

Council Meeting Minutes
February 11th, 2020
Zwingli UCC, Mount Vernon, WI

Council members present: Scott Holmstrom, Barbara Schmidt, Beth Albert, Brian Simmert, Kelly Brumm, Tisha Brown, Pastor Brad Brookins

Additional attendees: Rev. Franz Rigert (Conference Minister for the UCC Wisconsin Conference), Alan Ferguson (Treasurer), Steve Brumm and Britta (interested in serving on minister search committee)

The meeting was called to order by Brad at 6:05

1. Opening prayer offered by Brad

2. Devotional story shared by Brad

- We are the group that has been called to lead the church through this transition
- Brad asked the council to consider the following two questions to which we responded:
 - 1) Why are you still here and what is holding you in place?
 - o Community, music, sermons that make you think, learning how to apply Jesus' teachings in the modern day, being a church to the community, being accepting of all, spiritual and progressive community, everything going on in the world, learning the story of Jesus and His teaching, it's a varied community
 - 2) What are your hopes for the church in Mt. Vernon
 - o Continue engaging in the outside community, positivity and calmness, finding the perfect pastor to continue the foundation Brad has built, find a pastor that is easy to relate to, bringing the congregation closer together, thought provoking pastor, more outreach to the community, define what the future of this congregation is and find the right pastor to meet our needs, that the older part of the congregation stays with us, maintain the diversity we have, become more and more discoverable every day.
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3. Election of officers

- **Moderator:** Scott nominated Tisha Brown for Council Moderator and Brian seconded. There were no other nominations and Tisha accepted. All voted in favor.
- **Vice Moderator:** Tisha nominated Beth Albert for Council Vice Moderator and Kelly seconded. There were no other nominations and Beth accepted. All voted in favor.
- **Secretary:** Barbara nominated Scott Holmstrom for Council Secretary and Beth seconded. There were no other nominations and Scott accepted. All voted in favor.

4. Approval of January meeting minutes

- Tisha motioned to file the January minutes and Barbara seconded. Motion carried.

5. Treasurer's report

- Tisha motioned to file the January Treasurer's report and Brian seconded. Motion carried

6. Conversation led by Franz Rigert (Conference Minister for the UCC Wisconsin Conference)

- Brad excused himself from the meeting at this point as is customary in the process
- Franz presented the Conference's recommended procedure for the Search and Call Process
- This is a recommendation only, we have freedom to proceed as we see appropriate
- Franz left a copy of the Search and Call Manual with the council for further review.
- **General Points:**

- The church is not a corporate structure where you simply fill the position, the Search and Call process can take some time
- A skilled interim pastor can be helpful to the transition
- It's not healthy to switch from one minister right to the next, plan for transition time
- Take the necessary time to make sure this won't be a short-term replacement
- Expect the process to take 6-12 months (council sets the target timeline)
- **Basic process:**
 - Create a search committee within the next 2-3 months
 - Ideally comprised of 7-9 people of a diverse background (Different ages, genders, views)
 - Should not include council members or the treasurer unless necessary
 - Lorraine from the UCC Conference will want to attend the initial meeting
 - Must maintain confidentiality with all people outside the committee
 - This will be a time commitment that will ebb and flow
 - Avoid a single-focused agenda
 - Create a church profile
 - Spearheaded by the search committee
 - Don't wait for the interim minister to arrive to start this
 - Brad should not be involved in the creation
 - Goal is to have the profile complete before Brad leaves
 - The congregation needs to be involved in creation of the church profile
 - For salary numbers, refer to the Conference guidelines
 - Use one number for salary & housing
 - Candidates will have access to the profile once released to the conference
 - Plan a farewell liturgy to celebrate Brads ministry
 - Lorraine will help and be part of this celebration
 - Best gift we can give Brad is to celebrate all he's done and wish him a happy retirement
 - Don't put Brad in a position where he must deny you to be a personnel pastor
 - Council needs to be a leader in this philosophy
 - An interim minister will come in
 - Ideally, the Conference will provide two or three options for interim pastor
 - It's recommended that the council selects the interim, not the congregation
 - Assume the interim is not a candidate for the settled minister
 - There are occasions where the conference may not be able find an interim where the council will need to find pulpit support.
 - It's preferred to avoid using congregational pulpit support for more than ~6 weeks
 - Search and Call Process
 - The committee will first have a digital interview with the candidates before in-person
 - Lorraine would bring the first round of candidates to the search committee and explain how to read the candidate profiles.
 - Use the conference to help with background checks on past settled ministers
 - Select at least three to four candidates
 - The search committee performs all interviews and makes a selection
 - The Council and Treasurer prepare an offer package and negotiate terms
 - Work with new minister to determine when a formal announcement is made
 - The new minister is presented to the congregation and the congregation makes a final vote on the selection

- The search team, along with the council must give regular updates to the congregation
- Franz feels there will be significant candidate interest in this congregation
- **Council concerns and thoughts**
 - This could be a longer process than we would like it to be
 - The council agreed to get the process moving quickly and establish a search committee
 - Possibly present Brad's above two questions to the congregation for input into the profile
 - Brian will take the Search and Call Manual and begin creating an outline of inputs/output so we can present a timeline to the congregation
 - The council agreed to have open and frequent communication to the congregation
 - The council wants to avoid having council members on the search committee if possible
 - Alan will generate a demographics matrix of the existing congregation to help identify possible nominations for the Search and Call committee
 - It's not uncommon to have a teenager on a search committee

7. Reports/Updates:

- Not discussed

8. Old business:

- Church building fundraising letter
 - Brad has drafted a fundraising letter to the congregation
 - Have Brad change the contingency wording to "...we'll do", etc..
 - Have a pledge card along with the letter
 - Allow it to be a one-time gift or stretched out over multiple years
 - Would like to have a repayment plan in-place by the time Brad leaves
 - Tisha, Alan, and Brad will work to get something prepared to be sent out by the end of February.

9. New business:

- a. Insurance coverage
 - Alan received an updated quote on insurance to cover the increased value of the building and increased liability for the Chicken Barbeque
 - Tisha motioned to accept the new insurance quote which increases our insurance cost by \$148 a year and Beth seconded. Motion carried.

10. Closing prayer was offered by Tisha

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 pm

An additional, special council meeting will be held on Tuesday, 2/25/20 at 6pm. The purpose of this meeting is to create an outline/timeline of the Search and Call process to share with the congregation and to create a list of congregation members to ask to serve on the Search and Call Committee. No other church business will be discussed at this meeting. Everyone in attendance agreed on meeting at Tisha's house for this meeting. NOTE: The meeting location was later changed and the meeting was held at the church.

The next regular council meeting will be held on Tuesday, 3/10/20 at 6pm

The meeting minutes were submitted by Scott Holmstrom