

**Town Hall Summary
2023-2024 Budget
October 1, 2023**

Attendance: 27 in person; 3 online

Basic themes:

- How to reduce expenditures?
- How to increase revenue?

Expenditure Reduction:

- Difficult as there is not much to cut
 - Snow removal is reduced from \$5000 to \$4500 due to volunteers. (Original estimate from provider was \$6500)
 - Building insurance: building replacement cost insured for \$9 million; annual premium is \$16,000. Could we cut the insured cost to \$3 million? What would the premium be? Greg Bianconi looking into it; will contact Brunswick UU who has had experience with replacing a church.
 - Copier lease expires in October; some savings if we purchase our own machine.
 - Any wiggle room regarding UUA dues?
 - Greg Whitney stated that line 5.612 (Water and Sewer) should be \$1200; for the sake of clarity, at this time the line should not reflect the previously agreed upon 50/50 split with the DIC. (so an expenditure increase on paper)

Revenue Increase:

- Revive traditional church fundraisers/income producing activities
 - Gingerbread Fair; perhaps make do with bake sale/pie sale this year
 - UU Theater
- Increase number of rentals.
- 2nd floor apartment at 159 Pleasant Street
 - Not rented at market rate (\$800 vs. \$1400-1600)
 - Ask Claudia to check with Auburn Housing Authority with regard to possibility of increasing rent.
 - Awareness that the tenant has been a good, long-term tenant.
- Drop-in Center Contribution
 - Greg Whitney commented about the DIC contribution to overall church finances.
 - The Church is not subsidizing the DIC; nor will it need to.
 - DIC should probably contribute \$3000-3600 per year to cover its share of utility costs.

- DIC installed a \$16000 bathroom at its expense (Reverend Patrick using the shower).
 - DIC has been purchasing all paper goods for the church.
 - Should have a place holder number in the budget by the October 15 congregational meeting even if rental agreement not finalized.
 - Anne Perron
 - Rental agreement close to completion
 - Cited example of her choir: \$2200 rent for 3 nights at UCC South Portland
- MCF Funds:
 - Greg Bianconi discussed the Hackett Fund
 - Used to cover costs of ministerial housing (in different ways)
 - Would require vote and some legal action to change the purpose of the fund.
 - Greg gave a summary of the \$357,000 in church funds held by the Maine Community Foundation
 - Principal (untouchable)
 - Interest held by MCF: available by congregational vote
 - Ongoing interest income
 - Monies may be used only if certain criteria are met.
- Long term Revenue measures:
 - Renovate 1st floor apartment at 159 Pleasant Street
 - Requires investment of at least \$40,000
 - Could require significant expenses to meet code.
 - Increase membership and pledge base
 - Church to enter wedding videography business; potential good return on our investment in personnel and equipment.
 - Is this a realistic venture? The risk?
 - Quality control concerns
 - Capital Campaign
 - Are we in a position to run a capital campaign? Stewardship campaign was a challenge.
 - You can't squeeze blood from a turnip.

Immediate Budget Edits:

- Change line 5.609 to \$4500
- Change line 5.612 to \$1200

Parting Thoughts:

- We are low on people and resources
- How do we determine where people's interests lie? Tap into them?
 - Perhaps the topic of a future Town Hall.

- The building is our biggest asset: how to make best use of it?