

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting – March 2, 2015

Attendees: Steven Brown, Bob Burr, Chris Burr, Doris Hixson, Terry Hixson, Tom Marshall, Pastor Brian, Joe Ryan, Mike Sniecinski, Tom Wenck and Fred Wagner.

OPENING:

Fred Wagner opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes of the February 2, 2015 were approved.

Fred Wagner stated that the income from January was down while the income from February was well over last year's figure. The 2015 budget is based on last year's income as well as giving and tithing. He indicated that Steven Brown is attending because he has experience and thoughts on stewardship. Fred expressed his gratitude to Tom Wenck and staff for their work on the budget, with special kudos to Nancy Bosserdet. He stressed the importance of this year's budget being totally transparent. Because the revised 2015 budget of \$843,419.15 is different from that submitted to Church Council in January (\$829,000), Fred requested approval of the revised figure. Terry Hixson moved for acceptance and Doris Hixson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Fred Wagner emphasized the importance of everyone working to make sure that we will do everything possible to meet our income objective and to keep expenses in line. This is an ongoing process and things do change. We are not finished.

The issue of how to best maintain and continue to improve our ministries and programs and how to financially sustain them was deferred from last month in order to give everyone a chance to think about this topic. Below are the comments.

Terry Hixson – Spoke about the two words "faith" and "fear." Faith is when you hear the voice of "I am" and not "what if." Every church has two basic committees – Back to Egypt and Into the Promised Land. God is asking us to raise our voices. If we could get all the leadership in the church to tithe, we would not be having these discussions.

Doris Hixson – We need to be aware of the UMC Discipline and focus on increasing tithing. Much of the work of the Finance Committee has been to get the Council to cut programs rather than get more income. We need to be leading the way to giving generously to God's church. How are we at putting the giving to God's church first, and then encouraging our congregation to do likewise?

Tom Marshall – We can't wait until the end of the year to look at our various programs; need to look at programs earlier.

Chris Burr – Pleased that the proposed budget submitted in July came pretty close. She will be talking with Nancy Bosserdet about our accounting system. One thing doing fantastically well is our financial aid. \$5,000 came in on December 31st and another \$1,000 came in later.

Bob Burr – Thinks it would be helpful if we had somebody the second Sunday, or the third or fourth Sunday, of each month reporting from the Finance Chairman on a regular basis to keep the congregation up to date and let them know what is expected of them. This way we can all pull together and make this a church process rather than a finance process, thereby achieving a more positive approach to the matter.

Tom Wenck – Dinner and a Movie has been subsidized through sponsorship through the rest of the year. It is amazing that we have people in the church to support the dinner so that the money doesn't have to come out of the budget. Kudos to Barbara Hald. If we could do this for other projects, it would be great.

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Mike Sniecinski - The Finance Committee meeting should be moved from the first Monday of the month to a week later so that Nancy Bosserdet has time to get the information that we look at each month.

Joe Ryan – Trying to get more people to tithe. Don't know what moves the people in this church. It is so difficult to get folks to take the step to tithe. Could get slides up every Sunday and play them longer. Spoke about personal experience.

Steven Brown – Talking points: (1) Humor – approach with humor. 80% of Methodist people give a reported 3% of their income to the church. (2) Humility – we never get this matter resolved in our minds. Try 3% one year and then move toward tithing each year. The key is proportional giving. (3) Honesty – must be forthright about this. It is fine to have a stewardship campaign but it needs to be continuous.

Fred Wagner stated that if you don't plan things ahead, then they won't happen. Start at 3% and increase gradually. So grateful to see February income numbers and he believes it is the result of Pastor Brian's remarks made in January and February.

Pastor Brian stated that we do have a church that moves toward causes; "If you can convince me to give, I will give." We can solve our budget problems and not solve our giving problems. We have been making some registration demands on folks involved in VBS this year. When you get 200 in VBS but not 200 in our program, something should be done. Once we get the kids, we can do whatever we want. The idea of selling some of the pews can help and so far six have been sold. The preschool is going to have a summer program which will bring in revenue. Hours will be 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. We have a co-sponsor for our Expo – Habitat for Humanity of FL. Nancy Bosserdet has met a person who will help her line up the vendors. We found a group that wanted to use a haunted house. Also have a partner in the Stone Crabs and Rays who have promised to have 3 or 4 players available to us that day. We have recruited a grant writer from within our church. She is going for a grant to help us move the choir room as well as other activities.

Fred Wagner feels that God is working with us in so many ways when we accept him in our hearts.

Pastor Brian feels that we do have a generosity problem. After we tithe, then we should discuss what comes next. Steven Brown has given us some good ideas to take the next step. We are moving on some things but need help. Fred Wagner will work on this. Steven Brown emphasized the need to be positive. Talking about giving money to the church is counterproductive.

Moving the Finance Committee meeting to another night so that Nancy Bosserdet has the opportunity to get final numbers was discussed. Doris Hixson moved that the meeting be changed to the second Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. Terry Hixson seconded the motion. Motion carried. Tom Wenck mentioned that we have to set some kind of parameters when reviewing "out of budget" items. Fred Wagner recommended that Steven Brown and Joe Ryan give us an outline of a stewardship game plan at the next meeting.

Pastor Brian closed the meeting with prayer.