

**Minutes – December 14, 2010**  
**First Unitarian Society in Newton -- Board of Trustees**

Trustees present: Susan Bartlett, Jeannie Chaisson, Alan Cody, Margaret Costello, Barney Freiberg-Dale, Jonathan Lilienfeld (Ch), Pamela McA’Nulty, Carl Metzger, Gordon Moriarty. Phil Davis arrived during the meeting, as noted below

Also present: Rev. Erin Splaine, Mr. Barb Greve, Gayle Smalley (Asst. Clerk); Jud Leonard and Adrian Bishop were present for part of the meeting.

1. Meeting opened: Jonathan called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Carl lit the chalice and read some inspiring words from George Bernard Shaw. Attendees read the covenant aloud together.

2. “Administrivia.”

- Jonathan noted that the Board photo would be taken at a later date.
- Harvard Negotiation and Mediation Clinical Program: Jonathan explained that FUSN’s proposal was selected for the upcoming semester; that Barbara Bates will serve as point person, and she will provide an update once the program gets going.
- Inquiry, Board-led lay service: The Worship Committee has asked the Trustees to consider leading a Sunday worship service about the Board and its work. Discussion ensued about the possibility of taking on such a service. There was considerable interest in expanding the topic to leadership in a more general way. On a show of hands, about ½ of the members expressed interest in participating. Three members were appointed to lead the effort – Jeannie, Margaret and Carl. (Phil arrived at the meeting during this discussion.)

3. Governance Documents Update Process: Jonathan noted that the “first pass” for such document was completed last year. He explained the importance of keeping up to date the governance documents that reflect current operations; doing so will facilitate the bylaw review/revision process that is expected to take place next year. Mention was made of including the Operations Council in the update process. A two-member team was appointed – Gordon and Susan. Jonathan asked them to contact Pat Rohan to see what type of involvement he would like the Operations Council to have.

4. Canvass Visioning: Jud Leonard, Co-Chair of the Canvass Committee led a discussion about expressing goals as part of the canvass. Jud asked the Board for direction about “where we are going in the next several years.” As part of the Agenda package, the Board received a list of 7 suggested visions, which had been put together by the Operations Council. Jud announced that Adrian Bishop has joined the canvass leadership, and Adrian arrived to take part in part of this discussion.

The group brainstormed about a message to be used for the canvass. At least one trustee suggested putting the emphasis on “values,” avoiding specific future plans that cannot be clear. Other trustees spoke to the advantage of naming goals that leadership wants to reach for. The offset for discontinued RE fees and the desire for investment in a Membership Coordinator were both noted. The discussion repeatedly mentioned notions of growth, including “re-birth” and “stepping stone to new era.”

5. Ministerial Start Up: The agenda materials had included an email from Doug Zelinski about scheduling a session on February 5. It is expected to consist of a 4-hour workshop, plus lunch/snack times.

Jonathan noted that the Operations Council and staff will take part, and he asked for input about additional participants, to meet his goal of including diverse points of view. Pam, Barney and Alan both spoke in favor of including former Board chairs, and some trustees suggested members of recent search committees. At the close of the discussion there was a consensus to invite a) former board chairs; b) members of recent search committees; and c) the former treasurer.

6. Update, Social Action Task Force: Barney made a presentation about the progress of the task force, which has met regularly. Using a chart, Barney displayed an organizational structure rooted in a Social Action Council, which would be chosen by the congregation. Barney mentioned that the task force is still considering whether the Social Action Committee would continue, or whether such a Council would effectively replace the committee.

The chart illustrated the Society carrying out social action programs via two separate paths: a) a few "Congregational Task Forces," larger volunteer efforts established pursuant to a formal process including written proposals and adoption by vote of the congregation; and b) "Council Sanctioned Teams," perhaps ten or so, that would carry out smaller volunteer efforts, each established by approval of the Council.

Discussion ensued about the model, with particular emphasis on a) the reporting relationships, specifically the involvement with the Council by the Operations Council and Board of Trustees; and b) the method of selecting Council members – whether by election or appointment.

On the matter of relationships, there was a consensus that the Operations Council should be the usual point of contact for a Social Action Council. Regarding the selection method, some members spoke in favor of appointed members; at least one member spoke in favor of elected members; and yet another raised the possibility of a hybrid arrangement by which a Council would include both elected and appointed members. At the close of the discussion, the Chair noted the diversity of opinions that had been expressed and he spoke to the need to continue discussion at a future meeting.

7. Update, "Got Purpose" Part II Workshop: Phil reported on the Mass. Bay District's recent session. A PowerPoint document had been circulated to the trustees as part of the Agenda package. The program's focus was on the call (or "purpose") of a congregation.

Phil was impressed with the Weston Church's practice of choosing an annual congregational social action project, which is intergenerational and structured so that the project will be completed within one year. Overall however, Phil was disappointed that the reflective and conceptual nature of the session left him with not a lot of specific ideas to share with the group.

8. Update: Search of Membership Coordinator: Pam gave a brief update on the search: The group feels optimistic about some applicants' qualifications. Interviews have been scheduled for next week.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gayle Smalley, Assistant Clerk