

**First Unitarian Society of Newton
Board of Trustees
December 13th, 2011
Alliance Room**

Present: Susan Bartlett, Alan Cody, Margaret Costello, Barney Freiberg-Dale, Bruce Henderson, Pamela McA’Nulty, Carl Metzger, Gordon Moriarty, Strom Thacker, Ann Woodbury, Erin Splaine
Absent: Conrad Buys, Barb Greve

Susan called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM
Pam read the 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.

Annual budget drive-vision for canvass- Bruce Henderson and Josie Greene

Bruce and Josie presented a budget drive plan, which included 4 major items:

1. Determining a Financial Goal: They presented projected costs of current operations for the upcoming year, funding needed and total pledges required which came out to be 15% higher than last year’s pledges. They also included a wish-list if opportunity was there for a Full-time Intern Minister, increasing the Member Services Director position from part time to full time and decreasing draw from the endowment.
2. Non Financial Goal: Community building through canvass activities
3. Factors Driving the plan:
 - a. Pledge data from other UU congregations nearby shows FUSN is on the high end-but needs to increase even higher
 - b. The need to reduce the annual draw from the endowment
 - c. The issue of stewardship visits (1:1) whether to keep this model or introduce new modes of asking.
 - d. “The Ask” perceived as an obstacle being awkward
4. Strategies –with theme of “Step Up” - Bruce and Josie hope to meet people where they are, hold gatherings and parties and increase the number of members involved in the canvass. Want to build connections and educate members about FUSN finances.

The group identified systems that would help with fundraising such as

- a membership management system - goal for the future
- an accurate pledge data base, acknowledging issues of confidentiality.

And many brought up the importance of fundraising reflecting what the FUSN congregation thinks is important. How can the amount of money given be linked to goals of FUSN and what does the FUSN community want? Carl mentioned that Doug Zalinski's "Joyful Giving" workshop which links giving to spiritual practice.

Ann asked what the priorities of the budget are and the Board agreed that the 2 top choices would be to eliminate the deficit and decrease the draw from the endowment, but not eliminate it completely. All agreed it would be helpful to have a concrete goal.

Right now the average pledge is \$2000.00. Of the 460 members, 260 pledged last year, 104 have never pledged and 17 are unknown. Last year's total pledges came to \$472,482. After above discussion, the following goals were agreed upon by the BOT for this year's fundraising:

- increase average pledge from \$2,000.00 to \$2,200.00
- 2% reduction in the draw down from the endowment
- reduce the deficit by 52 thousand dollars
- Pledge income was set between 542-560 thousand, a 15-18.5% increase

Administrivia –Susan

- Approve BOT minutes

Motion: Carl moved to approve the October minutes. Gordon seconded

Vote: Unanimously approved.

- LDC Update- Susan followed up with Linda Rinearson and will follow up with Adrian Bishop after the holidays
- Board Picture taken for the directory and bulletin board

Staff Update – Erin

There will be 3 services over Christmas as well as coffee and conversation with Erin on Christmas Day. Cards and gifts for the staff from the BOT will be handed out and Erin is holding a dinner for staff on Christmas Eve funded by the BOT. The search for the new DRLE is still on. The start date for someone new would hopefully be 8/1/2012. We hope to have a decision on a candidate by end of March 2012. Erin would like to have Beth stay until the end of the year (2012) until the new DRLE starts and all agreed.

Susan then called an Executive Session for more discussion.

Board of Investment Policy Discussion- Alan

Alan, Pam, Gordon and Susan (Subcommittee of BOT) met with Eric Riak and Brian Hicks, from the BOI in order to report back to the Board.

They asked for the BOT to put together a list of issues to discuss in the future such as:

1. The role of the BOT in defining the distribution of Endowment investments -
The BOI used to present investment reports directly to the congregation including performance history i.e. FUSN down 44.8% and S&P 500 is at 51%.
What do we want to do in the future in terms of investment distributions? There is a lot of expertise on the BOI and Alan reviewed the current BOI policy on investments.
2. Objectives of Endowment- Goal of most endowments is to grow at the rate of inflation or expenses or more. The endowment was characterized as being to support operations, provide a cushion for unforeseen expenses, and for use for building expenses, (recognizing there is a building reserve fund of 10-15 thousand). The BOT determines the draw on the endowment and conveys that to the the BOI. The current policy is 5% but it has been recommended by the BOI to be decreased to 3% in order to not reduce the endowment over time.

Alan feels the BOT should be involved in the BOI and that the endowment should be preserved for unusual downturns and extraordinary circumstances. He felt it would be helpful to identify major risks ahead of time such as the loss of a tenant or decrease in the donor amount. The subcommittee will bring the above items to the BOI to discuss at their next meeting.

Quarterly Operating Summary –Susan and Alan

What should the BOT do to fulfill their Fiduciary Responsibility but not micromanage the budget? Alan distributed some possible questions the Board can ask to fulfill their Fiduciary Responsibility. This is an evolving process.

Additional Item: Erin

Erin asked if the BOT and the Operations Council would host an event on the evening of January 19th. Karsten Urban, a guest from Germany UUA is here on Sabbatical with his family, and Erin would like the BOT and OC to host a dinner for the congregation to visit with them before they leave. He will talk about the dangers of being a UU in Germany today where their congregational membership went from 6,000 to 1,000. He is also going to be a guest speaker at the January 22nd Sunday Service.

BOT priorities discussion: All

Susan handed out the notes from the Brainstorming Meeting in November with the goal of identifying priorities and action items. This resulted in picking:

1. Use of the Open Questions Model as an approach to setting Visions. (Margaret, Ann and Barney with Carl as an alternate offered to work as a subcommittee to develop the model and process.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50pm

Plan is to review above and narrow the ideas down at the next meeting
Meeting adjourned at 10pm

Respectfully Submitted
Wendy Atamian, Board Clerk