

**First Unitarian Society in Newton
OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES**

Tuesday, November 15, 2016

Children's Chapel, 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Present: Susan Bartlett, John Brennan, Judy Curby, Laurel Farnsworth, Kate Mason, Rev. John Nichols, Dir. RE Rowan Van Ness. Guests:.

~ **Invocation / Chalice Lighting:** Judy

Covenant

As we, the members of this Council and staff, gather to serve this congregation in leadership, we commit to ourselves and to each other: to be present and prepared for the work of this meeting; to listen well and contribute respectfully; to balance both our short and long-term visions with fiscal responsibility; to support the decisions of the Council; to uphold the democratic process; and to lead with goodwill and faith in the work we can accomplish together.

~ **Approvals:** All

- October Minutes - moved and seconded. Unanimously approved.
- Social Action fundraising activities. See Appendix 1 for list. A few specifics were discussed:

The date has not yet been determined for Alternative Gift Fair. Options include Dec. 11 and 18.

Fundraising activities may not occur 12/4, during the Holiday Fair.

The Communities Without Borders jazz performance this Friday is a fundraiser.

Kate moved to approve the list, pending the Alternative Gift Fair date. Laurel seconded.

Unanimously approved.

~ **Staff update:** John N, Rowan

John N:

Everything seems to be going well from his perspective. The Music Sunday service seemed quite helpful during this time of political upheaval.

Rowan:

- Almost 40 people came on Wednesday night to the session Rowan held, to be together after the election results. There was a full range of ages. Many expressed desires to take some kind of action.
- Children's RE is going well, in general. A couple of classes have students with special needs. Coming of Age is doing quite well.
- Youth participate most often when they are paid to be here for tasks. There is some discussion among RE about this.
- The Adult Faith Development group is making progress.
- The Family Ministry group had a gathering before the election to discuss talking to kids about the election.
- RE staff are working well.
- The Halloween party seemed successful. About 50 people attended.

~ **Report on BOT meeting:** John B.

John shared a summary of topics discussed, including ongoing audit and finance policy issues. Next steps may be at the Finance Committee, to provide a second round of recommendations. Laurel will request comments from Karen Bottar. Someone needs to follow up with Dan Brody. There was also some discussion about endowment spending policy, to set aside extra funds during strong performance years, to have a more stable way to manage spending over the long term.

Per John N., an offer has been made to a candidate for the Membership Coordinator position, but details are being worked out. He expressed enthusiasm for this candidate.

The Adult Faith Development task force described their progress and plans to the BoT.

~ **Financial:** Judy, All

- **Review Year to Date spending:** Judy indicated there was nothing unusual to report, especially as it is still early in the year, and we have not yet had any high utility bills.

~ **FUSN rental rates:** All

- **Member memorial services:** There was some discussion of having a memorial service line in the budget. John N. says most churches do not charge members for these services, excluding the cost of any refreshments. Ministers may be "tipped," i.e. offered an honorarium, or contributions may be made to the Minister's Discretionary Fund. Laurel said we should either raise the beadle budget or include beadle fees in a line item for memorial services. Those present agreed there should be no charge for rental space for member memorial services. Laurel thinks we should have Henry clean (the fee is \$150) and for a memorial service FUSN should pay for it. Judy pointed out that members make donations, so the costs are covered indirectly.

Consensus: No charge to members for space, minister, sexton (Henry) or the beadle. They pay for food and music (a "bench fee" for the organist).

Laurel pointed out that putting ashes in the niche is by arrangement with the minister.

- Rentals for social action fundraisers. Social Action has 5 task forces and 29 projects. Judy suggests we should not charge for FUSN's own social action fundraisers or those under Music Committee auspices (such as, raising funds for instruments for youth), youth (coffee house).
- Discounts offered to non-profits? John B suggested charging \$100. Judy shared a list of prices: Fran said it's \$100 per room, except \$75 for a classroom. John N. pointed out the costs involved in using rooms, from heat to electricity, and FUSN cannot afford to be generous to all requests. Evensong is a free worship service and falls under FUSN's ministry. Pan Mass Challenge was charged \$500 for their fundraiser concert. Laurel said Suzuki, a registered non-profit, would like to have concerts at FUSN to earn money for their scholarship fund and rent at a non-profit rate. John N. suggests calling 3 or 4 other UU churches to see what they do. Laurel will ask Fran to do this, perhaps via her administrators' network.

Other comments: Rent should be charged for any event that has an admission cost. Per Laurel, if an event will have food for the public, a caterer needs to be hired. Newton licenses are also needed.

No decision will be made on Suzuki until rates are clarified, perhaps at the next Ops meeting.

- Are/should rates be published on FUSN's website? If we are developing a full business model, our rates should be published.

~ **Database** - John B.

The discussion reviewed previous discussions and the status of the decision-making. Rowan was able to acquire Ash's notes on her work with Realm. John B agreed to consider next steps.

- At the BOT meeting Gregg DiBiaso from FOC inquired about status of the database decision-making.
- At (this) OC meeting there was discussion about next steps for evaluation and decision-making on what database to adopt.
- John B. agreed to research and provide a brief summary of the history that led to the adoption of the Icon software.
- Susan said she would meet with Rowan to review Ash's notes on her research into Icon vs. Realm and bring it back to OC for further review.

- John B. asked if OC would make the decision on which database to adopt or would OC make the recommendation to BOT . Laurel said she thought that this is a decision OC could make.

~ **Fire safety plan:** John B. Tabled until next month.

~ **DLT 'kiosk'** Developing Leadership Team: Kate

Kate distributed a packet of pages describing a proposed display, responsibilities for content, ongoing needs and next steps. The display would provide an overview of how FUSN works, how it's organized, and whom to contact with questions about particular areas of FUSN life. Many of the pages in the packet were drafts of text which would be posted, including Justice, Learning, Worship, Music, Stewardship, Connections, Holiday Fair, Fundamentals and Administration (including Ops Council liaisons), and who would be responsible for maintaining each section. Each category would have subsets. Items would also show if there are openings for help in one of these areas, encouraging people to come forward.

John N. pointed out that millennials respond best to personal invites to be on particular committees or tasks.

~ **Updates:** All -- Committee issues/reports, including:

- Newsletter columns
- Fundraising activities—need dates for Social Action and RE events
- The Joint Ops - Committee Chairs Meeting is scheduled for Saturday 11/19, 11am-1 pm.

~ **Thank yous:** All

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Schwartz,
Assistant Clerk

Appendix 1

Social Action Fund Raisers (November – December)

UU Urban Ministry Explorers Club: Gifts to Low Income Kids

Buy Christmas gifts for low income city youth through the Secret Santa program.
<http://www.uuum.org>, Contact Judy Friedman.

Healthy Baby Gifts: For at-risk Boston Children-Donate gifts for low-income kids at Christmas. Contact: Beth Walton, RE Assistant.

Alternative Gift Fair: For FUSN Social Action - Instead of a tie or a box of candy, give your loved ones a card marking your donation in their honor to a FUSN-endorsed charity. At coffee hour one Sunday in December. Contact: Pete Smith.

Buy UUSC Holiday Cards- Beautiful cards for sale in December, funds international justice work by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. <http://www.uusc.org/> Contact: Karen Lein.

UUSC Holiday Guest at Our Table- Support UU justice efforts around the world. <http://www.uusc.org/> Contact: Karen Lein.

Holiday Prison Gift Project- Purchase and donate Christmas items from a list of toiletries, etc., to be given to one of the 1,700 inmates in Concord prisons, many of whom receive no other gifts. <http://www.concordprisonoutreach.org/programs/holiday-gift-bag-program/> Contact: Mary Lou McArdle, along with Lynn Holbein.

And five special collections, which do not need to be approved with the above group. Communities Without Borders just happened 10/2.

The Dec. 4, Habitat for Humanity special collection has been moved to January 11.

Others unassigned so far: 2/5, 4/2, 5/14

Communities without Borders - Coffee House- Saturday in March
Possibly a music concert in November.

Appendix 2

FUSN Rental Rates: tbd