

THE PARISH OF THE ADVENT

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY

Type: Regular Meeting

Date: December 17, 2020

Via Remote Communication

A regular meeting of the Vestry of the Parish of the Advent was held on the seventeenth day of December, *anno Domini nostri Iesu Christi 2020*, via remote communication through Zoom, the Rector presiding.

The following fifteen members of the Vestry were present, all of whom were present at the meeting's commencement, thus constituting a quorum:

The Rev'd Douglas E. Anderson (Rector)
Mr. C. Thomas Brown (Rector's Warden)
Mr. Paul J. Roberts (People's Warden)
Mr. Adam C. Rutledge (Treasurer)
Mr. Frederick A. Ou (Clerk)
Miss Lynda J. Blair
Mr. John M. Boyd
Miss Amanda W. Daley
Mr. Thatcher L. Gearhart
Mr. Dustin E. Henderson
Dr. David E. Lapin
Dr. Philip W. Le Quesne
Mrs. Carolyn P. McDermott
Dr. Brent D. Nelson
Mr. Francesco M. Piscitelli

The Rector, after ensuring that all those participating could hear each other and be heard by one another at the same time, called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and offered an opening prayer.

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Rector presented the minutes of the last regular meeting of the Vestry, held on November 19, 2020. After review, upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Vestry's November 19, 2020 meeting be approved as submitted.

II. REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Gearhart, Chairman of the Finance Committee, reviewed the Parish's proposed 2021 budget. He expressed that this was a transformative budget for the Parish due to the substantial reduction in overall projected expenses reflected therein, which stemmed from a number of policy changes approved by the Vestry during 2020. It was estimated that compared to 2020, approximately \$150,000 will be saved due to the following:

- Replacement of the senior sexton position with a property manager.

- More sporadic use of the Parish's plumber and handyman.

- Shifting the responsibilities currently held by the Parish's church-school director back to the Parish's full-time clergy.

- Implementation of electronic bill pay and additional processes resulting from the departure of the Parish's bookkeeper.

- The replacement of Mr. James J. Wood with Mr. James D. Singletary as Parish Administrator and related changes.

In relation thereto, Mr. Gearhart gave particular thanks and credit to the Rector, the Wardens, the Treasurer, Dr. Lapin and the Administration Committee, and Mrs. McDermott, Mr. Thomas J. McDermott, and the Property Committee.

For 2020, despite an approximate \$57,000 reduction in income to the Parish largely connected to a decline in congregational giving due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, there had been a major, corresponding reduction in expenses due to COVID-19, as well as additional, unexpected savings related to the Parish's Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) loan, thus resulting in nearly \$380,000 in net operating income for the year versus the original expectation of \$65,000. In creating the proposed 2021 budget, the Finance Committee refrained from any attempt to factor in variances related to COVID-19, instead creating a budget as if the year would be under normal circumstances. The proposed budget assumed an approximate \$50,000 decrease in congregational giving compared to 2020 and included the expenses for three full-time clergy, with a goal of \$150,000 in net income at year's end that could be transferred to the Parish's capital account. With COVID-19 taken into account, the expectation would be that the Parish's overall expenses for 2021 would end up a bit lower than that budgeted.

In response to a question regarding the sizeable reduction in expenses related to regular repairs and maintenance provided in the proposed 2021 budget, Mr. Gearhart explained that this reflected the reduction in the Parish's use of its plumber and handyman, as well as ongoing savings resulting from the Parish's much-improved controls for expenses that had been implemented in 2020. The Treasurer concurred with this expectation, and also added that the proposed 2021 budget assumed a two-percent salary increase for all Parish employees.

After discussion, upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

RESOLVED, that the Parish's proposed 2021 budget be approved as presented.

2.2 Clergy Housing Resolutions. The Rector explained that the annual resolutions regarding clergy housing needed to be passed by the Vestry for 2021. Upon motion, duly made and seconded, the following resolutions were approved by the Vestry:

WHEREAS, The Rev'd Douglas E. Anderson is compensated by the Parish of the Advent, Boston, Massachusetts, exclusively for services as a Minister of the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, the Parish of the Advent, Boston, Massachusetts, provides Fr. Anderson with rent-free use of a Parish-owned rectory as compensation for services that he renders to the Parish in the exercise of his ministry.

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY

RESOLVED, that the annual compensation paid to The Rev'd Douglas E. Anderson by the Parish for calendar year 2021 A.D. will be \$122,400, of which an amount not to exceed \$50,000 is hereby designated as a housing allowance pursuant to § 107 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the designation of the aforesaid housing allowance will apply to both calendar year 2021 A.D. and all future years during which Fr. Anderson is employed as a Minister of the Gospel by the Parish of the Advent, unless otherwise provided by the Vestry.

WHEREAS, The Rev'd David J. Thompson is compensated by the Parish of the Advent, Boston, Massachusetts, exclusively for services as a Minister of the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, the Parish of the Advent, Boston, Massachusetts, provides Fr. Thompson with rent-free use of a Parish-owned vicarage as compensation for services that he renders to the Parish in the exercise of his ministry.

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY

RESOLVED, that the annual compensation paid to The Rev'd David J. Thompson by the Parish for calendar year 2021 A.D. will be \$76,500, of which an amount not to exceed \$30,000 is hereby designated as a housing allowance pursuant to § 107 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the designation of the aforesaid housing allowance will apply to both calendar year 2021 A.D. and all future years during which Fr. Thompson is employed as a Minister of the Gospel by the Parish of the Advent, unless otherwise provided by the Vestry.

WHEREAS, The Rev'd Dr. Jeffrey A. Hanson is compensated by the Parish of the Advent, Boston, Massachusetts, exclusively for services as a Minister of the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, the Parish of the Advent, Boston, Massachusetts, does not provide Fr. Hanson with Parish-owned housing.

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY

RESOLVED, that the annual compensation paid to The Rev'd Dr. Jeffrey A. Hanson by the Parish for calendar year 2021 A.D. will be \$29,131, all of which is hereby designated as a housing allowance pursuant to § 107 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the designation of the aforesaid housing allowance will apply to both calendar year 2021 A.D. and all future years during which Fr. Hanson is employed as a Minister

of the Gospel by the Parish of the Advent, unless otherwise provided by the Vestry.

III. REPORT OF THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Mr. Piscitelli, Chairman of the Stewardship Committee, reported a positive outlook regarding the Parish's 2021 stewardship campaign. To date, 144 pledges had been received totaling \$476,450 pledged, as compared to the aggregate 2020 pledge amount of \$555,225. Sixty pledges from 2020 remained outstanding, totaling \$146,440 pledged, but Mr. Piscitelli was cautiously optimistic that the Committee's goal of matching the 2020 pledge amount for 2021 would be reached given that receipt of pledges by the Parish had been back-ended to late December and January historically. Mr. Piscitelli's overall assessment was that in comparison to prior years, the current results of the 2021 stewardship campaign looked pretty good taking into account the present circumstances, and that a significant number of additional pledges were expected to come in over the next two months. The Rector added that peers of the Parish were expecting a much worse financial situation for 2021 comparatively, and thus he shared Mr. Piscitelli's optimism.

IV. REPORT OF THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Mrs. McDermott, Co-Chairperson of the Property Committee, reported that the Committee was in the process of reviewing possible property-related projects, including obtaining pricing proposals therefor. Mr. Gearhart also noted that the Parish should end 2020 in a good financial position as to its revolving capital account, so funds should be available for more urgent projects in the upcoming year.

V. REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Dr. Lapin, Chairman of the Administration Committee, reported that additional changes had been made to the Parish's draft employee handbook, including those suggested regarding confidentiality and remote-work requirements. The only issue related to the employee handbook that remained outstanding was whether to allow part-time employees to participate in the Parish's lay pension plan. Dr. Lapin proposed that this issue be given a closer look, including applicable legal requirements, to determine if it would be advisable for the Parish to extend such benefits to its part-time employees. In addition, he also suggested doing a survey of the Parish's part-time employees to gauge their interest in participating in the lay pension plan. If offered, Dr.

Lapin did not expect the addition of such benefits to have a significant impact on the Parish's budget.

Overall, Dr. Lapin proposed that the Vestry approve the latest version of the Parish's employee handbook, previously circulated amongst the Vestry, and postpone addressing the remaining outstanding issue of whether to allow part-time employees to participate in the Parish's lay pension plan until after this issue had been studied more comprehensively. Accordingly, upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

RESOLVED, that the proposed employee handbook presented to the Vestry be adopted as the Parish's Lay Employee Guide.

RESOLVED, that the Administration Committee and Finance Committee are directed to study the question of whether the Parish should allow its part-time employees to participate in its lay pension plan and thereafter present a report thereon to the Vestry.

VI. RECTOR'S REMARKS

The Rector announced that a fourth Mass had been added for Christmas Eve, December 24, 2020, due to demand.

VII. REPORT FROM THE WARDENS

The Rector's Warden gave a report regarding the Parish's upcoming 2021 Annual Meeting. He informed the Vestry that because the Parish had been founded so long ago, more recent statutory relief providing for alternatives to an in-person annual meeting, which apply to other parishes in the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, do not apply to the Parish. While the Vestry could delay the 2021 Annual Meeting, Mr. Brown advised against that course if it could be avoided, while also noting that his understanding was that most other parishes in the Diocese were moving forward with their respective annual meetings as scheduled. If the Parish were to similarly move forward with its 2021 Annual Meeting, then two major issues would need to be addressed.

The first issue would be the logistics of conducting an in-person annual meeting necessary to accommodate a quorum of at least fifty Parish members as required by the Parish's By-laws, while still complying with COVID-19-related restrictions and guidelines of the Diocese and civil authorities. Mr. Brown suggested that attendees could be dispersed among the various spaces

in the Church, and a registration system utilized to keep things organized. He also suggested that the Annual Meeting be broadcast so that Parish members unable to physically attend could still participate in some manner. The Rector concurred with this suggestion, stating that he wanted to ensure that Parish members did not feel obligated to physically attend the Annual Meeting, and thus supported any measures that would increase the transparency of the Annual Meeting and allow participation therein.

The second issue would be how to conduct the voting at the Annual Meeting, since those voting validly would need to be physically present at the Annual Meeting. To this end, Mr. Brown suggested that in the interests of simplifying the voting as much as possible, avoiding creating unfairness to those who could not be present or would feel uncomfortable being personally present, and avoiding the creation of unnecessary risks related to COVID-19 transmission, the Vestry direct the Nominating Committee to nominate a slate of candidates for office equaling the number of open seats, as is the standard practice in most of the other parishes in the Diocese. The Wardens could not think of any alternatives to this method that would not be immensely or impossibly complex to implement

The Vestry discussed these issues at length, with an emphasis on the need for the Vestry to clearly communicate the relevant changes to the Parish with sufficient notice to allow Parish members to duly participate in the process. Mr. Brown also added that the Wardens planned to broadcast the Annual Meeting live if possible, rather than providing just a recording thereof, and that it would be necessary for all in-person attendees to register beforehand. It was noted that the proposed process would be fairer to the Parish's members than any alternative, especially for those members in high-risk categories for severe illness from COVID-19, since this process would provide a method of participation therein without physically placing oneself at risk.

After said discussion was concluded, upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

RESOLVED, that pursuant to Article IV, Section 1, of the Parish's By-laws, the Vestry calls an Annual Meeting of the Parish of the Advent, to be held in the Church on the Third Sunday after the Epiphany, January 24, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Nominating Committee is directed to present a slate of candidates for office equal to the number of open offices for vote at said Annual Meeting; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Rector and Wardens are directed to develop specific protocols for the conduct of said Annual Meeting in a manner consistent with all applicable rules and regulations related to the current pandemic.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to consider, upon motion, duly made and seconded, the Vestry voted to adjourn the meeting, whereupon the meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

I attest that the above is a true record of the Vestry meeting held on Thursday, December 17, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Frederick A. Ou,
Clerk