

**OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**Wednesday February 12, 2014**  
Alliance Room, 7:00 P.M.

**Present:** Susan Bartlett, Rev Meghan Cefalu, Jeannie Chaisson, Alan Cody, Laurel Farnsworth, Anne Hess-Mahan, Andrea Kelley, Perry Montrose, Rev Erin Splaine. Guest Charlie Watts, Board President

**Covenant**

As we, the members of this Council 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 Council; to uphold the democratic process; and to lead with goodwill and faith in the work we can accomplish together.

~ 7:00-7:05 **Invocation / Chalice Lighting:** Susan

~ **Approvals:** All

Susan raised the topic of the Council for Social Action's fundraising effort in this second semester. CSA requested approval to sell logo'ed T-shirts, as a fundraiser for CSA projects. Laurel expressed concern about frequent fundraising at coffee hour. Anne was concerned about the number of tables; Jeannie says the number of tables has gone down overall. Discussion ensued on various aspects of whether it is a good idea for CSA to sell T-shirts to raise funds. One alternative is to ask people to pay for the T-shirts at cost, rather than priced higher to make a profit. Other CSA fundraising opportunities are already available, such as Second Collections, etc.

It was pointed out that the Youth Coffee House sells T-shirts for their event. Frozen meals sales by Coming of Age is part of the COA program and pays for COA costs; it is not a fundraiser per se. CSA went ahead with T-shirt production *prior* to requesting Ops Council approval. If they do sell them, it was suggested that the T-shirts be on the existing CSA table. Council members agreed that CSA planned this out of enthusiasm for funding their projects, i.e., for a good cause.

Erin expressed an on-going concern about too much fundraising, as well as the issue of circumventing the policy. FUSN policy permits fundraising at coffee hour, only after a request is approved by the Ops Council. Coffee hour should focus on people meeting each other and talking.

Therefore, the Art Fair sale needs to be addressed for next year, as well. Discussion included the option to use other spaces for sales. Once an elevator is installed, the Headstart Room would be an option.

Jeannie moved CSA be approved to sell T-shirts by rounding up the price to an even dollar amount and sell them to recoup their costs, but not as a fundraiser Laurel seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Other fundraisers: For Zambia Communities Without Borders, the Walk for Hunger on May 4, the NAMI Walk on May 5. Laurel moved to approve. Jeannie seconded. Unanimously approved.

- November minutes - approved. It was noted that December minutes had already been approved.
- January minutes - approved

~ **Staff update:** Perry, Erin, Meghan

**Perry:** Sunday's Religious Education focused on Martin Luther King, segregation, race and being a welcoming congregation.

The RE support circle wants to plan additional multi-generational social action activities, including working at the Newton Food Pantry. They'd like to develop a short and long term calendar.

The seventh grade made visits to a temple and Myrtle Baptist church.

Coming of Age sold food to raise money and had a spiritual practice session with meditation, tai chi, and music. K-7 will do a similar session.

Family fun nite was attended by 20-21 people. A Valentine's party is this Friday. With Jackie James, RE offered a session on UU sources. A multi-generational book group was held and will meet again next month.

There was a reunion for last year's CoA class. Fifteen 9th graders came and will continue to meet on Community Breakfast Sundays at a group table. Some CoA grads participate in the Youth Group, too.

Homebound Holiday Project # 2 is coming up for Valentine's Day weekend, in which RE classes provide goods and messages to those unable to attend services.

Perry and RE are addressing the issue of the three recent suicides of students in Newton. FUSN is also engaged with Newton Cares, which works with multiple foundations.

Full week of Faith = outside of Sundays. (?)

**Meghan** continues to settle in and learn more about FUSN and the UU Urban Ministry. She is attending as many FUSN meetings as possible. She attended a MassBay/Clara Barton District workshop today, on Faith Formation.

Erin, Meghan and Perry will divide up attending stewardship parties. They are also re-instituting monthly soup lunches, mostly attended by long-term members and retirees.

~ Alan raised a concern about people who have had difficulty using FUSN's **website**. The Communication Committee is aware of this and is looking at an upgrade. We also need to be sure that folks who need assistance get it. Greg Sullivan offered to help anyone who needs it.

More laptop circles should be offered that explicitly invite folks who need help navigating the website.

Meghan is also going to explore more ways to reach out and increase communication among members. She would like the website to be easily accessible, keeping privacy in mind.

**Erin:** Eight FUSNites went to Raleigh, North Carolina last Sunday, February 9th, for the Moral Monday protest. There were 80,000 protesters, including an estimated 1800 UUs. They will talk to the congregation about it during the February 23rd service. She feels the march really had an impact. Jeannie pointed out that there was no local coverage in Boston.

Jeff and Mandy Bass donated a Persian rug (originally given by a friend) to FUSN. It has been installed in the nursery (on the stage).

Alan: With **donations in kind**, the Board Chair needs to sign a form with the donor's name for the IRS. If FUSN sells a donated item before 3 years, another IRS form would be needed.

~ **Report on February Board of Trustees meeting:** Alan

Discussion on this year's Ministerial Review included Erin's preference that comments not be anonymous.

The Board continues strategic work. The Conflict Resolution committee is ongoing. A disruptive behavior policy has already been approved.

The Board discussed whether the Board or the Ops Council should be responsible for financial oversight. The Financial Oversight Committee has an approved charter for going forward.

Though budgeted, a member database has not been purchased yet. Discussion continues about how to proceed.

General Assembly delegates need to register in the next month or so, but they haven't been elected yet.

~ **Report on January Board of Trustees meeting:** Laurel attended the January Board meeting, which met *after* last month's Ops Council meeting, unlike the usual schedule. The major topic was long-range planning.

~ **Buildings and grounds:** Laurel said there's a possibility of exceeding the utilities budget for the first time since 2005, due to this unusually cold winter. The contingency budget is \$8,000, of which \$4400 was allocated for the painting of the three rooms (see January minutes). She pointed out that, as we are not having a Fellowship Dinner this year, the \$2300 budgeted for that could go toward utilities.

Alan suggests asking committees to be conservative in their spending. At the Finance Committee meeting on the first Tuesday of the month, Laurel will ask for a recommendation on where we might have access to discretionary funds.

~ **Financial:** Alan

Alan discussed the issue of whether FUSN should have a Balance Sheet which includes the

value of properties, amortizing, etc. The Financial Committee does a balance sheet quarterly and reports findings to Ops twice per year. There was a surplus of funds at the end of November, with funds available for two months' worth of spending.

Perry asked about the Extended Programs checking account. Alan said it's used only for Sandy Island and Ferry Beach. All checking account statements should go to FUSN Administrator Fran Clancy. Alan reconciles the EP account with Karen Lein, the Assistant Treasurer.

Alan also praised the work of Nancy Tobias, FUSN's bookkeeper, who has provided great help with QuickBooks.

~ **Committees Updates:** All

**More Buildings & Grounds:** Laurel

Laurel provided a draft budget for 2014-2015. Currently, we are on track during 2013-2014, except for the painting cost, which Ops had approved.

Overall, the new budget requests slightly less than a 4% increase in several categories:

- Cleaning (hasn't been raised in 5 years). FUSN cleaner Henry is an independent contractor, bonded with insurance. He also does work for other clients.
- Fire alarm. Old; it needs repairs.
- Painting, to be proactive and have a regular painting schedule.
- Small increase in Miscellaneous category.
- Also, funds for 4 small leaded windows repair.
- Gas and utilities.

Organ maintenance is in the Music budget.

Included in the yearly \$50,000 major maintenance request, Laurel proposes carpeting for the first floor hallway and the stairs that lead from Parish Hall up to the Headstart Room. This would need to be done when Pine Village school kids are not here, in August. Andrea wonders if carpeting is the best material to use. Laurel says carpet tiles is an option, and one reason to use carpeting is to limit noise.

Also in major maintenance, rebuild the Memorial Garden path, garden and sprinkler system to connect to the rainwater retention tanks installed last year. Congregants will be invited to donate plants. Anne suggests the sprinkler could be cut from next year's budget, if there is a shortfall.

Alan asked about safety in the parking lot. Newton's code requires more parking for a pre-school, though Pine Village is grandfathered in as is. Laurel feels there are no specific safety issues at this time.

**Annual Budget Drive:** Susan said Jonathan Lilienfeld provided pledge cards for Ops Council members to pledge early. She distributed the cards.

Committee issues/reports, including:

Anne said the Ministerial Review committee will hold conversations for the congregation and leadership on March 22, 23, 27, 29 and 30. The committee will work with Erin on what the questions should be and on what goals she would like to propose for herself.

The semi-annual Ops Council + Committee Chairs meeting will be noon, March 8, lunch included.

~ Other committee updates:

Laurel: A main speaker in the Sanctuary failed and was replaced. Microphones were upgraded and speakers rebalanced.

Laurel is also working on a microphone/sound station hook up in the apron of the stage for the Parish Hall, with a written set of instructions, so users can have events there and operate it themselves, without needing technical support.

This year's **Services Auction** raised approximately \$18,600.

~ Thank yous: All

Jeff and Mandy Bass for the rug donation; Pat Rohan for the Services Auction; Bob Persons, Jud Leonard and Jimmy Frances for helping diagnose the sound system problem and get it repaired.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wendy Schwartz,  
Assistant Clerk