourhood have been making play time use of the church grounds. Many of the public parks are closed and people have re-discovered the open space at Humbercrest. Howard assured all that people were being careful of the social distancing rules.

12. Devotions

No report on devotion matters. Brian shared the good news of his meeting with the Licence Lay Worship committee for Region on Monday and being approved as a Licenced Lay Worship leader. Beverley spoke for all in congratulating him.

13. Facilities

No report.

14. Resources

No report.

15. Community

Wedding co-ordinator Natalie Cakebread received an updated job description some time ago. She opens the church and is the church's representative on that occasion. Shrove Tuesday supper on February 25, 2020 was well attended. The profit of \$217.30 will be given to the church.

Easter cards were sent to those people who would normally be visited and be given a tulip plant.

16. Ministry and Personnel

Provisions made for contract staff during closure of Humbercrest United Church due to COVID19

After church service on 15 March 2020, Charlie Evans, Mike Grayhurst, Linda Steggles and Aileen McGregor meet to discuss how to deal with payment for our contract staff during the indefinite closure of Humbercrest United Church due to COVID19. There was further discussion with the M&P committee before the following recommendations were made.

1. Meredith – prepares and presents her weekly message/activities for Sunday school online, along with activities to be included in Rev. Jessica's Reflections. Meredith will keep track of her hours and let Aileen know the time this takes, then donate back to the church for any hours not worked as per usual when she is away on vacation or sick, as established in her letter of employment. (eg if it takes 3 hours instead of 5 hours, Meredith will donate back 2 hours)
2. Besnik – continues to do a weekly security check throughout the church building on Monday evenings, at a rate of 2 hours per call. Aileen to check in with Besnik at beginning of each month to confirm this ongoing arrangement.
3. Sam and his cleaning staff of S6 – Sam billed only for the first 2 weeks of March that he worked in the church before the closure. He is being given a retainer fee

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of 10% (i.e. \$100) per month, to show we appreciate his services and understanding during these unusual circumstances.

4. The Section Leads – the 6 section leads were paid their normal 2 calls per week (\$55 per call) for the remainder of March (after closure) and for April. The intention is to pay the leads 1 call per week for May and June, this will have to be evaluated as circumstances evolve.

Schedule of those entering the church

- Monday – Besnik for security check between 3 – 5pm
- Tuesday – nobody
- Wednesday – David Drake for mail pick up, bill payments etc – morning only
- Thursday – nobody
- Friday – David Gilmour for boiler, furnace and plumbing checks
- Saturday – Charlie Evans, treasurer, for financial business – morning only
- Sunday – nobody

Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes have been placed by the alarm panel at the entrance of the church for individuals to use.

To minimize the number of people going into the church during this period of closure due to the pandemic, it has been decided that there will be 2 people signing cheques, Charlie Evans and David Gilmour, as they both already have reason to be in the building.

17. Closing Remarks/Adjournment (Adjournment: 8:35 pm.)

Next regular council meeting is May 26, 2020 @ 7:00 pm.

B. Burke – *Council Chair*

D. Gilmour – *Secretary*