

## OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES

Wednesday March 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 (after a prior meeting), Rev Erin Splaine.  
**Guest:** Pat Rohan

### **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:**

~ **Approvals:** All

- February minutes: Corrections pending.
- The Council for Social Action (CSA) requests a fundraising activity: a Mothers' Day Walk for Peace/Lewis D Brown Peace Institute. Alan motioned to approve. Laurel seconded. Approved.

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

**Meghan:** This month's soup lunch moved to Friday due to tomorrow's weather alert. Meghan facilitated the lay ministers' retreat on Saturday and discussed possible changes in how they do things. She's looking at ways to promote sign-ups for chalice circles. She's been attending Annual Budget Drive parties. She'll meet with the Communications Committee on Sunday and with its chair Nancy Duvergne-Smith tomorrow. She's preparing the New to UU class, to meet on the morning of March 22; there are 6 sign-ups so far; she anticipates more. She requests an Ops Council member to attend. Susan said she could.

Laurel said she like it if Dinners for Seven could be reinstated.

**Erin:** Erin feels that the Sunday services are going well and especially the fundraising service, with its great music. She has been attending ABD parties and having excellent conversations with attendees. She also expressed appreciation for the fact that Meghan could cover the Lay Ministers' meeting, since Erin had important family business to take care of.

The Personnel Policy Handbook is almost complete. It's been a long-term project. It will go to the Board.

Erin and Meghan will attend the St. Patrick's Day Peace Parade this weekend.

She and Perry are beginning to explore the topic of "race," which will be a focus next year. The word "race" is a placeholder and will not likely be the term used. Rather, the topic will be on our way of looking at our being in the world. She emphasizes it will avoid guilt and shame. The book, *Waking Up White*, might be included.

Erin and Meghan will be away Thurs-Sun with Rev. Jory Agate, a consultant who helps team ministries start up. The fee is outside Erin's budget. The Board has agreed to pay half, \$300. She asked if the Ops Council would fund the other \$300. Laurel moved to do so; Andrea seconded. The request was approved. It was discussed whether conference fees should be included in Erin's budget in the future.

**Perry:** RE kids did 21 home visits to homebound individuals for Valentine's Day.

The multigeneration book group doubled in size to 18. The next book is *Kiss the Frog*, about changing fairy tales. A later book includes one by a local author, *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*. It will also be a play at Wheelock College, and they'll do a group outing.

The Coming Of Age Credo writing process has started.

RE circles have all started meeting and working on issues.

Teachers say Sunday mornings with Beth supporting the teachers is going well and that she's so conscientious.

Perry mentioned several other activities in the works, including how to keep youth involved. Rebecca is graduating, but it is not clear if she will stop as Youth Advisor or continue.

Perry presented a proposed the FY14-15 RE budget. He anticipates coming in under budget this year. The overall budget request is basically the same, but some categories' needs will change, because there is a smaller COA group, but funds will be needed to train an OWL teacher.

Some parents don't request reimbursement for such items as the mentor dinner or snacks for RE classes. There was discussion on whether the cost for participating in COA (\$560) be reduced -- perhaps a conversation to continue. Other costs include graduation gifts for COA kids at the end of year, supplies and the Ecclesia homeless speakers bureau. The Ecclesia Ministries project has paid for itself over the past 2 years, via COA fundraising. Parents pay for the Thompson's Island retreat. Some COA costs vary from year to year, based on the number of participants. Andrea feels that the funds for reimbursement should still be included, so that all

families feel they can host the COA dinner, for example, and not be shy about getting reimbursed. Perry reduced the COA budget but raised Special Events and Worship line items for next year.

Erin wonders if some of Rosh Hashanah, Passover and other special events should be split with Membership. Some of these could be in Worship, rather than RE. Perry just wants to have them funded and is not concerned about which committee's budget they fall into.

Laurel suggests keeping the COA budget as is but charge less for participation, such as \$500. The RE fee had been removed a number of years ago but not the COA fee. She'd like to see the COA fee gradually disappear. Andrea agrees. Perry says Thompson Island is the majority of where the fees go, since costs for mentors come out of that budget, and scholarships are available to those who need them. In the past, occasionally one family has paid for another family's child, but we can't count on this as a source of COA funds.

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

Progress has been made with the database. Jud presented the committee's recommendation, and the Board accepted it. It's a commercial system that comes with support, costing \$50/month after the initial purchase. The monthly cost will be in next year's Administration budget / Computer and Software, which Fran does. The purchase price of the software is in this year's budget.

The issue of a possible name change for FUSN (Unitarian) to FUUSN (Unitarian Universalist), which Alan Hartman raised last year, was discussed by the Board. Perry and Erin will create a one-time education session specifically on Universalist history.

**~ Financial: Alan**

Karen Bottar provides monthly financial summaries. Alan says there are no major issues. A correction to a one-time payroll issue will be taken care of.

The IRS has requested having a FUSN contact, although there is no specific issue at this time. The Board Chair is the only one who can legally sign contracts, so Charlie Watts will file the form. This will need to be filed yearly with each Board Chair change.

**~ Updates:**

The FUSN library group is considering buying a bigger book cart. Laurel is concerned about safety and suggests buying a second small cart, rather than a bigger one.

**Parking: Laurel**

The director of Pine Village is concerned that teachers have no place to park. Although the bank has said they can park in the back of their lot, currently the lot is full of ice. The director would like to park in FUSN's Washington St. driveway. However, Laurel does not want to set that as a precedent, as it needs to be available for contractors, FUSNites loading and unloading, fire and other emergency vehicles, etc. Susan spoke with the bank manager, who said that all kinds of

non-bank people park in the lot: sports club people; moviegoers; shoppers, etc. Laurel points out that FUSN does not have enough on-site parking for our own staff.

Laurel said FUSN has an easement on a driveway that is part of Tody's Auto, which includes 3 spaces. However, Tody's was disappointed that, at a hearing, citizens objected to construction of a cell phone tower on their property, and they seem unreceptive to working with FUSN on "neighbor" issues.

Susan suggested putting out another notice to FUSNites about parking. Andrea will put it on Facebook after Susan sends her the text.

~ **UUA General Assembly delegates:** Pat

A recent Membership meeting discussed trying to increase interest in GA. They especially want to get more youth involved. An informal group - Meghan, Rebecca Hinds, Carolyn Mapes, Kate Mason, Pat - met on Sunday. Pat said FUSN typically does not send its full allotment of nine official delegates. The ByLaws say delegates are selected at the Annual Meeting. To change this, the ByLaws must be changed.

To encourage attendance at GA, Pat would like to show a tape of Rev. Vanessa Southern's sermon from last year's GA Service of the Living Tradition, which was excellent. A possible date is April 13th.

Pat says historically FUSN has paid registration fees only. He points out that funds in *this* year's budget are really to pay for those who attended *last* year, since the budget year is June 1-May 31. This year's GA occurs after the current-year budget period ends.

If FUSN pays all 9 at the late registration price of \$385 per person, the cost would be \$3465. Early registration would be \$3015. Funds to cover some fees are available, and additional funds could come from the current contingency budget line.

Laurel suggests having an early ByLaws vote to get the early registration price option. It was pointed out that anyone going as an official delegate is obligated to attend the business meetings and participate in the votes. Anyone can go on their own to attend workshops, etc. This year's GA is in Providence, RI, so costs are less (travel, hotel).

There was some discussion about pre-paying for GA and taking it out of the following year budget. As the actual cost is paid before GA happens, it could come out of this year's budget.

Jeannie suggests considering this a transitional year. We would pay ahead, using money from the GA budget plus contingency. Next year we would pay in spring for the June GA.

Erin suggests there should be a summer service soon after GA to share information about it.

Pat suggested to the Board that the Board decide how the delegates would be chosen and have approval, rather than having the congregation vote at Annual Meeting. Alan would like to be sure that people get reimbursed in current budget year. Some discussion followed about whether

FUSN should do the registration or the individual delegates do it.

Laurel moved to approve \$2192 from the contingency budget to pay for FUSN GA delegates at the early registration rates for a 9-person slate. Andrea seconded. The motion was approved.

The Youth Group wants approval to sell soup to raise funds for registration fees to go to GA. Youth fees are lower than adult fees. Alan moves to approve. Attendance for Wednesday afternoon-Thursday night is \$80 per person for one day. Laurel moves we use \$150 of the Ops Council budget to cover costs of ingredients for the soup. Anne seconded. Approved. The Youth soup sale is scheduled for May 4th, but early GA registration ends April 30th. May 4 is also the Walk for Hunger, so it's perhaps not a good day. April 6 is the Youth Service this year.

Jeannie mentioned that Anne Watson-Born is directing the choir for GA this year.

~ **Committee issues/reports:** All

Alan expressed concern about T-shirt sale promoters approaching people in the hallway between the Sanctuary and the Parish Hall. It was agreed that such behavior is not approved.

Anne, **Ministerial Review** update: There will be 2 large congregational meetings March 23 and 30, open to all, with no sign-up required. Leadership members are invited to come on March 22, 27 or 29th, and these dates do require sign-ups. Input from the meetings will be reported for all to see. Comments from members will be attributed. Staff comments will be anonymous. Those who are homebound or away may provide email input.

~ **Capital Campaign:**

Susan, Laurel, Bobbie Sproat and Charlie Watts are an ad hoc committee. The Board approved moving forward to consider next steps. A consultant will be involved for a weekend in the fall, to talk and meet with individuals. A date should be chosen now, so the "quiet" phase and committee work can happen in spring 2015. The full campaign would begin fall 2015 and run through spring 2016. The Capital Campaign would run along with the Annual Budget Drive in spring 2016.

~ **Committee Chairs meeting follow up:** Susan will send committee chairs the link to allow them to sign up for preparing articles for the newsletter. We will not hold a Committee Fair this year. It is unclear how effective such an event is in providing information to the Congregation about work done by the committees and in recruiting interested members to join. In addition, the fair would be quite disruptive of coffee hour. [SB]

~ There was a motion to "allow the Buddhist monks to solicit voluntary contributions at Monday's 3.17 Adult RE class." This is a session on mindfulness that the monks are leading. [SB] Anne proposed. Laurel seconded. Unanimously approved.

~ **Thank yous:** none [SB]

~ The meeting adjourned at 9:17pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wendy Schwartz,  
Assistant Clerk