

**First Unitarian Society of Newton
Board of Trustees
November 9th, 2011
Alliance Room**

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

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM
Bruce read the invocation he wrote himself

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.

Administrivia –Susan

- Kristin Cleveland, Coordinator of Member Services & Development –(added to the agenda) provided an update for the group and reviewed 6 new potential member bios. Two are new to FUSN and the other four have been coming for awhile. Most have attended the New UU class and are coming to the new member pot-luck dinner. Erin thanked Kristin for the great job she has been doing.
Motion: Carl moved to approve the new members, Strom seconded
Vote: Unanimously approved
- Cheryl Lloyd Covenant. Susan provided the Affiliate Community Ministry Covenant to review for 2011-2012 church year. Erin and Cheryl Lloyd developed the covenant together, wanting to increase Cheryl’s role within FUSN. Questions came up about whether her work with the Mather School falls under the Social Action Committee (maybe as a Project or Task Force, as well as discussion around how to weave her work into FUSN more. Ann asked about how many weddings she is generally asked to preside over, but Erin stated those requests go directly to Fran. Erin states it is very helpful to have Cheryl on call for her during the summer and the stipend of \$2500 she receives is for her work with Erin and FUSN predominantly. Recently as one way to increase her work with FUSN Cheryl attended a Youth Group meeting and the group is going to adopt a second grade classroom at the Mather School. The Youth were very excited and energized by the opportunity. One change needs

to be made in the handout. The stipend is twenty five hundred dollars plus five hundred dollars to cover her UUMA dues for a total of three thousand dollars.

Motion: Pam moved to approve the amended covenant. Seconded

Vote: Unanimously approved

- Financial tutorial scheduled for November 20th at 9AM in Children's Chapel. Pat Rohan will invite the committee chairs to attend.
- BOI Update: Susan followed up with Eric and he suggested getting a smaller group together. Alan, Pam, Gordon and Susan will meet with Eric and report back to the Board members. Alan invited all to send him an email with any questions they might have so they could be addressed at the meeting.

Staff Update

Barb's Update:

- COA will be going to Ecclesia Friday –Saturday.
- Youth Advisor Team, which includes Barb, Rebecca Hinds (Youth Programs Coordinator), and 5 advisors, met to develop short term and long term goals.
- They have been looking for ways to connect COA and younger youth to the Youth Group. The Youth group leaders will be attending some COA First Fridays and the new project at the Mather School are two new ideas. Soon they will be making holiday ornaments for the school.
- Barb was asked to sit on the Musician Leadership Credentialing Committee (MLCC) which he is looking forward to though he did recuse himself re: Ann Watson Born.
- Beth and Rebecca continue to be an excellent addition to the RE Staff team.
- Barb will be traveling to NYC on 11/12 to attend the Star Island Lifespan Religious Education Conference executive committee meeting. (Barb sits on this committee as Dean-elect of the conference).

Erin's Update:

- Lay ministers have been responding to increased needs of the congregation. There will be 2 memorial services coming up in the next week.
- Update on the Portland RE Conference. Erin had lots of conversations looking for new DLRE.
- She will be attending the Minister Study Group which meets twice a year and includes John Nichols who sends his regards.
- Erin also reported she has had 2 meetings so far with the planned giving folks and feels there has been a good response.
- Discussed need for authorization of funds for Christmas gifts for staff. The BoT usually gives gifts to the staff or a gift card. On Christmas eve before the service Erin would like to bring dinner in for the staff. Alan asked about other ways the BoT might think of to thank the staff now and throughout the year.
- Leadership Development Committee (LDC) Barbara Bates and Jeff Baker former chairs need to step aside so they need 2 new people. This committee

reports to the Board. There is already a written charter approved 2 years ago with goal to develop new leaders within FUSN. Susan to follow up.

Report from Operations Council- Pat Rohan

Pat presented an update from the Ops council, which he plans to do two times a year and at the end of the year. This is the 3rd year the operations council has been in effect.

- Budget and Expenses-Unexpected expenses this year due to building problems. They are planning on creating a reserve fund for building expenses which Laurel Farnsworth coordinates. Board would like to send a "Thank You" to Laurel for all her efforts with the building upkeep.
- Safe Congregations Policy- Pat discussed the need for this at FUSN. Erin is working to begin the conversation and establish a committee to take on the task.
- Newsletter- Ops Council working with Nancy Duverne-Smith from communications to develop an electronic newsletter that would be available to the public at large but need to make sure there are no personal phone numbers or email addresses on it.
- Saturday meeting with Committee. Chairs (20) and Bot invited
- Succession Plan- for Ops council. Discussed LDC and need for committee to find committee chairs. Generally members stay on the board for 3 years and then go off just when the person is getting comfortable.
- Anonymous Donation-received \$4,870.00 for window repair and protection.

Motion: Pam moved donation be approved. Strom seconded

Vote: Unanimously approved

Pat then asked if anyone had any questions: Everyone commented and thanked Pat for sharing the minutes from the Ops Council and felt they were very clear and helpful. Pat commented on Bonnie being a great clerk.

Canvas Update -Bruce

- Josie Greene will Co-chair Canvas with Bruce. They met with the former chair and would like to focus on community and commitment and feel the money will flow from that.
- They are looking to engage members and seek ideas and feedback in a variety of flexible ways including: One on one meetings, Group meetings, Parties, Offer babysitting and meet with groups of parents etc.
- Discussed how awkward it can be to ask for money and ask to have pledge cards filled out. Bruce thought maybe he and Josie would make an announcement and ask everyone at the same time to pledge and hand out cards all at once and then conversations about FUSN could follow. He and Josie are meeting with Erin in the next week.
- Carl complimented Bruce and brought up the Joyful Giving Concept. Alan thanked him for bringing great energy to the canvas and Alan suggested bringing up stories about all the projects at FUSN that help others because it makes people feel proud to be part of the congregation. Ann also felt

positively about the change in focus. Questions about the role of BoT members came up. How can the Board show leadership in the Canvas process? Ann and Carl and Pam offered to host parties and Strom asked about technology and on-line giving. On-line giving has been discussed before. There are questions if using a credit card does the church have to pay a fee? Would on line payments improve compliance? Will continue to look into this in the future.

Retreat Discussion

Susan asked the group for their top take-aways and action items.

Retreat Take Aways

1. Changing demographics of the community
2. Still in governance transition
3. Plateau of congregational size which brings challenges
4. Develop congregational identity
5. Need Clarity of vision, shared vision, active engagement
6. All directed to mission statement
7. Love
8. Shaping larger community values
9. Growth-reason, in engagement and variety
10. What we are going through is normal—affirmed this
11. Challenge- to change way of doing things
12. Drive growth by shifting policies---can also stifle growth
13. Open Question Conversations
 - Are important to congregation
 - Energizing
 - Increase connectedness
14. Focus on deepening ties---growth and financial stability

Action Items

1. Relationship to wider community
Messages to community
RE SIGN
2. Open Questions-allow more voices to be heard
How to do? How to operationalize
 - Small groups at houses
 - At FUSN
 - How many per year
3. Leadership Development
4. Complete governance transition
5. Budgeting and financial review
6. Culture around giving
7. Growth Issue-what do we mean
8. Increasing Connections in different ways i.e. clubs
9. Retention-how do we improve

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

Respectfully Submitted
Wendy Atamian, Board Clerk