

**Old West Church Association
Annual Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2020**

Attendees: Rod Buck, Sandy Buck, Nick Emlen, Chris Ciaburro, Mack Gardner-Morse, Richard Maizell, Barbara McAndrew, Donna Fitch, Sue Killoran

President Barbara McAndrew called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm. Richard Maizell made a motion to approve the minutes of the 2019 OWCA Annual Meeting. Donna Fitch seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. The meeting was held over Zoom conferencing due to the 2019/2020 Covid pandemic.

Barbara introduced and thanked Board of Trustees, Richard, Donna, and Sue, and committee chairs, Nick, Building Committee and Rod, Finance Committee. She welcomed all community members, including Chris Ciaburro as a new member of the Building Committee and neighbor of the church. According to the updated bylaws, all current trustees were elected last Annual Meeting for 2-3 year terms. Caity Kaye was elected the fifth trustee in February. Attendees of the annual meeting are members of the Old West Church Association.

Notice of date of next Annual Meeting, October 10, 2021.

All events at the church continue to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Richard will talk later about possible pre-recorded virtual Christmas Eve service.

The 200th Anniversary of OWCA will be in 2023. The continued focus and work will be on fundraising, governance, building, engaging volunteers, and maximizing the potential in the community and throughout the country.

Barbara introduced Nick Emlen as Chair of the Building Committee and thanked him for the committee's work. Nick introduced new members of the committee: Andy Felice, Chris Ciaburro, Andreas John, John McCullough, Ryan Edwards, Mary Jo Llewellyn.

The committee met on September 13, 2020 and walked through the church to take inventory of maintenance needs such as the door sill, outdoor sign, windows, and mezzanine load capacity. The group was also able to access the basement of the church where they found no rot or moisture. The committee will be compiling a report and spread sheet that prioritizes projects with estimated costs and a timeline. Donna volunteered to help with the spread sheet. Nick ended by saying that the consensus of the group was that the church was in very good condition for being 200 years old.

Rod asked if the Building Committee will be working with the Trustees. Richard commented that the Building Committee's report will be a roadmap to the maintenance of the church that will coincide with the fundraising for the projects. Barbara said we would prioritize based on expenses, financial wellbeing, and the health of the church and all info will be included in a strategic plan.

Mack asked about a handicap accessible ramp for the south door. It could easily be a metal ramp that was put in place when needed. Nick said he would include in the report. Chris asked about the cemetery fence and that the boards are falling on his property and that he is happy to store them in his barn. Barbara said that would be ideal. Donna mentioned that the Zoning and Planning Boards and the Cemetery Commission working on developing a plan. Barbara mentioned that the OWC is involved.

Richard gave an update on the fundraising to date. He applied for a recent grant for the roof and chimney, which was declined due to many local competing projects. He will continue to search out grants based on the church's needs. The annual appeal letter went out six weeks ago with good response to date. Richard commented to Mack on his work with the bell and said the info was on the website. Mack and Barbara thanked Richard for all his continued work in keeping the website up to date. Richard thanked his daughter for initially developing the website.

Mack asked if we were going after bigger donors. Barbara said the detailed maintenance plan will help identify what our needs are to develop a clearer long-term fundraising strategy that may include planned giving, major gifts, and continued annual campaign. Rod suggested aligning with the 200th Anniversary. Barbara said that was the plan.

Donna Fitch, Treasurer, reported in FY2020, the largest expense was the painting of the church \$33,536.25. Fundraising expenses for the annual mailing and additional remittance envelopes for use throughout the year was \$1,233.29. For the first time, remittance envelopes were included with the Christmas Eve service program, garnering \$728 in donations. The August 2020 fundraising letter (fiscal year 2021) is the second year the larger mailing list has been used (a combination of past donors and the Town of Calais grand list). The Trustees plan to cull the list to remove some names in order to lower future printing and mailing costs. To date, we have received \$6,000 from the annual appeal.

With the advice of the Finance Committee, an endowment fund was set up with Vanguard in May 2019. In fiscal year 2020, \$19,000 was deposited. As of September 30, 2020, the Vanguard funds total \$57,504.92. The overall investment goal is to establish two accounts: An Endowment Funds account and an Operating Funds account, with the Operating Funds to be used for the larger, more expensive maintenance needs of the church.

A CD recently matured, and the dollars will be moved from Northfield Savings to Vanguard. Donna thanked the Finance Committee members for their work: Rod and Steve Killoran.

Rod made a motion to accept the annual report. Donna seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Richard talked briefly about a pre-recorded virtual Christmas Eve service that could recognize the day with two songs from the choir and short video clips from the community about a memory from the church. Many people write on the return donation envelopes. Nick said he could begin thinking of the songs but had no expertise in pulling together the choir together virtually. Barbara suggested contacting Artie and Nancy Toulis. Richard said his son could professionally pull the final video together. Richard volunteered to continue researching the potential project.

Rod asked if it would be possible to stand six feet apart outside for the service. Richard said the Trustees had discussed and decided it was not possible, staying within the State of Vermont Covid guidelines and the potential of having over 200 people.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 3:34pm. Respectfully Submitted, Sue Killoran, Recording Secretary, OWCA.