

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

Present:

Board: Gordon Moriarty, Strom Thacker, Ann Woodbury, Jonathan Reuman, Carl Metzger, Bruce Henderson, Margaret Costello, Charlie Watts

Staff: Erin Splaine, Perry Montrose

Clerk: Wendy Atamian

Absent: Alan Cody, Conrad Buys

Charlie provided an inspirational reading after the Board read the covenant and Gordon lit the chalice. Members shared joys and concerns.

Approval of the Minutes

The January 8th, 2013 minutes were approved unanimously, with Strom abstaining as he was not at the meeting.

New Members Vote

Gordon asked for a motion to approve Thom Theara and Rachel Viscomi as members after reading a short biography on Tom. **Carl moved and the motion was approved unanimously.**

Recognition of Colby Gift

Jackie Colby has donated her "Baby Grand Piano" to FUSN. Gordon wrote a letter of thanks and appreciation and passed it around for the Board Members to sign.

Staff reports

Perry presented updates on the new team model of having more than 2 teachers for each RE class. It is looking successful so far. There have been at least 3 teachers if not 4 for most of the grades. It has allowed many of the previous teachers to continue teaching, knowing they have backup and support and enabling them to attend some of the Sunday services.

COA program changes are being considered: This year, Perry met with the 7th grade youth and parents about the concept of COA Comparative Religion classes beginning in the second half of 7th grade. They loved the idea and he has a tentative schedule for March through May. Parents have signed up to chaperone, and they have already lined up visits. They are looking to include Hindu, Islam, Native American, Jewish, and Baptist (Myrtle) groups or congregations, among some others. On March 10th, there will be a COA visioning meeting for all to attend. Perry is meeting with current and former COA leaders and teachers to gather feedback before that meeting.

Adult Education Committee is looking for new ideas including life topics, transitions, and small group seminars. There is a program for the Life Cycle, and flyers are available so new members can see what is offered.

Erin noted her recent attendance at the UU Ministers Association Institute with other UU Ministers was intense, rejuvenating, and invigorating for her as well as an opportunity for her to worship with her peers. She also noted that there are a lot of pastoral needs in the congregation and she asked for feedback about cancelling last weeks Sunday service due to the weather.

Executive Session Called

BOI Policy Vote

A revised version of the BOI Policy and Operating Procedures had been circulated prior to the meeting for review. Gordon noted that the target annual return definition was modified in response to the Board's inquiry. No discussion. **Motion to approve the revision, seconded and unanimously approved.**

BOT Newsletter Topics

There are 2 newsletters a month. The Board discussed possible topics for future submissions. Gordon asked Board members to provide ideas by email. Some suggestions included:

- Snapshots on what the BOT is working on.
- A bio on how each BOT member came to be a UU.

Nominating Committee/Leadership Development Committee (LDC)-New BOT Members

As the number of members on the Board decreases over the next few years, everyone agreed the make-up of the Board is critical. The congregation will be voting on two new members for next year. Ann met with Adrian Bishop and Jonathon Lillienfeld from the LDC, and they agreed the LDC committee should be helping to educate those considering Board service as well as new members after they have joined the Board. They felt the LDC could help orient new Board members, provide leadership training and mentoring, and identify the skill sets needed in new Board members. They will come to a BOT meeting in the spring to discuss. The Board discussed demographic variables to consider in identifying new candidates for the Board, i.e., diversity by age, gender identification, minority status, sexual preference, long-term vs new members, critical thinking skills, commitment and connection, collegiality, and communications skills. The BOT discussed the importance of being able to articulate to candidates what being a BOT member means, as well as having some written materials to provide new members. Ann will contact Bill Horne to discuss bringing these concepts to the Nominating Committee and will report back to the Board.

Open Questions unpacking

Ann summarized the Board's first three Open Questions sessions that Gordon published in the FUSN Newsletter. The focus of those three meetings was on growth at FUSN. The BOT members reiterated their commitment to continue to hold open question sessions. Expected in the next year is the topic related to changing FUSN name requested by Alan Hartman.

Visioning

Charlie and Jon have been working on preparing a vision statement based upon input from Board members. Discussion centered on whether the vision statement was the BOT's vision for FUSN or the congregation's vision for FUSN. All agreed the vision statement should help guide Board decisions. The version offered by Jon and Charlie focused on the core values of Community, Social Action and Spirituality. Next steps are for Jon and Charlie to reflect on the evening's discussion, and at the next meeting they will present a further draft that they hope will be ready for use, acknowledging that it is and should be changed as needed over time.

Growth Framework

Jon is looking at a framework to support our goals generically referred to as "growth." Now that FUSN membership has reached the numbers of a Program Congregation, there needs to be financial growth to

support the staff and programs. Jon asked how to keep what is great about FUSN as the congregation grows. Erin expressed that she is hoping to go “deeper” in our mutual engagement, not just bigger, and maintain our core values while at the same time growing numerically. The focus must be on quality vs. quantity.

Bruce then talked about a stewardship workshop he attended. Some concepts suggested there include developing a rolling 4-5 year plan that covers all budget priorities. He suggested we update the mission statement every 2 years and not focus on need but on teaching generosity. The workshop he attended also introduced a UUA program called FORTH to share best practices among congregations interested in improving their focus on stewardship. To join the FORTH program, FUSN needs to have 5 or more congregational leaders to fill out a short assessment survey and agree to the FORTH covenant. These people will then be added to the FORTH Facebook group to discuss stewardship ideas for congregations.

By-Laws

Gordon noted the first congregational meeting to review changes to the By-Laws went well. The By-Laws Committee received particular feedback from Tom Bean, Didi Vittori, and Dan Brody. The Committee discussed a change in FUSN’s fiscal year end to June 30 but the Finance Committee raised concerns about how and why to do this. Some of the specific issues that were raised in the first congregational meeting were why BOT members are proposed to be term limited and Ops Council members are not. The need for institutional knowledge on the Ops Council is important. A comment was raised in that first meeting that suggested the financial oversight function should be independent of the Board, however, the Committee felt, and the Board agreed that the proposed financial oversight committee is not intended to audit the functioning of the Board but rather the financial well-being of the Society. There will be another congregational meeting regarding the By-Laws on Monday, February 25th. After that, the By-Laws Committee will be presenting the latest changes to the BOT by email for vote. On March 17th the congregation will gather in a special meeting of members for a vote. Alan Hartman suggested the By-Laws be revised to include language that implies a financial obligation be associated with be a member. This appeared to be a larger issue requiring a greater opportunity for the Board and the congregation to ponder and debate. It also appeared to be unrelated to the new governance structure, which was the main reason for this round of By-Laws amendments.

Budget Priorities/ABD

Bruce presented an update. His co-chair, Josie Greene, has set up 17 Pledge Parties so far. There is a need for Steward Callers who will call 6-8 people and steer them to a party. Margaret, Jon and Gordon volunteered to help recruit them. Bruce introduced the idea of having the equivalent of small group pledging parties during the Fellowship dinner. Jon suggested using EVITE. Party hosts have been sending out emails as well.

Bruce requested help in setting messages for the budget drive’s Goals and Giving Guide. Charlie offered to help. Ideas floated around ways to motivate giving. This led to a discussion about the decision of Kristin Cleveland, FUSN’s Membership Coordinator, to resign at the end of this church year, noting it presents an opportunity for a new position of Assistant Minister for Membership & Congregational Engagement. Erin pointed out that this long arc in growth and engagement can be regarded as part Gerry Krick’s legacy. The importance of retaining elements of the Membership Coordinator’s job was noted. Kristin plans to meet with the Membership Committee to discuss the varied aspects of her service to the congregation so those functions are not lost.

Erin is looking into an appropriate salary range for an assistant minister based on UUA guidelines. She will follow up with Alan and the Personnel Policy Committee. The concept of hire-to-call was discussed, wherein the assistant minister is hired by the senior minister, in consultation with the Board, PPC, Ops

Council, and Membership Committee, and stays for 1-2 years, after which time, if it is a good fit for all, the assistant minister would be called to stay. Erin would like to narrow the candidates and then bring them to a small committee hopefully by May.

A motion was made to endorse the concept of searching for an assistant minister for membership and congregational engagement and for Erin to provide the Board with expected ranges in the cost of salary and benefits. Before the vote, Carl raised concerns regarding need to consult with the Ops Council and Finance Committee.

Revised Motion: The Board endorses the pursuit of the minister's proposal for an Assistant Minister to be engaged on a hire-to-call basis and authorizes Erin to move forward with developing the job description and financial cost, both to be vetted by the Ops Council, Finance Committee and the PPC, and to provide the same to the BOT by email for the BOT to review and vote.

Seconded and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Atamian

Substitute Clerk