

FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN NEWTON
OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES
Wednesday November 11, 2015
Alliance Room, 7:00 P.M.

Present: Susan Bartlett, Judy Curby, Laurel Farnsworth, Rev. Erin Splaine, RE Director Rowan van Ness; guest Lesley Sneddon (BoT).

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm.

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.

~ **Invocation** / Chalice Lighting: Susan

~ **Approvals:**

- At the Ops Council retreat on October 24th, Judy moved and Andrea seconded to increase the roof repair budget line from \$3,000 to \$7,500. This would still stay within the total repairs budget. It passed unanimously.
- An email vote was taken on November 8, to provide Ash with a laptop computer. It was agreed to move ~\$1,500 from her salary to the computer line. Given her starting date, funds were available.
- October minutes were approved.

~ **Staff update:**

Erin:

- Her recent focus has been on integrating Ash into FUSN as the new Membership Coordinator. She started 2 weeks ago, and Erin reported that things are moving along smoothly. Ash is working out what her schedule will be and has already been actively engaged in a number of issues.
- The Multi-Cultural Ministry is having a retreat in a couple of weeks to assess progress and keep it going. They are also discussing the “black lives matter” movement in society -- what it means and how to respond/support it.
- Lay ministers are reviewing their roles and may make adjustments. They are looking at separating the administrative functions (phone calls to arrange meals and rides, etc.).

- Erin mentioned the New to UU course, the new member potluck and other activities that were well-attended.

November DLRE Report, submitted by Rowan Van Ness:

Staff Updates

- People are loving both Dani Nagus, the new Youth Coordinator, and Ellie Foster, the new Children's Music and Family Choir Coordinator -- so grateful to have them both on board!
- Children's RE
 - Ellie has started going to classrooms and leading songs/hymns. Great presence, classroom management, and musical skill.
 - Pre-K and 6th/7th grade classes are particularly large, (13 registered, 9 visitors) and (17 registered, 5 visitors) respectively. [They have] swapped classrooms (K and Pre-K) [to better allocate space].
 - 4th/5th Grade OWL teachers [were] trained last weekend (Todd Farrell, Jules Delamar. Beth Walton also did the training.)
- Youth
 - Amazing what additional capacity comes with moving from 10 → 15 hours/week.
 - Dani joined Coming Of Age candidates on UU Heritage Trip to Boston Common and UUA.

Ferry Beach

- Great chance for people to connect
- Announcement that we're locked into Columbus/Indigenous People's Day Weekend for the next 3 years

UU Identity Renaissance Module (15-hour training for UU Religious Educators)

- Great exploration of UU Identity and how we foster it
- Final Project: UU in the Home Starter Kit (neat potential collaboration between Erin, Rowan, and Ash for next year??)

LREDA Fall Conference

- Theme: Technology, Full Week Faith, Theme-Based Ministry
- Tons of ideas on how we can more deeply integrate themes into our congregation

RE Council

- Conducted a "Skills and Interests Inventory" to identify areas of interest and transition within RE Council
- [Wrote a] Mission Statement*
- Working to create volunteer job descriptions

*Knowing that ...We transform ourselves, our community, and our world by intentionally living our UU principles...Our Lifespan Religious Education Goals are to help children, youth, and adults:

- become their best selves
- be effective in community
- develop resiliency and a sense of
- connection to something greater than themselves

- develop a positive UU identity
- draw spiritual meaning from life experiences
- The Healthy Baby-Healthy Child holiday gift project was discussed. Rowan noted that it's an important ministry of this congregation, started many years ago. Gifts are collected at holiday time to give to non-FUSN youngsters. However, it takes up a good deal of Beth Walton's (Assistant RE Director) time, as well as physical space. She wondered if it drains resources from other holiday projects, such as gifts for prisoners, etc. She wondered if maybe it doesn't belong in RE. Laurel suggested it might fit in with Social Action. She added that the donated gifts do not actually go to the children named on the paper ornaments; rather they go to the general collection. If that is the case, Laurel suggested not having the RE kids create the ornaments. Maybe a small group ministry or the Youth Group could take on the HBHC project. Erin said we need to act now to make the transition in time for this year's holiday and maybe find a longer-term solution down the road. Erin asked who should put out the call for someone to take it over. Susan said she would send out an email, looking for someone to take it on. She will coordinate with Beth.

~ **Report on BoT meeting:** Susan

- Erin said two new FUSN members were approved, with 2 more approved by email today.
- The Developing Leadership team is 5 people. So far, they have developed three initiatives: working with the Nominating Committee (Kate Mason); creating a leadership course (Karen Edwards); increasing visibility of leadership opportunities (Josie). They developed a short survey to assess FUSN committees' needs. Kate will come to the joint Ops-Committee Chairs meeting this Saturday with an update.
- The Financial Oversight committee includes Greg DiBiasco (Board Rep), Jackie Rohan and Dan Brody. Some issues were raised from last year: QuickBooks backup; electronic pledging; the transition from Nancy Tobias to QuickBooks online; etc. Faith Kreider and Judy have been exercising oversight of the transition. Judy also reviews Ron Margolin's kitchen finances.
- The Board reviewed its priorities for the year, including some carried over from last year, as well as new ideas.

~ **Financial**

- Review year-to-date spending: Laurel commented that current pledges seem to be coming in as expected.
- Susan said the amount due from prior year pledges is \$11,000. Judy said the forecast is the entire amount that has not been received from the prior year, (versus assuming more of those funds would be coming in). Susan asked if we should be making phone calls to people who owe from last year's pledges. Some of those in arrears are people who have left FUSN. Erin will look at Fran Clancy's list.

- Annual Treasurer's report, May 2015: Judy submitted it.
- There is around \$8,000 in the Wayside Pulpit fund. Erin asked how we could access the funds, since they are not being spent. Erin will ask for Tom Bean's thoughts, since this requires legal input. Laurel said there are probably other congregations who have had to deal with similar issues: funds that were created for purposes that are no longer relevant.

Erin asked if she should invite Ash come to the January Ops meeting, so she can get a sense of the Council's work. Susan plans to contact her for a preliminary conversation and will invite her. Judy suggested perhaps Ash can take on making FUSN's website more prominent in the order of service. Judy will contact her about that.

~ Review updated rental use agreement: This topic was deferred until the next Ops meeting.

~ Review Ops priorities as developed at the retreat: Susan has typed and shared them. Susan will send Ash the list of Ops priorities to review with her.

~ **Update: Committee issues/reports:**

- Fundraising activities from social action: Susan said we have enough input to start a FUSN yearly calendar, but more details are needed.
- B&G: fire safety. Jeannie will review FUSN maps. This was deferred to the next meeting.
- The joint Ops-Committee Chairs meeting will be held Saturday, November 14th. Susan will purchase sandwiches, beverages, and cookies.
- Peter Smith and Sharon Susskind will chair the Alternative Gift Fair, which will be held December 13th.
- Holiday Fair: The need for volunteers was discussed. Rowan asked who has "ownership" of the Holiday Fair? and the Youth Coffee House? People tend to do it for several years and then burn out. How do we integrate other members of the congregation in these leadership roles? Judy asked if Erin might say something from the pulpit or another forum. (NB: Erin left the meeting before this came up.) Susan will talk with Erin about this.

~ **Thank yous:** All

Dwight repaired a table in the Children's Chapel; he will also work on the back door. *(NB: hold till door is repaired, as well!, so it's one thank you.)*

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Schwartz,
Assistant Clerk

ADDENDUM

2015-2016 Operations Council Priorities, from the Operations Council retreat

1. Rental policies
 - Charges [Susan to send around current schedule of charges]
 - Rental agreement [Andrea to send current draft]
 2. Database
 - Pledge component
 - OC support required [Ash/Fran/Peter to meet; follow-up Dec/Jan]
 3. Communications
 - Supporting communications work [John, Andrea, Susan to work with Ash and current members of communications committee]
 4. Newsletter articles
 - Ops [Possible columns: parking, e-mail policy, work of lay ministers]
 - Committees [Email committee chairs for monthly updates; done by Fran? OC?; SB talk to Fran]
 5. Developing Leadership Team (DLT)
 - Supporting work of DLT
 6. Financial policies
 - Review current policies and need for various reports—Ops (treasurer), financial oversight committee
 7. Building use
 - Scheduling—more easily visible (electronic, online)
 - o Check Rowan for RE calendar; Erin for staff calendar
 - Use—flexible times; FUSN use
- On-going tasks***
8. Fundraising
 - Schedule—CSA, RE, Music [currently have RE and music]
 9. Signs
 - Summer services [Jeannie to talk with Worship]
 - Other: bathrooms

2014-2015 priorities requiring minimal follow-up

10. Wayside pulpit
 - Repairs done; Judy to check with Dani about youth group changing message
11. Coffee hour
 - Check out use of quiet space in Alliance Room

Wish list

12. Electronic payments