

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ASHFIELD, UCC
Trustees' Minutes
March 4, 2025 at 7:00 PM

Present: Ted Murray, Holly Wescott, Annie Cheatham (Scribe), Nancy Marshall, Hetty Startup, Sam Schreiber, Richard Prée, Patricia Donohue
Guests from Co-op Power: Lynn Benander and Cyndee Fand

Opening Prayer led by Holly Wescott.

Presentation and Discussion re: electricity agreement with Co-Op Power and Common Good

Guests: Lynn Benander and Cyndee Fand from Co-Op Power

We discussed in depth establishing a relationship with Coop Power and Common Good so as to lower the church's annual electrical costs and to support the production of "green energy." Benander and Fand reassured us that we can save 15% of our annual costs, or approximately \$575 annually. We expressed our concern that transactions with Common Good and Coop Power go smoothly and easily and that our savings can be deposited into our bank account at Greenfield Coop Bank. Benander and Fand assured us that this would be the case. They will send Ted and Sam their contract. If satisfied, Ted and Sam will establish an account with Common Good, and return a signed contract. In about two months, our church should be in the system. Agreed that this will be reviewed in a year to determine if the church should stay in this relationship.

MOTION: To open an account with Common Good, and review and sign the Coop Power contract. 7 in favor; 1 abstention

Ted will explore the Ashfield town-wide energy savings program as well.

Old Business

1. Approval of minutes from February 4, 2025, was made by all voting in the affirmative.
2. Financial review was led by Ted based on financials sent to us by Ann Gibson, Treasurer. All is in order for this time of the year. Richard brought up value of CDs at Greenfield Coop Bank, but our Vanguard money market account is liquid and is yielding 4.26% now. Since the church needs access to these funds, it is best to stay with Vanguard and not lock funds into CD accounts.
3. Building/maintenance/repair issues and status
 - Rodent control traps have been set and Patricia will monitor.
 - We authorized Richard to contact Florence Lock and Key and pay \$125 for someone to come and give us an estimate for fixing the lock on the upstairs emergency exit door. To be continued.
 - Podium modifications assessment has been made with David's approval, and George Butler will do the modification. George will also make adjustment to the mike to get it higher. Richard is working with George and will talk with him about timing.
 - Sam will check insulation in attic to make sure there are no leaks.
 - Ted will ask Margery Heins to schedule organ maintenance.
 - Door closure on Sanctuary door was not working on Sunday. A new device was installed on Monday or Tuesday, and the door now opens properly and is not overly

difficult to open.

New Business

4. FRTA (Franklin Regional Transportation Authority) has requested that they use our parking lot as a turnaround location for passenger buses that they will be adding to a new transportation route. We agreed that our lot is not ideal for this use, and that FRTA would have to adjust for Food Pantry distribution days, BUT that we want to support efforts to have public transportation accessible for people in Ashfield who can't drive or don't have means to drive. Ted will respond to the request suggesting other alternatives, and the church's support for this effort.
5. Food Pantry heating costs are being analyzed by Ann Gibson and Ted. This issue was raised at the last Food Pantry Board meeting.
6. Food Pantry has asked if they can use part of the Sunday School room downstairs for food storage. Increasing numbers of families are seeking support, and the FP is having to turn away food deliveries from the Food Bank because they are out of space in the rooms they are using now. We agreed that our church has space upstairs where Sunday School can meet, and that we want to support the Food Pantry. Ted will convey this decision to Pat Thayer, director of the Food Pantry, and to Randy Gobiell, church member and FP board member who brought the issue forward.
7. Loaves and Fishes Fund at the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts has invited our church to submit a proposal by March 18. This fund will not support any capital improvements or infrastructure projects, and therefore would not fall under the jurisdiction of the Trustees. Annie said other groups (Deacons, M&SJ) know about this opportunity, and perhaps they will want to submit a proposal for an educational program.
8. Ted passed out a list of proposed Trustee roles so that when issues come up, we know which Trustee is working on which project areas. Amendments were made, and Ted will send out a revision before next meeting.

Closing Prayer given by Holly.

Next meetings: Apr. 1, May 6, June 3, Jul/Aug date?