

Big Moose Community Chapel
Annual Meeting August 27, 2023
Draft Minutes

A. Call to order – The meeting was called to order by Clerk Dan Conable at 11:35 a.m.

B. Qualification of voters and establishment of a quorum – The Clerk read the section of the bylaws that specifies who is a member of the congregation and entitled to vote, and established by raising of hands that all present were qualified voters. A clipboard was passed around for the names of attendees. There were 40 members present.

C. Election of presiding officer and two inspectors of election – The Nominating Committee chair proposed Susan Taylor as presiding officer and Steve Schanely and Laura McSweeney as inspectors of election. These persons were unanimously approved to fill those roles.

D. Proof of due notice of the meeting – This was reported by the President as having taken place on the two Sundays prior to the meeting, as required in the by-laws.

E. Reading of notice of the meeting – It was agreed to dispense with the reading of the notice, in the interest of time.

G. Reports of officers

1) President – I always think it's a good idea to begin any meeting of an organization by reading the mission. In our case, the Chapel's "Purpose of the Corporation" and "Bond of Union" statements dating back to 1927 written by the Chapel's founders are the Chapel's mission. I am going to read them now and ask you to think about them and apply them to our discussion of Chapel operations today. (Fun fact: You may not know that there is a second paragraph to the Bond of Union which I will include)

Purpose of the Corporation:

The Big Moose Community Chapel is an institution dedicated to the common worship of God whom we meet in Jesus Christ, and to the service of humanity. It is pledged to freedom of thought and speech, to fellowship with all persons of whatever sect, class, nation, or race, to the building of character, to the undergirding of the home, and the establishment of a righteous social order. It has a free pulpit where those who preach are invited to declare the word of God as they discern it.

The Bond of Union:

We joyously covenant together to worship Almighty God and to live as his Children in every expression and relation of life. We earnestly call upon Him to help us to be pure-minded and unselfish in personal matters, to make our family life happy in love, to be just, honest and merciful in professional, business and social affairs, to be loving and forgiving in church life and equally ready to share each other's joy or care.

Recognizing the mutual value of membership in Big Moose Community Chapel, we hereby join ourselves together that we may help one another, may multiply the powers of each through mutual fellowship and may thereby promote the cause of truth, righteousness and love in the world.

Those words of the Chapel's founders were certainly apparent this summer. We have had a summer filled with many examples of sermons that declared the word of God in ways that made us all think, laugh and then take those messages home with us to reflect upon during the week. We thank Weston Williams for this inspirational summer. (applause). We have really enjoyed getting to know you and your family.

In addition to inspirational worship, as you have read in the committee reports, our summer was also full of lively events, activities and community outreach thanks to the hard work and dedication of MANY volunteers. These events helped us to "multiply our powers of mutual fellowship" and along the way, while we were working on these events, we remembered to be "loving and forgiving in church life and equally ready to share each other's joy or care". We all are so appreciative of all of the work that the trustees, committee chairs and volunteers have done to make this a truly awesome summer.

Plans are already underway for next summer. I am confident that it will be another excellent Big Moose Community Chapel summer season! Please stay tuned to the website, emails and newsletters.

2) Vice President – the vice president had nothing to add to the President's report.

3) Treasurer – Treasurer John View reported these highlights for the fiscal year 2022-23 (Sept. 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023):

Current cash on hand is \$24944 for the Chapel and \$2766 for Memorial Woods. At this time all outstanding bills have been paid. We did transfer \$15000 from memorial Woods checking to the memorial Woods Endowment fund.

- Gifts from donors for Chapel operating support for 2022-23 are:

Stewardship: \$20,659

General gifts: \$12,030

Plate for 2022-2023 is estimated to be \$22,000

It should be noted that we did draw down funds from our endowment. If our finances maintain their current trend, we may not need a full draw this year. It is important to note that those funds may then be able to remain invested in our portfolio and thus as the market has come back our financial position is very strong.

Budget 2023-2024 is on the Chapel website for all to see. Each trustee was sent a copy for review and feedback back in August 2023.

We will begin the fiscal year (Sept. 1) with a Cash on Hand of approximately \$22,000. I have projected a 'normal' year (I am an Optimist). Quite frankly, no one knows what the future holds. Like most of you, rising costs for goods will have an impact on our expenses. We will do what we have in the past year and hold the line on expenses, while creating ways to draw in revenue to operate.

4) Clerk – Dan Conable said that his involvement in the flow of documents back and forth this summer had impressed him with the high level of collaborative activity that trustees accomplished this year. He thanked trustees and committee chairs for their prompt responses to many requests for written reports, list updates, and other business requirements of Chapel operations.

H. Committee Reports – Susan Taylor noted that in the interest of keeping this meeting to a manageable length, annual committee reports were gathered and posted on the Chapel website for review by trustees and members of the congregation prior to this meeting. Highlights will appear in the fall print and web newsletters. She called on those committee chairs present to make any supplementary points they wished and to answer questions about the work of their committees.

Worship – Barb Morgan said that she had received questions about why the Sunday service remained in the same format despite the installation of a new pastor. She said that Rev. Williams and the Worship Committee had agreed that it would be a good idea not to introduce change in the familiar pattern of worship while he and the congregation were getting to know each other. She said that the Worship Committee is always open to suggestions, and that the summer minister is an active participant in its meetings.

Sunday School, the Balsam Bee, and Public Relations – Mary Moore said that all are welcome in the Sunday School, which will continue next year. The Balsam Bee will take place next season on the last Saturday of July, with planning already underway. She reminded the membership that while her committee manages publicity and general communications for the Chapel, if there is ever an emergency situation or catastrophic event, the President serves as the Chapel's point of contact.

Communion – Jerry Rutherford reported that the present arrangement, with packaged elements including gluten free wafers, has been working smoothly.

Discretionary Fund and Sunshine – If anyone knows of a person in the community facing special hardship, they should contact Judy Bean. Donations from the Discretionary Fund are handled confidentially between her committee and the Treasurer. People should continue to let her know about people who are having health problems, suffering bereavement or are just in need of cheering up, so she can send out cards on behalf of the Chapel family.

Facilities – Dan Conable referred members to the report on the website for detail on what his energetic committee has been working on over the past year. He thanked the Finance Committee and the Treasurer for providing the resources necessary to keep our two historic properties in good shape. This allows us to think ahead about maintenance needs, rather than having to play catch-up.

Historical Lectures – Susan Taylor said that after a hiatus we are hoping to find a way to restart this activity at some point in the future.

Membership/Data Base – Richard Widdicombe pointed out that calling his committee “Membership” is something of a misnomer, since its function is to keep an up-to-date directory for mailings and other related purposes.

Music – Terry McSweeney reported that we have had a good program this year, and plans are to continue the Wednesday evening music series next summer. We have managed to have coverage at the piano and organ throughout the season, thanks in part to willing participation by members of the congregation.

Newsletter – Martha Widdicombe said that with the written reports from committees already submitted prior to this meeting, she was well-started on preparing the fall newsletter. She reminded people who want to receive it to be sure their current data is in the database.

Nominations – Sara is looking for volunteers to help on her committee. She thanked Pat Sturges, who is going off the board this year after completing three terms as a Trustee.

Outreach and Volunteer Coordination – The full Outreach report is available online. Anyone who would like to suggest community organizations for outreach support should contact chair Steve Schanely or another member of the committee. They have been tilting giving in the direction of organizations in our immediate vicinity. The Volunteer Coordination Committee has exceeded expectations for its first year. Anyone who has not filled out the interest and availability survey is urged to do so.

Ushers/Refreshments – Phyllis Sanzone said that she is in real need of a co-chair to help her manage these responsibilities. We have every Sunday of the current season covered at this point except for Cookie Sunday, the last service in September. Cooking donations are also needed.

Website – Susan Taylor reported that she was delighted to announce that Vicky Menand is coming on as her co-chair, and will be taking over the responsibility for maintaining the website. Vicky has a strong IT background, and will help us find new ways of doing things.

I. Old Business

a. Bazaar and Balsam Bee – Fran Knorr expressed the view that the Bazaar and Balsam Bee are essential ways that we are known in the community, and attractive to new people. She feels strongly that moving to alternate years for these two events is a big mistake, and something that many people have found perplexing. Susan Taylor said that in the winter Zoom Trustee meeting her concerns would be shared as part of the discussion of the coming summer’s events.

b. Plans for Services in 2024 – The Worship Committee proposed worship in 2024 starting on June 16 and ending on September 29, with a single service at 10:00 a.m.. They proposed a date for the Christmas service in 2024 of December 22 at 4:00 p.m. After some discussion, this recommendation was modified to schedule the 2024 Christmas Service on December 15. A motion was made to this effect by Kathryn Orbanek, seconded by Sara Burrows. The motion passed. The meeting was reminded that if weather conditions at Big Moose became too hazardous for safe travel, the Worship Committee has to reserve the right to cancel the service in the interest of safety for all.

J. New Business

a. Replacement of the Carillon – The installed carillon in the belfry has been out of service for about two years, and the manufacturer no longer supports its outdated technology. Susan Taylor said that the trustees have been discussing its possible replacement, and would like to sound out member views on the subject. The carillon is not “original equipment” to the chapel. The current, now defunct, unit was donated in the 1990s, replacing a less sophisticated unit that may have been installed in the 1950s. There is some divergence of views among those who have camps within earshot about whether it is an asset, though many like to hear it strike the chimes and play hymns. Larry Schunk moved that the meeting support its replacement in principle, and Jerry Rutherford seconded the motion. The vote was 31 in favor of installing a new carillon, with 1 opposed and 7 abstaining. Susan said she would report this vote to the trustees, and that Facilities, Music and Finance will be charged with figuring out how to proceed.

b. No other new business was brought to the attention of the membership.

K Nomination and election of Trustees, Clerk and Auditors – Ballots were passed out and a vote was taken. Trustees elected to the class of 2026 are Judy Bean, Katy Beltz, Dan Conable, Barb Morgan, Kathryn Orbanek, Susan Taylor and John View. Susan Taylor thanked Kathryn Orbanek for joining the group. Miyako Schanely was elected Clerk for a one-year term, and Peters and Associates were elected as auditors for a one-year term. John View brought up the problem of selecting an auditor in this meeting, prior to coming to an agreement on cost and other parameters with the firm in question, and it was agreed that next year a preliminary approach to a potential auditor would be made well in advance of the annual meeting.

L. Calling of the Summer Minister – Barb Morgan explained the somewhat more formalized process that was followed this year in evaluating the minister’s performance and formulating a recommendation to the membership. She said the worship committee had developed a spreadsheet to capture comments and suggestions from committee members and parishioners, filled out and discussed the spreadsheet within the Worship Committee, and shared it along with their recommendation to the Trustees at their August 20 meeting. The Trustees endorsed Worship’s recommendation, she and the President discussed the evaluation with Rev. Williams. The recommendation of the Worship Committee and Trustees is that Rev. Williams be called as the Chapel’s summer minister in 2024. Susan Taylor moved that this recommendation be accepted, and Steve Schanely seconded the motion. After a brief discussion, a vote was called and the motion passed. Rev. Williams was informed of the vote and thanked for his outstanding service in his inaugural year with the Chapel family.

M. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.