

FUSN Board of Trustees  
Tuesday, 8 March 2016  
Children's Chapel, 7:30 PM

<p><b>Staff:</b> Erin Splaine, Minister Rowan Van Ness, Director, Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE) <b>Board:</b> Lesley Sneddon, Co-chair Bobbie Sproat, Co-chair Brian Burba Gregg DiBiaso Eric Haas Julianna Lakomski, Youth <b>Absent:</b> Becca Lozinsky, Youth <b>Clerk:</b> Kit Ryan</p>	<p><b>Visitors/Presenters:</b> Laurel Farnsworth, Operations Council Tom Bean, Ellen Metzger, Saul Lookner, Annual Budget Drive</p>
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Meeting began at 7:31 PM

**Invocation / Chalice Lighting; Reading of Board Covenant**

**Check-In**

**Committee Reports**

Developing Leadership Team (DLT) update by Cathy Morocco  
(The team includes Kate Mason, Josie Greene, Karen Edwards and Lorenz Glaser)

- *Strengthening the Nominating Committee work.* The team is working with our Moderator, Bill Horne, on strengthening the Nominating Committee process. The Committee members for this year are John Adkins, Catie Curtis, Chris Gaebler Kate Mason (representing the DLT) and Andrew Morse. The committee will meet with Bill on March 19th. The DLT is charged by the Board to help the Nominating Committee strengthen their procedures (elect a chair, keep records of nominees, reach out to varied groups) consistent with recommendations of last year's Nominating Committee. The DLT will assist the committee in publicizing core job openings and improving job descriptions where needed.

The core job openings include two Board members. The other openings are still to be determined.

- *Collaboration with Membership Coordinator.* DLT members will be meeting with Ash Engel our Membership Coordinator, to discuss a service initiative that has strong potential to contribute to member engagement and leadership development in FUSN.
- *Leadership Training.* Karen Edwards offered a one-evening course on two different occasions, which drew only one attendee. The announcement had a short lead time and limited publicity. Board members commented that a leadership course could be of great benefit to the congregation. It could be a "Welcome into Leadership" retreat with a bigger goal of spirituality and bonding. It could be a "rite of passage."

## **Staff Updates**

### **Rowan van Ness, DLRE**

- Working on a long-term vision and setting priorities.
- An Adult Faith Formation Task Force is forming, led by Jenn Lerner and Devon Welles to explore the needs and opportunities in our congregation for adult spiritual development. The task force will start their work in the fall and report their recommendations to the board in the Spring of 2017. Bobbie suggested that the Ops Council be invited to their 2017 presentation.
- Working on leadership succession in multiple areas, including Coming of Age, Coffee House, Youth Advisors, and Our Whole Lives (OWL). Brian raised issue of how across many areas of FUSN we have people to "help" but not people to lead. The Coffee House has been active for 15 years and has been packed to capacity. It also requires much work. We need to let current leaders know their work is appreciated, and give Carol Reichert's work with the Coffee House as an example of outstanding and long leadership. We need to determine our major goals (fundraising, leadership development, fellowship) as a way to set our direction.
- Work is ongoing on database development, job descriptions, and identifying adult volunteer leaders for youth programs such as Coming of Age, Youth Group, and Coffee House.

### **Erin Splaine, Minister**

- Two Pledge Parties have been held that included both newer and older folks. The conversations were deep and hopeful. At least one party will be held per weekend during this period.
- Based on information and experience that Rowan provided, Ash Engel has drafted a FUSN Service Initiative with goals of helping excite people about serving at FUSN, matching people to meaningful activity, and providing support for leadership development.
- Erin attended a Reflective Leadership workshop on Thursday and Friday, March 3rd and 4th at the Public Conversations Project in Watertown.
- She will preach this spring on the issue of our spiritual purpose as a congregation. How can we answer the call without burning out? She would like us to conduct an inventory of all that we are currently doing and ask what purpose it serves and

how it furthers the mission and goals of the Society. We need to plan which activities we will keep, change, or let go. We need to ask, Do our activities promote a faith community or a social service agency, and how does each activity affect internal congregational interactions? She noted that simply asking these questions may cause anxiety.

## **Strategic**

### *Annual Budget Drive Team Update by Tom Bean, Ellen Metzger, Saul Lookner*

Raised the question, Is the Board's funding target for the 2016 Annual Budget Drive realistic?

Presented a preliminary analysis of the probability of raising an ambitious \$575K in pledges for 2017 based on data provided by David Morocco and Linda Rinearson from the 2015 Budget Drive. The early returns from pledges made at the first two parties is encouraging, with some pledges up 50%, nevertheless, the team expressed caution about achieving the target. While the data project an increase in the estimated average amount of pledges in 2016 over the past two drives, they also clearly show a decrease in the number of non-zero pledge units. Based on these numbers the analysis projects a result of \$50K below the Board's target.

The goals of the team are to raise money this year and also to transition the ABD leadership to involve representation from younger age cohorts.

Steward training is scheduled for 11:30AM Sunday, March 13.

### *Safe Congregations Initiative and Needs. Erin and Rowan*

Expressed need to revitalize the issue, including gathering information about the issues and needs from our own congregation, and policies and initiatives in other congregations.

Rowan: as with the Welcoming Committee, some components are already in place, such as having two teachers in a classroom; concerns include teacher & student safety

Erin: Safe Congregations guidelines could potentially apply not only to Religious Education, but also to activities involving lay ministers, care crew, Greater Boston Food Bank, and Sandy Island. The issues have both legal and moral aspects. We need some congregational conversation about these issues.

FUSN has some best practice procedures in place, but we have no policy in place. Goals of the Safe Congregations initiative are: 1) providing information, 2) gathering and selecting "most reasonable best practices," 3) educating the congregation, and 4) engaging in monitoring, implementation and re-evaluation. Other congregations have addressed these issues; for example, Watertown developed practices after the Marathon bombing.

Our efforts have been stymied most recently by difficulty in engaging volunteers to pursue this initiative. Laurel asked whether a short-term consultant could help us identify policies that reflect best practices in this area. We will investigate that possibility.

### *Welcoming Congregation Renewal: Bobbie*

Bobbie sent the Committee's report to the FUSN Business List, and posted it to the FUSN Facebook Group.

No feedback as yet on Bobbie's call for people to continue the work. The Board brainstormed a number of strategies for reaching out with this call. Eric will focus the next Board column on this, Bobbie will resend her list message, and we will place a message in the Order of Service.

*Multicultural Ministry Initiative: Bobbie*

On March 7, Bobbie attended the Multicultural Ministry Initiative's workshop "Can We Talk? An Introduction to Culturally Fluent Communication." The participants were asked to name and prioritize topics they thought could benefit from additional "difficult conversation" at FUSN. Top priority topics identified included: race and color, the definition of "welcoming," family structure, and conflict style and management.

*Vanco system for paying pledges on line: Bobbie*

There has been some concern about security of an online payment system linked through the FUSN website. After some research and discussion with various people, including the Operations council, Bobbie recommended that we launch a trial of the Vanco online payment system this Budget Drive season. Cyber liability insurance is available through our insurance agents.

Brian moved to approve a trial of the Vanco system through the end of this fiscal year, May 31, 2016, and to add cyber liability coverage to our insurance policy for the next fiscal year. Gregg seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

*Ministerial Sabbatical plans*

Lesley announced there is now a search committee for a part-time sabbatical minister in place: Laurel Farnsworth, Lisa Gresser, and Dot Jacobson, with Erin serving in a consultant role. They are planning their first meeting.

*Bylaw change to add another BoT member:*

Tom Bean has reviewed state requirements re. age of trustees; Massachusetts has no explicit age limitations on Board members. One non-statutory concern is the fiduciary responsibility of Board members and whether it's appropriate to impose that responsibility on youth. The issue was deferred, pending a scheduled consultation with Gordon Moriarty, for the Bylaws Committee.

*Long range planning for Stewardship Committee*

Brian reviewed the research he's done so far and discussed his notes, which he shared as a handout. He focused especially on what the book *Serving with Grace* has to offer. There might be benefit to having a workshop addressing leadership; the process may be its own reward.

**Procedural**

- Voted unanimously to affirm its March 5 electronic vote re. the UUA presidential candidate petition process: The Board will “affirm” any and all “petitions” that may be presented to us, per the UUA Bylaws, by candidates seeking to run for election to the UUA Presidency in 2017. We do so in order to support as much participation in the UUA presidential election process as possible, which we think is the only fair and responsible action. We do so knowing that “affirming” a “petition” is not a commitment to any individual candidate but rather a commitment to the process.
- Voted unanimously to affirm that, on March 5, the Board electronically approved minutes for meetings on June 9, 2015 and January 12, 2016.

**Close**

Meeting adjourned: 9:39 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kit Ryan. Clerk