

**[FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN NEWTON
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
April 8, 2014**

Present:

Board: Charlie Watts, Bobbie Sproat, Strom Thacker

Staff: Erin Splaine, Perry Montrose, Meghan Cefalu,

Absent: Maura Hess-Mahan, Ann Woodbury, Jonathan Reuman, Cathy Morocco, Michael Costello

Clerk: Sheila Ardery

Guests: Jonathan Lillienfeld, Andrea Kelley

Introductions and Check In

The Board members read the covenant and lit the candle. Bobbie provided the inspirational reading.

Note: It was noted that the Board did not have an official quorum; as a result, no official votes were taken.

The Annual Budget Drive

Jonathan Lillienfeld attended the meeting and presented the Board with a general update. The budget drive started earlier than usual this year, so comparing the numbers to last year at this time is difficult. Jonathan provided the following information as of April 8th: the drive has reached 83.3% of the goal of \$585,000 and 76.9% of the 350 participation goal. The drive is now in its second phase. Fifty one families that pledged last year have not yet pledged this year which represents \$35K of last year's pledge amounts. The success of the Drive depends on the ability to reach the remaining members and friends who pledged last year. Jonathan explained how this stage will be conducted with outreach to these families and asked for any other ideas to make it a success.

Charlie asked how this plays to the May 3rd celebration and when does the drive end. Jonathan said that he expected that the drive will end in the beginning of May, but it was agreed that setting a specific date would not necessarily be productive. The party communication can be an opportunity to promote the campaign, including the message that it is extremely helpful to have the information for planning next year's budget.

May 3rd Party

The estimate is 150 attendees. This is about how many people can fit into the parish hall. If it is nice, we could use the outdoor space. Bobbie reported on the food choices. She stated that there were two choices: American Flatbreads - a traveling pizza oven, or Blue Ribbon BBQ. The budget is \$2163 and we will ask people to bring a beverage, dessert, or appetizer. There were two options for bands, Route 66 and White Collar Crime. The proposed time now is 5:30-9:00, with Blue Ribbon BBQ followed by White Collar Crime.

Approval of the Minutes

Bobbie reported that the minutes were approved unanimously by prior email vote.

Staff Update

Perry reported that the Youth service went really well. The COA candidates are working on their credos. The multigenerational book group is up to 20. Two monks visited FUSN and over 50 people came to each of their sessions on Mindfulness meditation practice. One youth RE Sunday was devoted to a music workshop; the kids were assigned to groups by age and went to different music workshops. The goal is to help RE instructors introduce music into their class sessions.

Perry is still working on solidifying the RE support circles and it is an interesting challenge for the transition period in the next three months. Rebecca and Perry pulled together a group of youth to go out to dinner together and it was a great success.

After three RE conversations, Mark Kaufman designed a poster that will be blown up and posted in the parish hallway for RE engagement and recruitment.

Meghan has attended nine ABD pledge parties. The parties spurred an interest in further dinners and there is a plan to reinstitute the dinners for seven. Nancy DuVergne Smith, Communications chair, and Meghan are looking at creating a constant contact e-newsletter instead of the pdf form of newsletter we have now. It would have several advantages, among them live links to various parts of the FUSN website. The next priority is the website: some changes and tweaks will be made in the near future to improve it, and a major overhaul of the website is projected for the next fiscal year, 2015-2016.

Erin and Meghan went on retreat and it was an excellent and productive time together. Everything UU had ten participants in this last round. A number have requested membership applications. The next newcomers' potluck is this Saturday, April 12. The next new member welcoming ceremony is May 18. That service will include recognition of the longest-term members as well.

Erin reported that the big focus of her attention is planning related to Perry's leaving. Also, she and the staff are working on a new initiative to foster conversations that will deepen our understanding of cross cultural issues. This theme will be blended into events and themes at FUSN in the next year. The plan is to do some big work in the beginning of the year and move into small conversations as time goes on. The goal is to determine how we can deepen our understanding of each other and ourselves.

In addition to replacing Perry, the search has begun to replace Rebecca. For the DLRE position, the first step is to have an acting RE director while searching for a permanent replacement. There has been outreach to several potential acting directors. The permanent person coming in will be strengthening the model of circles that Perry brought to FUSN.

Retreat report

Charlie reported that the Board and staff spent six hours together on Saturday, April 5th. Rev. John Millspaugh led the group through a process that ultimately described what FUSN is about today and what it might look like in two to four years. Interestingly, at the end of the day, when the group turned to the question of how we get from "here to there," it appeared that a number of key "catalysts" are already underway. However, the group agreed that it will be important to evaluate ongoing efforts in the context of the elements (vision and challenges) articulated during the retreat. The retreat concluded with the development of a list of short term action steps that will help to shape the work of

next year's board. More communication about the retreat will be forthcoming in the newsletter and other channels.

Ministerial Review Committee

Cathy had submitted a memo for the Board to review. It stated that the committee had good participation in the congregational meetings. Cathy outlined a list of expectations for the committee as it completes its process. The Board reviewed and discussed the draft memo.

Budget

Charlie led a discussion on the depth of involvement of the Board in critiquing the budget. It was noted that the real work of the budget is done in the Ops Council. Strom noted that the Board is bound by the by-laws to approve the budget and there should be time for the Board to review it. Charlie is going to request an "advanced preview" before the May meeting. Erin stated that it should not be an effort that takes away the responsibility of the Ops Council in shaping the budget. Andrea stated that this is an interesting area for both groups to be clear on and what the lines of responsibility are and why. Erin stated that there was a retreat session where these lines were determined and it feels like we might be going backwards with a stronger input from the Board. Charlie clarified that all the Board is trying to do is to understand the "story" and ensure that it is consistent with the Board's intent. Erin stated that the results of the retreat were written and it would be good to revisit. Charlie will follow the lead of the Ops Council and reconnect about the guidelines.

Conflict Resolution Committee

Erin reported that there is a group that has developed a plan based on the recommendations of the conflict transformation team. Details will follow in the May meeting.

Financial Oversight Committee

Strom reported that the committee is ready to be "staffed." Strom recommended that a Board member who is going to be on the Board next year launch the committee by recruiting another two members from the congregation to populate the committee. The committee should be formed in the next month or two so that it can be operating in the new year.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Ardery