

Newton Highlands Congregational Church, UCC
Congregational Meeting
October 23, 2022
Hybrid: Parlor and Zoom

Meeting called to order at 11:15 a.m.

Copies of treasurer's report and auditor's report distributed at the meeting.

Report of the Treasurer

Report of the treasurer from year end, June 2022

Actuals are \$4,900 better than previously expected.

Endowment: increased during FY19-FY22

FY23: hybrid budget: 3 months of parsonage and 9 months of cash housing allowance. \$7,900 worse than presented at June meeting as the June budget assumed a July sale.

Sprint terminated the cell tower lease in November, which decreased income by \$10,600.

Pastor moved out of the parsonage October 1, 2022.

Since June, parsonage allowance overstated other compensation items. This has been adjusted.

Moderator Sally Brickell requested a round of applause for treasurer Jim Harper's great effort.

Report of the Auditor

Peter Moore certified that he audited the financial statements of the Treasurer and the Board of the Endowment and these accurately reflect the financial position of the church.

Round of applause Peter Moore's work.

Motion to accept the Auditor's report approved.

Motion to approve the 2022 Treasurer's report passed.

Nominating

There have been a few changes to the nominating slate.

Rich Bryden has agreed to be the Assistant Treasurer.

Jim Harper has agreed to take on the title of Historian.

Eric Hajer has agreed to be on Worship & Spiritual Life.

Ann Hulsing and Bill Cordts have agreed to be on Buildings & Grounds.

Motion to accept the nominating slate approved.

Parsonage Disposition

Parsonage was given to the church in 1921.

Senior Housing Committee worked for about 8 years to see if parsonage and carriage house could be turned into senior housing.

At Annual Meeting on June 5, 2022, congregation voted to sell parsonage.

Moderator assembled Parsonage Disposition Committee; met four times this summer and recommends selling the parsonage and allowing the proceeds to fund the pastor's housing allowance and possibly fund another parsonage if we decide we want to purchase one in future.

October 1, 2022: Baily family moved out of parsonage.

Parsonage Disposition Committee Recommendations

- Sell parsonage, aiming to clear at least \$1.7M.
- Manage the proceeds, along with the NHCC endowment, withdrawing enough to support the pastor's housing allowance but maintaining purchasing power to enable NHCC to buy another parsonage if desired in the future.

Discussion

What happens if we do not get \$1.7M?

Jim Harper: pastors really don't want a parsonage so keeping funds for a future purchase is not desirable. It is vague as to how much another parsonage would cost. If the sale proceeds were added to the endowment without any restrictions, distributions would help fund a deficit. Jim would rather remove that portion of the Parsonage Disposition Committee recommendation.

Rich Bryden: Change language to put portion into the endowment to keep that growing and appreciating.

Friendly amendment made to manage proceeds carefully as part of the endowment.

The calculations about funding a possible parsonage were detailed in the report.

Keirsten Lawton: Intent of the recommendation is to fund the pastor's housing. Changing the motion to say "to support the pastor's housing" would be a friendly amendment.

Motion to change the ending the motion at "support the pastor's housing" seconded.

Another friendly amendment to be "support pastoral housing" to accommodate any possible future configuration of the pastorate.

"Manage the proceeds within the NHCC endowment, withdrawing enough to support pastoral housing."

The market currently demands flexibility for pastors. A housing allowance allows a pastor to build equity in a home.

We want to make it clear is that there is no separation of the endowment for separate purposes.

"Adding the proceeds to the NHCC endowment, withdrawing enough support pastoral housing."

Keirsten Lawton and Steve Willner raised concern about the 5% draw on the endowment. Should this be reduced to be more sustainable since we will have a larger endowment? Is the 5% mandatory? It sounds like we are not obliged to draw down 5%. This discussion can be tabled.

Three-part motion.

Proposed motion #1

Move that the church

- Sell the parsonage, aiming to clear at least \$1.7M.
- Add the proceeds to the NHCC endowment, withdrawing enough to support pastoral housing.

Passed unanimously.

Proposed motion #2

“Move that the moderator present a slate of members to Council for an ad-hoc committee to undertake the process and practice of the parsonage sale. The committee will report to the Moderator, who will keep the congregation informed of significant events.”

Passed unanimously.

Proposed motion #3

“Move that, for the disposal of the parsonage property at 39 Forest Street, and in accordance with NHCC By-laws, and on recommendation of the ad hoc committee in the previous motion, the Moderator is authorized to sign appropriate documents relating to the sale of real church property.”

Discussion that the by-laws already give the moderator the authority to sign documents.

Passed unanimously.

Other Business

150th Anniversary of the church

- Celebration
- Walking tour
- Blanket collection
- Note card fund raiser
- Vision process over the next two months
- Dec 4 – carol sing

Meeting ended with prayer

Motion to adjourn approved at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Susan S. Gilbert
Clerk