



Diocesan Council Meeting Minutes

Friday, March 21, 2025, via Zoom

In attendance: The Rev. Mike Evers, the Rev. Mary Caucutt, the Rev. Amy Mayes, Brian Knox, Kim McAtee, Sue Rector, the Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley, John Sullivan, Taimi Kuiva, the Rev. Melinda Bobo, the Rev. Camie Dewey, Shirley Wildman, Amy Irene, the Rev. Lori Modesitt, Erin Hastey, Andrew Parra

Staff in attendance: Canon Jessica Reynolds, Genie Osburn, the Rev. Canon Bobbe Fitzhugh, the Rev. Canon Lara Gilbert, Kristi Wallin, Kira Bachus

Mike Evers called the meeting to order.

Amy Mayes provided an opening prayer.

Mike Evers presented the consent agenda, which was approved.

Camie Dewey gave a Diocesan update. The Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley was confirmed as the Bishop Provisional and will begin working in the Diocesan Office on April 7, 2025. She thanked Megan Nickles for her dedication and leadership as Standing Committee President and encouraged the council to thank her with a gift at the Annual Convention. Jessica Reynolds, Kim McAtee, Erin Hastey, Andrew Parra, Melinda Bobo, and Sue Rector will join Camie Dewey in a committee to plan a thank-you gift for Megan Nickles. Kristi Wallin suggested that all current members of the Standing Committee also receive a thank-you gift. Under the Standing Committee's leadership, the diocesan mission has been transformed by their hard work, leadership, and vision.

The Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley gave the council a report on his travel plans and briefly discussed his thoughts on the election. He is excited about the election results and working with the council and staff.

Committee Reports

Jessica Reynolds presented the financial report. She began with the 2024 year-end financials. The diocese ended 2024 in the black, with an excess of \$190,000. The diocese is financially strong and healthy. As of now, it has approximately \$2.3 million in reserves. The council historically has suggested that at least six months of operating expenses be in reserves, which is about \$1.2 million.

A revolving Loan Fund has historically been used to loan money to clergy people. The diocese has not done this in approximately 18 years. The Finance Committee has recommended that the Loan Fund be dissolved and returned to reserves. There is also an Office Equipment Update Fund, which has also not been used for a long time. The Finance Committee has also recommended that this fund be dissolved and returned to reserves. The Finance Committee has made a motion to dissolve the funds and return them to reserves. Motion carried.

Mike Evers discussed the Prayers of the Wind River (POWR) Documentary, which has received partial funding from the Foundation for the Episcopal Church in Wyoming in the amount of \$50,000 in 2025 and \$50,000 in 2023. The anticipated budget for this project is \$300,000. The Finance Committee suggested that the Diocese fund the project with \$25,000 for 3 years. This project is focused on Indigenous truth-telling and reconciliation and follows the resolution affirmed at the Annual Convention in 2024. Mike Evers moved to fund this project in a lump sum, \$75,000, from reserves. The Council discussed the diocese's role in this project, the process for the development and production of the project, and the other churches in the area that should participate in funding the project, specifically the Lutheran congregations that are interested in reparations. Council members noted that the diocese often shows disproportionate attention to the Northern Arapaho tribe and suggested that the council take that into account. Bobbe Fitzhugh briefly discussed the Wind River Pilgrimage in May. Motion carried.

Mike Evers gave an update on the Property Committee. The committee has been meeting to determine the process of granting funds for capital improvements. CroBar Construction has been completing inspections on the buildings in Region III. The diocese will begin completing Congregational Vitality assessments of churches for a full review of the building and congregation together. The Foundation will use its competitive grant application for capital improvements grant requests in 2025, will complete due diligence, and then send it to the Property Committee for evaluation and recommendation. A rubric will need to be developed to equitably quantify the vitality of the congregation in relation to building improvements.

Mike Evers discussed the search for a Director of Administration, headed by Peak Consulting and the Diocesan Search Committee. Two candidates have been presented to the Standing Committee, staff, and the bishop provisional. A selection will likely be made in the next few weeks.

Shirley Wildman updated the council on the work of the Ethete Task Force. Work on St. Michael's Circle has continued. Last week, concrete and plumbing were completed. The final museum plans are done. The next steps are to demolish the museum building's roof and install a new one. The task force has been meeting with the architect to complete the final draft and accommodate an ADA-compliant building. After the museum is finished, construction will begin in the parish hall. The task force will need to develop a plan for fundraising. Crystal C'Bearing and Jordan Dresser, members of the task force, are working on a brochure to be used for

fundraising. Kristi Wallin encouraged the task force to engage the Foundation for help with fundraising. There is much need for fundraising across the diocese for many projects, and the task force should work together with the leaders of those other projects to ensure there are no competing resources.

Kristi Wallin gave a Foundation update. Kira Bachus has started working for the Foundation full-time. Quarter 2 grant applications have been received in the new grant management software, Foundant. The Foundation is working with the Property Committee on grants for capital projects. The CAPEX fund is currently funded with approximately \$350,000. Board member Pam Brondos is reviewing the governing documents with help from an attorney, Greg Dyckman. Foundation staff have been traveling to congregations that have received grant funds recently; St. Peter's in Sheridan, Trinity in Lander, and St. David's, Shoshone Mission. Bernadine Craft will now begin acting as Foundation Board President.

Sue Rector gave a brief update on the Cathedral Task Force. The task force met in February and will meet again next week. The Cathedral has a Visioning Committee, which will work with the task force to ensure cohesion of the vision and planning. Sue Rector will update the council after the meeting.

Regional Representative Reports

Mike Evers invited the Regional Representatives to share one thing in their region that brings them joy and one thing that might be of concern.

Mary Caucutt gave a report on Region I. She has completed visits to all her churches with a member of the Foundation Board. The churches in Region I are quite vital but require additional support. However, she is unsure how they might need support.

Lori Modesitt gave a report on Region III. Each congregation has a large impact and is the center of its community. However, she found that her congregations are not ecumenical in nature.

John Sullivan gave a report on Region IV. The churches in his region are vital and creative in their ministries.

Erin Hastey gave a report on Region V. The Foundation will be hosting a Financial Discernment Roadshow for the congregations with good responses. The congregations are working to reach out to youth in a broader reach. She expressed that churches are also experiencing a need for support.

Sue Rector gave a report on Region VI. Chuck Clarke has sadly passed away, leaving St. Andrew's in Atlantic City without a priest. Pamela Glasser has been supplying and visiting the churches of the region. The churches are very welcoming when she visits.

Staff Reports

Genie Osburn gave an update on communications. She has been meeting one-on-one with congregations to give communications support and evaluate their needs.

Lara Gilbert updated the council on formation. This year's theme for Formation is the Sabbath. Rebecca Hall, the spiritual director in Texas, will lead a workshop on April 26th. Regional workshops will also be held in the summer. She is also working on the liturgy for the All Board meeting on May 1-2.

Bobbe Fitzhugh updated the council on the Equal Justice Task Force. The Alabama Pilgrimage will be held in April, and the WR Pilgrimage will be held in May. An EJ Summit is also planned for September. Sacred Ground courses are currently being held. SoulShop training and Train the Trainer will be held in July. The Train the Trainer will allow people to host a SoulShop workshop. The missional clergy continue to serve their churches as the diocese develops a plan for the retirement of these staff members.

Jessica Reynolds gave an update. Jessica has just returned from Tanzania to celebrate the consecration of the new bishop. While there, she connected with the bishop suffragan of the Diocese of Leicester. The Treasurer's Workshop has been rescheduled to May. The workshop is available to anyone who is involved with the finances of their church. She is preparing for the annual audit of Diocesan and Foundation financials. Jessica will meet with Cody's search committee. The church in Dubois is working on its profile and hopes to release it in mid-summer. She has been doing work in St. Mark's in Cheyenne to facilitate conversations regarding healthy relationships with money.

Other Business

Mike Evers presented a grant application from Canterbury Fellowship in Laramie. The grant will hire a historian to document Canterbury's history and create a presentation on the findings. Because Canterbury operates under the auspices of the diocese, it needs the council's approval to submit the application to the Foundation. The council approved the application.

Amy Mayes provided a closing prayer.