

Standing Committee Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2020
via Zoom, 6:30 p.m.

Attendees: Celia Fine, Andy Jones, Scott Leannah, Gary Manning, Tammy Prather, Sheryl Slocum, Jana Troutman-Miller

Guest: The Rt. Rev. Steven Miller

Excused: Marcus White

Opening Prayer: Fine

Report from the Rt. Rev. Steven Miller from his meeting with the Diocesan office financial staff:

It has become increasingly clear that the diocesan finances are too complex for the company we currently use, Numbers for Not-for-Profits (NNP). The Bishop suggests that we maintain some sort of relationship with NNP but hire someone as a bookkeeper. Our contract with NNP expires at the end of the year; the Bishop does not know if there will be a penalty for changing the terms of the contract.

Leannah suggested that Kevin Huddleston might be willing to remain as a bridge so that we can create a job description with information from NNP.

Prather cautioned that it may be difficult to bring two new people (a Transitional Bishop and a Bookkeeper) on board at the same time. The Bishop responded that there is so much year-end work that we really need someone to help out.

Leannah asked about the position of the Diocesan Office staff at year end. The Bishop stated that we need to ask each one what their plans are.

Jones wondered about the budget implications of hiring a Bookkeeper. Currently, we don't have to pay insurance or benefits for NNP. The Bishop believes that Huddleston would be willing to take on more responsibilities, but that would mean he'd be doing less in his congregations. The Bishop reminded that the recent property sales mean that we have a little more money to work with.

Prather asked if we are making full use of the National Church resources. The Bishop responded that the National Church is a lot less staffed than they used to be. In addition, our people don't particularly want to go on a website to get answers, they want to speak to a person.

Jones commented that the process for hiring someone new is a big project that may not mean time well spent when we may need to change operations or personnel in 6 months. The Bishop responded that one solution to this would be to bring Huddleston on board rather than advertise a new position.

Manning asked when will the budget will be finalized. The Bishop explained that the Finance Committee needs information from the Standing Committee to finalize it. Also, they need to develop a plan for how the pandemic will impact the diocese. Manning suggested that it may be helpful for several members of

the SC to speak with the Finance Committee. The Bishop agreed and asked us to appoint two SC representatives to communicate with Finance.

Manning reminded us that Marlene often coached parish representatives with their annual financial reports, so we need to remember that we will need a responsive phone presence. The Bishop added that in the current circumstances it is likely that more of our parishes will need help. Leannah suggested that if any of the staff who are staying on after December 31 have the ability to help parishes, we could ask if they would be willing to be the helpful phone presence. The Bishop pointed out that the office staff are already busy preparing for the Diocesan Convention.

It was decided that Manning and Jones will work with the Finance Committee, and Prather and Troutman-Miller will work with Diocesan Office staff. The Bishop asked that Prather and Troutman-Miller meet with him before meeting with the staff.

Supporting Stressed Parishes:

Bishop Miller reported that several parishes were financially stressed pre-COVID 19. The Bishop stated that the Finance Committee and the COMD have recommended the Canon 8 process. If he decides to initiate the Canon 8 process, it will probably continue beyond his tenure. The SC needs to consider how we would be involved after December 31 to ensure a smooth transition for any parishes in the Canon 8 process.

Having completed his discussion with us, Bishop Miller left the meeting.

Zoom meetings with Michael DeLashmutt and Esther Kramer:

Pleasant conversations were held with each candidate, catching the SC up with what each had been doing and learning and the developments in their sense of vocation.

After the each meeting a motion was made to approve. Each motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Leannah verified that Manning and Slocum will be rotating off SC in the Fall.

Discussion followed on the Canon 8 process. It was agreed that we need more background and need to make sure that communications are clear. Manning will forward follow-up documents to us so that we can be fully informed.

Leannah's report on his virtual meetings with Hallisey and Bishop Ousley:

Hallisey suggested that when we're ready, she can meet with us remotely or come out for a visit. She is also willing to lead the January clergy conference. She will wait to hear from us.

Bishop Ousley said that he has someone in mind for a possible Assistant Bishop, but his inquiries are not yet at a point where he can reveal names. If it turns out that there will be a lag time before an Assistant Bishop can come, or if one has to come part-time, the SC will be the ecclesiastical authority. If we need assistance now or later during this time of transition, Bishop Ousley is one of our resources.

A Retirement Celebration Committee has met and is working on plans for meaningful ways to celebrate Bishop Miller's many contributions to the Diocese, in spite of limitations imposed by the pandemic.

Approval of minutes for our previous meetings will occur via email.

Our August meeting will take place on the 11th at 6:30 p.m.

Closing Prayer 8:40 p.m.: Slocum