

**First Unitarian Society of Newton
Board of Trustees
January 10, 2012
Alliance Room**

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

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM
Gordon read the invocation “ I am only one”

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

- Dinner/discussion with the Urbans to be held on January 19th at FUSN. Catered dinner will be provided. Cost is \$10.00. Planning for 50. BOT and Ops Council to cover extra costs if needed.
- BOT subcommittee will set up a meeting with the BOI this month
- BOT picture retake for the directory and bulletin board

Staff Update- Erin

Barb met with DRLE search committee to prepare for a mock interview and felt they had some very good questions prepared. Alan who was there thought that Barb presented some good ideas and insights. There are 5 applicants and Erin will be looking over their resumes this week. She thought there would be more candidates. The deadline for applying is the end of January. Erin is committed to finding the right person for the position. She is looking for someone with a strong family RE background.

Pam noted this past Sunday there was a full house in church and she noted 8 new kids in RE.

Kim Shanks RE Chair and Erin are looking at ways to celebrate Wendy Berenson, who has stepped down from her position, which would include the FUSN youth. They are in touch with Wendy about this.

Staff compensation:

PPC recommendation concerning public reporting.- Erin

To promote privacy and staff morale the Personnel Policy Committee would like to report the total amount spent on compensation for staff salaries on one line at the annual meeting in an effort to decrease competition and maintain privacy regarding what staff are paid. Questions raised: Who would have access to the actual salaries? Alan wanted to make sure that the treasurer would still have access to individual salaries to compare against payroll. Pam also indicated that the audit committee would have access. (Alan noted he will be attending a seminar on how to develop an audit committee and invited anyone interested to attend.) Alan also indicated that the Operations Council reviews costs in detail and the BOT will have general overview.

Susan wondered if staff would be annoyed not knowing salaries and Erin did acknowledge that making a change like this can take a long time for staff to adjust to. Bruce voiced concern that there would be a “false sense of security” and that if the labor costs are taken out of program costs then how will he convey to the congregation true costs for programs they are trying to raise money for.

Strom asked about who the PPC reported to. Right now they report to the BOT for hiring and firing and to the OPS council for compensation issues. Eventually the BOT will review policies/goals re: hiring and compensation.

After the discussion Carl reviewed the pros and cons and noted that since Erin and the PPC felt this was needed the BOT should vote on it.

Motion: Barney moved to approve the PPC’s recommendation and Pam seconded.

Vote: 10 in favor 1 opposed

After the vote Alan indicated he would look at the reporting issues to see if a process is needed for making salaries accessible to whoever needs them and Erin stated she would check with her colleagues at other congregations and see how they address this issue.

Board Priorities for the Annual Budget-All

Susan distributed Annual Budget Process Draft developed by the Ops Council.

There was discussion about priorities for the upcoming years and how to fund them. Priorities such as increasing membership, retaining members, costs of buildings and grounds, and providing adequate salaries for current staff. The BOT generally provides the Operations Council their priorities for the budget. All agreed on the following priorities:

- Increase Membership Coordinator position to full time
- Decrease operating deficit
- Decrease the draw on the endowment from 5% to 3% over several years
- Increase pledge amount by 15%

BOT Sunday greeting: discussion of text- Susan and Bruce

Susan handed out the current greeting that the BOT members read on Sunday at the beginning of the service to discuss and see if any changes should be made. Erin, Bruce and Strom agreed to work on it and bring back suggestions. Also will see what other congregations have for welcoming remarks.

BOT Priorities-any further discussion-

Pam asked if we could improve the sign in front of the church. It could be a way to draw people in. No other discussion.

CSA position on impending prison sentencing legislation-Barney

The Committee on Social Action opposes current pending legislation regarding habitual offenders sentences and would like FUSN to take a public stand. The timing was such that the committee wanted to send out a statement representing FUSN to the State legislature and the Governor to hold off on any vote regarding this until the public could be more informed.

Barney presented the statement the CSA wanted to send out.

Barney was asking the BOT if it was ok for the CSA to do this representing FUSN. Questions came up as to the history of the CSA doing something like this in the past. In the Charter the BOT has the option of asking for a Congregational vote, but in this case that will take too much time. Many had reservations about the BOT speaking for the congregation with limited time for consideration and obtaining congregational input. Ann and Bruce brought up the possibility of handling it by sending out emails and educating the congregation in order to develop a ground swell that might have more of an impact. Others wondered if the BOT supports this what will be the impact in the future. Should the BOT try to define circumstances that they should speak for FUSN and on what grounds. Is there a current process or precedent for this?

The CSA is making a recommendation that the BOT respond to the urgent initiative. Erin acknowledged difficulty in setting precedents but felt there are times when taking a position is worth it, especially as this was to slow down the process so all could be educated on the issues. Strom offered some suggestions on changing the wording of the statement. Changes included:

Third paragraph: ADD: **The Board of Trustees on behalf of the** First Unitarian Society in Newton is concerned **about certain provisions of** the Habitual Offender legislation:

Second bullet: Similar laws---**remove multiple offender**

Fourth Paragraph: add **that the Board of Trustees on behalf of the** First Unitarian Society of Newton stands opposed to the passage of **(any)** proposed

Barney will send out the statement to the FUSN business list letting everyone know what they are sending to the legislature.

Motion: Alan moved to support the proposal as amended. Pam seconded

Vote: 9 in favor 2 opposed:

Meeting adjourned 10pm

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Atamian, Board Clerk

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