

OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES Final

February 15, 2022
Via Zoom online

Attending via Zoom: Susan Bartlett, Laurel Farnsworth, Jud Leonard, Karen Bottar, Wayne Everett, Stephanie Kendall (BOT), Heather Beasley Doyle, Amanda Graff (until 8:45 p.m.), Eric Haas, Curt Lamb (until 7:30 p.m.), Linda Ross (asst clerk)

Called to order 7:03 p.m.

Invocation/Chalice Lighting/Reading – Wayne

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:

- Karen moved and Laurel seconded that the January minutes be approved. Unanimous approval, motion passed.
- By email – On January 21, Susan sent out a draft of a statement from the Ops Council, BOT, and minister regarding the status of the building re-opening and COVID.
- By email – on February 1, Susan sent an email with Newton January COVID numbers, and suggested that a decision on re-opening be re-visited around February 10. All members were in agreement with this suggestion.
- By email – on February 7, Susan sent an email with a request from Heather Beasley Doyle to hold 2 outdoor events in April. All were in agreement and the request was approved.
- By email – on February 11, Susan sent an email with updated Newton COVID numbers, and suggested that FUUSN re-open and hold services in the sanctuary on February 20. All were in agreement (including Erin, Amanda, and Demi); the re-opening date was approved.
- By email – Eric asked a follow up question about whether masks would be required and whether there would be singing. Erin and Anne Watson Born indicated that masks would be required and singing would occur, both by the choir and the congregation.

Staff Update

Amanda

- RE is shifting back to the building, so she is figuring out where to have the children meet. She will be using the basement rooms, and trying to avoid using the Parish Hall.
- They are hiring one teacher to do OWL
- She will be looking for a nursery care provider.
- There will be a Newton Neighbors Diaper Drive, to be distributed through Newton Access on May 14. For the preceding 2 weeks, diapers would be collected.. They asked if they could use FUUSN for storage; the chapel or nursery would work, per Amanda. There is universal support for this from the staff. Laurel moves that FUUSN

be the warehouse for the diaper drive; Eric seconded. Unanimous approval, motion passed.

Heather

- Some new members will be welcomed on April 10
- There will be an update to the website – she only obtained access yesterday. She will be setting up a task force to look at the website and see what is needed.
- She has been in touch with the budget drive people re using Realm.
- They will be looking at the membership committee and how it is structured
- She and Erin are looking at having a trauma workshop in the spring, as we come out of the pandemic.
- She encourages everyone to put their photo on Realm
- She is giving a reflection on radical hospitality on Feb. 27.
- She will be sending out a membership survey the week of Feb. 28.

Summer services – Curt Lamb

- Still not sure about the format (Zoom or in person) – the hybrid model is not feasible due to staff shortages in the summer.
- Several people made suggestions- alternate Zoom with in-person services; hold services outdoors at a different location to avoid noise from the Pike; have services on Facebook live.
- Options will be considered by the summer services committee.

BOT January meeting – Susan

- Laurel came and talked about the cost (\$200,000+) and issues of making a parking lot. Nothing new from Robert Korff.
- Budget drive – Kate Thibeault, Nancy Stanton, Dan Stoll, and Barbara Niles will be running the drive.
 - Goal is 5% increase over last year
 - March 6 will be budget drive launch
- Board priorities
 - How to lead the congregation through time of uncertainty with departures of several people
- Interim minister timeline
 - February – a brief formal application is submitted
 - March and April – FUUSN puts together a package about the society
 - Early May – a list of possible interims is received from the UUA, the committee will be interviewing candidates and making an offer. Search committee is Stephanie Kendall, Chris Krebs, Barbara Schmitt, Naomi Wolfe.
- Nominating committee – Elaine Becker, Suzanne Buchko, Christian Dame, Julia Huston, Mark Leicester

Financial - Karen

- January expenditures – she made some adjustments, e.g. Dorshei will not be here for the spring and income therefore deleted.
- The projected deficit is about \$50,000; about the same as in the original budget.
 - Forecast expenses have been adjusted down in RE and membership which help offset the reduction in income from the cancellation of the winter services auction
- BOI restricted endowments

- This subject came up during a discussion of whether some of these funds could be used for website development (e.g., Wayside pulpit fund)
- Apparently small funds can be moved, with the approval of the state. These funds currently total about \$200,000 total. Funds must be greater than 20 years old and less than \$75,000 each to be eligible.

Building and Grounds FY 23 Budget – Laurel

- She reviewed the budget narrative for the proposed B & G budget
- Budget includes a raise for Henry (maintenance)
- Will re-visit utilities in May when more is known about expenses
- Some discussion of the budget and major maintenance for the future.

Continue reopening FUUSN building

- Masking for FUUSN
 - Discussion
 - Suggestion to remain masked for now
 - Vaccination status of FUUSNites not known.
 - Newton schools will likely drop masks in a month or so
 - Need to think ahead to the time when masks are no longer used
- Coffee hour
 - One option would be to have indoor coffee hour without the coffee; re-name as Social Hour
 - Could drink coffee through a straw slipped under the mask
 - Suggestion to involve Erin in the final decision
- Consensus – coffee hour outside this coming Sunday, will talk to Erin next week, consider indoor social hour Feb. 27.
- Renters
 - Have been asked to follow state and local mandates.
 - Pre-school; children are too young to be vaccinated and will be wearing masks

Update: Committee activities

- Social Action
 - Eric and Susan had a Zoom session with Peter and Eileen a couple of weeks ago, discussing accountability
 - They do have a clear process for deciding who receives funds
 - Peter wrote up a document detailing the process of how money is dispersed. This being read by Ops Council, members, and then will go to the board.
 - Money collected at Alternative Gift Fair in 2019 was never dispersed; folder containing the information has apparently been lost and is being looked for. There was a suggestion to dispense funds pro rata based on 2018 figures. The Ops Council will continue to monitor the situation.
- WiFi and phones
 - They are not working well for the FUUSN staff
 - Verizon Fios provides phones and internet
 - Routers may be old and may need to be replaced
 - Heather has found it difficult to connect to the internet in certain areas of the building
 - There are only two landlines in the building; raising the possibility for confidential conversations to be heard if a phone picked up
 - Staff should not have to use their personal cell phones at work

- Jud
 - Agrees that another landline would be beneficial
 - Internet – needs some investigation to see if the problem is in the building or routers

Wayne – next week, will be contacting people who asked for Zoom information during the pandemic. With Heather, they will also be doing a reach out to people who may have drifted away during COVID.

Thank yous –none.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 p.m.