



Date: September 14, 2011
Approved by vote, 10/12/2011

COUNCIL MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Pat Rohan (Ch), Laurel Farnsworth, Anne Hess-Mahan, Jeannie Chaisson, and Kim Shanks.
ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:	Rev. Erin Splaine (Assistant Clerk: Bonnie McDonald)
UNABLE TO ATTEND:	Alan Cody, Mr. Barb Greve

1. OPENING WORDS

Pat Rohan read a passage from Rev. John Nichol's "A Wind Swept Over The Waters" as the opening words. It began:

"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but you do not have works..." ~ James 2:14-20

2. BRIEF UPDATE ON COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

A. COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE – UPDATE BY ANNE

The Communications Committee met and discussed the rolling out of a digital member directory. The Committee will be hosting a sign-up event soon. Anne will find out *when* and let everyone know.

Pat believes the Membership Committee is still planning to update the photo (hard copy) member directory.

B. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL – UPDATE BY KIM

The Religious Education Committee will have its first meeting on September 15th. COA Mentor Orientation was held on September 9th and Children's RE Teacher Orientation was held on September 10th. We're still looking for 3rd grade teachers.

Jeannie mentioned there was also a good Youth Group orientation recently.

Erin mentioned that the Youth Group has so many kids this year that the Youth Room is not big enough – which is kind of good news.

Erin said she was not sure of the status of the DLRE search committee but that she and Barb would be attending the Liberal Religious Educator's Association (LREDA) fall conference in October and would be advertising the position there.

Pat and Laurel mentioned that we welcomed the new Assistant DLRE Director, Beth Walton, and the new Youth Group Coordinator, Rebecca Hinds, on Sunday.

C. GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE – UPDATE BY LAUREL

The Green Sanctuary Committee met on Monday night (9/12/11), and discussed the Green Sanctuary accreditation application that will need to be completed to be certified by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) to be a 'green community.'

Laurel said that someone will need to contact Concetta Daurio (Chair, DLREM Search Committee) to borrow the DLRE text. She also mentioned that there are 12 action items that need to be submitted with the application. For example, one is a new recycling initiative.

Jeannie asked if "new heating system controls" could be one of the action items; and Laurel said we could try that.



C. GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE – cont'd.

Heating System Conversation

- i. Laurel then mentioned that Bob Persons is putting in new heating controls which will report diagnostics to his Smartphone; and Jeannie said this will make it possible to take care of issues in a much more efficient manner.
- ii. Erin asked if there were any costs associated with this project, and Laurel mentioned the capital costs of \$250 per heating and cooling zones or less (depending on whether Bob is able to procure some of them for free). Laurel mentioned there are 17 zones, but we won't pay \$250 each for all of them. Bob did get some of them at a reduced price and is asking for some free ones since he's bought so many. Also, Bob will not incur any costs on his phone for this technology.
- iii. Laurel also mentioned that the computer in the basement will not need to be updated, because of the Smartphone technology.

COSTS/BUDGET: \$250 x 17 heating and cooling zones for the new heating system controls	ACTIONS/FOLLOW-UP/RESPONSIBLE: Bob Persons is coordinating this effort.
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The conversation went back to the topic of the Green Sanctuary Committee, and Laurel mentioned she heard that the new Committee for Social Action (CSA) asked the Green Sanctuary Committee to be either a project or a task force – which is how they are trying to designate all social action related activities now.

It was mentioned that the CSA may not be aware that the Green Sanctuary Committee is already an official committee at FUSN.

D. BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE – UPDATE BY LAUREL

Laurel reported that she may be *busting out of her budgets* soon due to a series of major issues, including the following:

- **HVAC:** The building repairs budget category is over in several line items, most notably the HVAC line where we knew we had to replace condensers and lines in the Parish Hall, but also found out in August that we had to replace the condenser and feeding lines for the units that cool Fran and Barb's offices. This doubled the expected \$8,000 cost. We also will continue to incur costs during the year to keep all the heating and plumbing systems working.

COSTS/BUDGET: ~\$17K for HVAC	ACTIONS/FOLLOW-UP/RESPONSIBLE: Laurel said they have not exceeded the overall budget, but expects this could happen if there are any other unforeseen incidents.
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- **Unexpected Wall Rot in Children's Classroom:** The miscellaneous repair line items show a major, unexpected expense for mold/rotten wood and wall board. When our tenants, Pine Village Preschool, started to repaint the first floor classrooms, they found a large section of rotten wall around a leaking window. Macomber, the same contractor who is building the new organ chamber, was able to come quickly and put four men on the job so that the wall would be repaired in time for school to start.

COSTS/BUDGET: ~\$4K for wall repairs	ACTIONS/FOLLOW-UP/RESPONSIBLE: Laurel was able to take swift action on this incident, due in part to a good working relationship with the contractor. (Especially notable and appreciated, since the damage was found soon after Hurricane Irene.)
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- **New Building Keys:** The locks and keys line item is over budget as re-keying the building proved to be more expensive than originally thought.

COSTS/BUDGET: ~\$1,700 for new keys, which were budgeted at \$1K	ACTIONS/FOLLOW-UP/RESPONSIBLE: Fran Clancy and Laurel coordinated the distribution of the new keys.
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Laurel said that the total repairs-related budget is perilously near the end, since they've spent 80% of 12 months worth of it.

E. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE – UPDATE BY PAT

Pat said he received the minutes to the Membership Committee meeting only after it had occurred. He did not remember receiving a notice about the meeting. Erin mentioned that they've been holding them on Monday evenings.

3. REPORT ON THE BOARD MEETING

A. RETREAT RELATED CONVERSATION (EVENT DATE: 10/1)

Erin mentioned there was a good conversation about the upcoming Retreat at the Board Meeting. The Board Meeting attendees also mentioned that the Retreat may be a good time for:

- Some 'visioning' exercises;
- Talking about how to empower others to take more responsibility for projects/activities; and
- Talking about growing our membership, and retention strategies.

(*Background:* Doug Zelinski, Director of Leadership Development for the Massachusetts Bay District of Unitarian Universalist Congregations, will be moderating the Retreat on October 1st. The retreat will be joint with the Board of Trustees.)

B. NOTES FROM GOVERNANCE MEETING (8/25)

Pat and Laurel met with Susan Bartlett (Chair of Board of Trustees) and Gordon Moriarty (Trustee) to work on Governance issues. Pat was very encouraged about the conversation, and felt that they really understood the messages they were trying to get across.

Pat was able to express that, at their level, the Board of Trustees may not have the same feel for issues as we do at the Operations level.

To improve efficiency, Laurel noted that we have a "crackerjack" finance committee, which should be empowered to make a recommendation and then *make it happen*. She feels that if a project/solution costs under \$5,000, there should be no more than three people in the decision-making process. Laurel also suggested that whoever is closest to the situation should make the recommendation. Pat said that there is so little discretionary money in the budget, that there shouldn't be a lot to talk about. He also said that \$5,000 is generally a cut-off point for many congregations.

Retreat Related Conversation

The conversation went back to the topic of the Retreat:

- i. Pat mentioned that clarifying the roles of the Board and of the Operations Council will be discussed at the Retreat. Doug Zelinski will tie it all together for the groups. Pat acknowledged that it will ultimately be the Board's decision on what happens, since they created the Operations Council.
- ii. Erin noted that the Board cannot legally give up its fiduciary responsibilities, but it can define who does what without line-by-line budget scrutiny.
- iii. Kim asked if the Retreat was going to help with the duality that is sometimes felt at FUSN regarding the issue of trying to make more money and obtain more members *versus* maintaining a congregation size that ensures everyone knows one another and feels like an engaged community. Erin said she knows of other congregations that added members and money which were successful in maintaining a sense of community, and continue to engage with themselves and the world. Pat agreed that we need to add more members.



- iv. Erin wondered how many of the 300+ current members might become more engaged. Laurel agreed that we need more active people, and more families.
- v. Laurel would like to see the budget process put in place.
- vi. Jeannie mentioned that people may be encouraged to stay on the Board longer when better processes are in place.

Pat mentioned again that he is very encouraged by the recent communication with the Board; and feels that the Retreat will be a good one. He said that Doug's workshops have been thought-provoking. Erin also mentioned that she is very much looking forward to the Retreat.

4. REPORT ON LOCAL AREA INITIATIVES

A. WEST NEWTON AREA COUNCIL

Pat has been advised of a new council that is in its formative stages called the West Newton Area Council. It is a form of city government, and involves local businesses.¹ FUSN is within this council's jurisdiction. Anne attended a recent meeting and said that FUSN may be eligible for voting privileges in the next election cycle. Anne said the Council is working on a Village Day initiative; and they want to hear from local businesses and churches. (There still needs to be some discussion about who should be attending these meetings going forward.)

B. MIT PLACE-MAKING SURVEY

Anne mentioned that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is doing a survey on 'place making'.²

Anne said the survey will be taken by MIT students under Professor Terry Zolti's supervision.

The questions came up about if and what information we should provide; as well as who should provide it. Anne is going to try to obtain a copy of the survey and find out more details, so we can talk about the next steps.

C. GREATER BOSTON INTERFAITH ORGANIZATION (GBIO)

Erin asked if we had checked out the GBIO, and if our participation would help with FUSN's local footprint. She mentioned that they had discussed the GBIO at a recent Newton Clergy Association meeting. Pat mentioned that the GBIO's dues were potentially prohibitive (which are some percent of a member organization's operating budget, plus a commitment of volunteer hours). Laurel said that participation with the GBIO could be a game-changer. There was a question about who might represent FUSN, if we did become a member.

4. APPRECIATION

The following people were nominated for 'Thank You's' by the Ops Council:

- A. **JIM AND MARY LOU ESHELMAN** – *Suggested by Erin for their Virtual Yard Sale (which raised money for FUSN).*
- B. **NOREEN KIMBALL, KATE MASON, CURT LAMB AND GERALYN HORTON** – *Suggested by Pat for coordinating/organizing the summer services.*
- C. **BOB PERSONS** – *Suggested by Laurel because we could not run the building without him.*
- D. **STAFF APPRECIATION** – *Erin and Pat discussed revisiting the subject of having a holiday lunch with the Board and Staff.*

¹ A local Alderman said that *the councils are a way to bring more people together to help better run the city.*

² *Place-making* has been described as a way to create a project or environment with unique characteristics that encourages social interaction and serves as a 'heart' of a community.



5. CATIE CURTIS HOUSE CONCERT & SERVICES AUCTION

In the past, Catie Curtis—who has been dubbed a *folk-rock goddess*—has donated a concert to benefit FUSN. This usually brought in about 40-50 people, and tickets were approximately \$40 per person. This year, Naomi Olson has asked Catie to do another concert and she has agreed to do so.

There was some discussion about who could host the event at their home, and who could help organize the concert.

Pat said the concert coordination is fairly simple, and that we need to:

- Find a house to host the concert
- Sell tickets
- Buy wine and refreshments (Pat may do this)

Kim said she would talk with Naomi Olson about help.

Laurel suggested we add a Reverse Services Auction component to the next Services Auction, since there are times when the services offered do not receive bids. She said “someone could post a service I would like to buy, and give me a price I’ll like.” As an example, Laurel mentioned that she would love to let the service offerors know that she wants to hire someone for approximately four hours to do some basement work. She said we could post the services we want, like a ‘honey do’ list.

6. CHIME REPAIRS

Laurel wanted the Ops Council to vote so she could present a recommendation to the Board of Trustees that it accept a plan to repair the chimes with the help of an anonymous donor.

Motion: To present a recommendation to the Board to accept a plan to repair the chimes.

Vote: Approved unanimously; 5-0.

COSTS/BUDGET: ~\$12K	ACTIONS/FOLLOW-UP/RESPONSIBLE: Upon approval of the Board, Laurel will coordinate this effort.
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8. UPCOMING MEETINGS & SCHEDULE

A. OPS COUNCIL RETREAT, 10/1

The joint Retreat (Board of Trustees and Operations Council) will be on October 1st. It will be held at the First Parish in Needham, Unitarian Universalist, on Saturday, October 1st – from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

B. NEXT OPS COUNCIL MEETINGS, AND FUTURE SCHEDULE

The Operations Council Meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of each month. Next month’s meeting is 10/12/11.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie McDonald, Assistant Clerk

October 12, 2011