

After Pastor Bill Fort led the congregation in prayer, Moderator Lance Neal called the meeting to order in the fellowship hall at 1:30 p.m.

Lance recognized Parliamentarian Mike Kettler, who reminded everyone that the church's constitution and bylaws, as well as Roberts' Rules of Order, provide the church's decision-making procedures. A few ground rules based on those include:

- Motions must pertain to the purpose of the call.
- Remarks must be germane to a motion on the floor.
- Proposed amendments must be germane to the motion being amended.

Lance then recognized Pastor Fort who presented the following motion:

The ministerial and program staff, with the approval of the deacons, finance and long-range planning committees, as well as the Sunday school council, recommends that First Baptist Church change the existing morning and Sunday school schedule to the following:

8 a.m. – Sunday school

9:30 a.m. – Worship service and Sunday school

11 a.m. – Worship service and Sunday school

And, to build a 6,000-square foot classroom annex at an approximate cost of \$474,338, coming from Building to Glorify funds.

The tentative date for adopting the new schedule and start using the annex would be Sept. 7.

Church members would vote on the proposal Sunday, June 1, at both morning services.

The motion was seconded from the floor and discussion was entertained.

(Wireless microphones were made available so that speakers could be heard by everyone.)

Barbara Sowders asked if the motion's two topics could be separated and voted on individually.

The parliamentarian said they could be separated if "an amendment to divide the question" was adopted. Such a motion would be in order because it would be an amendment to the original motion.

Ms. Sowders then asked a series of questions.

Question: Why would the 12 balcony classrooms not be used during the proposed 8 a.m. Sunday school hour when no worship service would be conducted?

Answer: Minister of Music Mickey Ballard said the church's volunteer technical crew and music staff would rehearse during that period. Currently, that is done prior to the 8 a.m. worship service and prior to Sunday school after it. The staff would revert to the old rehearsal schedule if need for the classroom arises.

Question: If the new building is going to provide the currently needed number of classrooms, why do we need to change the Sunday school schedule?

Answer: Minister of Education Sam Newman said, "The building alone would not meet all of our growth needs. Currently 10 classes are meeting in unconventional spaces. That does not count others that need to be started as soon as possible. Going to three Sunday school hours,

without building the annex, would have the children's department taking up the entire fellowship hall at 9:30, as it currently does. Most preschool classes also would likely be taught at the 9:30 hour, when most families with children are likely to attend. The preschool class already exceeds the space allowed by city ordinance. The youth department would remain where it is, and preschool department would take both sides of the preschool hall. Preschool classes are difficult to set up and then take down to make way for a different age group. Those departments would take most of the available space at 9:30. Kids Praise would use the fellowship hall at 11:00, leaving very little space available for Sunday school classes then.

Question: Will classes be available for all age groups during all three Sunday school hours?

Answer: Sam said the 8 a.m. Sunday school would initially focus on adult-only classes. The early hour would be least convenient for families with small children.

Barbara then moved to divide the question. Her motion was seconded from the floor.

The moderator then recognized the parliamentarian who explained that if the question were divided, only the building proposal -- because it exceeds \$50,000 -- would require a two-thirds majority for passage, with at least 10 percent of the membership present and voting. The Sunday school schedule change could be adopted by a simple majority. The combined motion would require a two-thirds majority.

Bill Fort said two proposals were combined because the staff believed that either recommendation adopted alone would not solve the Sunday school space problem.

David Graham said he did not think the annex could be completed by Sept. 7, as the proposal anticipates. He recommended that a needs assessment be conducted with full participation by the church body.

Mike Eckler said the question should be divided "because the questions are very different." The church staff, however, should be given flexibility to reorganize the Sunday school if the annex is not built but the Sunday changes were passed.

Harry Johnson said the church could again become landlocked with too little parking, as it was on Main Street, "if we keep building out here." He recommended creating a mission congregation in another location. The fellowship at First Baptist would not be the same if it becomes a mega church.

Ken Clawson spoke in favor of dividing the question. The church would get the most for its investment by completing the annex ahead of the previously planned second phase of the building program. He had reservations, however, about the proposed Sunday school schedule, because attendance in both Sunday school and worship services, as well as giving, could decrease. Moving the time and location of adult classes could reduce attendance and possibly destroy some classes.

Oliver Cosby asked why preschool and children's classes would be offered during only one period. Teachers of those classes would then not be able to attend a more traditional worship service. Has a survey of adults been taken to determine which would be willing to attending Sunday school at 8:00 or 11:00? The church would realize only 8 to 11 new classrooms by

spending nearly a half million dollars on the annex. That money might be better spent on the previously planned next phase. For what will the annex be used when the next phase is built, storage? Alternatives have been proposed, such as Saturday night worship or Sunday school, but the staff and planning panels have not responded to those who made the proposals.

Patience Fort said the staff had given long and thoughtful consideration of alternatives before offering the proposals. She said the long-range planning committee, on which she serves, considered many alternatives before endorsing the proposal before the church.

Bruce Whitson said most ideas raised by those who object to the proposal had been thoroughly discussed by the staff over the past two years. The entire proposal of the staff should be voted up or down and not split. “We need to support the staff by supporting their proposal,” he said.

Wayne Gabbard said creation of mission churches is a goal that the long-range planning commission has under study.

George N. Ridings said 500 and in Sunday school was once a big day in Sunday school. Now we have between 800 and 900. The first phase more than doubled the sanctuary, but did not add many Sunday school rooms. The annex was proposed after a building pledge survey indicated that beginning the second phase was not currently feasible. Are we willing to make some changes to accommodate Sunday school growth?

Ginny Fair said the proposed schedule would not be convenient for families, such as hers, that prefer a traditional worship service and also have children in Sunday school.

Tom Collins said, “It is easy to criticize this plan,” and asked members to think about the motivation of the staff in devising the plan. “I’m willing to do whatever I can to help building the annex and make this schedule work,” he said.

The moderator then called the question. In a standing vote, the motion to divide the question failed 71 to 74.

Discussion then turned to the question as proposed.

Oliver Cosby repeated his earlier question about a survey of adults willing to attend Sunday school at 8:00 or 11:00 and why were children’s and preschool classes to be offered only at 9:30 when the traditional worship service would take place.

Sam said a formal survey had not been taken. “We are simply encouraging everyone to pray about this proposal and ask God what He would have them do if this proposal passes.” Sam acknowledged that some people, including Sunday school teachers, will have to make sacrifices under the proposal, such as missing the opportunity to attend a preferred worship service.

Ken Clawson said two Sunday schools and two worship services might meet space needs as well or better than three Sunday schools.

Pam Russell said the proposals had not been presented in detail to the youth. Her son had asked, “Why is the church always kicking the youth out of the building?” If the annex is used for multiple purposes, the youth would have a space solely dedicated to their use. She also asked what construction standards would be followed for the annex. If money is taken from the more

substantial structure proposed for the original second phase to build the annex, “How well will it hold up?”

Facilities manager Chris Haney said the annex would follow commercial building codes. The annex would primarily be a “youth” building, and other users would have to accommodate the youth, not vice versa. The staff foresees the annex being used for years to come, long after the youth program moves to the envisioned family life center. By using building funds on deposit, the annex can be paid for within 18 months. That would put only a small dent in what is needed for the next full-phase of construction, he said.

When the youth moved to the new building, some said they missed the old youth annex on Water Street, Jeff Prosser said, “but youth are flexible.” The current youth area is used at times by others, such as Body Recall, without disrupting the youth program, he said.

In response to a question, Sam said new Sunday school class assignment would not be ready when the church votes June 1.

Pam Jones said she was willing to give up her Sunday school class time and space so when others, including children, come to First Baptist, they will not have to walk away after concluding, “There is no place for me here.”

Oliver Cosby moved that the meeting recess until June 1. The motion was seconded from the floor and was carried by a voice vote.

In response to a question, the parliamentarian said no vote was needed to carry the original motion forward for a vote of the church body.

Respectfully submitted,

William B. Robinson
Assistant Church Clerk