

Presbytery of Southern New England
February 15, 2023

Trustees Report

Finance Transition – On the joint approval of our Personnel, Trustees, and Roundtable Committees, the PSNE ended its contract relationship with our former Finance Manager, Dayle Larson, with gratitude. This is a move similar to that of many non-profits, churches, and other Presbyteries looking to make accounting services more efficient and cost effective. We are in the midst of our transition to the new accounting firm Jitasa and as such we do not have the regular financial reports available this month for the Presbytery meeting. All reports will be made available by our May meeting, including the close out of 2022.

Turn of River Church – The Turn of River Church Administrative Commission continues to work diligently to manage the Stamford property in the wake of the conclusion of the ministry of our Turn of River congregation. The building has been cleared out, is continuing to be maintained by a resident groundskeeper, and a couple week-day tenants continue to use the property sporadically. They are also working with real estate attorneys to explore options with regard to selling the property, navigating an 1861 deed restriction that requires that the property remain a religious facility in perpetuity. Discussions are ongoing, more updates to come.

Martin Luther King Jr. Church (2014 Community Center Sale Update) – At our November Presbytery meeting, the Trustees reported that we had discovered some gaps in the Trustees and PSNE minutes with regard to the sale of the MLK Church's Community Center in 2014. We received numerous helpful emails and phone calls from former Trustees and staff that were directly involved in the management of this transition – thank you. In our November report, we used language that came across as alarmist and accusatory. It was not our intent to assume impropriety in any way, and we apologize for the appearance of such. Our desire was to call attention to some gaps in our official minutes and to solicit insight from our fellow PSNE members, with sensitivity to a congregation that is both historically and very recently accustomed to being targets of injustice.

We are grateful that this has sparked a helpful conversation about the thoroughness of our meeting minutes in general, in addition to the documenting of email exchanges relating to official committee/commission business. With leadership turnover every few years, and people using their personal/church emails to correspond regarding committee business, those records and that institutional memory tend to get lost. This will be an ongoing conversation as we determine the best method of fostering leadership continuity and transparency going forward.

Our PSNE staff and leadership are still in the process of reviewing all the information we have received and contracting with an outside Clerk and accounting firm to make sure we correct our records accordingly. Please stay tuned for more updates, and do continue to reach out if you have further questions or information that may be helpful.

***2023 PSNE Budget** – You will notice several updates to the proposed 2023 PSNE budget. These changes largely pertain to the aforementioned financial services transition and the dissolution of our relationship with our former Stated Clerk, Rev. David Baer. Note that the Finance Manager’s compensation has been removed from the budget, and added in their place are our contracts with Jitasa (accounting), Gusto (payroll), and the Office Admin at Westminster. The Stated Clerk’s salary is consistent, as Personnel has recommended remunerating Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo at the same level our Clerk was being compensated, to be transitioned to our new Clerk once they come on board. This results in a net budget surplus of \$12,153.06. The Board of Trustees has approved the attached budget, and presents it to the Presbytery for discussion and final approval.

**Requires a PSNE vote.*

Please address questions and comments to our Chair of the Board of Trustees and President of the Corporation: andre.castillo@fpcg.org.