

Council minutes

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church
Arlington, Massachusetts

11 June 2011

Council Members Present: Katie Corneilson, Pastor Ross Goodman, Maile Hedlund, Mark Olson, Dana Ramish, Alison Roberts, Brian Sniffen, Wendy Stack, Chris Trost.

Also Present: Vicar Jen Soltis.

Absent: Heather Sheridan, George Wilson.

Gathering

A quorum was gathered and we came together in God's name at 7:30PM. A candle was lit to remind us that Christ is present with us as we meet.

Check-In

We shared highlights of what's new in our lives.

Agenda

The agenda was accepted.

Devotions

Maile Hedlund then led a devotion from Job on "Where were you when..." Next month, Wendy Stack will lead devotions.

Word

Minutes

The minutes of May were accepted as amended.

Financial Reports

The computers were down this week, so final reports are not here—but these will be quite close. They're fine now, thanks to work by Lionel and Peter.

Financial secretary's report

We're running ahead but expect smaller receipts in summer.

Treasurer's report

We are still behind on spending because of the lower utility bills this winter, but next winter is unpredictable.

New business

Personnel committee update

Pastor Goodman reports that Briston Huffman, our new Director of Children's, Youth, and Family ministry, will be starting in August—we expect two weeks early in the month, then she'll fly home and drive back with her things. Our program starts the second week in September.

Mark Olson reports that Colleen Henry will be departing early in July, and we intend to advertise for replacements in local and religious music publications. Perhaps Pastor Steele could take the substitute job? The search committee is set on finding a single person to be Director of Music, including the Organist and Choir Director jobs.

Presentation from Blue Selenium Solar

David Judelson and Wally Cole are here from Blue Selenium Solar. They were out last week to survey the site, and now they're here to talk about what we might do and how it might be paid for.

They propose to create a Special Purpose Entity to buy the panels and contract with St. Paul to provide our power at a discount from the state utility. The SPE is for-profit, and so can get the tax breaks and incentives to promote solar power.

Questions What would it cost if we did it flat? Well, a quarter million, more or less. Payback for a commercial firm would be 5.5 years. But a church can't take the income stream from N-Star, and can't take tax credits as we're already tax-free. So it's probably not the best choice.

Do we fall back to the state utility if we need more? Yes.

Are we selling power into the grid when idle? Yes.

Are we credited for any of that, or does the slop go straight to the SPE?

How does maintenance work? The SPE owns them and leases the space, so it contracts it out to Blue Selenium or a similar firm.

What's our liability if, say, there's a fire or a panel falls off and hits something? The SPE will carry insurance, and perhaps the church should have a rider in its insurance policy as well.

What's the real lifetime of the system? The components are warrantied for 25 years, but they're new tech. The whole system is not warrantied, so we're at risk of having a refund for the inverters and the rest of the system useless.

What's the annual maintenance budget and where does that come from? "Extremely small" Maybe \$300 per year for our system. What's the typical maintenance cost in year 15? None of these systems are that old.

What does it mean to say that this meets 100% of our needs? 100% of annual peak? No, total annual use—so we'd pull from the grid in some seasons and push back in others.

Interference with cell towers? What's the shielding on the inverters? They're not shielded, particularly. That may be interesting.

They claim \$256911 in savings over the 25 year life of the system—that is, 9 years at 25% off and 16 years at full discount. But we only spend \$7500 or less on electricity every year. That's only \$187500 if it was a full discount from day one. Given we'd get at most a 25% discount for the first 9 years, \$136875 is the best

I can figure out, \$91875 the worst. Wally answers that this isn't in constant dollars: it's assuming 5% utility price inflation.

Blue Selenium ask us to find up to ten persons who might participate in that Special Purpose Entity, and if we can do that to come back with a Letter of Intent. Then we can have a more detailed meeting about finances.

Pastor Goodman, Mark Olson, Brian Sniffen will talk further about whether this is practical.

Committes

Who here is on what? Wendy admits to being on Social Ministry and Adult. Alison is on Inclusion and Social Ministry. Katie is on the Intern Committee. Dana is on Personnel and the Strategic Working Group.

We'll collect the rest by e-mail.

Pastoral reports

Pastor Goodman speaks about the election of the new bishop. The current bishop, Margaret Payne, spoke seriously to Ross about whether he was called to serve in this way. He was saved in the first round, though one of his old Interns was in there. The Synod elected Pastor James Hazelwood to serve as bishop until 2018.

Vicar Soltis reports on her experiences at the Synod.

Meal

Pastor Goodman gathers us in prayer and leads communion at 9:16PM.

Respectfully submitted, Brian Sniffen

Next regular council meeting: 9 July 2012 at 7:30PM.

These minutes can be found online at
<http://evenmere.org/~bts/Church/>.