

FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN NEWTON
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
December 11, 2012

Present:

Board: Lisa Gresser, Gordon Moriarty, Strom Thacker, Ann Woodbury, Jonathan Reuman, Carl Metzger, Bruce Henderson, Alan Cody, Margaret Costello

Absent: Charlie Watts, Conrad Buys

Staff: Erin Splaine, Perry Montrose

Clerk: Sheila Ardery

Bruce provided an inspirational reading after the Board read the covenant and Gordon lit the chalice.

Approval of the Minutes

The November 13, 2012 minutes were approved without comment.

Minister's Housing Allowance – a correction to the minutes of May 8, 2012 minutes:

Gordon asked that a correction to the May 8, 2012 minutes be voted on. The board voted to approve the inclusion of the following resolution which was omitted from the minutes of the May 8, 2012 meeting:

"Whereas, The Internal Revenue Code permits a minister to exclude, from gross income, a church-designated allowance, paid as part of compensation, to the extent used for actual expenses incurred in owning or renting a home; and

Whereas, The First Unitarian Society in Newton compensates the Senior Minister for services in the exercise of ministry;

Resolved, That the annual compensation of the Senior Minister for the fiscal year beginning June 1, 2012 and ending May 31, 2013, excluding insurance, pension and allowances is \$97,170.00 of which \$41,132.00 is a designated housing allowance; and

Resolved, That the designation of \$41,132.00 per year as a housing allowance shall apply until otherwise provided."

New Member

Gordon asked for a motion to approve Matt Cuddy as a member after reading a short biography. **Carl moved and the motion was approved unanimously.**

Ops Council Chair

Gordon reported that there is a member considering becoming the Ops Council Chair as Pat Rohan has indicated that he would like to retire from the position.

Staff reports

Perry reported that the first meeting of the HS parent support group and it is a good model for other potential support groups. There will be a Homebound Holiday project for children and youth to make cards and goodies for homebound members that the families will deliver. The RE Council is working on the details of the RE Leadership. Rebecca and Perry have been meeting with people about youth programming within FUSN and in the district. There was a discussion on how the Coming of Age kids are not all transitioning to the youth group activities. Perry will be hosting a meeting in January to discuss the Coming of Age program.

Erin reported that the community really rallied at the death of John Sarvey to support Rachel and her family. Erin said that she had never seen a community that responds so well ministerially in such situations. Erin said that included the staff who are extraordinary and responded in extraordinary ways.

Erin reported on the planned events over the Christmas holiday including a staff luncheon.

Membership list

Bruce reported that the Membership Committee is trying to clean up the membership list for at least two reasons: 1) to reduce the dues paid to the UUA for inactive members; and 2) to reduce the burden on ABD personnel who spend a lot of time trying to contact people who won't participate. The Bylaws stipulate that members who have not attended service or contributed to the ABD in two years may be removed as members by the Board. It was recognized that we do not have systems in place to monitor attendance. It is recommended by the Membership Committee that people who have not been active in recent memory (including through financial contributions) and who have not responded to a letter and other attempts to contact them over the last six months be removed from membership. While some responded to such letters by saying that they wanted to be removed from membership, the following people have not been responsive or active in the last two years. **Carl made a motion to remove the following people from the membership list and Ann seconded:**

Cathy Almquist, Laura Bradford, Linn Hardenburgh, Alice and Bruce Holstein, Jack Kimball, Susan MacNab, Caroline Morrison, Jon Parsons, Maria Sergi, Patty Stone, Fred Green, Janet Thompson.

The motion passed unanimously.

Bruce recorded 378 members last fall. We are now back to 383 with the removal of the above names and addition of new members. Bruce said that there is a concerted effort to get non-members who are participating in services and activities to become official members. Erin noted that we have over 250 at services and questioned is that a very high proportion of members or to what extent does it include substantial numbers of engaged non-members.

Data Base project

Bruce reported that initial estimates from the Data Base project committee have indicated that \$3,500 the first year and \$2,500 will get us a decent open source system. The extra money in the first year would be for a consultant to train the volunteers and provide support. The committee is looking at this now but is not ready to request approval of funding at this time.

Pledge Drive

Bruce reported that the committee would like to aim for a 10% increase in pledges next year, in keeping with the multi-year plan developed last year. That plan called for a 15% increase this year (we reached a bit over 13%) and 10% next year to meet new expenditures (e.g., Member Services Director) and reduce recurring operating deficits over a two-year period. Bruce reported that the average pledge went down this year as a result of getting new people to pledge, even if at lower-than-average amounts. It is anticipated that some of these new pledgers will increase their pledge this year.

A discussion of budget planning and priorities ensued. There was no official report from the budget committee.

Josie and Bruce are going to a workshop on Congregational Stewardship on January 26th and would like other people to go who might be interested in working on the pledge drive this year. We also need to start searching for people who will take on the budget drive the following year, and it would be good to have them involved this year.

Visioning

Jonathan and Charlie submitted background on the history of the visioning project prior to their participation. Jonathan proposed that the current Board's efforts be based on the preponderance of data provided by the efforts made in 2009. Jonathan requested that the Board members read the materials that were sent out and to submit to Jon and Charlie three proposed vision theme statements both respecting the past information but incorporating our current understanding of our vision. They will then compact the information and bring it to the Board. The goal is to have a Board visioning statement.

By-Laws

Gordon reported on the proposed changes as submitted for review prior to the meeting. There was discussion regarding the Ops Council. Bruce questioned the appropriateness of having the Ops Council be elected by the congregation since it is "under the authority of the Board of Trustees" and the congregation already votes for the Board. Strom noted that there is no guidance for removal of an elected Board member. Carl suggested that the By-laws Committee develop a clause for the resignation/removal of an elected member. There was also some discussion on proposing a clause that addresses the current difficulty in meeting the requirements for removal of a member of the congregation.

Bruce suggested that we make the fiscal year end June 30th instead of May 31st because each year FUSN has no budget and no spending authority between June 1 and the Annual Meeting (when the budget for the new year is approved). He also noted that the UUA and many other congregations and non-profit organizations end their fiscal years on June 30. Bruce asked what the process will be to reduce the number of Board members to the goal of six adult members, and he noted that this should be in the By-Laws. The committee needs to recommend such a process.

Financial Oversight

Gordon reviewed the description of the proposed by-law to create the Board Financial Oversight committee. Carl asked how this committee relates to the investment committee. Strom responded that it would provide oversight of the actions of the investment committee to ensure that the procedures were compliant with financial standard practices and Board directives.

Gordon stated that the Investment Committee recommended that the members of the committee be limited to two consecutive terms.

Administration

Lisa informed the Trustees that she is resigning from the Board. She is looking forward to finding other avenues to contribute to the congregation. The Board members expressed gratitude to Lisa for her contributions and regret at her leaving.

Respectfully submitted,

GRM 1/7/13 8:43 PM

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Sheila Ardery
Clerk

