

First Unitarian Society of Newton
Board of Trustees
April 10th, 2012
Alliance Room

Present: Board: Susan Bartlett, Alan Cody, Margaret Costello, Barney Freiberg-Dale, Bruce Henderson, Pamela McA’Nulty, Carl Metzger, Gordon Moriarty, Strom Thacker, Ann Woodbury
Staff: Erin Splaine

Absent: Conrad Buys, Barb Greve

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM
Carl shared a reading

Chalice Lighting

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.

Administrivia –Susan

- Approval of Minutes
Motion: To approve March minutes
Vote: Approved unanimously
- Scheduled 2nd May BOT meeting for May 22nd at 7:30pm
- Pam updated group on Donautal partnership working group. First meeting will be held in one week. They are going to try to Skype with Karsten. Members include Patrice Joyce and Alan Cody.
- Annual meeting will be June 10th
- Ann Woodbury noted that the Nominating Committee is looking for a Clerk for the BOT next year and an Assistant Clerk for the Operations Council. Both are one-year terms.

Staff Update-Erin

Erin is part of a group of ministers that helps other ministers-to-be. She has been working with a candidate who is preparing to be ordained. She has done some painting with the urban ministry group a couple of times. Barb is away and will be back Sunday. Talked about Jackie James and her new book release “Voices from the Margin” about ministers of color. The book release will be at FUSN on Sunday night and Ms. James will be present to sign books, offer some readings and talk about the process.

An offer was made for the DRLM position and accepted. The hiring announcement will happen this Sunday. The letter of agreement has been sent out and Erin talked about the process of searching for a candidate and making an offer and how the salary was determined.

Conflict Transformation Committee Update- Carl

Carl as Chair of the Committee presented a Draft Charter of the Committee for discussion and approval. Others on the committee include Alice Nichols, Barbara Bates, Alan Cody and Erin Splaine. The goal of the committee was to take the results of the Harvard Students' research conducted at FUSN and their report and develop processes to address conflict.

Carl described the group's work. They have been inner focused:

- getting to know each other and their experience
- reading and discussing the Harvard Students' report
- reading books on conflict resolution,
- learning about UUA resources and how other congregations deal with conflict and what their policies entail.
- Checked in with the Mass Bay District and
- Attending workshops on conflict resolution

All with a focus on how to apply what they have learned to FUSN. They hope the final report will be ready by the end of spring/early summer and will include recommendations in three areas.

1. Disruptive Behavior Policy
2. Congregational Covenant
3. Roadmap on how to deal with conflict including conflict resolution resources.

The Board members suggested some changes to the Charter wording, which were agreed upon.

Motion: Barney moved to accept the charter with the changes. Strom seconded

Vote: Approved unanimously

Open Questions –Ann, Margaret, Barney

Barney and Margaret talked about the first open questions meeting. Felt it was spirited. About 30 attended. They felt a feeling of connection and one of the new members felt it was a great idea. Everyone had things to add. The next one is at the end of April on the 29th. Ann volunteered to sum up themes after the next one, and then they will meet and discuss action items including how to share what they have learned. The outcome of the meetings must be heard but the BOT must also state their own vision. Maybe have a table at coffee hour for "Open Questions". The theme for the next one is "Growth." Talked about how to let everyone know about the Open Questions meetings. Emails have gone out on both FUSN lists as well as notices in the order of service and newsletter. Maybe put up some posters. Ann to publicize the questions via email lists. Carl will lead the next one, Barney will support and Ann will scribe.

Staff hiring process- Erin, All

Erin talked about the Board's role and the Search Committee's role in the DLRE hiring process. Thinks it would be helpful in the future to:

- Review the process and history of a search going forward prior to making a decision so everyone knows the background.
- Review the agreement and compensation package before making an offer
- Include a salary range allowing for negotiation
- Refresh Board on the Committee's mandate
- Review everything at least a month before hiring
- Work on developing written guidelines and policies for staff hiring, including benefits, vacations, salary ranges.

They are working on process for "non-search" committee hires. BOT has the final say on those positions.

Budget Update-Bruce

Bruce distributed 3 modifications to the budget, presenting contingency budgets if previously defined goals are not reached. So far pledges have increased 6.5% of those who typically pledge. Pledge parties have had great attendance. 71 signed up who have never pledged. Of 470 pledge units (families or individuals) on the pledge list, 382 are Members. There are members who don't pledge. FUSN pays a combined \$77 per Member in dues to the UUA and District.

Question of whether members aren't aware of this expense? Barney suggested maybe having a standing sub-committee of the Board working with members who don't pledge to evaluate reasons why. Discussed BOT's role in the pledge drive. Agreed that they wanted FUSN members to know that 100% of the BOT members have pledged. Bruce to develop a draft statement for the board to vote on and agreed it should come from Susan as Board Chair.

Bruce was looking for guidance from the BOT as to how to deal with non-pledging members. There are about 15 of them. Josie and Bruce will forward the list to Erin. Erin has experience with this issue working with other congregations. Will include the Steering Committee and Pat from the Ops Council and get back to the BOT with recommendations.

In terms of the budget Carl and Alan suggested the Finance committee look over Bruce's three scenarios and come up with one set of projections that all agree on. The BOT then needs to decide on the contingency plans and risk analysis that also needs to be done.

BOT size and tenure discussion- All

Susan brought this back to the group with everyone present to discuss. She feels that it would be good for the current Board to propose a change, which would be implemented for the next BOT. The proposed change to the Bylaws would take effect in 2014. It is too late for the Nominating Committee to make changes in the

makeup of next year's board membership this year. They have already been searching out candidates for 2013.

The group discussed pros and cons of time commitment, need for orientation, hope for diversity and new leadership balancing that with need for consistency and history. Discussed how long it takes to work well as a group and the ease of making decisions and getting more done with fewer members.

Options discussed included:

- A three year initial term plus an optional two year renewal term;

- A two year initial term plus a two year renewal;

- A three year initial term plus a three year renewal;

- Six people, with four year terms;

- Six people with three year, renewable terms.

Motion: Pam moved to direct the future Bylaws to have a BOT with 6 voting members and 1 youth elected annually. The terms would be 3 years with an option to renew once and no treasurer. Strom seconded

Vote: Passed unanimously.

A by-law committee yet to be formed would be directed to include this in the proposed by-law changes for next year.

Executive Session called.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Wendy Atamian, Board Clerk.