

Iona-Hope Episcopal Church  
Minutes of the Vestry  
July 14, 2020

**Attendees:**

The Reverend Ray Buchanan ✓

**Vestry Members:**

Joe Mulino, Senior Warden ✓

Ray Zentis, Junior Warden Excused with regrets

Bob Earl ✓

Margo Farrara ✓

Alison Kinch ✓

Robin Mills ✓

Andi Jerger ✓

Debbie Prather, Treasurer, Member ✓

Patricia Ingram ✓

**Guests - Persons of Interest:**

The Reverend Suzy Post ✓

John Gamble, Project Manager ✓

John Thomas Assistant Treasurer ✓

Paula Paquette, Clerk of the Vestry ✓

**Guest:** Douglass Lind, Consultant ✓

**Opening Concerns and Prayers – Father Ray**

**INFORMATION**

**Re-Imagining Vestry Functioning** – Father Ray wants to present some observations about how he sees the Vestry functioning now. Parish management in a (post)-coronavirus world is a PowerPoint presentation he prepared and will post into Teams. Episcopal Church Canon 14 discusses Vestries. Vestry is whatever is allowed by the Diocese and the State. We are agents and legal representatives of the parish. The Vestry protects the property of the congregation and to see that all things needed for the orderly worship of God and functioning of the parish are provided. Clergy and employee compensation is a function of the Vestry. Vestry provides order in the church during worship. Bylaws provide more detail, from national to Diocesan Canons. Vestry cannot cause the church to be indebted by using the property. That must be approved by Diocese. Vestry must support spiritual wellbeing of the congregation. Represent congregational relations with Rector. Vestry is Council of Advice when Rector seeks that advice. Vestry serves as Council of Advice to Senior Warden if he or she requests. Any person seeking to enter into process of ministry meets with Rector and then with Vestry. Vestry reviews finances. Vestry is responsible for care of the Rector which includes a sabbatical every seven years. Vestry cannot have conflicts of interest in any regard. Vestry protects vulnerable people; we participate in safe church training. Those are basics of what Vestry does. Father Ray went to his first Vestry meeting in 1979 in the Episcopal Church. Changes have been brought to our church by Covid19. People have an increased online presence. All meetings and services are by Zoom. We must have a more agile response during this time. Vestry is a spiritual community also. Vestry is a learning community also. There should be both in Vestry meetings and gatherings. When those are lived out at the Vestry, they are then reflected also in the entire congregation. Father Ray recommends we make learning a part of every meeting. Learning can be combined with prayers. Annually, possibly there can be a

longer learning event. Use what we learn at Vestry and then bring that to the congregation. Size of parish can be studied as to how these things reflect into the parish. Vestry as spiritual community. Continue with devotions/prayer at each meeting; be active at worship services online and special services; attend worship services at different times than the one we would usually attend; broadening participation broadens understanding and experience of Iona-Hope; incorporate prayer and mediation in meetings we lead. Our church currently has people from all over the world attending. We need to experience how Iona-Hope is present in interfaith events. 1. Limit monthly meetings to one hour. 2. Submit agenda and documents one week prior to meeting so everything can be reviewed ahead of time. 3. Set up working groups and committees. 4. Complete tasks in a timely manner and submit them onto Teams so things can get handled efficiently. 5. Utilize Teams for information, discussion, chat, etc. between meetings. 6. Facilitate projects between meetings. 7. Be prepared. 8. Decisions need to be made between some meetings. Doing things ahead of time avoids crisis management. Working groups can bring up recommendations to the full Vestry. Example now is Finance. They meet before Vestry meetings and bring info to the Vestry. Submit reports to Teams a week before the meeting. All can review. Don't wait for meetings to do everything. The Vestry can function between meetings. Teams has a chat room to discuss things. There are how to videos for using Teams on Utube especially. Sometimes, things will come to decisions in between meetings. It has been difficult to recruit three new members each year. Perhaps Iona-Hope can reduce the size of the Vestry to six. Then, we could just seek out two new members. Vestry can approve this, but suggestion is to bring it up to the congregation. It could be brought to annual meeting. Now is a time for agility. Change is rapid now; some decisions must be made quickly, especially because of Covid19.

**Approval of Minutes** – Motion Joe Mulino, Second Bob Earl, to approve previous minutes June 9, 2020. All in favor.

**Group Ministries** – Bob Earl is reporting on Welcome committee of Invite, Welcome, Connect. They met recently. They are willing to make phone calls to members of the parish if needed at this time. The group also spoke about doing virtual coffee hours.

## **NEW FACILITIES**

**New Facilities** – Father John Gamble, executive summary concerning building projects, new facilities. Any questions on the last summary provided? Question was asked about have the handicapped parking spots disappeared from in front of The Gathering Place? Are they only toward the front of the church now? Can new ones be added back in? There are three there still. We will look to see if signs were taken down. Signs are there still. July 10, a door repaired. July 13 power washing of sidewalks and building faces was done. Front and rear of church. Suggestion was we do that once per year. Recommendation was made about landscaping. This is being reviewed with current landscape people.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Senior Warden Report, Joe Mulino**

Two items. Thrift store. Father Ray and Joe have tried to keep everyone apprised of the search for a new location. Prime location we are considering is by Target, San Carlos, 4,500 square feet, next to Dollar store. We are almost ready to do a letter of intent. A proposal for cost of improvements was \$136,000 at first for leasehold improvements. Price discussed down to \$117,000. Still seems too much for us. Joe let them know this was higher than anticipated. Father Ray and Joe contacted John Gamble to review the matter. Father John recommended an architect who is coming up with a proposal. Another source was sought out, too, for construction pricing. Father John imagines we can get the improvements' cost down to \$90,000 or so. ReMax representative recommends we make a letter of intent so

that we keep our interest in front of the owners. He is asking the owners what they might do for us related to improvements' cost. We can include in the proposal that we could ask for an abatement of rent in the amount of the improvements we might pay for. Spread it out over a term of some number of months. It is a wide open space now. It is a shell. Two five-ton AC units are on roof. Drops are there. No AC inside yet. Nothing inside.

Where would the cash come from to pay for the improvements. We have a line of credit from First Citizens Bank. Line of credit expires on August 27. Can Vestry give Senior Warden Joe permission to renew the line of credit? Do we want to move our banking relationship to another bank? Banks are pretty tight on lending right now because of the economy. Joe did some SBA research. Religious organizations are eligible for SBA loans. Year one is interest free. Marnie Ike is speaking with Anne Vickers, Diocese, and Martha, Diocese, to see about the SBA program and if we can try to use it. Joe is asking for permission to go to First Citizens to renew the line of credit.

Bob Earl, motion, that the Vestry agree that we should renew the line of credit with First Citizens, second, Joe Mulino. All in favor. Bob Earl, motion, that the Vestry proceed with a letter of intent to the owners of the proposed thrift store space, second, Joe Mulino. All in favor.

### **Vestry Consultation**

Doug Lind, consultant. Nothing to discuss at this time.

### **ACS/Realm Conversion**

Everyone has received credentials. Please access and log in. Excellent communication tool for people to be in touch with each other.

### **Junior Warden Opening/Job Description**

Discussed. It was recommended that the job description be expanded to more tasks than just maintenance as it has been up until now. It was also brought up that the job should be the job regardless of the gender of the person who fills the position. Perhaps the job description as it is now should not be changed. There is flexibility in the job description now because the position is not tightly defined. If we redefine the job description and box it in too much, it may limit the flexibility of the position. There is a job description extant in the Bylaws. It is short and not lots defined. No-one volunteered to serve in the position. The topic will be brought up at the next Vestry meeting again.

### **New Capital Campaign**

We need to start talking about a next capital campaign.

### **Security**

Not discussed at this time.

### **Strategic Planning**

Not discussed at this time.

### **Invite, Welcome, Connect**

Not discussed at this time.

### **Mardi Gras 2021 Recipient**

Not discussed at this time.

## **DECISIONS**

### **Finance Committee, Deb Prather**

Financial reports were emailed earlier to Vestry. Any questions about finances? Treasurer Deb Prather reports we are in good financial condition. We are \$10,000 above pledged income. The PPP is being applied to payroll expenses, as it is supposed to be. For every payroll paid, an equal distribution comes from the PPP line. Deb is extremely pleased as to how things are going.

### **Columbarium Financial Division**

We need to divide endowment account into two parts – general and Columbarium.

Motion that for the Endowment account, one part is for general endowment and the second part be for the maintenance of the Columbarium, Robin Mills, second by Bob Earl. All in favor.

**Thrift Store**

[See above under Senior Warden report.]

**Approve Audit**

Motion, by Joe Mulino, to accept the Audit report as presented, second Deb Prather. All in favor.

**Junior Warden Report**

Not discussed at this time.

**Vestry agenda completed 6:00 pm.**

*Adjournment*