

**The First Unitarian Society in Newton
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
June 9, 2015**

PRESENT:

Board: Brian Burba; Gregg DiBiaso; Eric Haas; Julianna Lakomski, Youth; Becca Lozinsky, Youth; Cathy Morocco; Lesley Sneddon, Vice-Chair; Bobbie Sproat, Chair.

Staff: Erin Splaine, Minister (by telephone); Rowan Van Ness, Director of Lifespan Religious Education.

Clerk: Sue Skoler

Members of the Congregation: Susan Bartlett, Representing the Ops Council; Dana Hanson; and Eileen Kurkowski

INVOCATION & CHALICE LIGHTING:

Lesley lit the Chalice, and Bobbie introduced the newer Board members to the Covenant and led the group in reciting the Covenant. Lesley read an inspirational reading.

INTRODUCTIONS AND CHECK-IN:

The Board and Staff individually introduced themselves to the group and told something about their involvement with FUSN or their history with Unitarian Universalism.

PROCEDURAL:

Bobbie asked if any of the new members were not yet official members of FUSN. To serve on the BOT, a person must be a member of FUSN. Julianna was not a member, so she filled out the necessary paperwork, and the Board voted to accept her membership.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Bobbie and Lesley have agreed to serve as Co-Chairs. The vote to make them Co-Chairs was unanimous.

There was a discussion about the idea of a Board Chair serving for two years, so that the learning of the first year as Chair could benefit the second year of service. One model is to have a first year Board member serve as Vice Chair, then become chair in their second year and continue on as chair into their third year. The benefit of this model is the continuity of leadership and accumulated knowledge. A second possible

model is for the 2nd-year-member chair to become chair emeritus in their 3rd year and serve the new 2nd year chair as advisor.

Brian and Eric were both hesitant to be Vice-Chair because neither could promise to serve as Chair the next year. After some discussion Brian agreed to take the position. Once again the vote for Brian to serve as Vice-Chair was unanimous.

There was brief consideration of moving the BOT meetings to Thursdays instead of Tuesdays. In the end, in order to best accommodate members' schedules, it was decided to continue to hold BOT meetings on second Tuesday of each month.

STAFF REPORTS/UPDATES:

Rowan Van Ness, DLRE:

Rowan announced that we are only one teacher shy (3rd Grade) of having a complete slate of teachers for next Fall. They had a successful RE Sunday. Now that she is the official DLRE, she has lots of ideas about new things that could be implemented to strengthen the RE program and what the RE priorities should be. She recently met with just the RE Council, and they brainstormed some new ideas for teacher orientation. When mentors in the COA program have had the opportunity to meet with one another, it seems to strengthen the COA program. She thinks the same concept of having more interaction between the RE teachers might also be beneficial. They are currently in the process of hiring a Youth Coordinator. She asked whether Board approval might be possible in July. Bobbie said a decision could probably be accomplished by email among Board members in July if needed. Rowan closed by saying that we ended the year with more children registered for RE this year over last year. We ended the year with approximately 150 registered children.

Erin Splaine, Minister:

Erin initially talked about General Assembly and the good group that will be representing FUSN. She indicated she thought it would be a very productive General Assembly. She then talked about what an incredibly difficult year it had been for all at FUSN in staff and leadership positions, and she praised Bobbie for her leadership.

Erin then discussed FUSN's need for both the congregation and its leadership to do some work around "right relations" (a UU term), a term referring to how we relate to one another and work with one another in difficult situations. This is particularly important when we disagree with one another.

She noted there had been some unpleasant things said to and about a candidate at the Annual Meeting. She feels she and/or the Board needs to address this issue with the congregation, after some individual conversations are had.

The board members discussed in detail their varying understanding of and reactions to the events of the annual meeting. The discussion was wide-ranging and helped all board members come to a common understanding of what transpired. There was a clear consensus to prioritize improving congregational relations (including the “right relations” work), to understand how to better develop a congregational covenant, and to ensure the board keeps in mind all various perspectives on the issues surrounding the annual meeting in the coming year.

COMMITTEE – CHAIR APPOINTMENTS:

All Approved Unanimously

Finance Committee Co-Chairs: Karen Bottar, Brian Gill

RE Council Chair: Kim Shanks

Buildings & Grounds: Laurel Farnsworth

Welcoming Congregation Assessment Team: Bethany Allen, Karen Burns, Chris Gaebler, Pamela McA’Nulty, Judy Zacek

SCHEDULING:

Some discussion took place regarding the various jobs that need to be filled by members of the BOT. These include rotating the responsibilities of:

1. A Board or Ops presence at every summer service.
2. A Board member to offer the welcome and any announcements at each regular service during the year.
3. A representative of the Board to attend each Ops Council meeting.
4. Gregg agreed to attend the Ops Council meeting on June 10, 2015.
5. Writing the Board’s Column for each newsletter.
6. Bringing refreshments and an opening reading to Board meetings.

Bobbie passed around a sign-up sheet for BOT members’ email addresses, home and mobile phone numbers and an indication of which September weekends they might be available for a Board Retreat. Brian indicated it might be possible to have a Board Retreat at his summer place. Lesley also indicated that it might be possible to have a Board Retreat at their Cape House.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board adjourned into executive session to consider a personnel issue.

After returning to regular session, the Board voted unanimously to approve a change in how the minister’s compensation is allocated between salary and housing in the FY15-16 budget, as requested by Erin. This represents a change in allocation only; the total

compensation amount remains as outlined in the budget presented and approved at the June 7, 2015 Annual Meeting.

CLOSE:

No meeting is scheduled for July. The next BOT meeting will be on Tuesday, August 11th.

It is hoped that by the August meeting, more Board members will know their Fall schedules and it will be easier to fill in the schedule of responsibilities and to determine a date for the Board Retreat.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sue F. Skoler, Clerk