

**First Unitarian Society of Newton
Board of Trustees
April 12, 2011**

Present: Jonathan Lilienfeld, Alan Cody, Gordon Moriarty, Phil Davis, Barney Freiberg-Dale, Jeannie Chaisson, Pamela McA’Nulty, Carl Metzger, Margaret Costello, Susan Bartlett, Conrad Buys; also present: Barb Greve, Erin Splaine, Concetta Daurio, Kim Shanks, Rebekah Smilley, Jacqui James, Tom Bean, Kristin Cleveland.

Meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM

Invocation/Chalice Lighting

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.

Administrative (Jonathan Lilienfeld)

- Add budget drive discussion to agenda
- Vote on new members, move to membership discussion
- Anne Watson Born has a proposal for discussion
- Proposed next step in the congregational size process

Erin: Discussed plan to begin next year with a joint retreat with Personnel Policy Committee (Doug Zelinski from Mass Bay District of UUA), Operations Council and the Board, to make the final shift from pastoral level to program level in size and function of the congregation. The discussion will focus more on how we function rather than on growth per se, which will require a separate discussion. For example, programs are held here on Saturday mornings when no staff are present to answer questions. Growth in itself does not necessarily mean increase in revenue – our goal is one of deepening connection. FUSN has been experiencing fluctuating growth – in the period between 2002 – 2010, FUSN was listed as third in growth in the District. Last year FUSN was not listed at all.

Anne Watson Born’s proposal: Carey Shunskis was hired as director of Songweavers in September. Despite concerted effort by Ann and Carey to revitalize the children’s choir, there are only six members, and not all are at practice at the same time. Carey has expressed disappointment in the level of involvement despite their outreach. Carey has reached a decision to leave the position to continue her education. Rather than refill the position, Anne proposes we use those allocated funds for intergenerational choir or other musical endeavor. Funding decision is within purview of OC, who will discuss reallocation of the funds at their next meeting.

DLRE Search Committee update (Concetta Daurio)

- Concetta distributed some additional text to accompany materials sent previously by email. She summarized the results of the search committee's work, which included eight facilitated listening groups and a congregational survey. These results conveyed agreement that the RE program is effective and well organized; the congregation is proud of the COA program and adult RE programs, and support the children's RE program in its focus on providing a better understanding of the world's religions.
- Rebekah Smilley described the survey and presented the results. Survey questions were organized around 1) vision (how can you imagine the program 5 years from now?); 2) what is working or not working in the current program; 3) desired qualifications of new DLRE. Several themes emerged:
 - Sense of community: within RE program, integration within larger FUSN community, the broader Newton community. Creating intergenerational opportunities were seen as important for all communities.
 - Attrition between transition from COA to Youth Group.
 - Program themes:
 - pleased with comparative religion in both children's and adult programs
 - expressed desire for better support for teachers in the form of mentoring, curriculum support.
 - Qualities of new DLRE:
 - Ability to work well with youth and adults
 - motivator and inspirer – ability to inspire children, teachers, and volunteers to be teachers
 - special education experience
 - good administrator
- There was considerable overlap between listening circle and survey data. 8 different groups consisted of 56. Two groups were just COA parents; one was a youth group facilitated by Barb and Erin; remainder were more random.
- Concetta recognized Rebekah's and Kim's work, as well as Josh Cohen's work in developing the survey. Concetta summarized the major priorities identified for RE:
 - Children's program: moral identity, faith formation
 - Adult programs: faith and spiritual practice
 - Takeaway points: Community a strong theme. Congregation desires a community that is safe and value-based, has a strong UU identity, and is engaged in social action.
 - Requested improvements: more teachers in RE program; more integration of RE programs into worship and social action; Address attrition between COA and youth group; promote more youth

involvement through youth programming, including those outside the youth group.

- Pastoral care was not a stated priority, but staff stated that pastoral care is an integral part of their job. Really strong in UU principles and values.
- Title: Director of Faith Development Ministries – job description; spoke with Dwight Golann about hiring minister of RE rather than RE Director. Our bylaws don't specifically address this difference between hiring a staff member vs calling. Plan to recruit for director but seek those well-versed in pastoral care, UU principles, and theology.
- Next steps: finalize job description; timeline: final draft ready for submission to Karen Davis. Job description, description of RE program, and job announcement will be ready by the end of June. Will begin accepting applications through fall, begin interviews in the fall through December, with a plan to offer in spring. Materials will also go to Lareda (Liberal Religious Educators' Association) on October 23, where job announcements are made for following church year. Announcement through UUA, online and on other media will occur in June. Religious educators in general start new positions on July 1. Erin acknowledged the work of the committee.
- Kim Shanks spoke about the RE council, which will examine its role during the interim to increase its effectiveness at building community inside and outside the program. One sample structure of the council is to operate individual committees working on specific tasks. However, survey results suggest a need for supporting teachers and RE director. Survey results will be studied more fully, and the council will address issues raised through the survey.

SADC proposed charter for the Council for Social Action (Barney Freiberg-Dale)

- Question has arisen about matters of social witness, and is raised here because there is some inconsistency in language of the role of Operations Council vs Board of Trustees approval. Currently these issues are to go to OC for review but changes must be approved by Board. The question: must Council for Social Action members be FUSN members? Can the Council also include Friends? Some individuals very active in FUSN Social Action have chosen not be members for personal reasons. A straw poll was taken by the Board, with the majority of the opinion that people must commit to being a member in order to be on CSA, particularly since it involves statement of social witness. This statement is added to 2nd bullet of the charter. Motion to approve the charter as amended; nine yes and one no. Nominations have been made, and will be voted on at the next

BoT meeting: Ruth Comstock, Nancy Stanton, Naomi Olson, Judy Friedman.

Wendy Berenson request for a leave of absence (Erin Splaine)

- Wendy requested unpaid leave some months ago, but was deferred pending completion of her new job description.
- Erin forwarded to her request PPC and the respond was positive, with the caveat that she commit to end of the year. Since her absence will create a significant void in the program, there is a plan to hire someone in her place. The hiring process will be truncated, as Barb knows several potential candidates whom he could ask directly. The plan includes the same rate of pay and same hours.
- There must be a right relations covenant between her and congregation, so that her time away will be respected. She is currently called repeatedly at home. FUSN questions and concerns should not be directed to her in her absence. Pre-planning for her leave took place this year. She does not work during the summer, so her 5-month leave will take place from September until the first of February 2012. The covenant will be acknowledged in writing, with a more formal announcement on her last Sunday.
- Wendy will be involved in new hire only at the end of the process.
- Motion to approve Wendy's leave of absence following her commitment to serve through the current church year; statement of right relations between Wendy and congregation during leave; approve to hire temporary replacement up to current salary; Wendy, Barb and Erin plan for her absence. Motion passed unanimously.
- Barb has a short list of potential interim candidates. The process will be expedited, with no search committee. Barb will make a recommendation at the next meeting.

Erin: Additional items

- Feedback on the Board service has been very positive.
- JCC, were targeted by Westboro Baptist Church. Jeff Baker is a member of JCC. Erin responded with offer of support.

Definition of Membership (Jacqui James, Tom Bean)

- In proposing new language for the membership card, Membership Committee had discussions regarding financial contribution. Some feel that financial contribution should mandatory, while others feel that members should contribute to the best of their ability. Further discussion by the Board ensued: relatively small group contribute what is generally considered to be acceptable. Is the membership card the right vehicle for language about contribution? Should language addressing both beliefs and contributing financially be on the same card? Bylaws state that a member is considered to be in good standing by attending regularly for last two years, OR by making a contribution. Language to this effect should go on the membership card. Is the language appropriate? Does it need wordsmithing? Giving guide gives a percentage based on commitment – the currently proposed language mirrors that in recognizing contributions to the best of one's ability, as well as the amount of commitment. Motion to add "and consistent with" passed

unanimously. Bylaws would have to be changed in order to require a pledge to be eligible for membership. Is there time and energy to put into this? Draft a change as basis for new discussion. This should be a topic for the joint retreat. There is insufficient data to demonstrate the need for change in bylaws. The current list of “non-pledgers” is not a true reflection because it contains inactive members, newly attending, etc. Only 27 members are not pledging, and some have good reason. **Action item: Have data in hand, follow up conversation in next meeting.**

- Vote on new members: Brief Bios of eight people who have signed intent to join cards were read: John MacGaffey, Rosie McInnes, Jonathan and Gail Yeo; Josh Cohen, Sandy Jones, George Corey, Laurie Hackett. Motion to accept passed unanimously.
 - Discussion: proposal to require financial commitment as condition for membership affects youth members, who are not in a position to contribute financially. Junior membership status was proposed, modeled after other congregations. Membership committee will take the matter under advisement, considering accounting of interested youth as members, who do not contribute financially, and for whom FUSN does not pay UUA dues or report them as members. This will require additional discussion, to be deferred.

Budget Drive (Adrian Bishop)

- Two receptions were held, but were not well attended. Raised almost \$315K so far. Pledges: similar to 2009, well ahead of 2010. 152 non-zero pledges so far. 456 households in the database; 315 assigned to steward.
- Plans for completion – visits are planned to end this weekend, but more will be made beyond that. Largest issue is getting response. Pledge card comes only from visit; should we send pledge cards in the mail with self-addressed stamped envelopes to steward? Sit at coffee hour? Some people resist visits but would make a pledge if given a card. Leave decisions to the committee. Adrian: Communications to captains and visiting stewards – if they choose to mail the card, can do so.
- Judd and Adrian are not planning to serve on the budget drive next year. Their replacements will need be somewhat tech savvy, and who knows many people in the congregation. They will need better information. Identify serious new attendees among those visiting FUSN. Next year is a transition to “cottage visits” – home visit with multiple households.
- Adrian and Judd will present again as needed; return to give updated numbers.
- Adrian’s and Judd’s work acknowledged.

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 PM.

An executive session was held to discuss staff salary recommendations which was led by Karen Davis and Dot Jacobson of the Personnel Policy Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Lesley Sneddon
FUSN Board Clerk