

**First Unitarian Society of Newton
Board of Trustees
November 9, 2010**

Present: Jonathan Lilienfeld, Alan Cody, Gordon Moriarty, Phil Davis, Barney Freiberg-Dale, Jeannie Chaisson, Pamela McA’Nulty, Margaret Costello, Susan Bartlett, Conrad Buys; also present: Erin Splaine, Barb Greve, Erik Riak, Jud Leonard, Kim Shanks

Meeting was called to order at 7:32 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)

- Vote on Anne Hess Mahan as a member of the Operations Council: Carla Erb has resigned and Anne has agreed to take her place. Motion: to approve Anne Hess-Mahan’s nomination to the Operations Council. Vote was unanimous.
- Covenant for community minister
Issues:
 - FUSN is not fully availing themselves of our community minister, Cheryl Lloyd, nor is she maximizing the contribution the congregation can make. Many people in the congregation don’t know Cheryl. She needs increased visibility. Most of her ministry occurs outside of FUSN.
 - How is this position evaluated? Suggest report for annual meeting.
 - This covenant was written by Cheryl with Erin’s input. All issues raised appear to have been covered.

Plan:

- Cheryl will articulate her work to the congregation and over time, make her work more systemic. She will put together a calendar of events and publish it so that congregants can participate. Erin suggests that Cheryl appear before the congregation once a year. Although she is not a formal staff member, she recently attended a staff meeting, and will attend several more over the year.
- Additional funding is desirable, grant funding was available in the past but was finite.
- Cheryl would benefit from more support and supervision than she has had in the past. Although long-time members know her, those who have joined the community in the past 6-8 years or less don’t know her well, if at all.

Motion: accept the covenant as written. Motion passed unanimously.

- Board Priorities:
 - At last BoT meeting, members agreed on town meetings as a means to solicit feedback from congregation. **Action item:** Decide on meeting times.
 - Definition of membership: **Action item:** Carl, Phil and Margaret will follow up with the membership committee.

Quarterly Finance report to Board (Alan Cody)

- Updated budget provided. No major surprises; pledges running on budget; income and expenses a little below budget (particularly major maintenance); Doing well in cash reserves due to deferral of major maintenance. Has there been any feedback on the quarterly insert on the budget in the newsletter? Not much.

Quarterly BOI report to Board (Eric Riak)

- Analysis compares endowment to benchmark of equities and fixed income, and to UUA. Benchmark calculation is in the BOI guidelines (mixture of domestic stocks, international stocks, and fixed income). Performance against benchmark is favorable (slightly better). Performance compared to UUA is mixed. Current and five year are favorable, but 2 and 3-year periods underperformed. Fourth quarter of 2008 and first quarter of 2009 losses were due to the financial crisis and everyone lost money. UUA has a considerably larger fund and were able to buffer their returns. FUSN has a somewhat aggressive allocation. Some of the loss was recovered in June and September. Three-year period: first quarter in December also down, but the five-year period covered some of the losses. Our investment allocations by sector are dictated by policy and will be reviewed within the next few months. Bottom line: we're in good shape for the budget year. What do investment managers see our return is getting in the future? After our 4% payout, growth of investment should be sufficient to make money. Expectation is 5-7% growth rate at the most with 2% inflation over time. However, there has been no contribution to the endowment in years and it won't grow much. The Planned Giving Committee has been restarted to solicit gifts to the endowment. Contact Eric with any questions.

Annual Canvass update (Jud Leonard)

- Jud has agreed to chair the annual budget drive; he has no co-chair at present but one is very much needed. Annual Budget Drive presentation:
- FUSN is mostly run by volunteers, but there are many expenses. Largest is building and grounds, followed by staff, ministry, and RE.
- This year's income: 55% is pledges; others are collection plate (very small); investment income (endowment and cell tower). Total cost = \$2745 per pledging household. FUSN Pledges = \$1,590 per household
- Not hard-sell approach: Asking people to make their own decision based on importance of FUSN to them and on their financial status.
- Reviewed distribution of pledge totals. 17 households pledging over \$5K yielded 25% of our total income. 150 members/friends/people approached for pledges did not pledge. This is unfair to the supporting congregants.
- This is year three of the five-year plan set out by David Morocco and Linda Rinearson. Appreciative inquiry approach and personal visits will be used again this year. 15-20 captains, 60-80 visiting stewards, 300-400 stewardship conversations. All Bot and OC

members to participate as captains or visiting stewards. Very important that FUSN leadership be highly visible.

- Specific concrete goal will help Jud promote the budget drive to the congregation. Donors need a reason to want to increase pledge amount. The aspirational goal is advertised to the congregation; expected goal: – usually less than the aspirational goal; and budgetary goal – what we expect to be able to spend. Jud requested help in setting the goal, suggests \$500K.
- Tactics:
 - Series of receptions for key donors and church leadership. Some concern about egalitarianism: want to honor those who shoulder more of the burden, but to make people feel that they want to give, all should be invited. However, the Fellowship Dinner is viewed as fulfilling this role.
 - Raise awareness: newsletter items; inserts in order of service; email announcements; testimonials - multigenerational;
 - sermon from Erin;
 - brochures; giving guide; summary of FUSN programs to be given to visiting stewards. Suggested giving guide: 1,2,5,10% categories, with increasing percentages in higher income scales.
- Timeline: Preparation phase now. January: recruit captains, stewards, and trainers. February: do training, begin visits to key donors; March 12 fellowship dinner; April visits; May – data available for budgeting; June – approval by congregation.
- Requests BOT members as captains and stewards; help in articulating the goal. Requests \$4K to fund the parties and brochures.
- Should we consider credit card pledging? Automatic debit yields higher pledges. Jud requested and received approval from BoT to explore this possibility. Need to know what the expense is. Jud will look into cost and administrative burden and report back. OC would like to be part of this process. Jud will present to OC in about a week, and will have some additional information. Jud's work and commitment was acknowledged. He needs a co-chair!

RE Council recommendation on RE Fees (Kim Shanks)

- Kim is chair of RE council. RE got request from BOT via Barb to discuss and provide a recommendation to continue or not continue the practice of charging RE fees. RE council discussed pros and cons; looked at info from similar-sized congregations. FUSN is in the minority in charging fees. Reasons:
 - Most congregations don't charge because they feel that educating our children is central to our mission and should be supported by the operating budget.
 - Requesting a fee from new members starting with a young family is not very welcoming, and works at cross-purposes to making them feel part of the community.
 - Charging a fee implies that paying a fee is in lieu of pledging
 - Contributes to a feeling of disconnect between RE and non-RE families.
- RE Council recommendation is to eliminate the fees: There are inequities in our system; it is the only program we charge for – not adult RE, not coffee hour, etc. Largest pool of volunteers, who both pay for and run the program. Is there any data on what RE families that don't pay fees pay in pledges? Is there any data showing that they contribute more? The data is not available. Comparing young families, who generally have less income and more expenses than non-RE families. Historically, the reason that we put RE fees in place was that the RE program grew rapidly and there was no budget to support it. Circumstances have changed. RE expenses should be part of the budget drive. Motion to eliminate RE fees, effective next FY. 9 yes votes, one no vote.

DLRE Search and RE evaluation charter (Alan Cody)

- Charter was drafted by Concetta Daurio with review by Jonathan and circulated prior to meeting. We understand and agree that this is now evaluation of whole program (adult RE included) as well as search process. Discussed changing the schedule to preclude rushing at the end of the year. Don't need to launch the search package until September; the more info available in June the better. Dev Levering meeting with committee this Thursday on big picture and potential issues to focus on in assessment. Next step: will have a longer meeting to plan it out. Timeline: April 2011 commitment for recommendations so it can be reviewed by BoT in May. Analysis phase to be complete by end of April, produce DLRE search materials over the summer. Job description and salary package to be ready for GA. Should the \$2K search cost be retained in the budget this fiscal year? Decision: retain in case of need for facilitator, survey, etc. Request that charter include members' names. Committee members are Rose McGinnes and John McGaffey; Dede Vittori, Concetta Daurio (chair), Josh Cohen, Rebeka Smilley, Alan Cody. Motion to approve the charter. Motion passed unanimously.

SADC Update (Barney Freiberg-Dale)

- There have been two congregational meetings and two committee meetings since the last BoT meeting. Congregation meetings were well attended (70) on Sunday, 3 on Wednesday. Feedback: lot of interest, lot of diverging ideas. There is lack of knowledge about breadth of activity, and lack of understanding on why there should be a centralized decision on focus. There was much discussion on communication. We are on track to complete our objective. The committee meetings revealed two competing ideas on how to constitute a council, but they will be resolvable.

Ministerial Startup Workshop

- Workshop is a facilitation process by MassBay District and is highly recommended. Intent is that OC, BoT, committee chairs, and new minister can understand how FUSN has worked, what conflicts there have been, expectations going forward. Address areas of conflict and resolve them. What does UUA think should come out of this that didn't come out of the search process and other activities? This would be a significant time commitment - be sure that it's important enough to do. Barb response: RE went through this during interim years using the same model. Found there was a very clear pattern of behavior – helped them figure out desirable behaviors. Identify issues that can be followed up. But – requires time, and there is little. Would need to do it in December or January. MassBay would provide facilitator. No prep work required. For RE, 1) history over 25 years; 2) emerging patterns; 3) technical problems or adaptive challenges. General agreement that this is desirable. Jonathan will contact MassBay to determine possible dates. Schedule for early 2011.

Conrad's attendance was recognized, as he missed a youth group outing to attend tonight's meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:51 pm

Respectfully submitted by Lesley Sneddon, Clerk