

Immanuel Lutheran Church & School
Voters Meeting Minutes
09.25.2023

Attendance: 49 (46 voting, three first-time members)

Tom Ruff called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pastor Jason Auringer opened the meeting with prayer.

Attendees reviewed the Minutes of the May 22, 2023 Voters Meeting. Tom Ruff noted one correction to the attendance number recorded in the Minutes, i.e., 75 (12 new members), plus two absentees. Becky Hoskins made the motion to approve the Minutes as corrected. Brian Parker seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

REPORTS

BOD Report – Tom Ruff, BOD chair, reported on the following Board activities:

- Completion of new Board Member orientation
- Selection of 2023-2024 Board officers: Tom Ruff, chair; Vern Boehme, vice-chair; Bonnie Schulte, secretary; Carol Waddell, treasurer
- BOD workshop held August, 2023, at which time BOD members considered future ministry opportunities and reviewed and revised Board policies to provide for clarity.
- Parking Lot Update – Tom recognized Grant Goris's leadership on the parking lot project. Final landscaping to be completed within the next month, small modification to curbing to be addressed.
- Subsequent to the May 2023 Voters Meeting, St. Charles County initiated additional requirements for care to the back swale. At the June 2023 BOD meeting, the Board approved an added expense of \$44,000 on the Parking Lot Project.

Jim Meyer asked what the final parking lot total costs were: \$316,000 for construction, plus an additional of approximately \$20,000 in engineering costs.

Treasurer's Report – Attendees reviewed Carol Waddell submitted written report outlining the congregation's good financial health.

Discussions included a question from Dave Rawlings about dollars set aside for Sunday School, Bible study and Vacation Bible School programs. Debbie Anderson responded she would be pleased to provide the most recent August 2023 report to help answer the question.

Motion from the Floor: Dick Schroeder made the motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as submitted. Nancy Minton seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

Proposed use of financial blessings from previous fiscal year – Tom Ruff stated that 2022-2023 excess funds in the amount of \$306,000, after \$2,400 LEAD allocation as per Policy, are

currently being held in Capital Reserve Funds Set Aside. Tom put forward the BOD recommendation for allocation of these funds.

- 10% allocated to mission-minded focus. Total: \$30,600
 - \$25,000 Grace Chapel and School, Bellefontaine Neighbors, Mo.
 - \$5,600 global mission fund in support of missionaries
- 90% allocated to campus expansion, which may include campus improvement in addition to campus expansion. Total: \$275,400

Discussion:

Brian Parker asked for information regarding Grace Chapel. Dr. Allison Dolak and Pastor Jason Auringer provided background on Grace Chapel located in North County, St. Louis.

Susan Maag asked for clarification of proposed dollar allocation. Tom Ruff responded.

Jim Borchers inquired about an Immanuel endowment fund.

Dave Rawlings asked for clarification that the Board recommendation does not include a portion to pay down Immanuel's mortgage.

Motion from the Floor: Dave Rawlings made the motion that Immanuel not take on any additional debt than what is already held and to place a cap on capital expenses. Darlene Whited seconded the motion.

Debbie Anderson, Immanuel finance director, commented that Immanuel's total debt reduction between May 2015 and June 2023 was \$1,941,846.10 (see September 2023 voters report).

Discussion to either vote down the motion brought forward or have the motion withdrawn.

Vitula Skillman asked about the projected payoff of Immanuel's debt. Debbie Anderson responded that with refinancing anticipated, a payoff date is currently not determined.

It was noted that several projects, including the balcony renovation, sanctuary improvement, storage building, and additional classrooms were funded without taking on additional debt.

Nancy Minton asked what Immanuel's current interest rate is. Response: 4.25%, per Debbie Anderson.

Tom Modde inquired how many years Immanuel has experienced an excess? Response: last six to seven years, per Tom Ruff

Amy Schuldt asked how dollars are handled if a month runs short for the mortgage payment. Debbie Anderson explained that reserve dollars are used, which are reserve dollars from the capital campaign fund.

Joel Mueller proposed the consideration of how debt can be leveraged positively with regard to expansion needs.

Carole Vahsholtz asked what Immanuel's current debt is. Response: \$4.7M approximately, per Tom Ruff.

Brian Parker made a statement in support of the fact that placing a cap on Immanuel's current debt does not allow for future expansion.

Carole Vahsholtz corrected her earlier question and asked the amount currently held in the expansion fund. Response: \$700,000, which includes the current 2022-2023 excess amount.

Motion from the Floor: Dave Rawlings asked Darlene Whited if she would withdraw her seconded to his motion in order that he may withdraw his motion. Darlene Whited withdrew her second. Dave Rawlings withdrew his motion.

Tom Ruff brought to the attention of attendees that a year ago, September 2022, the BOD included debt reduction in the proposed 2021-2022 excess plan; however, voters unanimously turned down the recommendation.

Brian Parker noted that dollars can be allocated to reduction of debt at any time.

John Holste commented that last year's response to the Board's debt reduction proposal was impacted somewhat by the anticipated parking lot project.

Tom Ruff commented that this year, Immanuel is keeping its eye on sewer plan connections.

Becky Hoskins stated that a new sewer system is likely coming in the next two years; and that dollars to connect, which will likely be substantial, will be the responsibility of the business/ministry/homeowner.

Nancy Minton commented on putting dollars into funds that work best for Immanuel.

Acknowledging that there was no motion on the floor, Tom Ruff returned to the original BOD proposal.

Carole Vahsholtz recommended placing one-half of the excess dollars into debt reduction and the remaining half in the expansion fund.

Motion on the Floor: Joel Mueller made the motion to approve the BOD recommended proposal as brought forward by Tom Ruff. Brian Park seconded the motion.

Brent Kuhlmann commented on a situation involving a ministry that was unable to obtain a CD.

Brian Parker clarified that dollars could be allocated to debt at any time, which would allow for attention now to campus maintenance needs.

Tom Ruff stated that while the Long-Term Planning Committee is currently on hold to allow for the ministry clarity process to finish its work, a LT financial planning team to assist in future planning is being developed.

John Holste called the question.

Tom Ruff restated the motion brought forward by Joel Mueller and seconded by Brian Parker. Motion carried unanimously.

Senior Pastor Update

Jason Auringer made comments on the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan Proposal

1. Update on the seven-member clarity process team meeting with LCEF
2. Reworked church job descriptions, which focus on what does the church/ministry needs and not on personalities, e.g., what does an individual like to do
3. Phase II partnership agreement with St. Paul Lutheran Church – New Melle. Meetings being scheduled with St. Paul and the District office.

4. Consistent visitation ministry for shut-in members
5. Clarify and publish role of the elders. Elders to be presented before the congregation in late October 2023.

Amy Schuldt clarified if Immanuel is looking for two additional positions. Response: No. Regarding current positions, the ministry is clarifying what is needed to carry out the role. The only position to fill is the Executive Director position.

Carry-over from 2022

1. Building possibilities where additional land is not required.
2. Establish more care groups. Establishing a Stephen Ministry, i.e., “Lay people helping lay people.”
3. Provide a designated space for youth.
4. Begin a young adult program

Dick Schroeder asked about Bible study classes for our high school kids. Response: High school youth attending current Sunday morning Bible studies and evening high school studies.

School Principal Update

Dr. Allison Dolak provided updates on the following:

1. The recent water issue
2. 2023-2024 School giving campaign – “Eagles on a Mission,” chapel projects supporting Immanuel Lutheran School on the island of Maui, Butangala, etc.
3. Student achievements – Immanuel students are doing well in academics and extra-curricular activities
4. Upcoming Missouri District Teachers Meeting – 33 Immanuel teachers to attend
5. Annual Trunk-or-Treat event, with the Immanuel Men’s Club cooking hotdogs

There being no further business, Tom Ruff asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dick Schroeder made the motion to adjourn. Brian Parker seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m. with the singing of the Doxology.

HANDOUTS:

- Meeting Agenda
- May 22, 2023, Voters Meeting Minutes
- Strategic Plan Proposal
- Treasurer’s Report
- Finance Director Report
- Fiscal Year End Report (2022-2023)