

REPORT TWO

April 28, 2015

Good Morning,

I'm Susan Tompkins – Director of Christian Education at First Presbyterian Church in Greer. I serve on the Discernment Task Force Committee alongside the following Teaching and Ruling Elders. Please stand as I call your name. Please contact them if you have questions.

- Rev. David Bailey from Central
- Lin Dearing from Fort Hill
- Rev. Lindsey Hatch from Mount Zion
- Robert McCormick from Nazareth
- Rev. Lud Weaver from Westminster
- And, the presbytery staff serves as ex-officio.

And, since I serve on the Discernment Task Force Committee, I now have the privilege and honor of chairing the Buc Transitional Board. The two works are integrated so I will be speaking to both this morning!

Foothills Presbytery is not the office! It is not an “us and them”! It is 61 churches making up Foothills Presbytery! We're all in this together!

Please report back to your sessions on this report from the Discernment Task force so they have full understanding as to what is going on and there won't be any surprises. ALSO, in order for the commissioners attending the next couple of Presbytery meetings, they will need the background information to make informed decisions as they vote.

The Discernment Task Force has been charged to prayerfully discern and recommend how Foothills Presbytery can live into the new, different and exciting ways God is calling us to be as Foothills Presbytery To be the 61 churches working together that we cannot do or be separately.

I want to highlight a few things from the Discernment Task Force Committee report on back two pages in your supplemental Reports.

First, let me first assure you we are a prayerful group and especially in regards to the work we are charged with. We take our work very seriously.

We began meeting in December of 2013. At first, it took us some time to digest what we were charged with and how to go about the task at hand, then to gather many documents to study and understand, and then we met with every single ministry team to gain a good understanding of every area within Foothills Presbytery

To those of you who took the time to put a presentation together and meet with us, and answer our sometimes not so easy questions – THANK YOU! You were very helpful. Also, Gordon Raynal

and Debbie Foster have been invaluable in guiding us along our way and we are very grateful and appreciative of them!

Now, please look at the last third of the page of the report as I speak to it:

The first thing we knew we had to determine was what the PCUSA Constitution required of us to be a functioning presbytery. We are required to have a foundational council made up of the Committee on Preparation, Committee on Ministry, Nominating, Finance, Bills and Overtures, Permanent Judicial Commission, Representation, and a Stated Clerk and Moderator. That is the minimum we can have.

So knowing what is required to be Foothills Presbytery, we had to consider what the required budget might look like taking into consideration the Gracious Dismissal payments will basically come to an end in 2017. Our projected required 2018 budget will be around \$525,000.

Let me explain:

If we keep the Presbytery Office where it is now, staffed with a Stated Clerk and Moderator, office administrator and bookkeeper, and meet our constitutional requirements, we estimate the **true cost of doing presbytery business** is about \$290,000.

And, we felt it wise to factor in a reserve of \$35,000 – which takes us to a \$325,000 budget.

Remembering our projected budget for 2018 is \$525,000, which leaves us with a \$200,000 or so balance to do the shared mission work of Equipping the Saints, Campus Ministry, Buc Outdoor Center, SC Inn, Mission Team, Racial Ethnic Cabinet, Small Church Development, and Governing Body Team.

Now Bill Sibley assured us when we met with him, the Presbytery is financially in good shape but we have to establish a budget we can live within as the Gracious Dismissal money is going away and unified giving to the presbytery is decreasing not increasing!

Realizing this, we quickly came to understand Buc Outdoor Center (cabins and camp) has to become self-sustaining within two years.

If you will turn to the handout (income vs need) I hope you picked up when you registered, you will see that Buc Outdoor Center only has two means of income – camp and cabins. Experts say we should really have 5 sources of income. For example: White Water Rafting Operation, Environmental Education, etc.

You see, that Presbytery has provided \$100,000 for the last few years as well as this year BUT, you can also see, we had to use about \$60,000 of reserves last year to cover the over spend. This is not a new occurrence and to be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us, we cannot continue this way.

If we factor in necessary maintenance, marketing, personnel in order for Buc to run at a level of quality and safety, we estimate Buc should operate on about a \$500,000 budget, with little financial support from presbytery, as I explained earlier.

Knowing what we know and understanding what we understand, the Task Force is at the point of doing due diligence of exploring every possible option and model imaginable for us to be Foothills Presbytery! It is our hope and prayer that we will have prayed and pondered through every scenario in order for us to make a sound recommendation to you – the presbytery. As you can see, the Discernment Task Force has a lot to pray over, sort through and process but we have faith in God that we are up to the task!

As PCUSA Moderator, Heath Rada shared with us at our January meeting, this is an exciting time as a denomination. Yes, people are leaving but many new folks are joining us. This is a time when we are claiming our identity with certainty as to who we are as Presbyterians and children of God.

I ask you to join with the Discernment Task Force Committee to pray two prayers: “Help us, Help us, Help us,” and “Thank you, Thank you, Thank you,” for this is a hopeful, joyful, and exciting moment in time for us as a denomination and as a presbytery! All praise and glory be given to God!

AND....

Don't forget to report back to your session so the commissioners for the next meeting won't be hearing our second report without any background information.