

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH of ANN ARBOR
HUMAN RESOURCES NEEDS-ASSESSMENT**

December 12, 2012

INTRODUCTION and CONTEXT

Change is inevitable in any dynamic environment. First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor is proud to consider itself home to an increasingly dynamic Church life and growing congregation. First Pres has experienced many changes over the past several years and anticipates continued significant change in the foreseeable future. Signal events like the installation in September, 2011 of new head of staff, Rev. Dr. Fairfax Fair, selection of new Music Ministry Director, Tom Granum whose ministry began in August, 2012 and retirement of Pastor Budge Gere in January, 2013 appropriately draw our attention, but subtler change continues apace, too: resident pastors become more confident and experience gradual expansion of their ministries, church staff members likewise experience personal growth, changes in the lives of all our staff impact their needs, their capacity for work, their intellectual powers, their interests and their gifts.

First Presbyterian Church is committed to realizing the greatest potential of its resources, especially that of its most valuable resource, its people. Our commitment arises from the ethical obligation the church owes to its supporting congregation and to those it serves. Similarly, the Church must recognize an ethical obligation to the valued individuals who, through their gifts, their energy, their labor and their dedication, enable our Church to fulfill its missions and set an ambitious future course.

Within the organizational structure of First Presbyterian Church, the Personnel Committee is the body primarily responsible for the church's human resources, though unquestionably, the foci of multiple other committees overlap considerably to weave the fabric of our Church's work in an integrated effort that effectively pursues the Church's missions.

At its April 2012 meeting, as the Personnel Committee surveyed the significant changes of our recent past and looked ahead to the not-too-distant future, all agreed that the Church could benefit from a focused study of First Presbyterian Church's use of its human resources. The Committee unanimously decided to undertake a study of the way in which First Pres conducted the Church's business with two goals in mind: 1) to determine whether First Pres is using its human resources to their best advantage, and 2) to determine whether First Pres was doing its best to help its staff individually and collectively achieve joy and meaning in their work.

Personnel decided that through group and individual staff interviews, the Committee would study closely how Church business is conducted and whether the Church's staff at all levels were effective and efficient in their work. The Committee also would determine whether our staff members would benefit from changes in the way they were organized and the ways in which their skills were utilized. The committee undertook the study to produce recommendations for improvement that would meet the dual goals in the present and in the near future.

Acknowledging that those involved in our study, our Session, and other bodies within our Church will have an interest in Personnel's work, findings and recommendations, the Committee offers this report in the hope that our Church's leadership and staff will find clear guidance toward improvement, that other committees of the Church will be able to work constructively together toward a common and integrated goal, and finally, that all of us invested in First Pres will understand how our most valuable resource, our staff at all levels, are deployed to the best advantage of the Church and its mission. The Committee hopes that those affected by changes will find them to be logical, reasonable and understandable. Finally, the Committee hopes that this work and the resulting recommendations will stimulate dialogue and creative suggestions ultimately to aid the Church's leadership as we move forward.

APPROACH

The Personnel Committee, with the assistance and approval of Rev. Dr. Fair, introduced the idea of a global human resources "needs assessment" at an overall staff meeting on May 20, 2012. Small groups of church staff were formed and two Personnel Committee members were dispatched to conduct meetings with each of those groups. Personnel Committee members also met individually with the staff member to whom they were assigned as liaisons. The goals of these meetings were to tap the individual and collective wisdom about the manner in which Church business is conducted, the manner in which it could be improved, and how to help each Church staff member find meaning and more joy in their work going forward. The Committee also reviewed relative compensation levels and compared them against the value of the work being compensated.

Members of the Committee met in several sessions with Rev. Dr. Fair to create an ideal office administration and support structure, taking into account impending personnel changes and Pastor Gere's retirement. This effort produced an organizational structure that anticipates the Church's foreseeable needs and yet, remains dynamic and responsive to future unforeseen demands.

Personnel met several times – with and without the Rev. Dr. Fair - to discuss the information they collected, discuss their findings and look for constant themes. The committee finally consolidated lessons learned in this report and in the accompanying organizational diagrams and plans for the Church's administration.

FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of its study, the Personnel Committee's findings are:

1. Our Church's administrative functions are too fragmented. This fragmentation causes a lack of coordination and integration which in turn, leads to
 - a. inefficiency and wasted energy,
 - b. personal frustration and waste among our Church staff,
 - c. frustration among members of our congregation as they interact with our staff, diminishing both the quality of the Church's work and our congregation's Church experience.
2. We are currently not deploying our existing staff to realize the full value of their gifts, which creates
 - a. the potential for resentment among some who perceive their effort to exceed reasonable expectations; and
 - b. waste, with energies not being channeled to their best advantage: some are spending time at functions for which they were not hired and which do not play to their greatest strengths, others' good faith attempts to help actually cause greater confusion and contribute to a sense of uneven contributions. The willingness of well-intentioned staff obscures boundaries and simultaneously causes gaps. In the absence of a unified office administration, it has become difficult to know who consistently does what.
3. As we compared compensation with expected work, it appears that compensation practices over time have created imbalances in the allocation of church resources that
 - a. limit the Church's ability to meet the staffs' needs within a reasonable personnel budget and,
 - b. create potential inequities between office staff
4. Certain infrastructure deficiencies in office equipment, information technology (IT) and physical space, though outside the scope of this committee's purview, create inefficiencies, staff frustration and waste including,
 - a. Inconsistency in internet access;
 - b. Software like the Shelby system which seems to many to be unreliable, unworkable and not fully utilized, leading to work-arounds and employment of different alternatives built of perceived necessity;
 - c. Copy machines and envelope folding devices that are unreliable and inconsistent, requiring inordinate attention and maintenance and lead to higher costs (e.g, the purchase of multiple types of toners to service multiple types of copiers);
 - d. Physical placement of some office machines like copiers that lead to unnecessary disruptions to the Church staff as they try to conduct other activities.

The Personnel Committee recommends the following:

1. Reorganization of administrative support and office-related functions (See accompanying organizational chart)
 - a. Employing an office administrator with a direct report to a pastor hired to succeed Pastor Gere
 - i. Rationale: The breakdown of clear divisions of labor is probably the single biggest engine for waste and confusion. Uniting the office administration in one full-time administrator with personal reporting responsibility to a pastor other than our head-of-staff should improve this problem immediately and free our head-of-staff to devote more of her time to tasks for which she is uniquely positioned
 - ii. Jennifer Sansbury is a logical choice for an interim period between now and Pastor Gere's retirement in January, 2013
 - iii. Upon completion of the interim period, filling the position on a permanent basis should be considered
 - b. Realignment of compensation levels and pay differentials to better match employee responsibilities
2. Clarification of office support for pastors and program staff as needed including, but not limited to direct dedicated support for our head-of-staff and clearly dedicated, shared support for others as needs dictate.
 - a. Rationale: Each pastor and program director should have available to her/him identifiable and reliable office support to assist with those necessary tasks that arise from her/his work and enable the pastoral and program staff to dedicate her/his time better to those matters for which she/he has been installed and hired. Those assignments should be made thoughtfully to match the need, taking into account both skill and time necessary for the pastor or program director to realize her or his greatest effectiveness in the role for which she/he has been dedicated.
 - b. Effort should be made to systematically assign staff to overlap, to ensure both consistency and depth at every position. Cross assignments or a "buddy system" should be consciously and strategically arranged.
 - c. Similarly, a central administrator should closely monitor those divisions of labor to avoid the "slippery slope" of work-arounds and obfuscation of boundaries and roles.
 - i. While a certain amount of overlap is necessary for continuity and depth at every position, the current situation evolved partly due to well-intentioned staff stepping in to fill deficiencies or accommodate deficient performance. The staff must be encouraged to "hold the line" on the strategic division of labor so deficiencies can be identified and corrected.
 - ii. Centrally focusing responsibility for office administration will facilitate maintenance of those boundaries. Consolidating

- office administration in one responsible individual answerable to a pastor should accomplish this.
- iii. It is equally important that staff at all levels understand the importance of clear communication to that office administrator regarding administrative performance and unmet needs.
 - d. Every Church employee deserves to know what is expected of her or him and how her/his job performance should be measured. All should receive regular open and honest feedback on whether they are meeting their goals so they have the opportunity to explore ways of improving or meeting unmet needs
 - i. Establishing a culture in which communication of these expectations and performance is expected will foster a healthy church environment – in many ways, the honesty and clarity is more charitable than an environment of shifting, uneven and unclear expectations
 - ii. An important goal is to enable our employees to find joy and meaning in their work and an effective way to meet that goal is to match skills and interests with job responsibilities and continually help our employees to work to their best advantage within that construct
3. Assignment of church property responsibilities in one individual who would oversee demands such as daily and yearly property maintenance, and infrastructure like internet access, should be considered.
 - a. Rationale: Centralizing responsibility for the “mechanical” and property needs facilitates expeditious repairs and improvements or referral of non-urgent issues to the appropriate committees for consideration and budgeting.
 4. Planning should start soon for a search committee for Pastor Gere’s replacement.
 - a. The ministry, role and scope of this pastor should be outlined within the overall personnel plan
 - b. The search committee should be formed immediately after January 1, 2013
 5. Personnel must communicate and work with other committees whose focus impacts on church staff performance to take advantage of the lessons learned in Personnel’s analysis, including:
 - a. Referral to the Technology Committee for
 - i. A plan to improve internet access;
 - ii. Consideration of its own “needs assessment” for simplifying and improving the Church’s office equipment and the way it is presently used (e.g, the copying and printing we presently do in-house rather than referring out);
 - b. Referral to Property for:
 - i. Development of reliable and accountable resources for the central office administrator when infrastructure maintenance and improvement needs are identified;

- ii. Consideration of placement options for certain office equipment in a way that will minimize disruption to Church administrative staff (e.g., moving the copier to another location)
- c. Referral to Finance:
 - i. For funds adequate for increasing Jennifer Sansbury's scope and job responsibilities for the interim period;
 - ii. For budgeting funds for a full-time, permanent office administrator who would have over-arching responsibility for efficient operation of the administrative functions once Pastor Gere retires
 - iii. For budgetary planning to anticipate Pastor Gere's replacement

Attachment: Organizational Charts

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Chairperson, Personnel Committee

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