

St. Mary of the Hills
Vestry Minutes, June 15, 2021
Parish Hall

Members Present: Tim Silver (Sr. Warden), Doug Galke (Jr. Warden), Marjory Holder, Roy McCraw, Faith Jones, Patty Patella, Jim West, and via Video Conference: Lisa Kaufmann and Gigi Poole

Members Absent: Chip Monroe, Sterling Hutcheson, E.B. Springs

Others Present: Fr. Andrew Hege (Rector), Elizabeth Sudderth (Clerk), Fr. Sam Tallman (Priest Associate), Amanda White (Treasurer)

Fr. Andrew asked those present if they preferred to wear masks or not at this first in-person Vestry meeting since the pandemic began. The consensus was to wear masks at this meeting.

Fr. Andrew called the meeting to order with prayer at 5:34pm.

Gigi Poole made a motion to accept the meeting agenda as presented by Fr. Andrew. Faith Jones seconded the motion. The Vestry approved the motion.

Marjory Holder made a motion with a second from Patty Patella to accept the minutes of the prior meeting. The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Andrew shared a devotion to begin the meeting.

Leadership Check-In:

Fr. Andrew asked those present to share where they have experienced grace recently. Some examples shared were: the joy of having grandchildren visit, abundant flowers blooming nourished by welcome rains, the gratefulness that a friend got to the hospital just in time for appendix surgery, Fr. Sam's experience of worshipping alone at Morning Prayer and feeling a great sense of holiness, the joy shared by a group from a church in Shelby praying in our church, the laughter and sense of community shared by a group working on the Tour of Homes, and the joy shared by Dr. Lisa Kaufmann that there are currently no COVID-19 patients at Watauga Medical Center!

Amanda White shared the Treasurer's report.

The parish remains in a very healthy financial position even though last month our expenses exceeded our income. The endowments continue to do well.

Currently 49% of pledges have been received year to date.

The Tour of Homes credit card account is active. The separate account for TOH will make it much easier to track and report expenses and income from the tour.

Beginning next month Amanda will share a detailed statement each month of the status of the TOH.

Amanda was happy to report the PPP loan has been fully forgiven by the SBA. An email confirming this has been received.

Amanda reported the Finance committee continues their work on defining and streamlining the restricted accounts.

Tim Silver made a motion with a second by Roy McCraw to accept the Treasurer's report.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Patty Patella gave an update on the Tour of Homes.

Filming by the videographer started yesterday in the Parish Hall. Several people were interviewed including Fr. Andrew, Loy McGill, and Kay McCloskey. Preparations including flower arranging and lunch preparation were also filmed. Filming is largely complete in 4 homes which will be featured on the virtual tour. The videographer will contact Marjory Holder to arrange uploading the tour to the parish website. Patty reported good progress has been made on collecting items for the auction.

Fr. Andrew reported the status of regathering in COVID times.

The current plan is to hold services at 100% capacity with no social distancing with masks. The exception on mask wearing will be for worship leaders when they are reading, etc. Fr. Andrew has received no news from the Diocese on a directive lifting the requiring of mask wearing at this time. When that does occur the congregation will most likely be given two weeks notice of the change.

Fr. Andrew also shared the news that groups of less than 20 people meeting indoors in our spaces can consider dropping the requirement of mask wearing if all present are fully vaccinated and everyone is comfortable.

The parish is getting more requests from outside groups to use our space. The plan is for outside groups to begin to meet again here without serving food. The serving of food will be allowed starting sometime in July.

Fr. Andrew reported that Lemonade on the Lawn after the second service will start on the first Sunday of July whenever weather permits. These outdoor gatherings for a time of fellowship will be a bridge to Coffee Minute.

Fr. Andrew shared that he is getting increasing feedback from parishioners expressing a desire for the mask mandate to be dropped in the church. A medical professional in the meeting pointed out that when the time comes for the mask mandate to end the Vestry should keep in mind that not everyone is vaccinated against COVID and that it will be important to remind those who are not vaccinated to continue to wear masks. Also, immunosuppressed persons should not be with those who are not vaccinated without masking.

Fr. Andrew noted that at this time we are still following the Diocesan directive by continuing to require masks of everyone indoors. He did note that other churches in our community have recently dropped their mask requirements.

Fr. Andrew requested the formation of a nominating committee for the Vestry positions which will be open on January 1. The committee consists of the outgoing Vestry members (Sterling Hutcheson, Gigi Poole, E.B. Springs, and Jim West) as well as the Wardens.

Roy McCraw made a motion to accept the members of the Vestry nominating committee as presented.

Marjory Holder seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Doug Galke shared the Junior Warden's report.

The repair work on the bell tower and the sidewalk is scheduled to begin around July 12. The leak in the Sanctuary was repaired at a cost of \$845.00. We may not know with certainty that this took care of the problem until the roof is tested with snow next winter.

Doug requested volunteers to form a small committee to begin planning work on the church grounds. One particular area to be addressed is the area in front of the church where the old maple tree stood. Marjory and Jim volunteered to join Doug, Tim, and Greta Wilson to form this committee. Doug will set up a meeting of this group.

Doug reported he is checking to see if the AED machine needs service. He also stated the proposed CPR training will not be scheduled yet.

Tim Silver shared the Senior Warden's report.

Tim expressed his thanks to all who have provided items for the Tour of Homes auction. Tim shared how much he enjoyed the visit from Bishop Jose. Tim mentioned he thought the idea the Bishop shared of having a "Vestry person of the day" to be responsible for reaching out to visitors was something our parish may want to explore to make those visiting our parish feel more welcome. It may be that the designated Vestry person could be identified by a badge, etc. to be more visible to visitors. Perhaps two Vestry members could be designated for this duty at each service, one at each door. Several ideas were discussed to make visitors feel welcome such as brief welcoming remarks just prior to worship. It was mentioned that this could be other parish members, not just Vestry members. Perhaps a variety of ages could be represented. The suggestion was made to offer a sticker or other keepsake to visitors. There was also a suggestion made to add information to the service bulletin explaining the tradition and history behind our prayers.

Fr. Andrew mentioned that greeters will soon be at both services again. He mentioned he will be following up on some action steps in the next few weeks. He will share these with Vestry members prior to the next meeting.

Fr. Andrew shared the Rector's report.

Andrew reported the overwhelming number of those who responded to his poll on the starting time for the second Sunday service prefer to start the service at 10:10. Beginning on July 4, the second service will begin each Sunday at 10:10. Adult Christian Formation will also return on that day at 9:00 each week.

Andrew shared that Fr. Sam Tallman is back with us on a part-time basis for the next several months.

Andrew is keeping major Feast Days. The service times will vary.

A number of funerals are happening now which were postponed during the pandemic.

He asked that all keep those dealing with grief and loss in their prayers.

Andrew reported the Technology committee is continuing to look at options to improve the livestream experience.

Performance evaluations are planned as a mutual process so that staff will have the opportunity to provide a “mutual ministry review” of the Rector. Fr. Andrew has reached out to the Diocesan office for help to develop this process. He hopes to implement this in September and to continue it at least every other year.

A comment was made noting it is hard for some to hear the reading of the lectors.

Andrew will ask them to speak up.

Marjory Holder made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:45pm.

Jim West seconded the motion.

The Vestry approved the motion.

Fr. Sam Tallman offered a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Sudderth, Clerk of the Vestry