

West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship
Church Council Meeting
Wednesday, May 11, 2016

Present: Alex Esh Bouwman (Council Chair/Deacon), Bryan Geib (Deacon), Tim Martin Johnson (HRC), Brenda Rich (Elder), Brooke Blough (Deacon), Carey Davis, Dorianna Lordi (Administrative Assistant), Reuben Wetherbee (HRC), Nick Lordi (Elder), Lorie Hershey (Pastor), Mark Michalovic (Elder)

Meeting began at 7:05 with prayer.

1. Minutes from February 17th meeting approved via email

Council thanked Alex with a gift for serving as council chair and deacon.

2. Pastoral Team Items

a. Elder structure

- Pastor Lorie noted that it was helpful to have a structure and that new structure is going well overall.
- Elders are now exploring ways to vision and expand ministries instead of just checking in with ministries.

b. Tel Hai retreat policy

- Tel Hai has a policy on their website that is contradictory to our beliefs as a church.
- Laurie Callan is planning to reach out to Tel Hai to discuss options and disclose our differences and objections to their policy.
- If needed, finding a new retreat center that can book so many people in under a year could be challenging.

3. HRC Items

a. Congregational review process

- HRC is planning a congregational review process for the fall, after Lorie returns from sabbatical.
- Currently in the process of contacting and following up with all ministry position coordinators.

4. Deacons Items

a. Summer building plans

- Calvary has plans to remodel the lower level to refigure classrooms this summer.

b. Building survey monkey

- Deacons plan to create a survey to explore the church's options and priorities regarding the building.

5. Misc. Items

a. Franconia conference meeting follow-up

- Recently, a small team from WPMF met with two leaders of Franconia Conference to discuss the open letter that WPMF sent out earlier this year.
- Meeting was cordial and both Franconia conference and WPMF were able to express thoughts freely.
- WPMF will continue to explore ways to be welcoming and supportive to individuals and congregations.
- Would be helpful to start conversations within our congregation about our role in the conference and how it relates to our stance of being a welcoming congregation.
- Council decided to include topic in the next congregational review meeting to establish a mutual church-wide understanding regarding same-sex marriages and our relationship to Franconia conference.

b. Review Visioning Cafe meeting minutes & hiring additional pastoral staffing

- Reviewed minutes from April, 2015 Church council meeting about March Visioning time.
- Jr. High and Sr. High Sunday school classes do not currently follow the same curriculum as children. Teachers found that previous curriculum was not challenging or interesting our youth.
- Council discussed ways to promote a healthy spiritual culture and biblical foundation within our youth programs and church body.
- Council discussed a need to establish what our church values are regarding foundations for youth.
- There appears to be a need for a youth pastor.
- Programs are going well, though some organizational aspects may fall through the cracks.
- There is also a need for someone to tie programs and activities together, as well as promote healthy spiritual practices for youth.
- Council agreed to discuss the option of hiring a youth pastor at the next congregational review meeting to gauge the interest of the congregation and discern if a plan to hire someone in the future needs to be in place.

c. Description of council chair & nominate next chair

- Lorie expressed the need and importance of having a council chair. The chair helps fill in the cracks that other council positions do not technically fit.
- Reviewed volunteer description.
- Council nominated Tim Martin Johnson as council chair and he accepted the position.
- Council thanked Brenda for her time served as Elder
- Next church council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 14, 2016 at 7:00 am.

Meeting concluded at 8:35 pm.

Minutes recorded by Dorianna Lordi.