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QUORUM

Current Membership Roll: 176

27 people need to be present for quorum (15% of membership). **49 members present.**

MEETING MINUTES

Enrique De La Paz opened the meeting in prayer as Moderator.

I. Welcome

a. Pastor Jarret encouraged everyone to read through the Annual Report and learn more about FBC's year in ministry. Print copies are available or visit fbcdg.org/meeting.

II. Vision, 175 & PSAs

- a. **175th Anniversary Celebration** is set for August 5, 2026, including a service, unveiling of the history hallway, and dessert reception.
- b. We will have an **evangelism initiative this summer** involving knocking on 175 doors, closest to FBC. If you've never done door-to-door evangelism before, we encourage you to step out of your comfort zone. You'll be paired with someone who is comfortable with evangelizing. Continue to pray as we want to GO and share the good news of the gospel with neighbors.
- c. A sermon series starting in July, **"Be Part of His Story"**, will focus on the people used by God for the mission of God, the kind of person, kind of heart, that God loves to use. On August 9, Pastor Jarret will begin a sermon series on the Book of Acts, lasting about one year.
- d. Pray for Pastor Jarret as he takes his **annual planned sabbatical**, May 18-22. The time away from the "daily grind" will be solely used to focus on FBC's ministry at a high-level view.
- e. After concerns were raised at the March Business Meeting, the Deacon Board decided to **keep security personnel on Sunday mornings** until an alternate plan is in place.
- f. The **Gleaners ministry** is coming back May 24 after taking a break during the 175 Refresh.
- g. The Social Committee will provide **monthly coffee after service starting May 17**, providing a welcoming environment and encouraging connection and fellowship.

III. VBS

- a. Pastor Johnny provided 3 ways you can say "YES" to VBS: **pray** for the kids and volunteers; **give** an invite card to your neighbor/someone who doesn't know Jesus; **go** by serving at VBS.
- b. We want kids to **know** Jesus, **grow** in Jesus, and **go** make disciples of Jesus. That is our church's mission and our mission for VBS!
- c. **Pastor Johnny's wife is expecting their 4th child any day now.** As Pastor Johnny finished speaking, his phone rang. Rob Peterson called Pastor Johnny from the back of the Sanctuary, making him think it was Hannah going into labor. We all love a good ROAST! Laurie McCabe then prayed for Hannah, baby, and the Elliott family. We love the Elliotts!



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IV. DGCS Budget Presentation & Vote

- a. **Budget planning timeline:** market survey in Nov; set fees/tuition in Dec; open enrollment to current families for 3-4 week period in Jan; public enrollment follows.
- b. **Steve Auernhamer presented the budget overview** (reference DGCS Budget PDF).
- c. **Current enrollment for 2026-27:** 175 students (176 in 2025-26).
- d. **ERTC PPP line item** – a pool of funds granted by the federal gov't during Covid. Total funds received: \$430k. Of those total funds received, \$102k will be used for 2026-27.
- e. **Operations line item** - \$50k of total, school provides funds to FBC for utilities/overhead costs. \$15k for custodial/maintenance. Internet, phone service, and office budget included.
- f. **Steve added that**, Enrollment is everything. Why not raise tuition? We're not on par with a school like Timothy Christian and we want to stay competitive. Our mission is to make it affordable; we want kids here. For us to reach a balance while also still relying on fundraisers, we need an enrollment of 190 (budget based on 178 students; 2026-27 enrollment is at 175).

Q&A

John Von Kerens posed a question about the government funds.

Steve - The total was \$430k, now it's \$102k less.

Luke Singh – Referencing last [annual] meeting (May 2025)... There was some sort of savings fund that the school had... and it was our first time hearing about that amount, and it was concerning to me. I thought we were being super transparent. That's not a balance sheet; it's similar to an income statement (referencing DGCS Budget PDF). I'm really concerned that information (about the reserve fund) wasn't shared.

Steve – The reserve fund has \$900K in it.. over the last 10 years or so, we have been very intentional about taking a portion of fundraised funds and adding to reserve fund.

Luke – I'm concerned about transparency. If that's unknown, what else is unknown? The income/expense statement is not a balance sheet, it's incomplete... it's a tough conversation, but I feel like it needs to be done. The income/expense statement is not itemized.

Steve – I don't understand the concern for a lack of transparency. I totally disagree with you that there's a lack of transparency.

John Von Kerens – Can explain a little more about the surplus?

Steve – Those who have been here 15 years plus, remember when we had 200 enrolled and it dropped to 135 very quickly.. We really had to claw our way through those years when we were at 135-145. We have to prepare ourselves for that same possibility. In wake of Covid, we saw a surge in enrollment (one year, we pushed to 200)... those were healthy years. I'm concerned where we are now.. We have to hire teachers, pay them wages, contract them for one year. It became very apparent that we needed a reserve fund so we could keep doors open. It's similar to the church's Stewardship Fund and how it's treated.



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Luke – Is there something we can do on the marketing side to make sure we have enrollment at 190 or higher? I don't think it's a quality issue, but about making people more aware and driving more at-bats.

Steve – Around this time last year, we hired one of our school moms to be Advancement Director, to make DGCS more visible in congregations, camps, etc. We find strategic ways to market. In Downers Grove Magazine, we have a 2-page spread; some of our families are writers and contribute articles about the school.

Luke – I understand your list is not exhaustive; but marketing has gone a lot more digital. Can we market the school more in a digital world?

Steve – We do; I won't say we're great at it. But we're trying different avenues.

Stephen Fleck mentioned the 900k and ERC money.. he asked, do we still have the 900k?

Steve confirmed, YES. The 900k reserve is still there.

Luke – We still need to have the conversation that that's not a balance sheet (referencing the DGCS Budget PDF; it's similar to an income statement).

Stephen – I'm on the committee, and it's definitely challenging to market in society today.. we're at a time though where we probably need to look at the school.. do we continue as K-8? Or stop at 5th like Holy Trinity? I personally don't want my kid to go to public school. We are keeping our cost where it is based on what we offer.. but how do we get enrollment up? Kids fall off at Junior High... I'm personally racking my own brain where we can be functional and not borrow money ... by ramping up preschool? Disposing of Junior High? Discounts for staying here after Pre-K/K, to stay 1st Grade and after? We almost need a refresh like the church. I understand what Luke's saying that this is a 3,000 ft view of the budget.... If you want to see a breakdown, we need to look at things from a different view. I feel comfortable knowing the 900k is still there...

Luke – If it is still there, it should be used to increase enrollment.

Kreig Smith encouraged members to follow the church and school on social media, like and share posts, etc. He added, Can we address how enrollment dropped... what are we doing to nail down how we can improve the school so people can stay (i.e. Junior High) – is it the quality of teachers, or teachers teaching out of their comfort zones?

Steve – What you're describing.. what happens here, we absolutely have control of.. Stan (Rea) and Sharon (Nese) will vouch. We spend a ton of attention making sure we are doing what we say we are doing and providing incentive to come here. I just received my property tax bill... there is a real kick in the shorts when you get that, especially when you look at the District 98/99 portion... it's like you're paying double tuition. It's a financial strain. The economy will play into it, there's a cultural component. It was absolutely worth having our kids here.. being taught biblical standards so that they were ready for high school.

Kreig – Do we hold similar to an exit interview for families leaving.. what are their reasons?

Steve – We do exit interviews, there are an array of reasons.. some moved from the area,



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some are feeling like their child is bullied, some can't afford it anymore.. there isn't a trend toward one specific reason.

Enrique De La Paz – The reason our son, Charlie, did not come here, was mainly a financial issue. Just a slight pushback on Steve.. Susan and I didn't send Charlie to school here.. we chose to disciple him at home so he had the strength to do it (live out his faith) at school.

Steve – That's what I meant. It's the responsibility of all of us as Christian parents.

Josh Mazariegos – Are there any plans once the ERTC fund is completely exhausted... how do we recoup the \$102k?

Steve – The plan would be to get enrollment to a healthier place. I've been doing this a long time, and it dominates our efforts within the School Committee. If funds are gone, say four years from now, we have to dip into the reserve. Some have said raise tuition. But that is a ridiculously simple answer.

Josh – The second part of my questions.. and it's obviously not for this year, but can we have more of a breakdown of the grades (Pre-K – 8th)? Maybe we can see middle school, for example, is taking a lot of funds, and that's where we're bleeding?

Steve – I have a lot of thoughts. The committee has a lot of thoughts, but we won't venture into that right now.. help me out, Shari (Peterson), when did we put a push on preschool? ... Before Covid, we made an effort into amplifying our Pre-K program... an undesired consequence of that is it becomes like a daycare. We've done a full-day preschool program – it's great for parents. They (our Pre-K students) are lightyears ahead of what most Pre-K programs would be... 4-year-olds have letter recognition by the time they graduate.

John Von Kerens – Just to confirm the ERTC funds... is there a deadline to use them by?

Steve confirmed no, there is no deadline.

Stephen – I understand this is a generic breakdown.. I, as a committee member, need to see more to vote on this... the numbers are legit, though. I went through every line with Steve. We have to approve this so we can hire teachers and retain staff... maybe we can change when we approve [the budget] so we're not always in crunch mode...

Kent McCaig – Where's our faith in God, that He's going to sustain the school?

Luke – How often is tuition raised based on inflationary metrics? There are three things in general that are raised due to inflation– tuition, healthcare, [and housing]... do we adjust tuition based on inflation? When was the last time it was raised and by how much?

Steve – Every November, we review it; it's generally raised every year... \$250/year (on avg).

Luke – If you raise tuition by 7%.. you get to that revenue number of 190 enrolled.

Steve – We will accept your nomination to the School Committee.

Juanita Sari – 7% may not be a lot to you, but it is a lot to me.

Luke – I totally agree with you. Raising tuition is one piece of it. The typical answer is multi-



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prong.. I hope I don't offend anyone by me speaking and want to be measured.. when we hired NL Moore (pastoral search firm), there's one thing that stood out regarding the church/school relationship. How is the allocation for the amount of room usage (we use the same building, utilities, etc)... how is it allocated? The expenses – operations line item, \$127k number... what's the overhead... paying everything within our building.. what is the percentage that the school pays and the church pays?

Steve – \$15k per year is to cover custodial cost; the school is a ministry of FBC; the model was and always has been – it is going to be the responsibility of FBC. If we're going to change that model, it's a much bigger conversation.. and a mistake.. there is a growing sentiment that the school should pull its weight.

Luke – I agree, but the search committee (NL Moore) pointed it out... [that the school should pay its fair share].

Steve – This is a one-year operating budget... this is merely a vote for approval.

[Ballots collected and counted by one Deacon and one Trustee]

V. Deacon Board Report

- a. AJ Pearson shared a brief recap of the Deacon Board's Annual Report, including: a focus on prayer during meetings, studying the Book of Acts together to help frame ministry, the 175 Refresh Project, restructuring of Next Gen Ministries, hiring of Josh Mazariegos, and Alpha as a way to reach the community.
- b. Each committee now has deacon liaison to streamline communications and give people direct access to leadership as needed.

VI. Trustees Report

- a. Edmund Olson shared that the exterior portion of the 175 Refresh Project began Monday, May 11. Tuckpointing and window frame-caulking expected completion by Friday, May 15. Roofers to remove gutters/downspouts and repair roof edge wood; expected completion early next week. Painters scheduled for the day after Memorial Day: power wash, scrape, prime, repair, and paint; target early June completion. After VBS, replacement of 20-year-old flat roof sections.
- b. Thanks for all who volunteered on Work Day, May 9! The church grounds look beautiful.
- c. The Trustees are still paying attention to our rooftop units. When they start failing, replacement parts are ordered and installed to keep them running.
- d. Thank you to the Refresh Team, and to David Morrill's instrumental work in hiring contractors and choosing colors, materials, etc.

VII. Q&A

John Von Kerens – I'm disappointed to hear Gleaners is coming back.. I know there are women in this church who have been talked to in a derogatory way, prejudiced way, by "Mr. Gleaner"... will Mr. Kerr be talked to?



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Pastor Jarret – Yes, there's been a conversation between David Morrill and Mr. Kerr.

Kathy Olson shared that she uses Gleaners and that it's "ok" if he speaks to her that way. Some members replied – No, it is never ok.

David Morrill – I spent hours talking to Bob, and one of the stipulations for coming back after the Refresh is that he will not insult, demean, or disrespect anyone. Agreement was obtained.

Luke shared a light request to provide more of the Awake bars for long meetings. 😊 (Pastor Jarret handed out the bars on Sunday as a reminder to "Wake Up, Church!" Rev. 3).

Enrique De La Paz closed the meeting in prayer.

VOTE RESULTS

DGCS BUDGET – Passed

38 yes / 10 no / 1 abstained

