

**Presbytery of Southern New England
Roundtable
October 2, 2024
Minutes**

Present: Elder Mildred McNeill (co-chair), Elder Barbara Riihmaki (co-chair), Elder Nicole Aronson Champagne, Rev. Nancy Baseel, Elder Peter Cameron (nominated during meeting), Elder Rachelle Lee, Rev. Dean Lindsey, Rev. Mark Montgomery (Zoom), Rev. Dallas Bradel (Moderator), Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo (ex officio, General Presbyter), Rev. 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 at Westminister Presbyterian Church, West Hartford CT, by co-chair Barbara Riihmaki on Wednesday, October 2, 2024, at 2:15 pm, with prayer and readings by Padraig Ó Tuama and Bishop Vicentia Kgabe.

A quorum was present.

Roundtable **approved** the agenda as amended.

Introduction of Communication Coordinator

Jenelle Hopkins, the new Communications Coordinator, joined by Zoom briefly to introduce herself.

Vandersall Collective

The Rev. Mieke Vandersall and Tim Anderson joined the meeting on Zoom. Shannan introduced the property project which Trustees and others have been working on with the Vandersall Collective. Mieke and Tim shared about the process, their work with the three focus congregations, and the retreat held in September. The discernment tool being developed by this project will also help Trustees and the Presbytery as a whole collaborate with congregations to make decisions in the future according to our core values.

Report of the Nominating Committee

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Nicole presented the following nominations:
Elder Peter Cameron, Calvin, Cumberland - Vice Moderator
Rev. Jane Esterline, retired - Permanent Judicial Council

Nicole noted that Jane is also serving on Nominating. Roundtable **voted** to elect the nominees to their respective offices and to ask Presbytery to ratify those elections at its next meeting.

Nicole encouraged Roundtable to seek more nominees to serve on Nominating. Nicole and Kate will be discussing proposing bylaw changes to the number of people on committees and commissions.

Report of the General Presbyter

Shannan reported briefly. She asked for prayer for COM and the ACs and ICs who have a lot of work before them at this time.

Report of the Stated Clerk

Kate reported briefly.

Report of Personnel

Mark Montgomery reported. He shared about ongoing conversations with Boston Presbytery's Personnel Committee about the joint stated clerk position.

Mark also shared an overview of plans for bringing in the Rev. David Bennett as Sabbatical Gap Presbyter while Shannan is on sabbatical.

Shannan's sabbatical begins in November.

Personnel is glad to have hired Jenelle Hopkins. Many excellent candidates applied for the position.

Shannan has shared her sabbatical plan with Roundtable and gave a brief overview of her plans.

Report of the Budget Committee

This year's budget committee was Mark, John, and Dean.

The recommended budget has a \$93,000 deficit at this time. There has been a decrease in per capita income due to attrition and church closures. Due to the income from the sale of the Turn of River Church, PSNE is no longer eligible for synod grant funding.

Synod and GA per capita assessments have increased. The draft budget does not, at this time, reflect a per capita increase passed on to churches.

Mark walked Roundtable through several details and line items.

The reduction in funding for the Brazilian Fellowship in Hyannis, as planned, which will continue progressively in future years.

The budget includes staff increases of more than COLA in order to approach minimum recommended amounts. Calculations were made based on a 3% cost of living adjustment. Shannan and Kate gave overviews of the changes to Board of Pensions benefits structures for staff.

The cash flow situation of the Presbytery is strong.

Roundtable discussed some short and long term topics about the budget.

Shannan and Kate were excused while Roundtable had additional discussion of staff compensation topics. Shannan and Kate returned.

Roundtable discussed possibilities around introducing a per capita for minister members or raising Presbytery per capita.

Roundtable took a brief break.

Visit from David Bennett

The Rev. David Bennett, Stated Clerk of Albany Presbytery and Resource Presbytery of Northern New York Presbytery, joined Zoom and introduced himself. He will be serving as Sabbatical Gap Presbyter; Roundtable discussed his upcoming work during Shannan's sabbatical.

Report of the Antiracism and Equity Team

Nancy reported. The Antiracism and Equity Team is holding gatherings before the Presbytery meeting to screen and discuss the documentary *Bad Faith*. Those who need to join later could watch the movie in advance and join the discussions around 6pm. All are welcome.

The next event in planning is the Antiracism Training on March 1. Dr. William Yoo will be the keynote speaker. Boston Presbytery will be invited to partner in this event.

The team is also working to make themselves available in a consulting role for congregations working on their antiracism work.

Approval of Minutes

Roundtable voted to **approve** the minutes of its stated meeting on April 17, 2024 and the special meeting on August 11, 2024.

Presbytery Calendar for 2025

Shannan presented the proposed calendar for Presbytery meetings in 2025, along with ideas in process about Matthew 25 themes and locations.

After a discussion about the leadership and visioning role of Roundtable and the practicalities of meeting scheduling, Roundtable **voted** to hold six stated Roundtable meetings in 2025.

Roundtable **voted** to recommend that Presbytery suspend Presbytery Bylaw 3.1 to allow only three Stated Meetings of PSNE in 2025.

Roundtable **voted** to recommend the following dates to Presbytery for 2025 Stated Meetings: February 11, May 3, and November 13.

The February meeting will be on Zoom. Locations and formats for the other meetings are to be determined.

Roundtable members considered the possibility of including Zoom breakout rooms as part of the February meeting.

Presbytery Meeting Docket

Dallas will take the lead planning worship for the October 23 meeting.

Kate presented a proposed docket draft for discussion. They also gave a suggested process for handling business referred by GA, including handling 8 of the 13 items at the October meeting.

Kate also presented a plan to use the Mentimeter platform for voting at next PSNE meeting. Each person with the privilege of vote will need a phone, tablet, or other device.

Roundtable **voted** to approve the proposed agenda for the October 23 Stated Meeting, with adjustments to be made as needed by the stated clerk and moderator.

Other Business

Roundtable **postponed** remaining items until its next meeting.

Adjournment

Shannan adjourned the meeting with prayer at 6:28 pm.

The next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery is October 23.