

**FUSN Board of Trustees**

Monday, 28 August 2017

Alliance Room, 7:30 PM

<p><b>Staff</b> Erin Splaine, Minister Rowan VanNess, DLRE</p> <p><b>Board</b> Cathy Morocco, Chair Eric Haas, Vice-Chair Amalia Basch, Youth Brian Burba Josie Greene Chris Krebs Leah Lakomski, Youth Brooke Foucault Welles</p> <p><b>Clerk</b> Kit Ryan</p>	<p><b>Visitors</b> Jeannie Chaisson, Operations Barbara Bates Judy Curby, Treasurer</p>
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**Highlights**

**The Board is preparing for a day long retreat, which will include writing a new Covenant and charting our priorities for the year.**

**An upcoming Financial Summit on October 14 will bring together FUSN's financial officers to build a common understanding of roles and finance challenges.**

**Invocation / Chalice Lighting/Reading Of The Board Covenant: 7:30PM**

**Staff Updates**

*Erin Splaine*

She feels the growing importance of the public part of the minister's job, representing FUSN to various communities, such as Myrtle Baptist. Pressures and issues in the larger world make this a critical time for making visible Unitarian Universalism's messages and points of view. How can external communities be allies?

Simultaneously the FUSN community has its needs. Erin plans to refine her own goals and decide how to present them to the congregation over the next month. Clarity in her focus will be important as FUSN works with external organizational allies. She will discuss her goals in more detail at the next Board meeting.

Sam Foster, Membership Coordinator, returned in mid-August; Erin will be checking in with him on status of his projects, including making sense of the databases

Anne Watson Born's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with FUSN is coming up; plans are afoot to recognize her at the start of the year.

A Board member expressed the concern that as the way forward is charted, we manage disagreements and negotiate issues proactively. Language such as "white supremacy" can spark controversy. Erin acknowledged that while we do not plan or want to provoke disagreement, we should not avoid challenging conversations; we should be able to tolerate discomfort in learning how to manage conflict.

*Rowan VanNess*

The monograph, "Death of Sunday School," by UUA regional staff member, Kim Sweeney, was published online in June and has stimulated conversations within the Religious Education (RE) Council on what is working well and what needs to change. One concern is that the practice of sending children to their RE classes during service separates families that have little enough time together and may "educate them out of faith." The RE Council is working on the challenges of including children during worship services.

Rowan, with Erin, is developing a pilot program, "Living the Principles," to create opportunities for cross-generational gatherings to explore a different UU principle each month (excepting September and December). They may start with an informal meal event, "Pizza and the Principles." Feedback from the Adult Faith Development Task Force will be helpful.

The Adult Faith Development Task Force is transitioning to an implementation team.

This year FUSN will expand Our Whole Lives (OWL), which is currently in 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade, by adding 5<sup>th</sup> grade and K-1. The program will occur at 9-10AM Sundays.

The search for a youth coordinator has resumed. The candidate selected in June declined the offer due to family issues. Bridget Hess-Mahan will help Rowan for the start of the year until a new coordinator is hired.

Rowan is developing a relationship with a Newton interfaith religious education group, which represents about a dozen congregations. She first worked with them making the OWL program available for adaptation. Presently they are working on an interfaith study of Bible texts. A cross-generational group from each congregation will discuss Genesis 16 [Abram, Sarai, and Hagar]. Afterwards, the religious

educators will come together to discuss their congregation's understanding of the text and see what insights emerged in the discussions.

### **Procedural**

- The FY17 Board voted to approve minutes for April 11, May 9, and May 18, 2017. All were unanimously approved except the May 9 minutes. One member abstained from that vote; it was nonetheless approved. The incoming Board unanimously approved the June 12, 2017 minutes.
- Cathy, the board Chair, distributed a schedule assigning routine Board duties and chores through the year, including writing a column for the biweekly Newsletter, introducing the Sunday Service, assisting at monthly Board meetings, and attending Operations Council meetings. The Chair will forward the monthly Ops Council agenda to the Board and the Board visitor will report back only on substantive decisions or discussions. Cathy handed out a chart, "What's on the Board's Plate?" listing last year's work, including continuing programs.
- The Board chair, vice chair, and clerk—Cathy, Eric, and Kit, respectively—met recently to discuss work flow of Board meeting minutes and agreed on a format and process. Kit will record notes during the meeting and generate a Word document, Eric will write first draft from Kit's notes and his own and will send it to the Board as a Google Doc for comment. Eric will collate comments and revise and Cathy will review the revision and produce the final version for distribution to the FUSN website and the congregation.
- The discussion of minutes broadened into a conversation about using Google Docs—or Dropbox?—to share and store documents of interest to all Board members. This would supplement members' own strategies for filing agendas and attachments for Board meetings. The youth members, and Brooke, have the most experience with Google Docs, and agreed to speak together about the possibility of creating a BoT file system

### **Strategic/Generative**

#### *Board Retreat*

Erin and Cathy are working with a UUA facilitator on topics and an agenda for the Board Retreat by telephone and Skype. They are discussing how we work as a spiritual entity and whether the Board views its work as a spiritual mission. They expect to begin work on a new Board covenant, following the example of the UUA, which has developed a new covenant to address the issues it faces. The overarching question for developing a covenant is, what do Board members need as individuals to feel the Board is working well? and the corollary, how will individual Board members know that they are working well for the Board?

#### *Update and Discussion of the coming October 14 Financial Summit*

This discussion of the Financial Summit took up most of the remainder of the meeting. Erin explained that while she was on sabbatical, an issue arose which helped her realize FUSN's financial groups would benefit from a group meeting to discuss respective roles and responsibilities and how groups interact to

deal with major issues, such as concerns over the Annual Budget Drive. She sees a need to distinguish roles and responsibilities between the Board and Operations Council.

The Planning Team identified three major income streams on which FUSN needs to focus for financial planning: Annual Budget Drive (ABD), Capital Campaign, and Legacy. Regarding the last, Erin noted that we need to clarify or define our policies about giving via wills. She gave the example of a colleague who had come to depend on an donor who made a large annual contribution, but then who died without addressing the matter in their will. The heirs did not support the donation. As a community we need to discuss how we talk about money, figure out how we manage conflict over money, and generate clear policies about money. The FY17 ABD served as our “canary in the coal mine,” and has alerted us to the importance of discussing financial issues.. While we are not in “crisis,”we are experiencing tension points around financial concerns.

A Planning Team, which includes Susan Bartlett, Brian Burba, Judy Curby, and Erin, are planning the Summit agenda. The planners realize that the scope of the issues is so broad that they cannot all be addressed in one day. The goal for this first summit is to ensure that involved parties share an understanding of our current issues and problems.

One major challenge is getting clear and complete data to work with. FUSN’s demographic, budget, and financial information is not stored in a single integrated database. The planners are hoping to get individuals to mine each separate set of records to get as complete a financial picture as possible. A better understanding of issues will help us set more realistic goals.

Several Board members expressed a desire to have “advance work” to prepare for the Financial Summit and asked if there would be an orientation for participants. Brian Gill and Laurel Farnsworth were suggested as excellent sources to consult for budget orientation.

Meanwhile, Cathy is working on an organizational chart to depict how the many entities within FUSN have some interest in or influence on its finances: the ABD team, Legacy team, and [to be constituted] Capital campaign team, are the principal generators of income. The Board and Ops Council, with guidance from the Minister and DLRE, make most of the decisions about disbursement. The Treasurer keeps track of financial resources and move them as appropriate. The Finance, and Financial Oversight committees and the Board of Investment advise regarding use of FUSN’s finances and manage its long-term Endowment funds. The planners are working hard to create a format to foster meaningful conversations without overwhelming participants or generating discord.

### **Generative**

How shall we communicate with the congregation this year? Postponed.

### **Close**

Appreciations. Meeting adjourned: 9:36PM