

FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN NEWTON
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
November 12, 2013

Present:

Board: Charlie Watts, Strom Thacker, Ann Woodbury, Jonathan Reuman, Bobbie Sproat, Cathy Morocco, Maura Hess-Mahan, Erin Splaine, Perry Montrose

Absent: Michael Costello

Clerk: Sheila Ardery

Guests: Susan Bartlett

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Introductions and Check In

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

Approval of the Minutes

Strom moved that the October 8th minutes be accepted. They were approved unanimously.

New Member

Shannon Vyff and Michael Trice submitted their application for membership. They moved here recently and started to come to FUSN this summer. They have four children. She was a former DRE in Texas. Bobbie moved to approve and it was approved unanimously.

Meeting of Committee Chairs report

Cathy Morocco provided a written report and stated the following: The meeting of the committee chairs was a very "alive" meeting. She reported on the energy and inventiveness. She noted that there was a discussion on how to give youth more independence and involvement in FUSN life. She noted that Nancy is thinking of asking people to do specific things to increase involvement with the website. Cathy was struck, however, by the fact that most reports were internally focused, prompting a discussion about the role and importance of outreach into the broader community. The group agreed this issue has implications for the focus of the new assistant minister and the Board's longer-term strategic planning process.

Capital Campaign Planning

Bobbie reported on a phone call with Charlie, Laurel Farnsworth, and Susan Bartlett to a UUA fundraising consultant, about the possibility of following the UUA's process and using its consultants for our next capital campaign. They were impressed with his knowledge and strategy. The next step will be phone interviews with two possible consultants who would work directly with the FUSN team. This is the beginning of a plan to kick off a campaign in 2015.

Staff Report

Perry reported that he was just with the COA leadership meeting. There is an expanded team that covers all the aspects of COA to discuss what's happening in each of the areas and plan out the next couple of months. The planning is a more integrative process.

The Halloween Party was a success. The youth were involved in creating the haunted house. About 70 people attended the party.

Alice Wood and Perry went to RE Renaissance Module. There were workshops etc. on Adult RE addressing content, structure and purpose, etc.

In creating programming for the youth, they also want to consider how to respond to the topics of the moment, such as the teen suicides in Newton. Perry stated that FUSN is in communication with service groups such as Riverside Counseling on topics of suicide, depression, etc. in planning programs. The grades did different things in relation to Veteran's Day in the past week as well.

Erin stated that things are continuing on fairly well. Attendance is strong and steady at 200-250. There are two memorial services coming up between now and mid-December and it shows how we are butting up against building use. We have a memorial service on Friday the 13th in the evening, because there is no space availability to do it at a more appropriate time. The Operations Council needs to reflect on this and come to some decisions on building use, which may impact income. Erin also emphasized the important of effective planning for Meghan's arrival, including a concentrated effort by the Board and Ops Council given the importance of this event in FUSN life.

Charlie reflected on the goal of having her "hit the ground running" and asked what the Board can do to facilitate that. Erin stated that the Board could be helpful in conveying the opportunity of her arrival through general communication as well as specific events (such as a Come Meet Meghan evening, for example). There is also need to refurbish her office prior to her arrival. Ann suggested that we have a point person on the Board to coordinate with other groups in planning her arrival. **Bobbie accepted that responsibility.** Charlie suggested that it would be helpful to have some general talking points for the Board and the Ops Council to help support the process.

Erin noted that the By Laws only refer to one minister and that needs to be reviewed so that we stay within the word and spirit of the By Laws as Meghan takes on responsibilities.

Ministerial Evaluation

Ann reported that there are three volunteers for the committee so far with two more weeks for nominations. Ann requested that we think of the skill sets we need and send her nominations, as we need five total. Cathy added it would be great to have someone who had young children. Erin asked if there was a possibility to have six and have one be a youth. They would like to have more nominations than five so that we have a pool to pick from. Cathy and Ann will send out the list of names and their recommendations. The discussion and decision will be made at the December meeting.

Cathy explained that there are just a couple of questions (that will form the heart of the evaluation) but they would be asked in different contexts, such as at an open question forum. The committee would have to synthesize the conversations. Cathy said they are considering using a case scenario to focus the conversation. With Meghan coming in we also want to think about how it will create a field of energy that she can step into, and how it will provide information we can use in strategic planning. There are a

lot of questions to sort out. Cathy and Ann are open to ideas as they move to communicate it to the committee that will operationalize it.

Charlie raised a concern that, as we start talking about the larger issues, we might be heading into some of the problems the last review faced. Ann stated that the topics are focused on positive growth issues. The emphasis is on collaboration and growth. Charlie said he just felt that it has a broader scope than giving feedback to Erin. Erin stated that it's a delicate balance in finding out how people feel about FUSN now and how Erin fits into that. Erin wants to know what is helpful to think about as her role, what is the role of the congregation, and where do they merge and where do they go separately. Cathy stated that around each question, it will be asked what is the role of the minister and what is the role of the congregation and what team work is necessary. Erin stated that it is important to voice things that individuals are not happy about and we can sift through it afterwards. Strom asked if there is a way for someone to say something outside of general meetings if they don't want to speak in public. Cathy said we need to manage expectations about the purpose of this exercise. Ann and Cathy have had conversations with congregations and ministers that have undertaken this process.

Charlie thanked Ann and Cathy and stated the BOT needs to provide nominations and this is an ongoing process and we have time to sort more of it out.

Annual Budget Drive

The co-chairs are wondering if the priorities are set. In addition, the Finance Committee sent the BOT a request for priorities for the next FY. Strom stated that it came up at the Ops Council and the request is to have the priorities stated soon. The three priorities he stated were supporting the Assistant Minister position, eliminating the structural deficit, and reducing our draw on the endowment to 3% a year. Cathy stated that we need to make sure that Meghan doesn't feel this pressure of raising her salary. We need a bigger story about our needs. Charlie stated that this year's challenge for fundraising is a little different from "let's go buy something". It has more to do with our commitment to our vision – funding and sustaining our vision, in a responsible and sustainable way. **Charlie said that he would write up a statement of priorities and pass it out for comment. He will sit down with the co-chairs to make sure they feel comfortable with this direction.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:35.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Ardery

Clerk