

**Diocesan Council Meeting**  
**Zoom | August 25, 2022**

**Present:** *Mark Strobel, Leslie Ross, Donna Pettit, Kim Becker, George Abdilnour, Christie Iverson, Stephanie Garcia, Brandy Watson, Terry Overbo, Leo Wilking, Bishop Ely, Angela Goodhouse-Mauai, Bart Davis, Jason Thoms, Jessica Thielke, Robert Fox, Charlotte Peterson*

**Absent:** *Tammy Enockson, Steve Godfrey, John Anderson, John Floberg, Helen Lodu, MaryAnn Henry, Margaret Zaharia, Christi Iron Eyes*

**Proposed Agenda:**

1. Call to Order and Opening Prayer
2. Review of Agenda
3. July Meeting Minutes
4. 2023-24 Draft Budget, with a motion needed to approve this draft budget and recommend to Diocesan Convention
5. Discussion and action on the House at St. Thomas, Fort Totten
6. Discussion and approval of 2023 Council Meeting Dates
7. Other
8. Prayer and Adjournment

Meeting called to order by Bishop Thomas Ely at 7:09pm.

Opening Prayer, led by Bishop Ely

**Approval of the Agenda:** No additions

**Update:** Pr. Larry Thiele is taking a time of personal leave. Staying in contact with Bishop Tom and the ELCA Bishop during this time.

**July 2022 Minutes:**

Leo Wilking made a motion to approve the minutes. Terry Overbo seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**2023-2024 Draft Budget:**

Expense section of proposed budget added a line [110-50300], Native American Ministry Support, in the amount of \$10,000 for 2023 and an anticipated amount of \$15,000 for 2024. There is also a corresponding increase in line [001-41800], Royalty Income. The Episcopal Church, through the General Convention Block Grant, gave a 5% increase over 2022. The other 10.8% is coming from our budget, for 2023. For 2024, we will receive a 5% increase from the Convention Block Grant and anticipate 12% from the diocesan budget. We had originally requested a 15% increase in the General Convention Block Grant.

COLA: Leave it as it stands. When the new council assembles in November, we will reassess. There isn't enough information out there to make a good estimate.

Medical Trust: 4.2% increase, has come in as of August 25, 2022, for group health; and 2% for dental. Should be okay with what we have prepared in the budget.

We are doing a two-year budget, but convention will only approve the 2023 budget. But then we have a good idea of where we are going for 2024.

Bishop Ely called for questions and comments.

Leo Wilking expressed concern about inflation and COLA, but 100% agreed that we can revisit this at another date. Feels that the finance committee has done their due diligence and is fine with what has been presented.

Jason Thoms wondered about the dates at the top of the budget. It is a two-year budget, even though the ACS software only notates a one-year budget.

Leo Wilking verified that the convention in October is only adopting the 2023 budget but will be seeing the 2024 budget. Bishop Ely is looking to Leo to know what the proper protocol is. At convention we can only approve a one-year budget, but we want to look ahead to future years, to see where the council is going, at least through 2024. Can only approve a 2023 budget but will provide the 2024 budget for information purposes. Agreed

Jason Thoms wants to change the title to “projected 2024 budget.” [2023 Annual Budget and 2024 Projected Budget] Agreed.

Christie Iverson thinks it is amazing that we could come up with this total in our budget, when back in 2020 our budget was far smaller. Part of the difference is that we are being proactive with using our endowment money instead of waiting and seeing what is going to happen.

Leo Wilking made a motion to approve the 2023 budget and projected 2024 budget to be submitted to our annual convention in October. Christie Iverson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

### **St. Thomas, Fort Totten:**

Rectory/Caretaker House –The former Rectory/Caretaker house needs to be demolished. We received \$7,500 from the last round of Sustainability Grants, however, the actual cost for demolition and abatement is nearly \$30,000 due to the presence of asbestos.

According to the EPA, this structure doesn’t fall into the same emergency category as the church in Selfridge, which was recently taken down at no cost to the church.

Conversation with local tribal leaders and congregational leaders is ongoing. Ultimately, this is our responsibility as the Diocese. We need to be done with this building. The price tag we have right now is about \$30,000 – which is built upon the idea that the people who can do this work are currently in the area. We wouldn’t have to add the expense of bringing them back to the area.

Possible solutions for coming up with \$30,000:

<b>St Thomas -- Ft Totten</b>					
demolition of rectory					
		<b>Grant</b>		<b>Bid</b>	
			\$ 7,500.00		\$ 29,870.00
<b>additional funding sources:</b>					
	Covid Relief Grant (DFMS)		\$ 8,000.00		
	grave digging		\$ 900.00		
	Church insurance dividend		\$ 830.00		
	Church insurance unspent claim		\$ 7,525.00	** grant may be needed to complete work	
	ECCIM grants		\$ 5,232.00	* \$1240 of this was to have been used by Dunseith for the van.	
			\$ 29,987.00		
	Native Amr Property Reserve		\$ 1,045.00		
	Indian Bldgs Fund (Endowment)		\$ 25,000.00		

Another project that has been started is to update heating in the Guild Hall, and we are looking to see where that money was coming from.

Leo Wilking verified that the amount needed is \$30,000 and NDCIM is saying they don't have any money left over to help with that project. We are unclear as to what the ECCIM balance is or what it has been reserved for. There is some available in the Indian Building Fund endowment, but that also generates income.

Leo Wilking does not favor using COVID money for this type of project. Could we explain our project/need to the Diocese of Texas to see if they would be able to help us. Could we ask NDEF to do a \$10,000 a year grant for three years to come up with these funds?

Bishop Ely has talked with Bishop Fisher (Texas) about this issue. Bishop Ely has sent him an email with all this information and the other priorities of NDCIM and what they would like to see accomplished in the coming year. Bishop Ely has been in conversation with Bishop Jeff; Tom believes there will be some form of response from Bishop Jeff, but he doesn't know exactly what their mission committee will decide.

Bishop Tom also brought up the revolving loan fund. Problem with asking Fort Totten to take out a loan to do this, brings up the question where will Fort Totten get the funds to pay back the loan?

Bart Davis mentioned that in the past some revolving loan funds have been forgiven. They weren't this large, but they have been forgiven in the past. Bishop Ely mention that at the most we are looking for \$22,000.

Jason Thoms brought up the budget we just approved, could we pull funds from another line item? Congregational Support, Education, Youth Ministry: all of these haven't spent their line items, could we just pull from them since we haven't touched anything in their budget lines? Some of these have already been spent to cover other budget expenses (Congregation Revitalization, Convention, Partnership for Renewal, NDCIM meetings.)

Leslie Ross is wondering if we have solicited bids or how did we come up with this total? Bishop Ely explained that this is a bid. On Native American reservations, the tribe must approve anyone that does work on a reservation. This particular outfit is approved to do this particular work and is in the area doing similar work.

Robert Fox explained that you must be approved through the tribe to come out and do work. That is why there is sometimes problem to get three bids, for instance, because companies don't want to go through getting certified. And then other companies aren't allowed to do any work on reservations. Each tribe is a little different, but overall, you need to be certified to come within the tribe boundaries to do work.

This bid will tear down the building filled with asbestos and put the land back in working order. We are also looking at who owns the land. St. Thomas sits in a 2-acre plot, in a larger 17-acre lot that belongs to the tribe. The tribe has the land reserved but allows the other use. So, do we own the land or just the building? This isn't a normal Episcopal Church situation, so we are continuing to explore.

Perhaps the best way to handle this would be to authorize the Standing Committee, the Bishop, and the Treasurer to sort through all the possibilities and figure out the best way to move forward. Standing Committee could be the subsection of council to come up with the solution, since they already approved the demolition of this building.

Bart Davis wondered if there was a deadline for when we need to accept the bid for this company. Bishop Ely isn't aware of a deadline, except that they are in the area. His sense is that we probably need to be giving them the go-ahead in the next couple of weeks, while they are here. Bishop Ely can check back in with him to get a better idea. (After the meeting Bishop Ely checked with the firm and they are available until the end of September and their bid is valid through that time.)

Bart Davis mentioned we have enough in cash flow to cover this, while the Standing Committee, Bishop, and Treasurer figured out where the funding came from.

Christie Iverson wants to know if the Diocese can take out a revolving loan fund instead of just a parish?

Donna Pettit makes a motion to use the cash flow to pay for the demolition of the rectory at Fort Totten. Then we authorize the Standing Committee, Bishop, and Treasurer to find the exact funding to cover that. Seconded by Jason Thoms.

Leo Wilking amends the above motion to say that the option of a loan be taken out of the equation. Mark Strobel seconded the amendment. Amendment passed.

Amended motion: Use available cash flow to pay for the demolition of the rectory at Fort Totten. We then authorize the Standing Committee, Bishop, and Treasurer to find the funding and report to the Diocesan Council. The Standing Committee, Bishop, and Treasurer will not be able to take out a loan to pay for this. Motion passed.

**2023 Council Meeting Dates:**

November 18-19, 2022 (overnight already scheduled)	Jamestown
January 17, 2023 (7:00 PM Central Time)	Zoom
February 28, 2023 (7:00 PM Central Time)	Zoom
April 21-22, 2023 (overnight in person)	TBD
May 23, 2023 (7:00 PM Central Time)	Zoom
June 16-17, 2023 (overnight in person)	TBD
September 15-16, 2023 (overnight in person)	TBD
November 17-18, 2023 (overnight in person)	TBD

Leo Wilking moves to approve the proposed dates, in person and on Zoom, for 2023. Seconded by Leslie Ross. Motion passed.

**Other Business:**

Charlotte Peterson would like to see the minutes from the previous NDCIM meetings to verify fund requests. Wants to see if funding has been slated for specific projects. Kim Becker, Secretary of NDCIM, will forward these minutes to Charlotte.

**Closing Prayer**

Motion to adjourn made by Leo Wilking and seconded by Leslie Ross. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jessica Thielke  
*Diocesan Administrator*