

August 29, 2022 Elder Mtg

Attendees: Lane Hamm (last elder mtg.), Keaton Jones, Brad Stevens, Don Fitzgerald (chair), Steve Awtrey, Bret Blackford, Louis West, Dave Weiler, Steve Walker; Erich McPherson (guest).

Summary:

Below notes are more a recording of conversations as they occurred, so here are my summary of key points:

1. **Eric McPherson** – Eric was asked to join the meeting to discuss his concerns with direction of church and update on the Youth Minister search.
 - a. Eric started by expanding on his 9.23.2021 letter (link [here](#)). Items noted are still a concern.
 - b. Eric strongly recommends Nathan Strickland for the Youth Minister position (letter [here](#))
 - c. Eric stated that he is “*The husband of one wife*” and feels the same for Jason Vincent.¹

2. **Youth Minister** – the Search Committee has decided not to decide (see **Attachment A**). Elders decided a decision needs to be made and suggest the following:
 - a. The elders will interview two remaining candidates – Nathan Strickland and Wesley Handwork
 - b. Candidate Feedback:
 - i. [Nathan Strickland](#)
 1. General Feedback – [link](#)
 2. Concerns:
 - a. Jenny Reijgers – [link](#)
 - b. Laura Picker - [link](#)
 - ii. [Wesley Handwork](#)
 1. General Feedback - [link](#)
 - c. Lane Hamm will contact both candidates and schedule a follow-up interview weekend with the elders and wives. Plan to start with Wesley.
 - d. Elders will work in pairs to interview. Elder pairs:
 - i. Steve and Steve
 - ii. Dave and Joyce
 - iii. Bret and Brad
 - iv. Don and Keaton
 - v. Jeff Kryder will drop in on at least one meeting
 - e. Elders will use a standard set of questions. Additional questions may be asked but we want to get an apples-to-apples comparison of the two candidates
 - i. Lane Hamm to provide some standard questions
 - f. At end of follow-up interview process elders will make a decision. Each elder should carefully consider the candidates and be prepared to give their individual recommendation to the full eldership. After all elders, along with Jeff Kryder, give individual recommendations the elders will pick a candidate.

3. **Other Items** – as noted below

Below is dictation from meeting recording thoughts and discussions as occurred ...

- People

- Visit with McPhersons

Erich McPherson speaks on letter

Feels a dark ominous cloud that has gotten worse since Dec 2021. Erich feels this in his bones that MX has problems.

- Michael Parks and Matt Earnhart YM decision
Youth Ministry was on rocks and MP was let go.
Michalie was hired and did a great job. She had a hard time with the MX culture.
- New YM search committee looking to replace Machalie
Several good candidates and **Erich feels Nathan would be the right candidate**
YM Search Committee made *no recommendation* on YM going forward – which boggles Erich’s mind
Many people are eager to hear about the new YM and expect one to be hired this week.
- The Plan – what do we do with Jeremy Picker?
Does Jeremy need a sabbatical? A mentor or counseling?
Jeremy needs definition in his role
It is hard for Jeremy to get and maintain volunteers.
Jeremy struggles in following through on tasks
- Support Jeremiah
Congregation and staff need to support Jeremiah. We need to check in with Jeremiah and support him.
Jeremiah is doing a GREAT job.
- We need Ministries
Soccer, men’s, women’s, etc., ministries.
How do we find a way to get the congregation engaged with time together?
We need events – areas to plug into
- MX needs to reinvent itself – we need a vision

¹ Comment relates to the current position that a divorced man is not a candidate to be an MX elder. This disqualification was discussed Q2 2021. Review elder minutes [here](#) and companion website [here](#). **I think this decision needs to be revisited -- m Bret**

- NextGen – we need to change how it operates
It isn't accomplishing much and has mostly been focused on YG and not Children's Ministry,
Q: What authority does Jeremiah have to set curriculum, etc.?
- Dave Weiler – YM candidate and how to move forward. Many parents have strong feeling and it seems we may lose families regardless.
 - Jeremy Picker is older and may not be best candidate for YM. Jeremy does not always come across as committed to YM and might cancel events if it does not work with his schedule.
- Steve Awtrey – YM Search Committee did NOT make a suggestion. Where does this leave the Elders? The Elders are in an awkward situation now as Elders may need to make this decision.
- Brad Stevens – agree problem starts at the top and authority roles at church. Not sure Staff Driven model is best for MX and thinks Elder lead is better for MX. The Elders need to take on this responsibility and cannot hide behind the YM Search Committee or the Staff.
 - Q: if we bring on new staff do we have a healthy staff dynamic to support them, or are we at risk of burnout and frustration?
- Steve Walker – we should consider an Elder lead model but we have blind spots. We need to collaborate more with staff and elders. Jeff Kryder has some definite strength, but Jeff is transitioning out. At time of transition the MX Elders will need to take on a more active leadership role. To get out of current funk we need Jeff Kryder.
- Steve Awtrey – elder led works when you do not trust the staff. Jeff prefers a team approach. Unfortunately, not much of a model provided in the Bible. Our current elders do not have time to commit to an Elder Driven model.
- Lane Hamm – **what is it about the office environment that is caustic and harmful to new employees?** Jeremiah was initiated into MX with VBS and there was limited leadership provided by others. Jeremiah knew that VBS would be a reflection on him so he knew he had to step up, regardless of who should have taken the lead. Jeremiah gets limited feedback and cooperation when talking about roles and thinking outside the box.
- Jeff Kryder after sabbatical was not in charge of staff – **who now is in charge of staff??**
 - Steve Walker – knows this is a gap but doesn't know how to work through this issue.
- Dave Weiler – why Jaime not worth pursuing? Lane Hamm – Jamie does *not* connect.
- Erich McPherson – someone will get blamed for the YM decision. People will be upset regardless of what is decided or if nothing is decided.
- Dave Weiler – Nathan red flags ...
 1. Didn't drive to Ne-o-Tez because parents didn't trust him? Erich and Lane have not heard about this.
 2. After a YG event Nathan was going to talk 1:1 with a female youth member. Erich and Lane didn't know about this. Steve Awtrey – this is something you train a YM about.
 3. Nathan doesn't handle money well. We can work with him on this. Again, Erich not aware of this problem.
- Steve Awtrey – **we have 2 good candidates. We are lucky to have this decision.** It would be easier to tell Wesley "no" than Nathan. How do we decide based on parent feedback?
 1. Lane Hamm – Elders cannot make a decision tonight. Recommend we invite both candidates back for interview and then the elders will make a decision. Just interact with elders and staff and not YG and search committee..
 2. Should we have the Committee share with the elders about any concerns they have and why?
- Erich McPherson- "I am the husband of one wife!" as is Jason Vincent. Can we revisit who can be an elder?

- Youth minister Search

- Some concerns that Wesley would be overly conservative.
 - Steve Awtrey had good notes for Wesley.
 - Ted Crigler and others gave him a good recommendation
- We have a tie. What is elder's next step?
 - Do we bring in the two lead candidates – Wesley and Nathan?
 - Do we meet with the Search Committee?
 - Do we do both?
- If we drag this out will we lose members? – probably yes
- If we make a decision will we drag this out – probably yes
- [Survey](#) or candid feedback from congregation not considered ideal.
- After his week Lane Hamm not a part of eldership so his personality is not pushing the decision.
- Elders did not feel ready to make a decision tonight.
- Elders will have the two candidates return – Nathan and Wesley – for a last follow-up interview. After this process elders need to be able to make a recommendation. Do this ASAP. Within the next two (2) weeks.
 - Should we have standard questions to use between candidates?
 - Lane Hamm to contact Wesley to get him in. Get Wesley in first and then Nathan afterwards.
 - Schedule meal meeting with a few of the elders (Friday night/Saturday morning).
 - We need a focus for each meeting and key topics
 - Understanding of gospel and how they share
 - Treat both candidates the same
 - Lane will provide some questions
 - Can we determine if candidates are coming with an agenda?
 - Q: How do you feel about _____?
 - Q: What would you do if a kid asked you _____?

- Meet with two elders and wives together and these elder meetings have a specific topic
 - Steve and Steve
 - Dave and Joyce
 - Bret and Brad
 - Don and Keaton
 - Jeff Kryder will drop in on at least one meeting
- Possibly meet with the teens if an event available
- Lane Hamm will communicate with the Search Committee on elder next steps.
- Note/Communication that a decision will be made by end of September.
 - Short communication via email, wed email communication/Sunday morning announcements
- Jenny R – someone from the elders need to get with her to talk about her concerns of Nathan (bad with money, not a trusted driver, etc.)
 - Steve Awtrey will reach out
- Laura P – what response do we need to give her? She is expecting info on next steps.

- Discussion of staff roles

- Misc

Steve Walker will take chair next month. Is it best to do for two months?
Next meeting? Sept 12 & 19 meetings.

Elders signed elder commitment letter

Classes starting September 11

1. Questions of Jesus
2. Where do go from here?

Mini-Golf for Missions – September 11 at 5:00 pm

- Looking for 18 foursomes
- Promote Community
- Raise money for Missions – looking for \$1,000.00

October 2 – Sunday to honor Kim and Lane Hamm

Below is the letter from the Search Committee -- a .pdf copy is also available [here](#).

August 29, 2022

To the Elders of McKnight Crossings,

The Youth Minister Search Committee met on Sunday afternoon to finalize our recommendation regarding our search for the new leader of this important ministry.

Members of the committee are:

Lane Hamm, Steve Beauchamp, Sara Matheny, Beata McGlawn, Jeff McGlawn, Eric McPherson

Youth Member consultants are:

Kennedy Picker, Sidney Bax, Ansley Picker, Coen Reigers

We interviewed several candidates with three entering the final stages of consideration. Jamey Grimsley, currently at Fairview Road in Columbia, Missouri was eliminated from consideration at our committee meeting last Wednesday meeting.

Our two remaining candidates, Wesley Handwork and Nathan Strickland were discussed in great detail at our meeting with no clear consensus emerging as to which candidate would best fit the needs of MX.

Additional input was sought and received after the meeting on Wednesday and the group reconvened on Sunday afternoon to arrive at a recommendation.

At the onset of that meeting, a question was asked "*Do we have to hire someone right now?*" This question led to a long conversation regarding the relative pros and cons of hiring one of our current candidates now or pushing pause on our search and being more proactive in pursuing candidates in late 2022.

What clearly emerged from the conversation was that half the group felt we should hire now while the remaining members felt we should wait for a candidate that would more easily bring us to a consensus. Of those on the hire side of the equation, there was no consensus as to which of the two candidates we should hire. This left the group with the realization that moving forward with a hiring recommendation would lead to a candidate being hired who had the strong support of no more than a third of our committee.

As a result, we cannot in good conscience advocate for the hiring of any of the candidates who have interviewed with MX.

- Jeremy Picker would continue in his role as our interim Youth Minister.
- All recruiting activities should be put on pause
- New leadership for the committee will need to be appointed due to the departure of Lane Hamm from MX
- The committee should be reconstituted and MX should aggressively go on campus on our college campuses to actively recruit a leader versus waiting for applicants to apply. These recruiting efforts should begin no later than January.