

FUUSN Board of Trustees

Tuesday, February 13, 2018

Children's Chapel, 7:30 PM

<p>Staff Erin Splaine, Minister 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</p> <p>Clerk Kit Ryan</p>	<p>Visitors Jeannie Chaisson, Operations Council Urban Larson, Board of Investments (BOI) Jonathan Reuman, observer</p>
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Meeting Highlights:

- **Board members shared updates about the Annual Budget Drive progress, and the work of the Welcoming Congregation and Financial Oversight committees.**
- **The Board unanimously approved a set of updated financial policies that our finance groups have worked on together for several years.**
- **The Board discussed how the Nominating Committee works to ensure a full slate of Board members, and other officers.**

Invocation / Chalice Lighting/Covenant 7:34PM.

The Board read a revised version of our new covenant, prepared by Chris Krebs. Material from earlier drafts was printed on the back of the agenda as “Guidelines for Board Meetings.”

Staff Updates

Rowan Van Ness

- Religious Education [RE] is going well; Rowan's staff and volunteers are starting to plan for next year's program. The Our Whole Lives [OWL] sex and social education program is currently running for three different age groups, with trained, volunteer OWL instructors from our congregation. Planning for next year includes figuring out how to support a high level of activity without over-taxing the instructors.

- The RE program is excelling in several areas, including Coming of Age [COA]. Rowan wants to support COA's ongoing success while assisting other programs to shine.
- The online RE newsletter, with both text and photographs, produced by Beth Walton and Dani Patrick has improved communication with RE families and is well-received.
- Some 135 children are currently registered in RE, with an average of around eighty attending each week. An estimated 20 percent of the children require some accommodation for disability or behavioral issues to attend. Beth and Dani providing a great deal of support for the two grades with the greatest needs.
- Six new families visited this past week, which is not unusual.
- The initiative to incorporate youth into teaching and worship is thriving. A FUUSN delegation of five youth and three adults will be attending an upcoming Youth in Ministry training in Albany.

Erin Splaine

- Erin has fully recovered from influenza. She thanks to all who filled in while she was out.
- One of her recent sermons discussed the #MeToo movement, and was followed by a structured conversation on the topic, comprised of three gender affinity groups, led respectively by Erin, Dani Patrick, and Jud Leonard, lay minister. The groups varied in size from three to eighteen participants. Erin is now pondering how to go forward in a way that maintains safety and inclusiveness.
- She plans to attend all pledge parties
- She recently met with the lay ministers.
- Erin would like to form a team for a new initiative in "Worship Arts" that will generate other opportunities for worship and ritual beyond our weekly Sunday morning services. An example will be celebrating Passover with a seder. This idea grew out of the work done by the Adult Faith Development task force, lead by Devon Welles, Andrew Morse, Peggy Ellertson, and Jenn Lerner.
- Marion Bullitt's memorial service will take place on Saturday Feb 17.

Board Updates

Annual Budget Drive [ABD] Progress

Josie: Lead by Brian Gill, FUUSN's Finance Committee held a "Finance Open House" during Community Breakfast on February 11. Twenty to thirty congregants attended—more than expected—and questions and discussion were lively. Community Breakfast tables were decorated with reminders that the ABD is starting soon.

Cathy: Alice Nichols, who facilitated early meetings of the ADB planning and support team, helped the group develop a set of five "Critical Success Factors" for the fundraising drive; among them are increased financial literacy of the entire congregation and expanded ownership of fundraising. This year ABD leaders are thrilled to have a team, so

that the ABD does not rest on the drive chairs alone [as it did last year on Saul Lookner and Ellen Metzger].

Cathy Morocco and Brian Gill will conduct a training for stewards and pledge party hosts with the view of reifying the importance of the stewards and hosts in the drive.

The Board had planned to symbolically start the budget drive season by making their pledges at this meeting, just as it did last year. The pledge forms had not been printed yet, so this gesture was deferred.

Listening to Facebook: Brooke

Not much conversation has taken place on our Facebook pages [“FUUSN” and “FUUSN Families”] over the past month. Topics included gender identity and the Service Auction. Rowan noted that a recent Story for All Ages dealt with gender issues, which may have accounted for some of the feedback. The topic will be coming up in OWL. In response to a question from Brian, Brooke estimated that the average number of Facebook posts is between fifteen and twenty per month

January Operations Council [Ops] meeting. Josie

Josie outlines some highlights:

- Review of our current budget standing
- Financial Policies update
- ABD will use the Icon database this year for pledge data
- Black Lives Matter banner was rehung

Josie noted that it has been helpful to receive the Ops agenda before the meetings.

Security Lock. Eric

Eric asked about the new security lock on the glass door leading from the main corridor to the classrooms. It was installed at the request of the Pine Village preschool and requires that a code be entered on a keypad. Some FUUSN staff and officers have the code, but it is not in general circulation. The lock has caused difficulties with access at times when the preschool is not in session. It cannot, however, be deactivated at will. Laurel noted that access to that hallway can still be gained via the kitchen, and that the door is propped open during busy times—such as Sunday morning—although this is technically a violation of fire codes.

Welcoming Congregation Committee. Chris Krebs

Cindy Beal, who presented a workshop on “Radical Preemptive Inclusion” at FUUSN last spring, has been invited to return and continue our work on welcoming and inclusion. Several dates were proposed; the Board quickly decided on April 8 as having the least conflict with other events. The committee has scheduled several films on the subject of gender. The first, *Normal*, which follows a transgender woman in the Midwest through her transition, will be shown February 18.

Financial Oversight Committee (FOC) membership. Cathy

The FOC will need new members after this church year. Dan Brody has served for four years, and will be leaving in June. Jacki Rohan has served for two years, officially, and will serve one more year to complete a three-year term. Originally the FOC was to have a full-time member from the Board, but it has been working well recently with a Board member taking a liaison role. Brian Burba has served graciously in that role. Several Board members recognized Brian's experience and comfort with financial matters, and expressed the hope that future BoT panels will include folks that are as competent.

Procedural

Minutes of previous Board meetings: December 2017 and January 2018 have been completed and distributed. Cathy moved to accept them; Josie seconded and the motion passed. Cathy sends the minutes to FUUSN News and posts them on our website. Cathy noted that although this seems a dry chore, some community members tell us they read our minutes closely.

GA Delegates. FUUSN's proposed delegates to June's General Assembly [GA] were presented: Barbara Deck, Suzanne Greelish, Laurel Farnsworth, Jacqui James, and Bobbie Sproat. Chris moved to accept the identified delegates; Brian seconded motion; passed unanimously. Anne Watson Born will serve as music director for GA.

Policy

Update to financial policy: Urban Larson and Brian Gill.

Handout: Financial Policies with proposed revisions marked.

[We noted that the abbreviation "FUSN" and the name "First Unitarian Society in Newton" have not been corrected in the Financial Policies document]

Dan Brody and Jacki Rohan have worked with the Board of Investment [BoI] and Financial Oversight Committee [FOC] over the past year to update and clarify FUUSN's finance policies. Urban highlighted some of the more significant revisions:

- New language was inserted creating the possibility of "board-designated endowments," which will allow unrestricted gifts or bequests to be set aside for future use, rather than being incorporated into the general operating fund. Such funds would be managed and invested by the BoI, with proper reporting to the congregation, but would not be subject to the same limitations on future spending. Surplus from the operating budget could also be transferred to the BoI as board-designated endowments.
- Specific recommendations for creating a balanced operating budget with contingency funding. If a yearly budget lacking contingency funds or containing a deficit is proposed, it must clearly identify the source of the funds to cover the shortfall.
- Recommendation for an independent audit before beginning a capital campaign.
- New language governing funds and loans from the Endowment. This topic was covered in great detail and approved at the December 2017 Board meeting. Brian

moved to accept these amendments to FUUSN's Finance Policies with the updates; Chris seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

The Board thanked Dan, Urban, and Jacki and their committees for the tremendous amount of work they put into this project. Cathy commended the effort as an example of democracy at work. Urban would like the BoI to make a presentation to the BoT twice a year.

Strategic/Generative

Board future and succession. Josie, Cathy

Handouts: "BoT Overview," a draft job description for members of the Board of Trustees; and "Board Succession and Needs," a graphic representing present Board membership and places open for FY19.

Josie opened with a review of the nominating process, which she studies while serving with the Developing Leadership Team (not active at present). Discussion with former FUUSN leaders three years ago identified several needs:

- Preservation of institutional knowledge. This effort is underway: the Board approved the charter for an Institutional Memory Committee, with Barbara Bates as chair, at its December 2017 meeting.
- Need to initiation the leadership search earlier in the church year than previously. Dwight Golann (FUUSN's moderator) has already convened the Nominating Committee (NC), comprising Catie Curtis (chair), Brenda Roberts, Gregg DiBiaso, Norm Thibeault, and Julia Wolfe. They will solicit nominations between February 15 and April 15. After the nomination period the NC will take some time to consider all applicants and choose the slate to present to the congregation to be voted on at FUUSN's Annual Meeting scheduled for June 3.
- Clear job descriptions for leadership roles for NC members and potential nominees. Some positions defined in the Bylaws have term limits—e.g., Trustee—other do not—e.g., Operations Council member. In the latter case, the NC will ask those wishing to continue to nominate themselves. Also, some positions specified the Bylaws are obsolete and no longer needed—an example is delegate to UUA's Massachusetts Bay District, which was dissolved. Ted Hess-Mahan has helped to clarify which positions can be eliminated based on conversations he had with the UUA office. The bylaws should be updated formally.
- Cathy clarified that the NC will notify candidates when others nominate them, and explain to them that being nominated does not guarantee that they will be elected.

Board Succession

Coming more specifically to the question of succession on the Board, Cathy referred to "Board Succession and Needs," which shows that the Board has four openings for FY2019. Cathy will step down after this year, and will not serve the third year of her second three-year term. One of the new members will complete that final year of her term. Brian and Eric will finish their terms, and one of the Youth members is leaving as well.

Given this turnover, the Board needs to give the NC adequate guidance for finding new Trustees. Discussion followed on the Board Job Description, which Josie developed last year. Striving for balance in age, ability, gender, and experience is a theme of the description. Brian pointed out that candidates need to have the proper temperament to participate. Brooke noted how much she has appreciated Brian's financial acumen and hoped that such experience will be represented in the future. She also noted the value of having a balance of extroverts and introverts. Erin reminded us gender is not simply binary. Chris agreed that leadership experience and knowledge are helpful, but so is the ability to inspire and motivate others.

Chris also suggested that new blood is needed in many of FUUSN's committees. Cathy has heard the concerns of some leaders, who are feeling tired. She hopes that the NC can find vibrant new members. She suggested that likely candidates might be found among those congregation members whose children have recently completed CoA.

Strategic

A Look Ahead. Cathy

Cathy reviewed topics that the Board will be considering in the future:

- Faith formation: The congregation continues to express the desire for more spiritual development.
- Stewardship Council: The team that has been supporting the ABD is also advising on the formation of a more permanent group that can support year-round fundraising. No chair for the group has been chosen or volunteered as yet.
- Youth Trustees: These are attentive members, yet we rarely give them the opportunity to talk about Youth issues. Cathy plans to designate time during future meetings for them.
- Results from ABD team.

Close

Meeting adjourned: 9:40PM