

**First Unitarian Society of Newton  
Board of Trustees  
January 11, 2011**

Present: 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, Pat Rohan, Naomi Olson, Jeff Baker

Susan Bartlett chaired the meeting in Jonathan’s absence and called the meeting to order at 7:35 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 (Susan Bartlett)**

- Board photo was taken by Pat Rohan.
- Barb briefly reviewed the DLRE search and RE Evaluation plan. He stated that the goal of RE search committee is to engage the congregation in evaluation of RE program. Starting in February, RE council and search committee will compile and analyze data, and in March, present to the Board an analysis of what the congregation is searching for. The goal of the process is not just an evaluation of the current program, but also what the congregation would like to see happening in the next five years. Board members are encouraged to attend the sessions.

**Operations Council report to Board (Pat Rohan)**

- See report, tasks, and membership statistics. Pat noted from the report:
  - The Operations Council (OC) intends to report to the Board quarterly in March, June, September, and December but would like feedback from the Board on this proposed schedule.
  - OC relationship to committees: under the current governance structure, OC members have authority over committees assigned to them, but in practice, OC members have found that they function more productively in a support and liaison role with committees. OC has yet to deal with inception of new committees, and consolidating of some existing committees. The OC is kept informed of committee activities through Pat’s attendance at most of the meetings as liaison, or in other communications with them.
  - Functioning of OC: OC holds monthly meetings and distributes minutes, develops priorities and reports them to the Board.

- OC reviews the budget monthly; no budgetary issues to report. OC requests financial information from the Finance Committee. The OC then address issues, but doesn't review the budget line by line. Pat asked if the Board is comfortable with the OC budget authority, which currently is \$25K for in-budget items, and \$5K for unbudgeted items. One issue is that the Buildings and Grounds Committee usually has large expenses that exceed the current OC authority. The approval of several Building and Grounds out-of-budget requests necessitated their return to the Board for approval. Alan suggested re-consideration of the contingency and the amount of authority with the intent to decrease the necessity of committee chairs' having to meet separately with the OC and the Board.
- Pat requested suggestions to streamline budget meetings in May, and proposed as a possibility a joint OC and Board budget meeting.
- OC priorities for the year (refer to numbered list in the OC report to the Board):
  - #3: Develop a global governance communication strategy in collaboration with the Board. The OC met with committee chairs this week and had constructive conversations about how the governance structure is working. There is still a need to communicate more effectively with the congregation about the new structure and how it is working.
  - #7: Succession planning for the Operations Council and Committee Chairs: This is a big issue since the initial term was thought to be 2 or 3 years and many are in their second year. Pat suggested a rotation schedule be developed. It is also important that the Leadership Development Committee be functioning so that new members can be identified. Pat suggested that the chair be transitioned to an extant member as currently happens on the Board. The new structure will need to go into the bylaws.
  - The Planned Giving Committee has been resurrected, chaired by Bill Dusett.
  - Barbara Bates was elected Chair of a new committee to work with Harvard law school to develop a process for dispute resolution.
- Pat then asked for questions, comments, which included:
  - Membership stats: it is worth noting that the 20 new members in April were formerly in the Friends category, so does not represent a net increase.
  - How do priorities of the Board affect the priorities of the OC? Pat: unless they impact the OC directly, the answer is not known. Currently there are members who are on both the Board and on the OC concurrently, so priorities of each are known to the other to some degree. But when dual representation is no longer the case, there will need to be more direct communication.
  - It was noted that Pat Rohan has put a tremendous amount of work into the OC and is the main reason it is working so well.
  - Communications: Pat intends to get notes of OC activities into newsletter.
  - OC policies are now on the web site.
  - Pat's contribution to the OC was recognized by the Board.

### **LDC Update (Barbara Bates, Jeffrey Baker)**

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- Jeff Baker spoke about the status of the Leadership Development Committee (LDC). He outlined the key points of the discussion: a) LDC Charter – description of the document and duties of the members; b) role of leaders; c) Board responses on self-rating exercise; d) capacity: what format for workshops?
  - Charter – see charter document from May 2010. Specific duties of the committee are to develop a plan to: a) identify leadership needs and solutions; b) incorporate FUSN priorities; c) develop process to identify and train leaders. The next step is to fill the Committee positions. The LDC is the nominating committee that is responsible for identifying candidates, with an eventual goal to assume the role of the current Nominating Committee and Committee on Committees. The decision how to subsume these roles will be made in the future. If the Nominating Committee is retained, the LDC process can accommodate this.
- What is the role of leaders? Barbara described the “work of leaders” model, referring to the handout. Leaders have three key roles: a) to provide direction, and to ensure that the organization is aligned around that direction; b) to build the capability and commitment of organization’s mission; c) to execute the plan. The primary responsibility of leaders is to build capability and commitment of the congregation, and to develop other leaders (directly). The most effective and high-performing organizations are those that focus on developing their own leaders. The teaching of skills is important. Barbara suggested there be a plan to enable each member of the Board, the OC, and committees to be better teachers. Learn how to translate what you already know into compelling and engaging method to develop others, i.e. role model leadership. Some of the work is inner reflection, and the outcome is a personal story that captures what FUSN means to you. Leaders learn to develop and tell their own story. Leaders will also learn how to engage in dialog that is purposeful and directed. Question: how are potential leaders identified? Start with current and former leaders to actively identify and recruit future leaders.
- The results of Board members’ ratings of themselves
- Follow-up: Jeff and Barbara will move ahead with developing process.

### **SADC update (Barney Freiberg-Dale)**

- The Social Action Development Committee (SADC) scheduled two congregational meetings; they are developing a plan. Barney distributed a handout outlining the current SADC proposals: Social Action Council (SAC) will be comprised of six members, with staggered three-year terms. Members will be elected at the Annual Meeting and nominated by the Nominating Committee or the Leadership Development Committee. The SAC will report to the OC. There will be 2 levels of social action programs, the larger to be voted on by the congregation, and smaller programs to be endorsed by the SAC. Congregational meetings are being held to develop the final proposals, and to put them in place without a congregational vote. Questions:
  - How do proposals originate? Answer: Proposals must be presented to Social Action Council to be evaluate against other social action priorities. Barney

- requested that feedback be sent to him, after which the proposals will be presented to congregation and their feedback incorporated in final proposals.
- Where are authority lines? Reporting vs authority? Answer: In reporting to OC, the intent is to get approval. However, once the task force is approved by the congregation, there should be some autonomy. However, the OC (or the BoT) can put a stop to any activity it deems necessary.
  - What is the role of the Board in developing the priorities? Answer: A proposal for a task force that wasn't endorsed by OC does not go to the congregation for a vote. Or the OC may decide the BoT needs to weigh in. (This point needs to be made more clear).
  - FUSN does not currently have a mechanism to take a public position on issues. The current proposal will take a step in that direction by defining a process for developing and approving positions on matters of public policy.

### **FUSN's comments on the draft Ethical Eating Statement of Conscience (Naomi Olson)**

- Naomi stated that she is presenting as a member of Denominational Affairs (DA) Committee, having filled the chair vacated by Bob Zeeb. She requested the Board to give authority and to clarify policy for future years. The UUA Commission on Social Witness is developing the Ethical Eating Statement of Conscience and the DA Committee is organizing a process whereby FUSN members can prepare comments on it, and to advise the congregation on whether or not the issue should be voted up or down for inclusion on the agenda for GA 2011. Naomi requested Board authority for the following: a) the DA Committee to submit comments on the draft language to the Commission on Social Witness, and b) vote on behalf of the congregation as to whether or not the Ethical Eating issue should be placed on the GA 2011 agenda.
- The difference is either a Committee vote vs congregation vote. Naomi advises the former, to submit the draft comments to the congregation and thus keep the issue going for another year. Ultimately this function should belong to the SADC. Motion: DA committee is authorized by the Board to take a position (after gaining a sense of the congregation) by commenting on the draft language. Comments will be made on behalf of the congregation on this particular issue only, without the intent to set a precedent. The request is for provisional authority. If, after the meeting there are points of controversy, the Board is notified. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm

### **Executive Session: Membership Coordinator recommendation (Pamela McAN'ulty) - DEFERRED**

Respectfully submitted by Lesley Sneddon, Clerk