

**Presbytery of Southern New England
Roundtable
January 22, 2024
Minutes**

Present: Mildred McNeill (chair), Nicole Aronson Champagne, Lisa Baker, John Merz, Deb Packard, Jenny Peek, Lauren Tate, Kevin White (moderator), Shannan Vance-Ocampo (ex officio, General Presbyter), Kate Carlisle (ex officio, Stated Clerk)

Call to Order & Opening Devotion

The stated meeting of the Roundtable of the Presbytery of Southern New England was called to order on Zoom on Thursday, January 22, 2024, at 4:01 pm, with prayer and reflections by Mildred McNeill. Psalm 89:1, Psalm 90:12, Psalm 121:1

A quorum was electronically present.

Agenda **approved** without objection.

Report of the General Presbyter

Shannan reported. She talked Roundtable through some new ways PSNE is doing things this year: holding the three business meetings by Zoom only, but adding monthly “Presbytery on the Road” gatherings, when Presbytery staff will be co-working and sharing lunch and conversation with folks in different parts of the Presbytery.

The planning has begun for a potential clergy retreat in early fall, focused on wellness and wholeness in ministry. There is some interest in making this a joint event with PoB.

Shannan and Kate are continuing antiracism coaching with Jessica Vazquez-Torres and Ryan Lents. We are working to pull together a cohort to discuss topics around leadership and theological clarity – this may be a difficult year and we want to support the Presbytery and its churches in this time.

Shannan’s service to the national denomination is wrapping up following GA this summer. The dates for her reading week in March may shift a little as she continues working towards her DMin graduation in May.

There is good energy around the Presbytery heading into the new year.

Report of the Stated Clerk

Roundtable voted to **approve** the minutes of its meetings on September 5, September 12, and November 17, 2023.

Roundtable voted to **ratify** its email vote on December 20, 2023 to to elect the following persons, on recommendation of the Nominating Committee:

Elder Nicole Aronson Champagne - Elder Commissioner to GA 226

Ashley Aronson - Young Adult Advisory Delegate to GA 226

Kate reported.

There should still be time to add alternates to the names we have sent for GA. Because of the busy docket at the February meeting, we will hold off on considering any overture concurrences for GA until the May meeting.

Kate also offered an update on boundary training. About 50 people participated in the joint PSNE/PoB boundary training on Saturday. Online options for those still needed to fulfill this requirement will be circulated soon.

Nominating Committee

Nicole reported. Nominating is facing a number of challenges. The only committee/commission totally filled is PJC, and there are lots of people unable and unwilling to serve at this moment. It is also challenging to find an adequately diverse pool of willing nominees. Nominating committees in individual churches are also struggling.

Nominating has had discussions on the relationship between ordination and Presbytery service, and is considering options for involvement of members who are not ordained as ruling elders.

Nominating is making an effort via Google forms to learn more about ruling elders, as most information about ruling elders has been spotty and dependent on current Presbytery service and institutional memory. Roundtable will need to continue conversation about this at future meetings.

Antiracism and Equity Team

Jenny reported. The Antiracism and Equity Team has been working on a draft of the Antiracism Policy for adoption by the Presbytery. Jenny walked Roundtable through

this policy and gave a brief overview of its development. The Team will be bringing this before Presbytery for a first reading at the February meeting. Roundtable discussed the policy and its implementation.

Administrative Commission - IPB Hyannis

Shannan reported. A written report from the AC, summarizing their actions and recommendations, has been shared with Roundtable. Shannan summarized the issues about which the AC has come to an impasse. The AC will bring this report and ask to be dismissed at the February meeting. When the AC is dismissed, the COM will need to take up continuing issues with the fellowship and with Rev. Alonso Dacunha.

Administrative Commission - Turn of River

Shannan reported. The AC has been working since the congregation dissolved to deal with the assets and properties. The AC has found a church that wants to purchase the property. The AC will bring its final report with the proposed property sale for Presbytery approval in March.

Commission on Ministry

John reported. Two warrants for Administrative Commissions will be before Presbytery in February: one for Granby and one for St. Andrew, Groton.

The Granby church is not yet ready to close but they are thinking ahead, and want to give their land to the Kestrel Land Trust.

St. Andrew is at a financial cliff and needs to close, without much notice. The warrant for the AC recognizes that the Presbytery may need to provide for the Pastor's severance, to be recompensed with the sale of the property.

Trustees

No Trustees report.

Personnel

A 3% COLA increase for employees is included in the updated budget.

Personnel is planning to meet with Shannan in January and Kate and Katie in February, to check in about annual goals.

Presbytery docket

Roundtable **approved** the draft docket for the February 8 Stated Meeting of Presbytery, with the start time moved to 6 pm, without objection.

Kevin, Dallas, Shannan, and Kate will meet to discuss options for Presbytery worship during Zoom meetings.

Mildred, John, and Mark will continue meeting to discuss the Presbytery meeting model and cluster gatherings at future meetings.

Adjournment

Mildred adjourned the meeting with prayer at 5:36 pm.

The next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery is February 8. The next regular meeting of Roundtable is April 17.