

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY

Otey Memorial Parish Church

Sunday, September 8, 2013, 2:00 PM

Brooks Hall

Present: John Bauerschmidt, Bishop; Joe Ballard, Rector; Ann Millar, Sr. Warden; Amy Burns, Jr. Warden; Roy Millar, Treasurer; Steve Blount; Alex Bruce; Karen Keele; Pratt Paterson; Carol Sampson; Dave Spaulding; Beth Wiley, Clerk

Visitors: Bobbye Ballard; Ken Taylor

Joe opened the meeting by reading a prepared statement (attached) which informed the vestry of his intent to resign from his position as rector if he could work out the details for disability retirement, including a plan for keeping health insurance for both he & Bobbye.

The Bishop asked if Joe was willing to dialog with the vestry about this decision. Joe responded in the affirmative and members expressed their sorrow that the situation required this step. There was a long discussion on short term and long term disability options as well as insurance options. Joe noted that the only workable arrangement for him seems to be retirement with long term disability, but he will continue to investigate all options.

Bishop Bauerschmidt indicated that once Joe had finalized his resignation, which can be verbal rather than written, Joe and the vestry each need to write letters of explanation to the congregation to be sent together as the first initial announcement. Ann read a sample letter the Bishop had brought for the vestry's consideration (attached). Pratt suggested adding a few statements to the letter specifically addressing the continuation of programs. Bobbye asked the vestry to highlight the positive in this letter, specifically the group's sadness for Joe's resignation.

If Joe is able to work out the details, his last Sunday will likely either be September 15th or September 22nd, prior to a scheduled appointment at the Social Security office. Bishop Bauerschmidt was clear that no public announcement should be made until the letters have been sent. It was agreed by all parties that we will hold a celebration of Joe's and Bobbye's ministry to the parish at a later date.

Joe then excused himself from the meeting so that the vestry could discuss his request to cover health insurance for one year following his retirement date for both he and Bobbye.

There was much discussion about whether Joe was getting appropriate advice about his options. Bishop Bauerschmidt assured the group that he was working with a representative from the Church Pension Group whose job it is to assist clergy through this process. Questions were asked about who would hold the policy, Joe or Otey. Roy stated that Joe would get his own policy. He is just asking us to help them pay for it. Ann clarified that the Church Pension Fund would pay \$285/month as part of Joe's current policy. Otey is being asked to cover the rest for a year.

Motion: Ann moved that the vestry support the cost of Joe & Bobbye's unfunded insurance for up to one year. Steve seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Bishop Bauerschmidt suggested two options for the vestry's approval of Joe's pending resignation:

A vote could be taken today to accept it in anticipation of its submission.

An email vote could be taken following submission if our bylaws allow for this.

Since there is plenty of precedent for votes via email, this was the course of action settled upon.

Alex volunteered to ask Joe & Bobbye to step back in as he had to leave for a University function. Ann announced the positive result of the vestry's vote. Joe thanked the group for this decision and for all they do for Otey. He also thanked Bishop Bauerschmidt for being present and for his support through this process.

At 3:40 PM Karen moved that the meeting be adjourned. The group ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Wiley
Clerk of the Vestry

Called Vestry Meeting- 9/8/12

Thank you for being here today for this called Vestry meeting, for taking your responsibilities so seriously.

Thank you to Bishop Bauerschmidt for joining us--- his presence emphasizes the importance of our gathering.

As I've tried to make you aware, I suffer from an illness called Confusional Migraines, technically called Basilar Artery Migraines. As one of my medical caregivers advised the Bishop and me, they "come on suddenly, can result in lack of balance, double vision, unsteadiness, blacking out, often these patients are thought to be intoxicated, suffering from other conditions"---- they are bad.

Mine are getting worse.

Since April my doctors have been trying new meds and adjusting doses, with mixed or little success.

SO: I am advising you today of my intention to resign as Rector of Otey Parish ---- the reasons are health reasons.

I am applying for Medical Disability, both from the National Episcopal Church, and from Social Security. Not in a willy-nilly way, but with the encouragement of my family doctor and neurologist--- they do not believe I can 'slow the slide' in my health while working as a parish priest and rector. I will continue to work with these doctors towards a means of controlling these confusional migraines so that I can have some sort of quality of life.

2. Timing has not been kind.

The Church Pension Fund meets Tuesday September 10 to consider applying cases. Regarding my case: I know my part of the paperwork is in; I'm confident that the Bishop's part of the paperwork is in; I'm pretty sure my Family Doctor's part of the paperwork is in; I hope my neurologist's part of the paperwork is in--- I have done all I can to ensure the above. If my case is not considered next week, consideration is delayed to October 1st. I have asked to be advised of status.

Regarding Social Security: I have an appointment with them Sept. 24th.

I cannot be employed when I meet with them. It can take up to 18 months to be approved by Social Security for SSI (note: Social Security Disability is the correct term I believe for me, as I have been paying into SS all my life), if at all.

However, if the Church Pension Group approves my application, they have a group that represents me to Social Security (named Allsup), with, I'm told, a faster process, and a 99% success rate.

3. I have great concern regarding my Health Insurance.

If approved by the Church Pension Group, they still pay only approximately \$285 (they advised me) per month toward insurance.

After my resignation, I will not be able to stay on diocesan insurance.

For about three weeks, I have been working with one of the National Church's and diocesan Health Advocates, have supplied them the names of our Doctors and prescriptions---- they are searching for a new policy, a replacement policy for me. They have not yet advised me of one.

In a little while, the Bishop and Sr. Warden will present to you a request from me regarding health insurance, that Otey Parish cover the cost for one year after my resignation. I hope you will receive it favorably. I do not know if the new insurance will cost more, or less. I do know it is much less expensive than the cost to Otey Parish of the Sabbatical I would have accrued next spring. If the CPF approves me for Medical Disability, my monthly income will be cut by 45-50%. Without Otey's assistance, we cannot afford the insurance. Without the insurance, I cannot continue seeing my doctors. More importantly, Bobbye cannot continue seeing the doctors she has been seeing since her serious illness three Julys ago.

4. The Bishop fully expects me to resign today, and advises a verbal resignation is adequate. I cannot do so, because of the few things that have not fallen in place.

I expect them to fall in place.

I expect to resign this week for the health reasons discussed.

I expect my last day to be Monday Sept. 16th.

I will keep the Bishop and Sr. Warden fully apprised.

If a verbal resignation is adequate, I presume one via telephone to the Sr. Warden and Bishop will suffice.

If I may, I will work out my final paycheck, including any remaining vacation days, with the Treasurer.

5. Finally, I ask you to keep my resignation plans confidential for a few days, until I can advise my staff, spiritual advisor, and other friends.

Dear Friends and Members of Otey Parish,

On September 10, 2013, our priest and friend, the Reverend Joe Ballard, resigned as Rector of Otey Parish. The Vestry accepted his resignation with regret, understanding the difficulty of this decision for Joe.

Joe has faced grave challenges to his health over the last number of months, and with the support and encouragement of his doctors and other friends and counselors he has decided at this time to seek total and continuing disability retirement under the terms of the Church Pension Fund. He has not made this decision lightly, but with much prayer and with the knowledge of the serious nature of the health challenges that are before him. Total and continuing disability retirement is available to clergy in the Episcopal Church who face personal health situations that make it impossible for them to continue in their ministries. We are fully supportive of him in this difficult decision.

We are grateful to Joe and Bobbye for their presence with us and their ministry among us. The last five years have seen a renewal of our ministry in the community at Otey Parish. We are thankful to God for all that has been accomplished. The Capital Campaign and building project for a new Parish House is just the most visible sign of Joe's leadership and what it has made possible for the future.

Joe's last Sunday with us as Rector will be September 15 and we look forward to the opportunity to celebrate with the Ballards and to express our appreciation for them.

Our ministry as a parish continues, as does the vital role of each member of Otey Parish. The Vestry has begun to meet to determine the next steps in this time of transition. We have met these challenges before, and are confident that God will provide for this parish.

Please continue to pray for Joe and Bobbye and for our parish in this time of difficult decision and transition.