

First Unitarian Society in Newton
OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES
Wednesday, February 10, 2016
Alliance Room, 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm.

Present: Susan Bartlett, Judy Curby, Laurel Farnsworth, Andrea Kelley, Rev. Erin Splaine.
Guest: Bobbie Sproat (Board of Trustees).

~ **Invocation / Chalice Lighting:** Laurel - "The Choice," William Butler Yeats

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.

~ **Approvals:** All

- January Minutes were approved.
- A Montpelier, VT, COA group will visit and would like to stay at FUSN. Ops approved by email a rental fee waiver prior to this meeting.
- Ops approved the sale of Holly Zeeb's poetry book, *Eye of the Beholder*, during coffee hour, per request of Cathy Morocco.

~ **Staff update:** Erin

Erin reported for Rowan: A gender identity informative workshop will be held after the 2/21 service, from 12 to 3pm. Alex Kapitan, the UUA's Congregational Advocacy and Witness Program Coordinator, will participate in the service and run the workshop.

Rowan has received requests to send emails to the RE parents email list. Erin will distribute the guidelines for what's appropriate to send to that list.

Erin: She and FUSN are dealing with 2 recent deaths in the congregation: Holly Zeeb and Helen Lein. Black Lives Matter activities are ongoing. Buttons are available. Under consideration is a banner for the building. This needs to be done thoughtfully.

Erin will have a 6-month sabbatical next year. She will divide it, taking off 9/20/16 to 2/20/17 and then late May-June. This will allow her to be at FUSN for the budget drive.

The Board is looking for a sabbatical minister, who would preach twice a month during the sabbatical. To find a good candidate, Bobbie said the Board would put together a committee consisting of a member of the Ops Council, the Committee on Ministry, and the Personnel Policy Committee. The decision should be made by the end of June. Candidates often include retirees and interim ministers. Erin is working with the Committee on Ministry to create an informative brochure about this for the congregation. Contract payments can be made to the sabbatical minister's retirement account and toward Medicare, so they are not taxable. Erin said she would be available for any major events or deaths that should occur while she is on sabbatical.

~ **Report on BOT meeting:** Judy

Erin's sabbatical was discussed.

The Welcoming Congregation survey was presented and discussed. The next step is sending the committee report to UUA's Annette Marquis of the gender identity committee. Bobbie will send a note to the congregation inviting participation in the next implementation phase.

Karen Bottar did a 5-year financial projection. It shows a continuing and growing deficit.

The Board was advised that members of a non-profit Board of Trustees must be 18 years of age or older. There are 2 youth members who are not yet 18. Youth member Becca Lozinsky suggested having a 7th adult member, to avoid having tie votes. Youths would remain non-voting representatives. Becca thought this less-demanding role would encourage more youths to participate. Laurel pointed out that the Ops Council has 6 members, so there is no tie-breaking vote.

~ **Financial:** Judy, All

Review Year to Date spending:

Income from the November FUSN art sale was reported to be around \$50, less than prior years. Ten percent of sales go to FUSN. Judy is checking with Fran.

~ **FY17 Annual Budget - B&G request:**

Laurel increased the salary line for Henry Lopez, FUSN's sexton, and FUSN's property insurance by 3% each. No discretionary line items were increased so far. She will email her specific budget request to Ops members.

She is exploring with a plumber an instant hot water system for the upstairs bathrooms and kitchen, to avoid having hot water travelling a long distance through the building. She would like to hold off on painting the bathrooms until the work is done.

B&G is still planning memorial garden work and a handicap-accessible ramp for the Sanctuary.

~ **Database update:** All

Erin said Rowan and Ashley, in consultation with Fran, met about what their database needs are. They also met with Peter Farago and Jud Leonard to discuss implementation with the current system. They have a list of preferences and will ask Icon to determine if the system can handle the items on the list. After that is determined, next steps will be considered. Ash has had a positive role in this process. Although John Brennan could not attend tonight's Ops meeting, he previously expressed a willingness to participate in the process. Meanwhile, the process seems to be going forward.

Discussion followed about online exposure to financial information if we use online pledging through the FUSN website. There are concerns but no decisions were made.

~ **Holiday Fair:** Laurel

Discussions were held among the 10 members of the group looking into revising the fair. Judy Zacek and Laurel agreed to be on the leadership team for the next Holiday Fair, rather than have it end abruptly. The group said the fair needs to downsize and include fewer events. One idea is that Trader Jackie's and attic treasures, for instance, could be held on a different date -- or to discontinue attic treasures -- but this would then create a whole new event. Laurel will discuss this with Jackie. Judy pointed out that an advantage of the Holiday Fair is that it brings people in from outside the regular FUSN community.

Among other topics discussed:

- Several congregants have expressed attachment to Attic Treasures, although it takes up the most space and requires the most labor (clearing the stage area ahead of time and clean-up afterward). It also raises a relatively low amount of money (\$1,000.).
- The book/CD sale in the Ladies' Parlor takes up less space, and More Than Words will pick up unsold books, minimizing the disposal problem.
- Maybe children's activities could be run by Coming of Age candidates.
- Having COA mentors and mentees involved in the Fair works well.
- Laurel asked Ash to talk with youth about how they could be more involved in the Fair.
- Andrea said she could help with publicity and community outreach, through a Google group that lists West Newton events: westnewtonneighborhood@googlegroups.com.
- Tree sales are a separate event.
- Some people only come to the fair and are not at FUSN other times.

The overall goal would be to minimize effort and maximize profit.
Laurel will send an email listing holiday earnings by category.

~ **Updates:** All -- Committee issues/reports, including:

- Susan reminded the group of the March 12th joint Ops-Committee Chairs Meeting.
- Coffee house co-chairs are needed for next year.
- Regarding the proposed van service, there is no new input at this time.
- Getting an RE credit card was discussed. An alternative could be a petty cash account. Fran said that RE used to have its own petty cash account. No further action is needed.
- The Wayside Pulpit has been handed over to the youth group to manage, with Dani's help.
- Due to Jeannie's absence, the B&G fire safety topic was tabled until the next meeting

~ **Thank yous:** All

Dwight Golan and John Brennan for fixing the back door so that it closes well.

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Schwartz,
Assistant Clerk