**St. Paul’s Church Refugee Committee**

**Meeting: November 15, 2015**

**Present:** Kathy Black, Thomas Black, Beth Cummings, Paul Friesen, Derek Hounsell (Chair), Kirsten Jones, Bill Lord, Isobel Macpherson, Amy Moonshadow, Kate Newton, John Osler, Martine Osler, Nathan Otley, Tony Otley, Mike Tutton, Mike Vavra

Derek welcomed those present and asked Isobel to open in prayer.

1. **Approval of Nov 1, 2015 Minutes:**

The minutes were approved as circulated.

1. **Financial Update:**

Derek reported that, as of this date, $10,750 has been received in pledges, $2,845 from Thanksgiving offerings and $11,050 in actual donations, for a total of $24,645.

1. **Meeting with Marie Kettle:**

Derek said that he and Bill had met with Marie Kettle, Diocesan Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator, on Friday, Nov 13. He asked Bill to give a brief summary of their meeting. Bill referred committee member to the notes he had circulated with the agenda. He said the main takeaway was probably the fact that there appear to be two sponsorship routes we might want to consider, viz., the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program and the Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR) program. The advantages of the latter would be a shorter wait to receive a family and the fact that the Federal Government provides up to six months of income support, thus potentially reducing the financial obligations of the committee. Bill then drew attention to the list of new Syrian BVOR family profiles which Marie Kettle had sent to him and Derek, and pointed out that there is a deadline of 14 days for all of them, i.e., if we were interested in one or more of the families on the list, a decision would have to be made by Nov 27 [N.B. We understand that additional lists will be sent out on a regular basis]. A review of the list showed that most families have significant social and medical needs. Kate, Martine and Kristen suggested that the committee set parameters as to the size and type of family we believe we could support. Amy said that no family could live on the income support figures shown in the Cost of Sponsorship document. Derek replied that, once a decision is taken on the size of family St. Paul’s is prepared to support, a realistic budget will have to be established. He added that he, John and Bill would work on producing one. Following some further discussion, John said he was prepared to make a motion but that it would be in two parts, viz, that the BVOR route be adopted and that, with respect to the type of family, parameters be established.

**Moved:** John Osler/Beth Cummings: “That a) the committee opt for the BVOR route and b) parameters to guide the selection of a family or families be established.” **Carried**

1. **Housing:**

Bill asked Isobel if she had anything to report vis-à-vis the two parishioners who may be able to assist with housing. She said, now that things appear to be moving more rapidly, she would approach them again. Several committee members said that any housing would have to be close to bus routes, schools, doctors’ offices, supermarkets, etc., and that these criteria would inevitably limit the number of areas where a family could be housed. Isobel suggested that a Housing Sub-committee be established, but Derek asked that we wait until our next meeting to do so. However, some members felt it would be a good idea to start looking at possible locations immediately.

1. **ISANS Workshop:** Derek drew attention to a notice about a Refugee Resettlement workshop to be put on by ISANS on Saturday, November 28, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. The workshop is free but pre-registration is required. Derek, Bill, John, Tony and Amy said they planned to attend, space and schedules permitting.
2. **Next Meeting: Parish House, November 29, at 9:00 am.**