

## Minutes of the Official Board of Sydenham Heritage United Church

Wednesday January 11, 2023

**In lieu of regular Board Meeting , the board participated in the Regional Workshop entitled “Deficit Dilemma”**

Presenters

Brenne Baker

Lynn Allin

Micol Cottrell

John Neff

This workshop is being recorded and will be available on Regional Council Websites once link is established. Recording will include slides with resources noted in full detail

Territorial Acknowledgement and opening prayer

Review of Agenda

### **1. Anxiety**

- Review of annual reports demonstrate an increase in deficit budgets
- Financial anxiety takes away from other activities of the congregation
- We are in a new chapter of life as a society and as the UCC post pandemic
- Treasurers and Chairs do not hold sole responsibility to solve financial problems, it is a congregational responsibility

### **2. Community of Faith Profile**

- A good place to begin
- Contains a financial viability section, a demographic section , a real property section and a living faith story section
- Template located in Congregational Support Toolkit #2
- Identifies trends , inventories skills and gifts in the congregation, property and other assets, who you are as a congregation today, and current ministry goals and priorities

### **3. Grants and Loans**

- Assistance to call new minister, change call or appointment
- Redevelopment of building
- Sale of property
- Any decision requiring approval of Regional Council

#### **4. Leadership**

- Keep calm and make a plan
- No one wants to donate to a sinking ship
- Congregation needs to know how their generous gifts were used as well as what you could do with more resources
- Thank congregation for their support
- Explain openly and honestly why there is a deficit
- Explain openly and clearly plan to reduce costs or increase revenue, be specific
- Never talk about money apart from Mission, need to live out the Gospel not just survive

#### **5. Scenario Budgeting**

- Concept adapted from the Non Profit world
- Not intended to replace regular budget, rather intended to imagine possibilities and prepare a plan
- Source [www.propelnonprofits.org](http://www.propelnonprofits.org)

#### **6. On line giving**

- Make it easy , seamless and instant
- Tell people where their gifts go and why it makes a difference to the community

#### **7. Grants and Resources**

- Mission Support Grants
- Extension Council Grants
- UCC Foundation
- Local Community Grants
- Faithful Footsteps
- Greening Sacred Spaces

#### **8. Look at current costs**

- Get quotes on services
- Sometimes we need to spend money to make money
- Buying United
- Consider UC Protect Insurance
- Talk to the phone company/bank/insurance company can you negotiate better rates?
- Who is your community? Look beyond just the congregation
- Upcoming workshops “Getting Started in Stewardship” and “Called to be the Church, The Journey”

## 9. Staffing

- Your top priority is meeting payroll
- Changes to staff may be necessary – move with care act with love
- Consider the non financial cost of decisions
- Follow Employment Standards Act
- Change of pastoral relationship process outlined in the UCC Manual
- Collaborative ministry – sharing of minister, music, admin, custodial staff while each community of faith remains independent
- Challenges us all to think outside silo mentality and encourages a broader understanding of ministry
- Region is here to walk alongside congregations in these difficult situations
- Nothing should ever be a surprise to church employees

## 10. Reserve Funds

- Restricted Funds – those designated for a specific purpose – against CRA to borrow from this fund for operating budget
- Funds with no specific intended purpose can be designated by the group who made the original decision
- Ensure board, treasurer and congregation clear about the funds in reserve and the legalities around access

## 11. Ongoing education

- Webinars and resources for Treasures/finance committees – sharing of best practices and sharing financial strategies
- [www.churchx.ca](http://www.churchx.ca)

## 12. Long term options for Property

- Kindred Works – United Church corporation that helps congregations redevelop properties
- Region needs to provide approval

**Closing message** – don't wait too long to reach out for assistance from the Region, there are greater options the earlier problem solving and planning is commenced.

### **Follow up conversation by the SHUC Board @ 830 pm**

**Present:** Maureen Gilmore Hall, Larry Pickard, Yvonne Wright, Loren White, Paul Shepherd, Norma Janzen, Verna Timpener

**Regrets:** Sharon Davidson

**Absent:** Andrew Adincola

- May need time to reflect on content
- Informative
- How do we talk to /inform the congregation?

- Like the language – what we use the money for , why we have a deficit
- We already do some of these things
- Need to understand the designation of the sale from the church property by the Heritage Congregation – can we continue to utilize as approved by Board or are there limitations we and congregation need to be aware of ?
- We need to heed the opening message to not be anxious to be calm and make a plan – this is a challenge for some board members who worry about growing deficit and no clear plan to address
- Beneficial to hear that budget should be connected to Mission
- Paul states he was told the congregation had unrestricted access to half a million dollars in investments at his interview and that this echos his New Years message – gifts being interests, passions, skills
- Maureen asked board members to reflect on the webinar and bring forward thoughts, ideas, we may need to set aside a separate meeting for a fulsome conversation

Closing prayer – offered by Paul

Business Meeting – January 18, 2023 @ 7pm