

**First Unitarian Society of Newton
Board of Trustees
December 8, 2009**

Present: Dede Vittori, Pat Rohan, Adrian Bishop, Alan Cody, Barney Freiberg-Dale, Phil Davis, Pamela McA'nulty, Susan Bartlett, Will Batchelor, Lesley Sneddon, (Clerk); also present: John Nichols, Barb Greve,

Meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM

Invocation/Chalice Lighting (Sue)

Covenant

As we, the members of this Board 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 Board; to uphold the democratic process; and to lead with goodwill and faith in the work we can accomplish together.

Administrative (Adrian)

- Major Project Update: Laurel (deferred)

- Acceptance of \$50K anonymous donation towards purchase of piano (Pat): donor would like to make the donation this year for tax deduction. Requires two votes: one to accept the donation; another on details on how it is spent, since the donation will likely not cover the entire cost of the piano. Gift does not impose a financial commitment from FUSN to supplement cost. Current piano needs significant repairs, replacement need not be new. Music Committee is researching options. Ops council voted to recommend to BOT to accept the donation. Motion to accept the donation of \$50K for new piano. Motion carried unanimously.

- New classroom is functional except for sink.

Annual Budget Drive Overview (David Morocco and Linda Rinearson)

- Discussion of FY11 budget drive plan. BOT members were requested to be visiting stewards. Administratively the ABD should be a little easier, but will be financially more challenging than last year.
- Linda: reviewed current financial situation. Usually receive 95% of our pledges, but last year received 90%. 18 donor households give 25% of our budget. Calculation of cost per member discussed, including various scenarios (pledging non-members, non-pledging members, etc.) Must

recognize all donors, members or not. Average pledge is \$1500, median pledge is considerably lower than national average.

- Suggestions:
 - Visits are important.
 - Earlier fellowship dinner (as ABD kick-off event)
 - Green sheet (documentation of all the programs FUSN does) had very positive response last year.
 - Appreciative inquiry training will be different this year, including some new material.
- Giving guide: should the recommendations be increased? Many churches use the UUA guidelines; FUSN is much lower. Comparison to national average rather than UUA guidelines? Comparison to other churches and synagogues?
- Need replacements for Linda and David as co-chairs next year.
- More details to come in January.
- Acknowledgments for last year's pledges will be in next newsletter.
- RE is considering elimination of RE fees; in general, pledges are lower in congregations that charge RE fees because assumption by RE families is that fee covers the cost (it doesn't). COA families now absorb costs over time without knowing the full cost up front; would like to calculate costs up front. RE council will research other congregations and propose a policy to BOT.

Budget Review Process

- Review Quarterly insert: for contingency this year (energy, snow plowing, etc.) Any new costs foreseen? Communications committee web site work. Services auction: no designated chair; being run by committee.
- Discuss overall process between Board and Ops Council (OC): BOT must lay out guidelines for budget process. BOT needs to be involved with compensation and with major maintenance. OC needs context to develop budget. Dede provided draft guidelines. See handout. See new policies. Process: to avoid need for duplicate presentations by committees to both OC and BOT, presented alternatives: 1) present to BOT, who presents to OC; 2) present to both bodies at the same time; 3) one or two members of BOT present at presentation to OC and vice versa. Although this year, there are 3 BOT members are on OC, this will not always be the case. Budget is purview of OC. Exception: Finance committee will report to BOT on multi-year forecast in January, and on final budget. OC uses the BOT guidelines to set the budget. OC minutes are posted on the web site. However, key data is not available until May and budgeting will always be down to the wire. Plan to adopt guidelines in January. Send comments to Dede.

Board Retreat Priorities updates

- Membership: Phil Davis and Pamela McA'Nulty: updates distributed at meeting; feedback from last meeting; two bylaws changes: 1) youth are not permitted to be officers on the BOT; 2) requirement for membership of annual completion of pledge cards. OC must request BOT to add membership coordinator to budget. If this is added to budget, should David and Linda talk about this as a financial need in budget drive? Phil drafted a job description last year. Expectations of membership are posted on FUSN web site and are a good start for definition of membership; Will Batchelor will take FUSN T-shirt idea to the youth group next week.
- Governance: Leadership Development Committee and Conflict Resolution – Adrian, Susan; research in progress. Policies – Jonathan. Ends policy: ends for OC or for congregation? Policies will be sent out for vote in January. Need to reformulate to accommodate OC structure. Docs with linkages pieces incorporated, send suggestions in “track changes” review mode.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Lesley Sneddon, Clerk

Action items

Carryover Action Items from Prior Year:

New Action Items from August 12, 2008 meeting

1. Keep track of conflict of interest policies developed by UUA and evaluate them for adoption by FUSN

New Action Items from August 11, 2009 meeting

1. Neither Alan nor the Assistant Treasurer is bonded. Suggest that this should be done.
2. Review end of year Balance Sheet and reconciliation and get any questions to Alan.