

Minutes from the New Hope Family Church Council Meeting on August 24, 2014

Jim Stephens
August 28, 2014

Attachments include a report from the Charter Committee and an email related to the report.

Council Attendees: Chairperson Joanne Parrish, Council members: Doug Burton, Jim Stephens, Debra Gertz, and Miken Jenkins (by speakerphone)

Prayer to Open: Joanne Parrish

OLD BUSINESS:

Financial Issues:

Quarterly Report: The Quarterly Financial Report was left on the table near the entrance at Sunday Service on August 17, 2014. It seems that very few copies were taken. We decided that the Report should be distributed at the next Sunday Service as well and that **Pastor Miilhan** be requested to make an announcement to the congregation for anyone interested in a copy.

Tithing Discussion: It was reported at the last Council meeting that tithing is down this year over last year. **Pastor Miilhan** agreed to discuss this issue with Liana and Arael, our Sunday Service Coordinators, but he was not at the meeting to give a report.

Miken reported on re-establishing a Financial Oversight Team similar to one that existed in the past. **Jim Howell and Will Stein** have responded to an email that they are interested to help.

New Hope Academy Not Available on August 31st

New Hope Academy will not be available for Sunday Service on August 31st due to preparations for the new school year. *Members should be encouraged to send in regular tithes anyway.*

August 31st Programs at the Learning Center. No further information was available about any events planned for the Melford Learning Center on that date.

Melford Learning Center

The idea of hiring a Learning Center Manager and Maintenance Coordinator was briefly discussed and a couple names of potential candidates were mentioned. **Debra Gertz** will contact one of the people suggested.

Pastor Miilhan needs to be consulted on all things related to the Learning Center.

Jim Stephens will prepare a “**Checklist When Leaving The Building**” for those who run events at the Melford Center. It is hoped that all responsible parties will have the attitude to leave the place cleaner than they found it and ready to receive the next event. It will be further discussed at the next meeting.

Jim Stephens volunteered to look over and revise the Job Description for Learning Center Manager and distribute it to the Council for discussion at the next meeting.

Employee Activities Reports

Monthly Activities Reports for August are due at the next Council Meeting on September 7th and should be submitted by all members who are receiving payroll checks from the church.

In addition to the requested information on the initial reports for last month, the Council would like to know approximately how many hours were worked by each of the employees during August.

The Council would also like more details about the events which are being held which would include how many attendees came to each event, how many members, how many guests, and how many staff.

The Council is also interested in fostering a structure where each employee has a clearly designated central figure/mentor person.

Strategic Planning (Tabled until next meeting.)

NEW BUSINESS

Report from the Charter Committee

Attending the Council Meeting were the following members of the Charter Committee: Jim Parrish (Chairman), Betsy Hunter, Libby Henkin, Will Stein, and Nancy Bulow.

The Charter Committee was organized about 6 weeks ago by the Council to deal with the issue of reconciling our existing NHFC Charter and the National Charter for Local Churches sent from Headquarters. All members of the congregation were invited to join the committee via an email to the congregation and during a meeting after church service.

The Charter Committee has been holding regular weekly meetings and thoroughly going over both charter documents. The Chairperson elected during the meetings is **Jim Parrish**.

The report from the Charter Committee on the work that they have completed so far is attached.

After lengthy and sometimes passionate discussion, the Council voted 3 - 2 for the Charter Committee to continue preparing an amended NHFC Charter. See Charter Committee report for details.

The 2 Council members voting against the report wanted the Committee to pursue a different course.

The Charter Committee is continuing to meet at the Melford Center every Wednesday night from 7:30pm to 9:00pm sharp. All members are invited to attend and/or send input.

Application for National Council Grant for a Marriage/Blessing Event on March 2, 2015.

After discussion, the Council voted 5 – 0 to support a grant to be submitted to the National Council for approximately \$10,000 for a major event centered on the Blessing on March 2, 2015, which would include multiple legal marriage ceremonies (at a very reduced price) open to the non-members and members of congregations of our pastor contacts. Those participants would be expected to attend several marriage education programs on successful relationships before the weddings. **Doug Burton and Jim Stephens** are the contact people for anyone interested in taking part in this project.

If we are awarded the grant, then NHFC would have to contribute a 10% matching amount, approximately \$1,000. The Council felt this would be easy enough to do in our community and supported going forward with the application.

September 18th Event for 40-Year Members

All members and families are invited to a celebration dinner on Sept. 18th for those who have been in the church for 40 or more years. Each individual will be responsible for their own dinner cost of approximately \$14. The Council decided to allocate the \$500 that was already budgeted for a Special Event in September to be used for certificates and small gifts for the 40-Year members.

Next Council Meeting will be Sunday September 7th 7:00 pm at the Melford Center.

Prayer to close: Doug Burton

Charter Committee Report to NHFC Council

The Charter Committee has met four times. It is an open committee, meaning that whoever chooses to attend can participate in the meetings and vote. We have had ten or more participants at every meeting and we meet Wednesday evenings between 7:30 and 9:00 at the Melford Center. The role of the committee is advisory in nature and works to inform and enable the council to make decisions about the charter (see role of the committee) and also seeks feedback from the congregation.

During the last three meetings the committee has been reviewing the existing NHFC charter, and the National Council charter for local churches which was submitted to us by email on July 1st. We have read and compared the two charters and noted similarities and differences between the two documents. We completed this task at the August 13th meeting and also read thru the National Charter for the District and National Council. During this time we have requested and received information about the charter from the National Council from our National Council representative Libby Henkin. (See attached email). At the end of the August 13th meeting we voted on which was the best path to take for our deliberations going forward. The options presented were as follows: (from the minutes of the meeting)

There was discussion over the pros and cons of adopting the National Charter.

We took a vote to see where everyone is at between wanting to:

1. Adopt the National Charter and make amendments
2. Write a new charter
3. Keep our charter as is
4. Keep our charter and make amendments

All but one person wants to keep our charter and make amendments.

We decided to report our progress to the MD church council and get their direction.

A brief description of each option

Option # 1: Adopt the National charter and make amendments. This is the path desired by the National council. The National Council Charter for Local Churches is in some ways similar to our existing New Hope Charter which was adopted in 2006. However, there are several notable differences. The Amendments allowed by National are restricted in nature to the following points:

(sec. 9 of the National Charter)

9. Amendments

- a. This charter may be amended by the National Council with the approval of the President
- b. With approval of the Local Church Council and a two-thirds vote of the Local Church membership, a Local Church may amend this document for its own purposes as follows:
 - i. Requirements for Local Church membership and voting

- ii. Election rules
- iii. Composition of the Church Council
- iv. Frequency and rules for Church Council meetings
- v. Participation requirements for Church Council members

Other areas of the charter are non-negotiable and can only be amended by the National Council with the approval of the President. Some sections of the National Charter we would like to amend are sections in which amendments are not allowed by the National Charter.

One of the sections not amendable in the charter is the ability of veto of “Any Church Council decision... by a higher church authority” from the District Leader on up. The veto can be appealed to any higher authority in the National structure.

Option#2: Keep our charter the way it is. This idea was proposed when we heard verbally from National as communicated to us by Libby Henkin that our current charter is grandfathered in, meaning we can keep our existing charter as is, with no amendments. It was also communicated that National would require us to adopt the new National Charter at a later unspecified date. The idea of keeping our old charter is attractive because it keeps us from having to deal with the charter at the present time, although we will have to do so in the future at National’s discretion. This keeps us as we are for a while, but does not enable us to change things and move forward with a new updated charter.

Option #3: Write an entirely new charter. This was considered by some on the committee as a good option, but amending the existing New Hope Charter was deemed adequate to make the changes we need, and keeps in place most of the existing New Hope Charter.

Option#4: Keep our New Hope Charter and make amendments. This was voted on by the committee and accepted as the best course by all but one member. Since our committee is only making proposed charter amendments for the NH Council to consider, this option enables us to be free and creative with the charter. There are practical matters that need updating, but also we can explore the governing relationships between the congregation, pastor, NH council, and National Levels. We may like to explore different areas and consult with those who are, or have been previous Pastors, Council Members, or working in different ministries in our church community. We will also seek input and communicate with the congregation as to what we are considering, and hope to foster participation by more members in creating an amended charter that better serves New Hope Family Church now and in the future. As far as compliance with National goes, who knows how different our charter will be? While there is an amendment process made possible by National, perhaps we won’t even need an amendment or if we do, we can go through the process with them. We won’t know until we start working on the New Hope charter and seeing what changes are desired. We propose that the committee freely considers amendments to our own local charter.

From: Libby Henkin
Sent: Friday, August 01, 2014 5:45 PM
To: Charter Committee
Subject: Libby's answers from Noah Ross re: Charters

Perhaps not everyone was in on the last send, so resending.

Hi everyone,

I just want to preface this email by saying I'm sensing among us some confusion and disunity, mostly born of misunderstanding, and I hope that will change. A little trust in one another's motives and respect of each other's characters would go a long way. I look forward to working with everyone on this committee as brothers and sisters. I am **YOUR** representative **TO** the National Council, not the National Council's representative to you, and if there is anything concrete you would like to recommend, or clarification you would like to get, I will gladly bring it to the next National Council meeting as a recommendation for improvement. Also, if there is anything you like about the National Council or the National Charter, I'm sure they would like to hear it too, especially from our community.

I discussed our questions with Noah Ross, and here is what I learned:

First, for now we don't need to change our local charter, because it is grandfathered in. We will need to come into compliance eventually, but when that is has not been decided or stated yet. The national charter was created more out of concern for churches with no charter or council

However, if we choose to make changes to our existing charter, that new charter will need to be in compliance and submitted to the national council.

So we can keep our current charter as is for now or make changes and come into compliance.

Headquarters' hope is that we will adopt the national charter and list any amendments (like the US Constitution). The charter is designed to be the standard. The reason is there need to be some standards and ways each church should be the same. But it is designed to be amended and tailored to each local church. There are a list of things that can be customized, but for example, we can't change the roles and responsibilities of pastors and councils. Those are standard. Who can vote, how elections will be handled, what departments the church will have can be customized.

If our area wants to come up with something else and change something not amendable, the national council rep should bring it to the national council, and it would have to be changed for everybody. The national charter can be changed once a year. Every year the national council is taking a look at the charter and may add to the list over time of what the local churches can amend, based on our recommendations.

There needs to be a way to intervene if there is a runaway church. But the way it is written is not the only way it could be. The council spent a lot of time discussing and debating it, and this is what they came up with. But they are open to something different, It changed back and forth over the veto question, for example, and can change again.

Re: the veto: The national charter is giving power and responsibility to the local level but with oversight. It's a paradigm change. The president can say "no", but he can't say "yes", in other words he can't appoint someone of his choice; he can't tell us what to do. But HQ needs the ability to intervene if something goes astray. That's all it is, so things don't go crazy.

If we feel we can do what we want without going through this process, we need to deal with Dr. Balcomb and the Board of Directors. Dr. Balcomb adopted the national charter, and it's not like it was before that was done when every church was doing its own thing. The more established the national charter becomes, the more protected the local churches are from someone being able to come in and swipe it away and remove our councils and charters like what happened under In Jin Nim.

Question: Do we need to add the Statement of Purpose to our Local Charter?

Simple answer: No

Question: In the national charter, what are the non-negotiable items?

Answer: In amendments it says which items can be amended. It was written with the expectation that churches would adopt the national charter and make amendments to it, rather than trying to incorporate non-negotiable items into something altogether different.

Question: What does the national charter mean by "comply with all the legal policies of the corporation"?

Answer: A local church is a branch of HSA and legally must follow corporate policies. For example, as a non-profit corporation, certain practices must be followed to keep our 501c3, like HSA cannot give money to an individual for personal use; rather money spent must be reimbursed. If HSA made a law there can be no gay weddings, for example, local churches would need to comply.

Question: Is the last sentence in the Affiliation section redundant?

Answer: Perhaps

Question: Are we expected to include all the sections of the national charter in our local charter? Are we being asked to adopt the national charter and tweak it or bring our existing local charter into compliance?

Answer: See above