

**First Unitarian Society of Newton
Board of Trustees
January 12, 2010**

Present: Dede Vittori, Pat Rohan, Adrian Bishop, Alan Cody, Jonathan Lillienfeld, Barney Freiberg-Dale, Pamela McA'nulty, Susan Bartlett, Jeannie Chaisson, Lesley Sneddon, (Clerk); also present: John Nichols, Barb Greve, Laurel Farnsworth

Meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM

Invocation/Chalice Lighting (Adrian)

Covenant

As we, the members of this Board 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 Board; to uphold the democratic process; and to lead with goodwill and faith in the work we can accomplish together.

New Members (Adrian)

Garren Corbett – defer to membership committee; complication due to his living on the west coast.

John Brennan: motion, second; no discussion; motion carried unanimously.

John Nichols – suggests new procedure for new members: either membership chair or minister would have a conversation prior to voting. Procedure was in place but has drifted over time. Need to discuss expectations of membership.

Administrative (Adrian)

- Use of online calendar (Jonathan): proposed because it is easier to keep track if all the BOT activities and assignments are centralized. **Action item: Jonathan will load the calendar; individuals are responsible for updating it.**
- Appeal for Stewardship co-chairs (Pat): needs help trying to find Annual Budget Drive co-chairs for next year. Pat has approached several people and none are able to do it; an alternative is that David and Linda recruit and groom the new co-chairs. **Action item: Pat will ask David and Linda if they have ideas for their replacements.**
- Calling off services (Adrian): in lay-led service, what is procedure? John: mechanism is in the hands of the staff. Issue is that staff would have to be called at home, and if lay-led, phone numbers would be too widely available. Ops Council voted: minister makes the call; if lay-led, BOT chair or Ops council chair makes the call. There is a process already in place

for public communications. Decision: Ops Council chair will make the decision. There are services which can call a large list of people simultaneously – see Barney for details.

Building Maintenance request (Laurel)

Request: As a result of several recent cost savings in major maintenance, Laurel requests that funds be expended on renovations of the children's chapel. OC recommends approval, but feels this is outside their purview. Funds will be used for large screen television, which will be closed off by curtain. Specific request:

- Authorize \$8500 from the Ann Bancroft Fund
- \$3000 from painting line item
- Accept \$13,500 anonymous donation to Ann Bancroft Fund.
- Authorize expenditure of the approximately \$8,700 left over from the major maintenance items already in the budget, bringing the total to be spent on the children's chapel in the \$33,500 range.

Motion to authorize above requests: carried unanimously.

Request: Deaccession the inoperable organ in children's chapel – offer to congregation, then put on craigslist.com. Repairs cost more than the organ is worth. Laurel has consulted Ann Watson Born, who agrees it should go.

Motion to deaccession the organ and authorize up to \$300 for moving expenses if required. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget Process Review (all)

- Review of budget guidelines document: comments were incorporated from last month's discussion; \$50K line item should be accounted for. OC sent recommendations that were also incorporated. Pledges have declined since 2006 – must address this.
- Review process document:
 - Guidelines should be reviewed, updated and re-issued every year.
 - Discussion regarding balanced budget recommendation: should be within 2% plus or minus. Recommendation: cap surplus at a certain amount; remainder transfer to endowment? Need to define cash reserve before moving surplus to endowment. Board of Investment guidelines recommend 2% cash reserves.
 - Current monthly statements are difficult to gauge because some expenses are very variable, and some income is also variable. Is there a way to show expected vs actuals? Very time-consuming to do this. Instead, distribute numbers more broadly so different components can be assessed by committees who know those numbers better. Also time-

consuming. **Action item: Alan will ask Finance Committee for advice on how to get a better picture of actuals vs expected.**

- Vote: motion to accept budget guidelines: motion carried unanimously
- Budget process:
 - Timeline: draft guidelines in December; approve in January meeting
 - Discussion ensued regarding Finance Committee presentation of projections – to whom when? Issues: a) desire for Finance Committee to avoid having to give multiple presentations, b) new governance structure gives budget development responsibility to OC, but c) BOT has ultimate fiduciary responsibility and needs to see budget numbers prior to May; d) both BOT and OC need different information from Finance Committee and from Board of Investment (BOI). Eric Riak is currently scheduled to give a presentation at the February OC meeting.
 - Resolution: Eric should present to BOT meeting (rather than OC) in February, and OC members are invited to attend. Finance committee will present to OC and BOT is invited to attend. Dede and Alan will attend and take notes, then present to BOT at February meeting for those on BOT who could not attend. Recommend a financial summit in November.
 - **Action item – put November financial summit meeting in BOT calendar.**
 - OC also requires salary recommendations; will receive in for February or March meeting.

Board Retreat Priorities Update

- Social Action Initiative (Dede and Barney) – see Social Action portfolio distributed at meeting. Illustrates the number of volunteer number of hours per year (13,344) and dollars raised per year (\$50K). Still acquiring information on some areas. Presented information regarding congregational preferences from many sources, including Mission / Purpose workshops, 2006 Congregational Survey, Ministerial Survey, Listening Circles, and Governance focus groups. In “Faith into Action”, there was no consensus in congregation; it was a distant third after community and spirituality. No predominant theme. Not a lot of interest expressed for additional social action opportunities for families with children. Barney researched other congregations and their involvement; info was taken from web sites only, but web sites probably not completely representative. Found that FUSN is a leading congregation in social action. First Parish of Concord is ahead of us (among UU churches). Next month Dede and Barney will have a menu of ideas for the BOT to consider for social action policies, program goals, and options. . If we strengthen social action programs, perhaps FUSN can draw others into our community that we don’t have now; strengthen bond within FUSN; keep involvement of families beyond COA year. Send comments to Dede and Barney. GBIO brings together congregations for social action; provide training to become activists. FUSN is not currently a member, but Barney attends meetings. John – hook into a few projects that more members of the congregation can be

involved in. Our efforts are many but diffuse. Barney: Small number organizing, but number involved is much broader.

- Membership definition (Phil and Pamela): defer until next month
- Governance (Adrian, Sue and Jonathan):

- Policies – Jonathan:
 - OC policies regarding contracts: ensure competitive pricing and avoid conflicts of interest. Change to “major” rather than “all”.
 - Regarding monitoring Board of Investments; got feedback from BOI on the new language. No performance requirement on portfolio.
 - Personnel policies need to be revamped; not currently compliant with UUA.
 - Jonathan will email OC and BOT policies docs out again. Phil will send ends document when he returns. Vote will be taken next meeting.
 - Pat: what reports does OC make to BOT? Meeting minutes are acceptable. OC taking policies adopted by BOT and putting them up on the web site.
- Leadership Development Committee (Adrian) – researched Follen and Brookline. LDC would be an ongoing committee and would replace nominating committee and the committee on committees. Identify lay leaders (see handout). Adrian reviewed materials produced by Jeanne Crane Consulting. Good material. UUA Harvest the Power curriculum also good. First Parish in Brookline has a committee ministry. They do a skills inventory survey which has very good participation (over 50%). Next steps: assemble a group and ideas for training courses. Our by-laws require working with Nominating Committee. Will request nominating committee to start going in this direction. Will try to get LDC into effect next year.
- Conflict Resolution – grievance procedure: who does staff go to in case of grievance? First to minister, but if continued non-resolution, go to head of OC.

Meeting for Executive Session adjourned at 10:35 pm.

Executive Session:

Vote: motion to renew Barb Greve’s contract as interim DLRE for the 2010-2011 church year with the understanding that salary and benefits will be decided when the budget is formulated: motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Lesley Sneddon, Clerk

Action items

Carryover Action Items from Prior Year:

1. Begin discussions of fund raising for the organ (Judy)

New Action Items from August 12, 2008 meeting

1. Keep track of conflict of interest policies developed by UUA and evaluate them for adoption by FUSN

New Action Items from September 9, 2008 meeting

1. Remind the congregation of the ability to send comments and volunteer for things to the board via the e-mail system that is in place. Publicize answers to questions. **If we know the email address, we should post in the BOT section in the hallway and close this.**

New Action Items from August 11, 2009 meeting

1. Neither Alan nor the Assistant Treasurer is bonded. Suggest that this should be done.
2. Review end of year Balance Sheet and reconciliation and get any questions to Alan.