

FUSN Board of Trustees
Tuesday, June 13, 2017
Children's Chapel, 7:30 PM

<p>Staff Erin Splaine, Minister, on sabbatical Rowan VanNess, DLRE</p> <p>Board Cathy Morocco, Chair Eric Haas, Vice-Chair Amalia Basch, Youth Brian Burba Josie Greene Chris Krebs Leah Lakomski, Youth Brooke Foucault Welles Clerk Kit Ryan</p>	<p>Presenter Ellen Metzger, Annual Budget Drive Co-chair</p> <p>Visitors Susan Bartlett, Operations Laurel Farnsworth, Operations Barbara Bates Gregg diBiaso Dwight Golann, Moderator</p>
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Meeting Highlights:

**The Board will coordinate a Safe Congregations Task Force
Annual Budget Drive Co-chair discussed the Drive results**

Invocation / Chalice Lighting/Reading of the Board Covenant: 7:31pm

New Board Formation

Elect Chair and Vice Chair (written ballot)

Cathy set a context by explaining that prior to this first meeting of the "new Board," continuing members discuss who is willing to be nominated for the officer roles. This ensures that there will in fact be someone in the Chair role, a By-Law requirement. Nominations and self-nominations are open for both roles at the meeting.

Chris asked about the roles and responsibilities of the two officers. Cathy and other Board members described the "legal" description of the two officers' responsibility in the By-Laws and the Chair's responsibility for holding the "big picture" of Board's priorities and for coordinating with the minister and other officers.

Asked how much time the Chair role takes, Cathy responded that meeting preparation usually takes two days and Steering Committee meetings and both formal and informal meetings with the Minister and other officers and members of the congregation can take a considerable amount of time. The Vice Chair fills in for the Chair when the Chair cannot be present, as Brian did at the recent June 4 Annual Meeting and an earlier meeting when the Chair had a death in the family.

Brian nominated Cathy as Chair and there were no other nominations. Cathy nominated Eric as Vice Chair and Josie nominated herself as Vice Chair. Eric and Josie were invited to comment on what they could contribute as Vice Chair. Eric commented on his support for the Chair's leadership. Josie described her roles with the Multicultural Ministry Initiative, her background in counseling psychology, and her interest broadening pathways to leadership at FUSN. The Clerk received and tallied the paper ballots. The results were that Cathy was voted unanimously as Chair; Eric received a majority of votes for Vice Chair.

Rowan VanNess

- On June 15, part-time staff will leave for the summer. Beth and Sam are on summer break. Dani will be moving to Davis, California, having completed her Masters degree in Theology at BU.
- Rowan thanks the Board for expanding the Youth Coordinator's hours from 10 to 15 hours a week this past year, having really seen the impact of that 50% increase in paid time.
- The Youth Coordinator Search Committee is currently interviewing candidates for the position and will email its recommendations to the Board.
- The final teacher slot for pre-kindergarten through 7th grade is now filled.
- Adult Religious Education is working with the Adult Faith Development Task Force to sustain that initiative.
- Our Whole Lives (OWL) is currently present in the 5th and 8th grades. The RE leadership are considering adding primary grade and the adult OWL programs.
- Rowan will send an important article by Kimberly Sweeney (New England UU), titled, "The Death of Sunday School and The Future of Faith Formation: Do we "Sunday-school" people out of the society?"
- Rowan and her staff have completed parent meetings with all of their children and youth parent groups. The purpose of these meetings has been to investigate what parents like about the RE program and what they struggle with. What are their hopes and what opportunities do they see? We now have a lot of data to analyze to help guide us forward. Beth will return a little early from her summer break to work on these issues and help formulate strategies and goals for next spring. Brian is excited to hear about the results of the parent meetings data.
- Rowan discussed the RE Council: What is its role? How is it functioning? They have established a strong Youth Circle and a strong Coming of Age program, and they are building stronger children's programs. Kim Shanks has been serving as the RE Council Chair for 15 years and is ready to move from the position if there are other interested parties.
- Cathy asked Rowan to comment on the Safe Congregations initiative, which may be a part of this FY18 Board agenda. How could we structure this initiative? Rowan explained that Safe Congregations policy includes allergies, fire safety, and sexual misconduct among other potential topics. Most neighboring congregations have been working on these issues for several years and she has examples from other communities. FUSN already has addressed some pieces,

including as CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) and we have a Disruptive Behavior policy. We need to consider how safe congregation issues might apply for lay ministers and visiting ministers.

- Rowan explained that FUSN will need a task force to develop the policy. One idea is to hold listening circles for information and idea sharing. Kim Sweeney, who has been working on Safe Congregations as a part of her staff role in the UUA New England Region, is available to consult. The Board of Trustees will need to approve policies that emerge from the initiative.

Brian asked whether anyone has reviewed options and developed a recommended model. Rowan responded that she has put together binders of all the Safe Congregations work that includes examples from another congregation (Cambridge) and she passed around a Table of Contents. She also forwarded a Drive link to several more examples.

Next steps will include a conversation with Kim Sweeney and the initiative could be discussed at the Fall Board Retreat. We will need a steering committee to help develop the policy, which has a broad set of issues that intersect with all aspects of the FUSN community. Working on this requires that we avoid inducing anxiety among community members. Rowan will send email links. (Note: Rowan's follow up email included these links: This one to the UUA information about creating a Safe Congregations policy including the Safe Congregations Handbook Rowan mentioned: <http://www.uua.org/safe>.

Rowan also sent a follow up email to the Board on June 13 that included a link to her drive with examples from several congregations.

Procedural

- As required by By-Law, the Board voted on the Annual Committee Chair candidates, which include Kim Shanks, for the Religious Education Council, Laurel Farnsworth for Buildings and Grounds, and Karen Bottar and Brian Gill, for Finance Co-Chairs. Brian motioned to vote on the committee chairs and Eric seconded. Their Chairs were approved unanimously.
- The Board voted to approve Rowan as a General Assembly delegate.
- Cathy distributed a signup sheet for attending summer services. The goal is to have at least one Board and Operations Council member at every service, to provide support and to be available for member questions about FUSN.
- At the August 28 Board Meeting, members will receive jobs lists and assignments for assisting at Board meetings, introducing the Sunday service, attending Operations Council meetings, and writing a column for the FUSN Newsletter. Members are free to trade jobs.
- Members reviewed and corrected contact information.
- Cathy passed out a handout of upcoming Board meetings. Members will forge the Board agenda for the year at upcoming meetings and the Board Retreat (Note: Now scheduled for Saturday, September 16 at Laurel Farnsworth's house). Laurel added that the Finance Committee needs the Board's Goals for FY 19, as early in the fiscal year as possible.

Strategic. Being a Board Member: deferred until August 28th meeting.

Strategic/Generative

2017 Budget Drive Report and Discussion (Handout: FUSN 2017 Annual Budget Drive Report). Ellen Metzger

Pledge parties remain one important source of pledges. The Annual Budget Drive (ABD) Team received 60% of target amount of \$560,000 from pledge parties. The personal canvassing started later, so that there was a gap between parties and canvassing and the canvassing took longer to complete than planned. Ellen recommends that the Team begin canvassing earlier. Someone asked whether some kind of incentive was needed to bring in pledges earlier.

Comments from Board members included the following:

Cathy pointed out the need for members to give more and asked whether it is time to examine and change the fundraising strategy. Brooke commented that pledges increased at the rate of inflation so we may need to be more explicit about setting expectations if we want pledges to increase more than that.

Chris asked, what was the relationship between pledging units vs. pledge amounts? Josie asked if there is any trend over past 3 to 5 years? (See Note below on data provided after the meeting)

Ellen responded that while there has been a recent increase in membership, new members might not pledge. In response, Susan asked whether Sam Foster provides guidelines or guidance to new members regarding pledge expectations. Eric responded that last year (FY16) was the first year that an explicit request as to percentage of adjusted income was given. The guideline was 2%. (Note: Guidelines have been presented in past years, showing income levels and amounts by percentage of adjusted income).

Brian reminded the group of a chart on the Parish Hall wall that provided a visual graphic showing the number of gifts by pledge amount (all anonymously), allowing congregants a better understanding of whether they were contributing appropriately. Ellen commented that younger families tend to use the Internet, versus face-to-face contact.

Brooke commented that other faith organizations give more information for guidance, including breakdowns on cost of operations per member and the costs of various services (e.g. cost of RE per child, etc.). This information is often available online where families can review it in private as they plan their giving budgets.

Cathy expressed concern about the major effort required by the Board, Minister, Finance Committee, stewards and ABD Team to bring the pledges level from \$500K to \$530K, still short of the target by \$30K, in the final weeks of the drive. Interventions included a letter from the Finance Committee to the community outlining three levels of impending cuts, a letter from the Board to the congregation on the seriousness of the situation, Erin's sermon on White Supremacy to address anxiety in the congregation that was affecting pledging, Rowan's letter to the RE community, and the ABD Team letter in the Order of Service. In addition, Board

members contacted a great many donors. Should interventions and information sharing come earlier?

Ellen added that 20 donors increased their pledges after these interventions, five responded to matching pledge requests, and 15 more people increased their pledges after the ABD Team letter went out. Brian urged that we need to avoid having to make these last minute efforts and Josie asked how we could get information about past trends (See Note below on information Josie requested from Bruce Henderson).

Ellen pointed up the absence of a database to provide information about donors and guide planning. Rowan responded that Sam has been working on database issues and Cathy suggested that this issue might be discussed in more detail at the Finance Summit, where we could ask or share information about what other congregations do, whether we need a Stewardship Team, rather than simply depending on year-to-year efforts of an ABD team.

Ellen said that she would like to “retire” from the ABD team though Saul Lookner may stay another year. Ellen does not know Suzanne diCarlo's intentions.

Cathy reminded the Board that the Financial Summit is scheduled for October 14, all day and the ABD Team will be included.

(Note: Data provided by Josie and by Bruce Henderson after the Board meeting indicates that while the size of pledges has varied over the past 10 years, it has risen over the past four years, from \$1516 to \$1924. At the same time, however, the number of donors has decreased from 351 in 2012 to 280 in 2017. This is of concern, given that our membership has grown during that period).

Close

Meeting adjourned: 9:30PM

Respectfully submitted,
Kit Ryan, Clerk
Cathy Morocco, First Editor