Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

(Author: Rick Blum and AI-edited by Rick)

January 12, 2026 6:30 p.m. – Madison and Zoom

Attending: Sarah Wehnes, Greg Vlack, Gary Schmuhl, Kris Schmuhl, Rick Blum, Spencer Johnson, Diane Wenzel, Sara Ritter, Adam Frey

Not Attending: Nan Schilling

Quick recap

The finance committee meeting reviewed December financials, which showed a positive $48,000 surplus at the end of the month. The committee debated keeping $235,000 separate for potential Verona site staffing and using the remaining $474,000 for facilities improvements, including parking lots and HVAC system upgrades. A significant discussion centered around a proposed $1.5 million capital campaign to address facility needs and staffing specifically at the Verona site, though timing and leadership challenges were noted. The committee also addressed changes in meeting schedules and roles due to recent staffing changes, particularly regarding the treasurer’s position and coordination with the HR committee.

Dec. Financials

- Results YTD
- Questions and Discussion

Financial updates were presented, revealing a positive December with the church $48,000 in the black at the end of December, $21,000 ahead in revenue. Diane discussed the strong Christmas giving numbers, which matched the budgeted amount of $33,000. The December numbers are seasonally adjusted financial performance.

Committee Process Moving Forward

- Sarah Wehnes’s new role
- Review of place and time of committee meetings

The committee discussed transitioning the treasurer's role from Tyler to Sarah, acknowledging the need to adapt the process given Sarah's new responsibilities. Sarah will officially become treasurer, pending board election in January, and will take on a more active role in presenting numbers at future board meetings. The committee considered whether to maintain a separate chair position, with Rick suggesting that Sarah could handle both treasurer and chair duties, though they agreed to revisit this decision next month. They also discussed potentially moving their monthly meeting from 6:30 to 6:00 PM to accommodate Pastor Craig's schedule, with Rick agreeing to check with him and Jeff about the timing. PR. Craig came in later and said the chairs of Finance and HR need to talk and work something out.

Financial Reporting and Meeting Schedules

The group discussed meeting schedules and financial reporting processes. Diane explained that financial reports typically need 2-3 days to complete, with the goal of distributing them by Friday. They agreed to aim for distributing the agenda and financials on Friday, with the meeting on Monday night.

Diane would like to go to Quick Books online for reporting in the future.

Greg will be out of town for February.

7:10 – Facilities Fund Update

- ERTC Money
- Suggestions, recommendations to the board

Facilities Fund and Budget Allocation

The board discussed the allocation of $862,000 for facilities and general funds, with $235,000 from ERTC and appx. $600,000 from the estate . They agreed to keep $235,000 separate for potential staff hiring and set $474,000 for the facilities fund, which will be used for parking lots and other projects. The group also addressed a $110,000 HVAC control system upgrade that exceeds the 3% budget limit, requiring a congregational vote before proceeding. Rick explained that a $153,000 facilities project cannot proceed without a congregational vote, and while delaying might increase costs, the board needs to decide whether to hold a meeting or wait until after the annual meeting in the fall.

7:20 – 2026 Capital Campaign

- Recommendations on moving forward

Facilities Project and Campaign Planning

- The group also discussed a previous capital campaign initiative that was paused, with Rick proposing a new campaign focused on $1.5 million over three years to address facilities and staffing needs, though timing would depend on whether to proceed with the current facilities project first.

7:30 - Schedule next meeting, Lord's Prayer

Next meeting: 6:30 p.m. Monday, February 9

Next steps

- Rick: Talk to Pastor Craig and Jeff about potentially moving the Finance Committee meeting start time to 6:00 PM and confirm building access/doors.
- Rick: Connect Sarah with Rachel Reitbach (HR Committee chair) to discuss and coordinate meeting times between HR and Finance Committees to accommodate lead pastor attendance.
- Sarah and Diane: Work together to transition financial reporting from Excel to direct QuickBooks reports, aiming to streamline the process for future reports.
- Rick: Check with Hooper (facilities) regarding how long the HVAC controls bid is valid and the impact of delaying the project on cost.
- Diane: Email the audit committee members to proceed with quarterly audit activities now that the quarter has ended.
- Sarah and Spencer: Take recommendation to the board regarding allocation of $235,000 ERTC funds to board designated reserves and $474,000 to the facilities fund.
- Rick: Keep the group apprised of developments regarding the potential capital campaign and report back to the committee.
- Rick: If necessary, organize a congregational meeting for approval of the HVAC controls project if the board decides to proceed before the annual meeting.
- Sarah: Prepare the agenda for the next meeting, or coordinate with others as needed, especially as Rick will be out of town.
- Nan Schilling: Continue as vice chair and minute-taker; group to designate a backup if Nan is unavailable.
- Rick: Follow up with Hooper on whether the maintenance agreement/warranty applies to new furnace installations and report back to the committee.

Executive Summary:

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Topics discussed:

- **December results:** $48,000 surplus (seasonally adjusted), $21,000 higher than budget; Christmas giving met $33,000 budget.
- **Funds & projects:** ~$862,000 available (≈$235,000 ERTC; ≈$600,000 estate). Recommendation: keep **$235,000** for potential Verona staffing; designate **$474,000** to the facilities fund (parking, other projects). Decide what to do about HVAC controls (~$110,000) as part of a $153,000 facilities project. The controls exceed the 3% threshold expense and would require a congregational vote.
- **Capital campaign:** Proposed **$1.5M** over three years to address facilities and Verona staffing; timing and leadership unresolved.
- **Operations & governance:** Transition treasurer role to **Sarah Wehnes** (pending board election); consider combining treasurer and chair roles

4. **Items of importance / concern for the Board**

- Decide whether to hold a Congregational meeting to approve HVAC (~$110K) project.
- Approved new proposal to designate $235,000 (ERTC) for Verona staffing reserve and $474,000 to facilities.
- Confirmation of treasurer transition and committee leadership.

5. **Requests for Board direction**

- Approve the recommended fund designations.
- Direct whether to call a congregational meeting now for the HVAC/$153K projects or defer until after the annual meeting.
- Confirm new treasurer.

6. **Requests for Board approval**

- **Formal designation of Facility funds as recommended.**
- **Authorization to call a congregational meeting if the Board elects to proceed with HVAC project.**
- **Approve and appoint treasurer Sarah Wehnes.**

7. **Attachments / Next steps (selected)**

    - *none*

Next meeting: *Monday, February 9, 6:30 p.m. (time to be confirmed).*