

Highlights of the July 30, 2024 Special Presbytery Meeting

On July 30, 2024, the Presbytery of the James held a Special Meeting to receive the report of the Strategic Plan, Staffing Structure, and Financial Review Task Force and to act on their recommendations. It was a hybrid meeting held at the First Church, Richmond and on Zoom.

Moderator Cherry Peters called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Cherry introduced Steve Hicks, who acted as Parliamentarian at the Stated Clerk's request, and acknowledged Vice-Moderator Josh Andrzejewski, responsible for monitoring the 3-minute time limit for each speaker.

A quorum was present. Temporary Stated Clerk Barry Parks opened the meeting with prayer, following which Cherry made a statement of land acknowledgement. Rev. Dr. Renita Page was recognized as a Corresponding Member and seated with voice but no vote.

Teaching Elder Janet James, Moderator of the Mission Council, called for adoption of the agenda. Teaching Elder Mike Watson, Fairfield Presbyterian Church, made a motion on behalf of the Strategic Plan Review Task Force to amend the agenda:

"The Strategic Plan, Staffing Structure, and Funding Review Task Force moves that its report and recommendations be presented tonight as a first reading for information and clarification on July 30, that the Task Force subsequently will incorporate changes to the report as suggested by the Presbytery, and a final report be presented as a second reading at the next available presbytery meeting for debate and adoption."

The motion was discussed, and Moderator Peters noted that First Church Richmond had offered to host a meeting for this purpose on September 24th, which would be properly called and announced at a later date. **The motion to amend the agenda was adopted by a vote of 110 to 55.**

Cherry then asked for votes to approve the agenda as amended. **The vote to approve the agenda as amended was adopted by a vote of 144 to 25.**

The moderator then called on Mike Watson and Teaching Elder Tom Coye, Campbell Memorial and Milden, to present the first reading of the Strategic Plan, Staffing Structure, and Funding Review Task Force report. The Task Force gave presentations on their process, recommendations and financial issues, and took comments and answered questions following each presentation.

At approximately 7:00 PM Moderator Peters noted that the meeting was set to end at 7:30 PM, and asked if the body would object if the meeting was extended until 8:00 PM. A motion to extend the meeting to 8:00 PM was made and seconded, which required a two-third vote to pass. **The motion to extend the meeting until 8:00 PM failed by a vote of 82 to 75.** Comments on the report continued following the vote.

At the end of the meeting, Moderator Peters thanked everyone for their patience with each other, and thanked First Presbyterian and all of those who helped to make this meeting happen. Cherry declared the July 30th Special Meeting adjourned, and Temporary Stated Clerk Barry Parks closed the meeting with prayer at 7:30 p.m.