

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ASHFIELD, UCC
Trustees' Meeting
June 3, 2025, at 7:00 PM

Minutes by Hetty:

Present: Ted, Holly, Patricia, Richard, Sam and Hetty.

Opening Prayer: Holly raised up our meeting in prayer mentioning that with the current climate she tried twice to begin a prayer. Our gift was listening to her read her column from last month's Ashfield News.

Old Business

1. Minutes from the May meeting were approved by all.
2. Financial review: Our balance sheets are healthy and United Church funds are actually up. With Operating Surplus of \$1800 the Office/computer upgrade is possible, and with \$587.07 left over from the Loaves and Fishes grant, not all those Operating Surplus funds will be needed. **Ted will work with Vanguard to have Sam added to our accounts/funds.**

We discussed other options that would involve contracting with an investment advisor (e.g. someone like Melody Foti who came to our church for a while) to advise us instead. This is a more conventional fiduciary option.

Related to financial matters, our neighbor Craig Gibson has requested we pay 1/3 share of \$500 cost to remove trees at back corner of parking lot.

3. Building/maintenance/repair issues and status
 - Podium modifications by George Butler and Michael Moscatelli (of Small Church Sound and Video) are underway for the microphone.
 - Sam found a couple leaks and a damp spot in the insulation under our main church roof. **He will follow up with Mitch Hawkins (of Deerfield) re: further proposals for roof repairs this summer.**
 - Sam got approval from other trustees for us to use Mirabito rather than Sandri for our heating oil contract. **He needs to circle back with FRCOG to confirm they are aware of our decision.**
 - Spring clean-up outcome was very good, except we still need to clean the windows. **Patricia agreed to standardize the spring and fall check-lists.**

- One other outcome from spring clean-up is that Margaret and other deacons want to repaint Friendship Hall (to be lighter/brighter) and pick new curtains. **Patricia will work with them to move this forward.**
- Richard reports that Satch has a person – also called Richard – who can re-paint our fire escape using paint in aerosol cans. Next couple days would work well given the predicted weather pattern, and **Patricia will coordinate with ‘our’ Richard.** To be noted: there was some de-leading already done to the lower part of the fire escape when a day care center operated out of our church.
- **Holly will communicate with Jeff to inspect/update as needed fire extinguishers, first aid kits, emergency lights, smoke alarms for July building inspection.**

4. We reviewed the revised job description for Office Administrator, where it was noted that supervision and annual review of the position will be by the minister, clerk, and a deacon. Final approval was moved, seconded and voted unanimously (6-0-0).

5. We reviewed discussed the job description for Sexton, with the goal of specifying vacation arrangements similar to those of the Office Administrator. **Holly will add new wording for this specific topic and circulate a draft for final approval.**

6. Co Op Power Energy Proposal was accepted by the Trustees, and the church has ten shares.

New Business

7. Inquiry re: shape-note singers via Tim Erickson at Amherst College for use of church. The group (that currently meets at the Hills Chapel) might also use upper floor at Town Hall (for the larger groups of singers planned for their program). They may need access to our kitchen for preparation of lunch. The group needs to visit both Town Hall and our church.

8. Holly reports that the Transformation process is methodical, informative and on-going with Chris, the navigator from Southern New England Conference/UCC. On June 4 Holly and Rev David will meet with Alice’s Spirituality group to get their perspective on the Transformation process. The team is beginning to involve people in the town and identify specific groups or organizations. It is our ability to find partners locally to do specific things at church (whether it's a Games night or a vigil or a food pantry) that make for the

best long term outcomes for this process. There may be a role for the Trustees sooner than later, especially in relation to physical changes to the church building. Need to address financial stability into the future especially as we are running a structural deficit. At some point, that needs to be a part of the conversation. Also, could our kitchen become commercial grade?

There was no further new business.

Next meetings: Tuesday Jul 29 will be our combined July/August meeting on Zoom; Please mark your calendars for this and Sep 2, Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2

Holly offered a Closing Prayer. Meeting adjourned.