

**MINUTES OF FIFTH MEETING  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MERCY HOUSE OF SARATOGA, INC.**

The fifth meeting of the Board of Directors of Mercy House was held on the day and at the place set forth as follows:

Time: 7:00 pm

Date: September 9, 2019

Place: 43 Washington Street, Saratoga Springs, New York 12866, (First Baptist Parish House)

Present: Gordon Boyd, Mark Claverie, Mark Griffin, Doug Huston, Howard Nelson, Tom Remington, Mary Sanders Shartle, Mary Withington

Chair: Gordon Boyd, President, chaired the meeting. The meeting convened at 7:00 pm.

**MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the meeting notes of July 1, 2019 be entered into the record. A motion was made by Mary Withington to accept the minutes and the motion was seconded by Doug Huston, and adopted by unanimous vote.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

The treasurer's report, November 20, 2018 through August 30, 2019, was presented by Mark Claverie, noting the two donations (\$25,000 from BEST, and a second donation of \$100), also now showing two months of rent for use of the office space at 43 Washington Street, including the September rent.

RESOLVED that the budget was hereby approved. Mary Withington moved to accept. Howard Nelson seconded. All ayes.

**ELECTION TO THE BOARD**

The vestry had approved the nomination of Tom Remington to the Mercy House board. Tom described his extensive involvement with our church and local business (Stewarts), as well as his not-for-profit related volunteer experience, such as the Honor Guard for Veterans. His initial term will extend through January 31, 2020 at which time we will have the annual election when three board members' terms will end.

RESOLVED that Tom Remington be elected as the newest board member of Mercy House of Saratoga, Inc. Mary Sanders Shartle moved to accept, Mark Claverie seconded. All ayes.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Communications:**

*Website* is up at MercyHouseSaratoga.org but could already use some updating, but includes updated floor plans and basic information about our partners and mission.

***NYTHA donation announcement, July 16*** – There was a press event in front of the site sign. The NYTHA check for \$25,000 was announced at that time, so we got a lot of publicity on that occasion. NYTHA is excited about our relationship with the backstretch workers (BEST), and the \$25,000 is an “initial contribution.” With the donation from NYTHA, Mercy House is now perceived as a viable potential entity in the neighborhood. David Brause (Brause Realty) called with concerns. Gordon Boyd spoke with him and stated that Mercy House plans to be a good neighbor. Brause may be coming to Saratoga to meet with other people in the community to talk about concerns, but these are people who have been invited and who have talked to us.

***November 8 Forum: “Partners in Hope”*** – The forum will be hosted at Bethesda in conjunction with the First Baptist Church. There are 75-100 guests coming who are involved with non-profit agencies in the region through the Saratoga-North Country Continuum of Care—a multi-agency committee that shares information and twice yearly conducts point-in-time surveys, like a census, of the homeless in a four-county area (Washington, Warren, Hamilton and Saratoga). The purpose of the November 8<sup>th</sup> Forum is to bring together faith communities and other service agencies to share awareness and motivation for what others are doing. Diane Robinson and Lucas Manny are assisting with a power point presentation. The meeting will be from 9am to 4 pm. Lunch will be hosted at the First Baptist Church.

### **Housing Partners:**

***BEST 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary breakfast*** was a success, with a good representation of Bethesda and Mercy House representatives. Field Horne, Sharon and Gordon Boyd have volunteered at some of the dinners they have at the track on Sunday nights. There are also opportunities to volunteer for Bingo nights.

***Department of Social Services, Letter of Support*** – Now recognizes Mercy House as a resource during the winter months for folks normally referred to motels, etc., for shelter around Saratoga County. It’s not a letter of intent, but a strong statement of support. Discussions about the cost (\$35 per person per night - \$150,000 to \$180,000, November to April, using the fourth floor space). That space is designated as a shelter as opposed to apartment-style housing and the cost paid by state money, the use of that space will be reimbursed through the county. Tina Potter, commissioner of DSS, has arranged for Gordon to meet with the State Office of Temporary Disabilities Assistance (OTDA) to standardize, statewide, the types of physical requirements for shelter. John VanDerVeer and Gordon will meet at Commissioner Potter’s office and OTDA this coming Friday (9/13/19). The architects will be there with the plans. The hope is to get a vote of confidence, not asking for money, but for written approval of the partnership.

The space, originally designed for BEST needs, (two beds to a bedroom, shared bath down the hall, shared kitchen facilities, separate, secure entries and quarters for women, etc.) Now that we may include DSS, OTDA may ask for alterations to the floor plan as they standardize their requirements. Once we clarify those needs, we’ll go back to BEST. Changes are not likely to be a problem for BEST. The architects have not yet been authorized to make technical drawings. We’re still fine-tuning the floor plans.

DSS supports a variety of people with needs. They recognize that Mercy House is a great location, and predict that we will be full occupancy. A good place to be when we can say we will likely have full occupancy and ask the bank for the mortgage.

### **Administration and Operations**

**Office Space** – 43 Washington Street. Baptist Parish House. Currently being used for meetings only. Most of the desk/computer work is done by Gordon at his house. Baptist House WIFI is operative. When we begin building, the space could be used as a site office. Gordon will ask the architects for large scale renderings of the planned Mercy House to adorn the walls. Also to talk to Rose and Kiernan Insurance for liability concerns.

**Operating Budget** – Skipping over. Karen Finkbeiner is doing a revised version.

**Risk Management:** Gordon met with Darren and Ed Moore, retired police chief and head of security at the Casino. He was very helpful in talking about security issues in dealing with such a variety of people using Mercy House. Discussing issues like security cameras, providing full-time staffing, smoking areas, etc. Came up with a detailed list of things for Shannon be aware of.

- **Insurance and Security** - Rose & Kiernan Insurance were recommended for advice on liability concerns. We met here with Karen Finkbeiner and Brennon Parker (from Rose and Kiernan). That conversation also covered the directors and officers' liability, which we don't have, and also construction risk—a Bethesda concern rather than Mercy House, since Bethesda will own the building and Mercy House will be a tenant. Gordon has completed their "Builders Risk Worksheet" so that we can have an insurance carrier provide an estimate of what coverage will likely cost.

No dollar estimates for insurance as yet from St. John's Community Services. Will contact them later this week.

- **Neighbor relations** – See above reference to Brause Realty.

### **Funding Status –**

**Charles R. Wood Foundation grant application** – Howard Nelson has helped us with a grant request for \$50,000 towards the capital costs of the two-and three-bedroom apartments, applying as a collaboration with Wellspring. They give you bonus points for collaborating. *NOTE: September 17, 2019: This application has been withdrawn as a consequence of Wellspring withdrawing.*

**Alfred Z. Solomon Charitable Trust** – Gordon has heard that they are looking to close out the trust, giving away the rest of the funds in the next year. The deadline for the application is November 1<sup>st</sup>, so that will be submitted by the time of the next meeting. Gordon has spoken to Harry Snyder and Victoria Garlanda, trustees. We have all the necessary information, like the PDFs of incorporation papers, for these grant applications

**Anonymous donor status** – unchanged since the last time we met.

**Capital campaign, timing and leadership** – is contingent on the donor status. Darren and Gordon had a long evening with Elliot and Cathy Masie. They are very interested and very supportive, but may want to have company before committing after their experience with Shelters of Saratoga over the Walworth Street plans. Gordon suggested partnering with Barbara Glaser, a life-long friend of Elliot's, and he liked that idea. Gordon has talked to Barbara about having our residents, especially backstretch workers involved with Pitney Farm. He took Paul Ruchames from BEST out there to see the farm and met with the farmer, Ken Kleinpeter, who has experience working with horses, as well as managing vegetable farming.

**Gift Acceptance Policy – need to develop** – Gordon and Sharon met Betsy Sutton (Skidmore graduate and old friend) at a BEST final day of racing volunteer appreciation party at the Shake Shack. She loves what we're doing, especially in relationship to BEST, so she wants to give a donation to Mercy House to augment the money NYTHA has given. But need to get a gift acceptance policy together for such donations. Need to set a lower gift figure for such cases and designate which donations earn a name on the wall. Laura Bradigan has volunteered to pull together a proposed policy by the next meeting, November 4th.

Question was raised about the capital campaign. Is fundraising for Mercy House separate from Bethesda or the Parish House? The Masies, for instance, would donate to Mercy House. Others might just donate to the church. All of the money is fungible. What Bethesda has raised and can make available, Mercy House can borrow, and what Mercy House will have from rents, will be available to the church in rents, once Mercy House expenses are covered.

There is general agreement that it would be best for Bethesda not to have a mortgage. During the meeting with Rose and Kiernan Insurance, it was suggested that it might be best for Bethesda, which owns the building, to have Mercy House rent the entire building from Bethesda insure all the risk and then have Bethesda rent the bottom floor Parish House back from Mercy House. This would be better from a liability standpoint. Jim Cox would have to get involved in that.

We're getting close to being in a very strong position. The Friday meeting with DSS and the State, is crucial, at least to get county and state (verbal) support. It would be a good idea to have someone come in to talk to the parishioners who still have concerns, once we have broken ground to talk to the parish about our Christian mission, and why it's important to the community and for people in need.

Gordon was interviewed in the church with Look TV, and the report can be viewed on our website: [www.mercyhousesaratoga.org](http://www.mercyhousesaratoga.org).

## NEW BUSINESS

No new business

## ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion to adjourn duly made by Mary Sanders Shartle, seconded by Howard Nelson, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned, 7:53 p.m.

Dated: September 9, 2019

*Next meeting, Monday, November 4, 2019 at 43 Washington Street.*

MSS

Mary Sanders Shartle, Secretary