

OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES FINAL

November 16, 2021

Via Zoom online

Attending via Zoom: Susan Bartlett, Laurel Farnsworth, Jud Leonard, Karen Bottar, Wayne Everett, Eric Haas, Amanda Graff, Anne Watson-Born, Erin Splaine, Brian Hicks (BOT), Linda Ross (asst clerk);

Called to order 7:03 p.m.

Invocation/Chalice Lighting/Reading – Susan and Jud

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:

- October minutes – Laurel moved and Karen seconded that the October minutes be approved. Unanimous approval, motion passed.
- Greeting before service (Susan sent via email), informational – Jeannie Chaisson made some suggestions as to how to alter greetings once the weather turns colder. Consensus was to follow Jeannie's suggestions.
- Bob Feldman would like to bring 6 people up to the tower for playing of chimes on Dec. 13 or 14 – Jud moved to approve, Eric seconded, unanimous approval, motion passed.

Staff Update

Amanda

- RE will be moving indoors in December.
- Youth
 - Samantha Nemeth has started as the Youth Programs Coordinator, 7 hours/week
 - Youth will be meeting Sundays 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., after service, twice monthly.
- Children are getting vaccinated
- Need accessible space, especially for pre-K and nursery– will be using some rooms in Pine Village.

Erin

- Will not be going on sabbatical
 - She had already arranged to pay several people to deliver sermons; will need to decide from which account to pay.
- There will be a memorial service for Aurelie Goodwin on Saturday Nov. 27

BOT October meeting –Laurel

- Stephanie – looking for a co-chair adult for RE
- Amanda has met with Bruce Henderson about updating the website.
- Board wants the racism workshops to be the main focus for the year
- All children over age 5 should be vaccinated by January 1, 2022.

- NBARC is in the process of signing the lease for the refugee apartment; FUUSN is responsible for 1/6 of lease, about \$1250, if there are not enough contributions to cover this amount. The question was raised as to why the Ops Council couldn't approve the lease; the response was that the Ops Council cannot sign contracts.
- Susan and Karen gave an explanation of FUUSN's 5 year projections and why there is a structural deficit
- FUUSN has lost pledge units but total amount pledged is good; this past year was second highest on record.
- Discussion of combining the assistant RE director and the membership coordinator positions.
- Demie has had no feedback about distribution of Board priorities
- Stephanie had spoken to Karen Davis about achieving more standardization of hiring practices
- City of Newton has some financial support for hiring people who stay in a position for a designated period of time; not sure if FUUSN is eligible.
- There are significant challenges to finding chairs of this year's budget drive

Financial - Karen

- Review October expenditures
 - Renters have been paying. Lost theater group, so there is a loss of expected revenue. No extraordinary expenses in B & G. Everything is about where it should be. Yard sale netted about \$2400.
- Use of Square for the Holiday Fair
 - Square payment system uses dongles for smart phones, so that credit cards can be taken at the Holiday Fair and other activities. The plan would be to obtain several dongles, with one person in charge of them.
 - Need to set up a Square account for FUUSN
 - FUUSN would pay 2.6% on each transaction; could ask purchaser if they would add this amount to their transaction to cover costs.
 - Discussion of the Square payment system.
 - Eric moved and Jud seconded that FUUSN set up a Square account; unanimous approval, motion passed.
- Hiring OWL teachers
 - Amanda – this year, FUUSN will be running 5th and 6th grade OWL (15-16 kids); didn't do kindergarten last year so will do K - 2nd grade this year.
 - There is only one trained OWL teacher, so she will need to hire 2 more for K-2nd classes. These people are UUs from other congregations.
 - The cost is about \$1500 per person for the 10 week course. This cost would be covered by salary not expended for RE assistant director.
 - Karen moved to hire 3 OWL teachers and Laurel seconded. Unanimous approval, motion passed.
- Status Comcast termination – Jud – Tom Bean sent a letter to Comcast stating that we would not pay; he is not aware of any response.

Continue reopening FUUSN building

- Update live streaming
 - Jud – there is a minor issue in that the voices are garbled on the recorded Zoom; it is being worked on..
- Congregational singing
 - Erin – given that children will be vaccinated soon, she would like to plan a gradual return to normal.

- First – remove barriers to pews this weekend.
 - Will encourage families with children to sit in the back of the sanctuary for the November 28 multi-generational service because the choir will be singing.
 - She would like to be able to do the carol sing service on December 19.
 - Have adults sing (masked) after the children leave starting Dec. 5
 - Discussion and clarification of the above points.
 - Decision to wait on removal of barriers until Nov. 28. At that time, there will be open seating.
 - Susan will write an email informing the congregation of the above decision. Erin will follow with her own email, also including information about Joys and Sorrows.
 - Rehearsals in the sanctuary – the band needs to start rehearsing for the holidays, an upcoming folk musical service in January, and the annual FUUSN musician concert in February. The band typically rehearses after services on Sundays in the sanctuary. There were no objections to band rehearsals.
- Coming of age food/snacks – Amanda
 - Mentors are fed prior to meeting, 6-7 p.m.
 - KIds have been having a snack at 8 p.m. in the kitchen.
 - Youth – she would like to offer pizza from 11:30 a.m. – noon, probably in head start kitchen if too cold to be outside.
 - Pre-school and nursery kids might have a snack
 - So far, only Coming of Age kids are required to be vaccinated; all RE teachers are required to be vaccinated.
 - She wonders if all youth should be required to be vaccinated because of indoor eating; no objections.
- Coffee hour
 - Susan – thinking that coffee hour should be discontinued for a while after the weather is unsuitable.
 - Lengthy discussion of whether to hold coffee hour and when
 - Susan proposed to hold coffee hour outdoors as long as possible; indoor coffeeshour would be discussed again at the December meeting. The consensus was to agree to this proposal

Board priorities, including:

- Transparency in social action donations to outside organizations
 - The Board is interested in the social action committee developing some kind of process (RFP) for applications to receive money; and deciding between these organizations. The committee needs to be transparent in these donations to the congregation. Eric will contact Peter Smith and Eileen Kurkoski to discuss.
 (Note: Money from the 2019 alternative gift fair was never disbursed to the organizations.)
 - Roll-out of the 8th principle
 - The Board is working on having the 8th principle adopted (racial justice)
 - They would like to have a vote to adopt it at the next annual meeting.
 - They are working on a way to roll it out to the congregation
 - Considering rolling out through committee chairs.
 - Susan is considering holding a committee chairs meeting in January or February
 - Suggestion to put out an informational item on the business list periodically.
 - Suggestion to have Amanda do a story for all ages on the 8th principle
 - Erin – most UU congregations have already adopted the 8th principle, so FUUSN is behind on this.
- Website – being worked on, no discussion at this time.

Update: Committee activities

- Membership coordinator search & Membership committee
 - There is one candidate for the membership coordinator who looks strong; has had a telephone interview with the search committee and will be having a hybrid interview tomorrow. Another candidate has recently submitted an application but is less strong than the first.
 - Wayne is still working on developing committee actions and is hoping that someone will step up to be chair (hasn't happened yet).
- Consider combining MC and ADRE positions into one FT position – Amanda would like to stay with the ½ time Asst. RE Director for now; if someone hired and is doing well, consider adding the additional MC duties.
- Holiday fair – still looking for chairs for bake sale and book sales.
- Christmas trees – Eric – needs to get word out. Delivery is still planned for 8 a.m. Black Friday. He has hired young professional movers to help with unloading the trees.

Thank yous – for Yard Sale – Connie Stubbs, Denise Bousquet, Ruth Comstock, Sandy Jones, Laurel Farnsworth. Wayne and Marlene, and Jeannie Chaisson for bringing coffee.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 p.m.