

FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN NEWTON
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
October 9, 2012

Present:

Board: Lisa Gresser, Gordon Moriarty, Strom Thacker, Ann Woodbury, Charlie Watts, Jonathan Reuman, Margaret Costello, Carl Metzger, Bruce Henderson , Conrad Bouys

Staff: Erin Splaine, Perry Montrose

Clerk: Sheila Ardery

Absent: Alan Cody

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

Approval of the Minutes

The September 2012 minutes were approved without comment.

New Members

Eileen Freiberg-Dale and Sondra Shick were approved unanimously as new members.

There was a discussion on how to promote membership among those who are active in the Society but not members. Bruce said that there were people who pledge but were not members. It was noted that some people don't know that they aren't members. There were several ideas on how we can promote membership without being so strong as to deter people from being casual participants if that is what they choose. Carl recommended that this discussion's information be brought to the membership committee.

Calendaring

Ann brought a spreadsheet that summarized the goals of the BOT for the year along with the action items. Ann recommended that we update this as we progress through the year and it will help us track the accomplishments of the Board.

ByLaws Committee

Gordon reported that the Committee has met and Pam McA'nulty is going to develop a set of amendments. The changes that are being recommended are to codify the existing structure of the past three plus years. Gordon stated that he didn't think these amendments will be controversial. Vote of the congregation is set for March 24th. The conversation meeting will be set in January.

Vision Statement

Jonathan reported that a meeting has been set with Barbara Bates and Jeff Baker to get a historical perspective on the work that was done by them a couple of years ago with respect to a proposed Purpose Statement amendment. Jonathan requested a discussion on what the deliverable would be so

that he and Charlie have guidance with regard to the Board's vision statement. Gordon summarized the discussion by saying that the notes of the retreat should be referenced. It was suggested that they reference the goals as summarized by Ann.

Pledge Drive

Bruce said the Annual Budget Drive (ABD) committee is promoting the idea that pledging activity go on at the Annual Dinner. This would cut down on the need to make as many phone calls later. The week that we talk about the Budget Drive is a week before the Dinner.

Financial Oversight

Charlie reported that there was no meeting in the past month. Strom asked if there was an opinion on how many people should be on the committee. Gordon stated he didn't think that it needed to be more than two people. Strom and Charlie want to bring someone on from the congregation who has an accounting background.

Minister Evaluation

The evaluation takes place after the first three years. Lisa said that the committee is comprised of a Board member, Ops member, and three other members chosen by Erin. A discussion ensued as to whether Erin should choose these members outright, if she should suggest a list from which the Board selects the three members, or if the Board should select them. Jonathan said that Karen Davis is willing to come and talk to the Board about what is going on at Personnel Policy Committee. Erin stated that she would recommend that others choose the three general members.

German congregation

Gordon reported an effort to establish a connection with the Donautal Unitarian congregation requires a champion from the congregation, and we have not had success in finding that person or persons. While the Board supports such an effort, it cannot drive it without congregational support. Erin noted that there may be an opportunity for the choir to make a visit at some point in the future.

Staff reports

Perry stated that there is a group of youth and adults created to plan activities, etc. that bridge generations. Also, at the RE Council meeting, there was a review of the past three years which led to the discussion on expanding the structure of the council. The council was ready to take that on and the next meeting they are going to discuss new structures and responsibilities.

Erin reported that the staff is looking to make new changes to the hallway outside Erin's office. The minister portraits will be moved to an appropriately respectful location so that there will be room for more informative and engaging material.

Erin raised the concern that Fran's calendar for Sundays is jam packed. Erin's concern is that there is so much going on, she wonders if the Board and Ops council understands what is happening and whether activities are integrated into a cohesive whole. There needs to be a process that identifies priorities when there is competition for space, time, etc. Also, Erin asked, is there a law of diminishing returns at

play with so many competing activities? Erin worries about how this frenetic energy can be sustained and would it be ultimately detrimental to our growth in that it would turn people off? What is the overarching thing that keeps this all together? It was decided that this was an important issue and to schedule it for further discussion at another meeting.

Conflicts Committee

Carl provided a report with a detailed presentation of the committee's purpose and work that included a draft of policy and procedures, the creation of a Conflict Transformation Team, and an implementation plan. The Board will review this information and address the recommendations at the next meeting.

Open Questions

November 4th is the next Open Questions meeting. Ann asked Lisa to help facilitate the meeting. Ann asked for another person to be there to open the meeting. Ann asked for feedback on the questions that she sent out to the Board members. Ann will finalize the three questions and it will be put in the newsletter, website, etc. Ann stated that we had an average of fifty people last year and she asked for a volunteer to get the food. Margaret said she would get the food. Ann is willing to write up a statement about what was said in the past and what was done as a result but she is asking for a review by another member. Gordon will help introduce the session and Gordon and Carl will help facilitate the discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Ardery
Clerk