

**TOWN OF WILLISTON
OLD BRICK CHURCH TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
December 4, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alice Beisiegel, John Butterfield, Marge Butterfield, Sara Fitts-Pratt, and Lauren Koumjian
ADMINISTRATION: Bruce Hoar, Director of Public Works
ABSENT: None
OTHERS PRESENT: Chapin Kaynor, Rick McGuire, Jack Price

Call to Order

The meeting of the Williston Old Brick Church Board (OBC) Trustees was called to order at 4:00 p.m. on December 4, 2023. The meeting was held at the OBC Basement at 100 Library Lane, Williston, VT 05495.

Public Comment

Three members of the public attended this meeting, primarily to offer comments on the following agenda items:

- Chapin Kaynor – Improvements to the church grounds
- Rick McGuire – Restarting the Old Brick Church Music Series & handicap accessibility to the church.
- Jack Price – Proposed Verizon Cell Repeater Project

Comments from these individuals are incorporated in these meeting minutes within the appropriate topics.

Introductions

Introductions were made and the Board of Trustees welcomed Lauren Koumjian as our newest member.

Approval of Draft May 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes

The draft minutes of the May 15, 2023, meeting was presented for approval. A motion was made by Marge Butterfield and seconded by Alice Beisiegel to approve the minutes as presented. The Trustees voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

Handicap Accessibility to the Church

Lack of handicap accessibility is a major deterrent to hosting public events at the church. Various handicap options were brought up, including removable ramps, permanent ramps, and lift systems.

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Lauren Koumjian informed the group of the UVM Historic Preservation Program. This program may offer resources to investigate handicap options for historic buildings. They may also assist in identifying potential funding sources through State Agency Grants. Lauren has agreed to reach out to the UVM Historic Preservation Group to learn more about available resources that might help address this issue. She will report her findings back to the Board.

Update on Verizon Cell Repeater Project

Bruce reported that he did not have many Town updates on this issue. Town Manager Erik Wells has scheduled a December 7, 2023 meeting between Town Officials and Verizon representatives. Erik invited John to attend the meeting. The Trustees, and attending members of the public, summarized the pros and concerns that have been raised regarding this project.

Pros	Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved area cellphone service• An additional income source for the Town• The church has been identified as an optimal location by Verizon.• Increased utilization, and value to the community, from the church property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noise from generator and HVAC equipment.• Increased use of fossil fuels• Potential health impact of radio frequency radiation• Impact on the historical integrity of the building. (eg. Non radio frequency dampening shutters, exposed conduit, etc).• Risk of fire or damage to the building during construction.• Inadequate post-construction patching, repair and cleanup.• Repair, restoration and removal of equipment and facilities if/when the Cell Repeater system is decommissioned by Verizon.• “Why in the church? Why can’t the Cell Repeater be located elsewhere?”

The Board and attendees agreed that additional project details will be required to address these concerns. John will relay these concerns to Erik Wells prior to the December 7th meeting.

Discussion on Grounds Improvements Suggestions

Chapin Kaynor expressed his interest in continuing his voluntary work improving the church grounds.

Chapin briefed the group on his recommendations for improvements to the church grounds. These include:

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- Removing buckthorn and other invasive species thus allowing other natural species to flourish. Use of natural species results in lower maintenance and upkeep.
- Improvements along the two neighboring property boundaries. It was agreed that Chapin, in his capacity as a volunteer, may discuss this matter with the neighboring property owners.
- Chapin also outlined his thoughts on improving the grounds that face the school. Bruce pointed out that new plantings must comply with the Planning & Zoning Department specifications. Alice will reach out to the Planning & Zoning Department regarding these specifications for new plantings.
- Chapin recommended that there is a tall box elder tree that is a potential hazard to the church roof. Bruce pointed out that tree removal work must be done by an insured tree company that is hired by the Town. Tree removal costs will come out of the church's annual maintenance budget. Bruce will inspect the box elder to assess the priority for its removal.
- Chapin will document his recommendations and share them with the Board in early 2024.
- The Board will tour the church grounds with Chapin in the spring when the weather is better.

Rick McGuire's Thoughts on Restarting the Old Brick Church Monthly Music Series

Rick McGuire has expressed an interest in restarting the Old Brick Church Music Series. Several of the original people who worked with Rick on this program have since moved on. Rick is looking for new volunteers to work with him on restarting this program.

In the past, proceeds from the shows have been used to pay the performers and donate to the sponsoring organization. The Board questioned whether some percentage should also be donated to the church in the future.

The Board expressed their support in restarting the Old Brick Church Music Series and have agreed to support Rick in his efforts.

It was agreed that Rick would begin the process through the following steps:

1. Obtain the support of the OBC Trustees, which was given in today's meeting.
2. Verify that Town Saff agree with restarting this program.
3. Begin advertising for volunteers in January 2024.
4. Approach other local organizations about supporting the program, either through donations, volunteering, underwriting, or sponsorships.

Holiday lighting / decorations

Window candles (John Butterfield), Holiday boughs (Alice Biesiegel) and a door wreath (the Town) have been installed for the Holiday Season.

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Updates on Old Brick Church budget and projects

Operation and Maintenance:

- Bruce presented the 2024 operating and maintenance budget. It was noted that the budgets for the church and the Stovepipe School are now combined.
- Bruce reported that the Town has repaired the area of rotted wood on the corner of the building.

Capital Projects:

- Fire Protection System: System design is in progress, scheduled to be completed in early 2024. Completed design documents will then enable the Town to obtain updated construction estimates. The current budgeted cost is \$300,000. Concerns are that this cost may increase due to labor and materials inflation.
- Chimney Repairs: \$26,000 has been budgeted for chimney repairs. Work is slated for either 2024 or 2025.

Other Business

No other business was noted at this meeting.

Next Meeting

No meeting date was set. The next meeting may be scheduled in the Spring, or earlier if certain key issues need to be discussed before then.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Butterfield
Chairperson - Old Brick Church Trustees