

OPERATIONS REPORT — APRIL 2023

PERSONAL UPDATE

APRIL 25

I am happy to see the excitement around completed projects — folks are really appreciating the new carpet, the hearing loop, and even seem excited about the auction! So that is good. I am continuing to balance family and other human needs with UUTC. There are sometimes not enough hours in the day!

GRANTS PROGRESS & REPORTING

On the hearing loop, progress was delayed because of an initial spike in prices that would have put the equipment out of reach. John Haynes recommended patience, and things did come down. But that put us right up against the wire of required reporting due on this Friday. All is well, however... Bryson Carpet's team was timely in their carpet removal and reinstallation, and by all reports, those who need the help are overjoyed with the results. I have been told that the sound quality is better than other hearing loops available to the public in the area. Part of the grant requirements are to promote The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina broadly, so you will see a note on our website, on our Facebook page, and an article was submitted to the Times on Monday. Invoice totals came in under the original bids, so a check for \$848.21 is being sent back to the Gibbs Charitable Fund that is managed by CFWNC. We spent \$29,778.79, none of which came out of UUTC member pockets.

The North Carolina Native Plant Society Grant is another story. The \$900 awarded by the Society will, essentially, cover only the bog portion of the install. However, no Operating Funds have been spent on the work. With revenues generated (and leftover) from last year's projects, and another successful Pi Day Auction, plus savings on anticipated signage and changes engineered in the bog top level drainage, the project is still on track to completion within the allocated budget. The scope of work, however, grew — out of the Grow Getter's desire to get a professional design for the whole space, since this is a very public project. Private donations from group members covered the plan and have ensured that structural elements have been placed first, making it clear that "there IS a plan," and providing some visual reward for the delay about to take place... the bog must sit for 4-6 weeks minimum before the bog plants can be installed. Judith Moore has been providing documentary assistance to ensure we have what we need for the reporting in September.

PLEDGE FULFILLMENT & OTHER BUDGET OBSERVATIONS

As of this writing, \$33,950 is still due on pledges for this fiscal year. Of that, I am guessing that up to \$12K is "in jeopardy," and may not be completed. Rev. Bob and I will need to reach out — some may be pastoral needs. Our bigger problem is manifest in "other revenue," where we have only realized 25% of what was budgeted. Plate collections are up, Space Use donations are up — but we are not realizing all of the revenue we need. In spending, payroll expenses have exceeded the budget allocation — this is not the actual wages paid, but what we pay outside agencies to handle our payroll. Another hotspot in the budget are utilities, much of which is because our budget did not include utilities for the Chalice House. All in all, we are coming in under budget — but we are operating in the red because of insufficient revenues. I am hopeful for a successful auction.

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BOOKKEEPING

Thanks to Eloise Shepard, we have gained a 4 drawer file cabinet (retail: \$425 on Amazon). It has moved into my office, where Chelsea will start reorganizing last year's files and this year's files in preparation for a financial examination. As in our last attempt to fulfill this position, I have started training Chelsea on the tasks that I had to pick up when Sue Gervais moved to Florida. Two timesavers for me are the actual trips to the bank (sometimes 30 minutes!) and the post office which she is already handling. Sue and I are working together to make sure we relieve Sue of work where we can fairly quickly. I anticipate these changes beginning in May.

Given the trouble we have had with outsourced payroll, I am giving serious consideration to moving our accounting into Realm, where the software has finally grown robust enough to handle multi-fund accounting... and has a payroll component, which we would not likely make use of until January of 2024. ACS Technologies built a budget tool into this package, as well. I will be talking with Rev. Bob and Gail Meyers to review these options. My sense is that "the time is now" to make the adjustment, as Chelsea could begin the tasks in Realm using up to date instruction from the platform, while we have a "window of change" in which we can use both Realm Accounting and ACS Accounting (where Sue would still be in charge, and all changes would be visible). I will make no change until Treasurer Mike Griffith, Rev. Bob and I are in agreement that this is the next best course of action to simplify our bookkeeping and reduce the burden of budget making on our volunteers.

COMMUNICATIONS

I recognize that our communications have not been as accurate or as proofed as they need to be, of late. I have made some errors when communicating to other staff, saying to publish these things... to the wrong email, for example. With most of the sanctuary work now complete, and the bulk of the landscape monies already spent, I will be better able to direct attention to supervision of office staff and maintaining our communication "product." Thanks for your patience.

In Covenant, RK