

OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES FINAL

Tuesday, March 17, 2020
Via Zoom online

Attending via Zoom: Susan Bartlett, Laurel Farnsworth, Jud Leonard, Judy Curby, Sharon Sisskind, Eric Haas, Ted Hess-Mahan (BOT), Erin Splaine, Amanda Graff, Linda Ross (asst clerk)

Called to order 7:08p.m.

Invocation/Chalice Lighting/Reading - Sharon

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:

- By email, prior to meeting – Demie Stathoplos sent the following request to Susan and Laurel:

The FUUSN Climate Task Force is requesting permission to have a table in the Parish Hall on Sundays beginning in March, through the end of June, to provide a variety of information to our community related to reducing our individual and city wide carbon footprints, associated with the implementation of the Newton Climate Action Plan, as well as the larger IPCC goal of reaching net zero carbon by 2050.

Our intent is provide a variety of information on various Sundays, related to opting up to 100% renewable energy, electric vehicles, induction cooking, backup generators, etc. We hope that by educating people in our congregation, we will make it easier for people to consider some of the changes in our housing and vehicle choices that will make a difference in reducing our carbon footprint.

The request was approved unanimously by email.

- Minutes – February. Sharon moved, Eric seconded, 6 approved, motion passed.
- Erin requested two more Zoom accounts for membership committee and music committee. Amanda noted that if this is done through the UUA, Zoom will automatically upgrade the account.. Sharon – a free account allows up to 40 minutes and 25 people; might be sufficient. Judy moved to approve adding two Zoom accounts, Jud seconded, unanimous approval.

Staff Update

Amanda

- She and Aoife have been working hard on family faith practices. Very timely given current circumstances.
- Family newsletter usually goes out once weekly.
- She is going to do parent support group once weekly with Erin O'Donnell, starting this week.
- Thinking about COA program, hoping we will be able to have the service in the building in May.
- Youth group has not been meeting very often this year.
- Adult faith – she thinks daily meditation would help her; may ask others to join her.
- Search for RE director
 - One applicant to date
 - Aoife will be applying
 - She is meeting with hiring committee regularly.
- Staff schedule in building: Monday-Aoife; Tuesday-Amanda; Wednesday-Anne; Thursday-Rosemary; Friday-Fran; Weekend-Erin

Erin

- She is inspired by those who have done concerts on Instagram and Facebook
- Thinking and working about ways to stay connected, especially if this lasts for a long time
- Zoom recording of the service last week has been posted on Facebook
- Wondered if notifications of Ops Council and BOT should be announced to congregation with Zoom link so people can listen in. For OC, next month includes a salary discussion, so that portion is not open to the public.
- We need to think about the time frame for decisions that need to be made e.g. Sandy Island, Annual Meeting, Fellowship Dinner, Seder, General Assembly. For GA, the UUA will apparently make a decision in mid-April – so we will wait until next meeting to decide on delegates. Denise Bousquet will be contacted to determine the lead time for Sandy Island.
- Susan Frederick Gray (UUA president) is scheduled to preach on May 3 – Erin would like to have her in the pulpit rather than online.

Responding to coronavirus

- Susan asked about Henry's time – Laurel had asked Fran to think about special projects that he could do.
- Susan has more permanent signs to post about the building being closed – will consult with Laurel as to method to attach signs.

Financial

- RE Budget – Amanda – asking for approval to keep budget the same as it was this year.
 - Not sure if there will be Coming of Age next year; will know within the next couple of weeks.
 - If no COA, will decrease request by about \$2,000.
 - Erin asked if COA line should stay in every year. Judy – might mean that leaving it in would result in a cut to something else.

- Amanda will send RE budget to Brian Gill
- Review February expenditures – no issues noted.
- Laurel – budget drive
 - She is concerned that members of our congregation may not be able to pledge due to pandemic, job loss and insecurity, etc., and that this will affect the budget drive
 - Sharon – a lot of uncertainty may affect people’s pledges
 - Further discussion about challenges facing the pledge drive, and ways to contact congregants.
 - The suggestion was made to try to control expenditures over the next few months.
 - Lawn sprinklers are scheduled to be installed in early April; landscaping is scheduled for May (\$25,000). The new projector for the Parish Hall has been ordered and an electrician would install. The funds for both of these projects is in the current budget. Laurel would rather do these items and possibly postpone next year’s roof and window repair. The building reserve is currently about \$90,000, and the window fund \$47,000 (depending on market status).
 - There was further discussion of expenditures; the consensus was to continue with projects already scheduled and funded for the current year.

Newsletter: March – due March 24 - committee chairs meeting – Laurel volunteered to write.

The Board of Investment volunteered to write an article on investments; will schedule for April newsletter.

Meeting adjourned 8:50 p.m.