

First Unitarian Society in Newton  
OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES  
Wednesday, April 12, 2016  
Alliance Room, 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at around 7 pm.

**Present:** John Brennan (by phone), Judy Curby, Laurel Farnsworth, Andrea Kelley, Rev. Erin Splaine. **Guests:** Greg DiBiaso, Board of Trustees; Ash Engel; Karen Davis (Personnel Policy Committee); **Black Lives Matter:** Josie Green, Wendy Haskell, Beau Stubblefield-Tave.

~ **Invocation / Chalice Lighting:** snacks by John.

### **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.

~ Ash presented information on a new database recommendation, The Realm. FUSN's current database system, IconCMO, works well for Administration and Finance, but is not easy to use for RE and Membership needs. While using The Realm would double the cost, the benefits seems to outweigh the increase. Several questions were discussed, such as about the transfer process from the current system to the new one. The migration and new website are independent of each other, so there would be no impediments. The consensus was to go with The Realm as the new database, starting in June.

### ~ **Approvals:** All

- February Minutes were approved.
- March Minutes were approved.
- Susan has been working with the Personnel Policy Committee to develop and implement a CORI policy and process for all volunteers working with our children and youth in RE programs. The PPC recommended that the CORI policy be described in our Youth Protection Policy. The policy was circulated by email and approved by email vote 3/22/16.

### ~ **Staff update:** Erin & Rowan

Erin: The new website will be up in a month or so.

The joint service with Myrtle Baptist on June 5th has grown to a more comprehensive project. The Mayor has made it a city-wide celebration, including food trucks. Erin feels we are creating something wonderful for the community. This first year will be a challenge. She says we will likely need funds for details, such as an outdoor sound system. Andrea suggests asking the City if they have access to an outdoor sound system.

Erin has been busy attending all the pledge parties. She mentioned that there are still a range of active, unresolved feelings about the difficulties of last year.

A workshop is scheduled for Saturday, September 17th -- "In-FUSN: Aligning our Doing With Our Being" -- to assess whether the range and nature of the many activities at FUSN is too much. Are we trying to do too much? It will be facilitated by a regional staff member. The morning is open to all. The afternoon will be for leadership. See Appendix for more workshop information.

Rowan is at a class tonight.

**~ FY17 Annual Budget: Salaries, Karen Davis for the Personnel Policy Committee:**

Karen passed out a sheet on what the market is doing in terms of salary increases. Consensus remains steady for an average increase of 3% in 2016. To be eligible for benefits, an employee must work at least 30 hrs/week for 52 weeks or 1560 hours in the fiscal year. In FY 17, we will have four benefits-eligible employees (Minister, Administrator, DLRE, and Coordinator of Member Support and Communications). Karen reminded us that FUSN is a fair compensation congregation.

Karen then distributed the PPC's budget recommendations for FY 17 salaries. Expenses are 10% of salary for 2 staffers. The amounts for the other 2 staffers are the same as for FY 16.

- The PPC recommends a bonus for the Administrator -- who is already at the UUA maximum for this position -- in lieu of a salary increase.
- They recommend moving the Family Music Director salary to the Music budget.
- The Member Coordinator is a 40-hour per week, 10-month position.
- They don't yet know if there will be health insurance increases or how much.
- Salary but not benefits are included for the temporary Sabbatical Minister.

Laurel mentioned that it is unlikely FUSN will meet this year's pledge goal. Budget cuts will be necessary for the FY 17 budget. She asked Karen if the PPC can look at their recommendations and see if they can reduce some figures.

**~ Report on BOT meeting: Greg**

The Board discussed upcoming events, including the Seder. Rowan had talked about youth mental health workshops; the joint service with Myrtle Baptist; the Black Lives Matter proposed banner. The Board wanted to move quickly on the banner, rather than wait for the Annual Meeting.

Erin mentioned there will be mock-ups of the proposed banner and opportunities for the congregation to ask questions and discuss it. They see the banner as an invitation to a conversation. There will be a Google phone number, to avoid Fran getting too many phone calls.

The Board also discussed the Harvard Conflict Study and how to deal with conflict and conflict resolution.

In addition, the Board is trying to establish a better plan to transition and encourage leadership. A system is needed. Under consideration: making the Chair position 2-year vs. 1-year.

~ **Black Lives Matter, Josie Green, Wendy Haskell, Beau Stubblefield-Tave:**

Wendy said they met with the Board last night. They hope to get the banner up in early June. They have looked into communication with the congregation, such as a table at coffee hour each week. Events scheduled include a post-service discussion with Erin on April 17; guest speakers on May 3; the annual Mother's Day Walk for Peace on May 8; a 2-hour workshop on racism in Newton and beyond on May 22; and the joint service with Myrtle Baptist on June 5th. Erin will meet with the Newton Police Chief and anticipates it will be an opportunity to work together.

Beau said the Chief hopes to have the entire police force at the June 5th event, as a show of support. He said, "this is not a moment; it's a movement."

Josie said the recent discussion with representatives from other congregations and FUSNites went well. She showed banner mock-ups on a poster board as options to consider.

Greg said if we cannot get rights to use the UUA Standing on the Side of Love heart icon, we could use a chalice image.

Andrea and Laurel pointed out that there is a sign ordinance. Someone needs to look into it. While FUSN has several signs already, some of them are grandfathered. If you take down a sign, it would be hard to get a new one approved to go up. Laurel pointed out that temporary signs have fewer restriction. Andrea wondered if having such a banner is "organic," i.e., could evolve. How long would it last? What if people behind it are no longer here? etc.

Josie raised the question about whether the banner should stay up or go up on designated occasions. She prefers the former.

~ **Financial:** Judy, All

Laurel mentioned that Karen Bottar had provided a financial report. Laurel has stopped discretionary spending from B&G, so any remaining B&G funds could be put into the building reserve fund, a way to reduce the B&G FY 17 budget.

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

- Van service-status. Laurel met with Barry and Chris Goldsmith. A contract is under review. Insurance is taken care of. Bobbie Sproat needs to sign the contract for FUSN.
- Laurel provided an update on the search for the Sabbatical Minister, including potential candidates.
- Laurel said the CORI policy passed, but it needs to be fleshed out further.
- Pine Village expressed concern about the care of the playground after the Easter egg hunt. We need to remind everyone that it is a shared space.
- Concern was expressed over Sanctuary cleanliness.
- Dani is the clearinghouse for child care requests, and it is taking a up good bit of her time.

~ **Thank yous:** All

Jud was the guiding force behind setting up the reception for Helen Lein's memorial.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wendy Schwartz,  
Assistant Clerk

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#### APPENDIX:

Working title: **IN-FUSN: Aligning Our Doing with Our Being**

We talked about the **goals of the workshop**, in terms of how we want to think, feel and act. Here's some of our thinking:

- We'd like people to walk away with the evaluation tool (what's CORE, valuable but NEEDS WORK, valuable but NEEDS PARTNERS, etc.) and ideally for every committee to work through this over the course of the next year.
- We want to figure out the core of *what* we do and *why* we do it. Why are we here?
  - Why is here different?
  - What are we missing?
  - What's our spiritual grounding for being here?
- We want to think about faith formation (and what that means) and have a larger more meaningful container for the why and how we do things
- We want to change how we think about "deliverables."

We want to target the leadership of the congregation (lots of the key committees) but open it up to the larger congregation as well.