

MINUTES OF THE CHURCH CONFERENCE OF THE  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA  
February 15, 2023

**Call to Order**

Dr. Chris Chapman led us in prayer. Moderator Dennis Ellis called conference to order at 6:15 p.m.

**Business**

December's conference minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

Austin and Betty Connors membership was transferred, decreasing membership to 1,327.

Jim Keown was approved by unanimous vote to join the Diaconate, completing the term of Hayden James.

**Standing Committee Reports**

*Properties Committee:* Sam Ewell reported on the front steps and emergency repairs for the kitchen dishwasher and for replace / rebuild of backflows that were under the \$10,000 threshold requiring conference approval. Should have a signed contract for the front steps soon, with a start date shortly after Easter.

*Music Committee:* Warren provided a new attachment of expenditures from the endowment fund. These were added to last month's report that Chris provided.

*Finance Committee:* Sam Ewell provided a report on behalf of the Finance Committee. The month of January revenue exceeded expenses by \$24,973.40. All personnel are currently being paid at 2022 since we have not yet adopted a final budget for 23. Appropriate adjustments will be made retroactive to January once the 23 budget have been adopted in conference. Sam does not believe further adjustment will be required, but still calling preliminary at this point.

As a result of December and year-end adjustments, total expenses for both December, 2022 and 2022 YTD increased by \$30,674.85. Total revenues for both December, 2022 and 2022 YTD increased by \$3,835.12. Total expenses for 2022 were \$2,035.29 greater than total budgeted expenses. Total revenue for 2022 is \$44,545.13 less than budgeted revenue (a 3% shortfall). Total carryover for 2022 was reduced by \$46,581.02. Our carryover as of 12/31/22 is \$225,972.46.

There was a \$40,000 error in reporting revenue in May, 2022. The contribution of \$40,000 should have been recorded as a prepaid pledge for 2023, but was recorded as revenue in 2022. This error was not identified until mid-December, so revenue reports were in error from May until December.

Next steps in adopting a final budget for 2023. Still hoping for additional pledges so that revisions will not have to be made to the proposed budget, but Finance Committee feels it is time to make some contingency plans. Sam has had discussions with Chris, Wayne, and Anne Rollins regarding the process and timeline for adopting a final 2023 budget.

Sam will propose a timeline for next steps at tomorrow's finance meeting. He will meet with them again with them next Monday the 20th.

Sam will send an email to committee chairs responsible for oversight, requesting they meet with the committees to identify potential reductions. Sent back by no later than March 1. Sam noted that Finance will request all pledges be received by end of Feb. Finance will hold a called special meeting in March to review. The intent of the Finance Committee is to propose a final 2023 budget at the March church conference.

Wayne Hager confirmed that stock contributions were included in the pledges.

Sam clarified the 80% figure is based on the proposed 2023 budget and that 80% is usually good because we underspend the budget. Sam also indicated it was too soon to say if the fact that 2022 revenues were less than the budgeted revenues changes anything.

It was confirmed that 160 units pledged last year.

Specific expenses that we know will go up in 2023 are already addressed in the proposed budget. Finance will be discussing all contributors including items such as property insurance that can be remit periodically.

*Stewardship Committee:* Matt Strickland noted the proposed 2023 budget is \$1,608,329, which is a 5.7% increase over 2022. For the Finance Committee to submit a final 2023 budget to the diaconate and church conference, 80% of the general fund revenue line item needs to be pledged by church members. The general fund revenue line item is \$1,583,079 and 80% of that is \$1,266,463.20. As of February 15, 2023, total pledges for 2023 are approximately \$88,740 short of the 80% goal.

Matt noted that Sam and the Finance Committee will not be bringing the 2023 budget to the February conference for approval, and that if the pledges ultimately fall short of the 80% goal, Finance will need to revisit the proposed budget.

Matt is encouraged by January. The Stewardship Committee is working on one final message. Matt reminded the conference of the emails, videos, the rose window weekly, and posters around the church. Matt noted that the deadline for pledges will be February 28th.

Matt will be meeting with the Finance Committee tomorrow evening about how to craft the final message for distribution. Matt will also be speaking during worship on Sunday.

Matt clarified the \$252,000 carryover will likely not be considered to help reach 80% as this falls under the purview of the Finance Committee.

With respect to a plan B for when we come together in February, Matt noted that in some years the budget has not been adopted until March. Committees could be asked to re-evaluate their proposed budgets.

Matt also noted the Personnel Committee proposed a 4% increase in salaries and benefits, to which the Finance Committee concurred, faithfully anticipating that we will meet our Stewardship pledge goal. Finance will work with all committees to make reductions if 80% is not reached.

*Dream Team Update:* Mary Nash Rusher thanked the Diaconate for their unanimous endorsement and the congregation for all the input received, and noted the team recognized worked hard to revamp the belonging value to avoid any kind of all inclusive list since it was not possible to develop one.

The Church Conference endorsed unanimously the statement of mission values. Mary Nash also noted the Dream Team will now take all the input and return with a fresh look at the building.

Dr. Chapman gave closing remarks and noted the Raleigh Police Department had requested some time ago an interest in forming community relations. This may include providing a meal to officers, writing notes, and other ways to build relations. Nancy Phillips through WMU will lead this initiative.

Dr. Chapman also noted the Chief of the Raleigh Police Department will speaking to the Thirty Niners in March.

Dr. Chapman closed conference with a prayer. Conference adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Clerk