

**FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN NEWTON**  
**OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, December 10, 2014**  
Downstairs Classroom, 7:00 P.M.

**Present:** Susan Bartlett, Judy Curby, Laurel Farnsworth, Anne Hess-Mahan, Andrea Kelley, Rev Erin Splaine, Rowan Van Ness. **Guests:** David Morocco, Linda Rinearson. Jon Reuman represented the BOT.

~ 7:00-7:05 **Invocation / Chalice Lighting:** Judy

~ **Covenant**

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

~ The meeting was called to order a minute or two after 7 pm.

~ **Approvals:** All

- Social action fundraising: Approved CSA solicitations to be made in Parish Hall at Social Action table, occurring January-May 2015. This includes: NAMI walk, Bikes not Bombs, Walk for Hunger, Mother's Day walk for peace. Discussion of a UUA rental and fee waiver: approved fee waiver for denominational activity.

~ **Staff update:** Erin, Rowan

- **Rowan:** Lots of work on RE circles: connections, justice, events, youth, etc.

Discussion about tables in the Parish Hall continued from prior meetings, this one concerning having the RE table.

Discussion around a revised RE mission statement is ongoing among RE circle members.

- **Erin:** Erin noted Rowan's accomplishments with RE since she started four months ago. Erin also praised all the work on the Holiday Fair: setup Friday night (Thursday night for some), the fair on Saturday, and clean up that same day.

Many FUSNites responded when Erin asked for help with a reception after the Sunday afternoon march with Myrtle Baptist Church. The protest concerned issues of race relations and policing across the country. She felt it was a successful event; chimes welcomed the marchers as they came into FUSN. Participants expressed a desire to follow up, building on

the connections. Refreshments remaining were brought to the police station across the street, as a thank you for their help with the march.

Erin would like to have a regular contribution allocated to the multi-cultural ministry initiative. To cover the costs of this year's multi-cultural ministry initiative, including the author talk on *Waking Up White*, some funds were allocated from other budget lines.

~ **Reports on Board of Trustees meeting:** Laurel said she received a copy of Mark Ewert's capital campaign report at the BOT meeting last night. Others will also receive copies.

~ **Annual Budget Drive team:** David, Linda

This year's ABD is chaired by Urban Larson, David Morocco and Linda Rinearson.

This is David's 5th ABD! David hopes that the Ops Council will provide support: as visiting stewards, hosting parties, talking to people who are on the fence. He said it's important to convey "what FUSN is all about," and showed a photo from the front page of Monday's Boston Globe Metro section, showing FUSN's sanctuary (filled to the brim, including people in the aisles) after the protest march.

Linda presented an ABD model and timeline from October 2014 through May 2015. The team includes people who have run ABDs in the past, and several roles have already been filled for organizing testimonials, planning pledge parties, handling the website, and training. Erin will provide the ABD letter to the congregation. Sign ups for the parties will begin in February. They hope to have all parties all done in March. April is for individual steward conversations. A celebratory BBQ will be held in May. One suggestion is to provide rides to parties for people without cars or who can't drive at night.

David says the campaign will focus on the positive aspects of FUSN, although a concern includes the loss of some large donors who've moved away.

Gratitude was expressed to David and Linda for their work on the ABD.

~ **Financials:** Judy

Review year-to-date spending: November's monthly update will be provided by Karen Bottar before the end of December.

Accounting consultant Nancy Tobias will finish her work with FUSN at the end of the fiscal year, May 2015, so FUSN needs to find a replacement. Judy said it's not clear who should take the lead in finding someone. This person would not have any access to funds, deposits, etc.

The Financial Oversight Committee (FOC) was suggested as an option for doing the search. One part of the job involves routine transactional activities, such as checking that postings are made to the correct accounts, etc. A second task is performing reviews to determine that

procedures are being followed correctly.

The FOC feels the new person should not be a member of the congregation. Judy said Nancy felt she could show Arlene Duelfer how to take over the tasks in the meantime. They will go back to the Board and ask whether the bookkeeping aspect of the responsibilities could be handled by a FUSNite. The review function should definitely be done by an outsider. Nancy has been paid \$4000 per year. That amount would not cover two different people performing these tasks. Judy feels the person should not be a FUSN member and that she will continue working with Nancy and Arlene to help smooth the transition.

Judy checked on the cost to repair the Wayside Pulpit (the free-standing framed sign which displays UU messages on Washington Street) and got a price of \$500 from a FUSN member. The question was raised about whether a congregant should do this job. Perhaps a policy could be decided about a financial limit to hiring congregants for one-time tasks. It was pointed out that even in small jobs conflicts about costs and timing could arise. Perhaps the size of the job could decide the issue. It was agreed to go ahead with this small job with the member at this time. Laurel said that in prior years, members did do audits for FUSN.

Erin suggested the Ops Council consider a thank you gift for Nancy Tobias.

~ **Update: Committee issues/reports**, beyond what's already been shared. All

- Laurel said the fireplace in Erin's office is functional but hasn't been used in over a decade. She had the chimneys checked around 15 years ago, and she thinks it hasn't been used since. She suggests putting a lit newspaper cone in the chimney to see if the flue is drawing up the flames before anyone makes an actual fire.

- **Communications:**  
Anne said the Communications Committee still needs a Chair. Meanwhile, people are continuing their tasks, such as Nancy Duvergne-Smith doing the newsletter and Greg Sullivan, the website.

Susan asked if we should advertise in a Newton North High School athletic booklet, per a NNHS request. Ops members agreed the Council generally doesn't purchase ad space. Laurel suggested we might consider advertising in the Mayor's Community Breakfast booklet, because of its wide reach.

Anne asked Jon about the BOT's work on mission and goals. Jon said it is primarily for internal Board use, i.e., the Board's mission, not the whole congregation's.

- **Database & direct deposit readiness**  
Judy talked about completing FUSN's ability to handle direct deposits. She feels this should be arranged before trying to set up a system for using credit cards, which is quite complex. Ops

Council members agreed that direct deposit is the priority.

- Board of Investments: Wayside Pulpit account [info. updated by Judy Curby, via email]. There are two Teixeira trusts, created by two different Teixeiras. The NA Teixeira account for the Wayside Pulpit has a balance of \$10,097. The CJ Teixeira account for sheet music has a balance of \$2,493. So there is a substantial amount in the Wayside Pulpit account, even after the recent repair costs of about \$500 are deducted.

Council members asked how to determine if it is acceptable to use the Wayside Pulpit funds for web development, which is also a publicity tool. Judy said we may need to ask the Attorney General. Jeannie wondered if naming our website the "Wayside Pulpit" would comply with the letter and spirit of the fund. The FUSN website is a major means of getting the word out and attracting newcomers. Susan wondered how to proceed.

Judy has been changing the messages in the Wayside Pulpit for the time being. Laurel said the UUA has a catalogue of messages, and new ones could be purchased. Judy suggested that the youth might be able to change the signs, after the frame is fixed. Judy said a congregant complained about one message, and she was glad for the feedback and some controversy.

*January email update to discussion above: Input from Brian Hicks of the Board of Investments:*

*We did talk about this at our last BOI meeting. We could locate no additional information about the restrictions on the restricted Wayside Pulpit fund... While we do not believe that this fund would be the right fund to pull from due to its restrictions, there are other funds, including our core unrestricted endowment, that are more flexible in their terms that could be applied to the use that you mention....*

*Let us know the amount of funds that you believe would meet your needs and we could make a recommendation.*

*I would need to conference with Peter [Farago] and Erik [Riak] and review our files to provide the detail on the restrictions on all the restricted funds. ws*

- Green Sanctuary: review application

Laurel suggests a person outside the committee read the document for final review. Judy agreed to read it. The Ops members agreed that the GS committee should go ahead and submit it, if there are no problems with the content.

- B&G rental agreement update: Andrea said the committee writing the agreement has not yet met. She anticipates it will be ready by the next Ops meeting. A roofer is coming Saturday to look at the leak in the Sanctuary.

The repair contractor has said he'll return the window near the flower room, but it's not clear when.

Laurel says we need to clean the basement out sometime this year.

- Jeannie mentioned there were costs incurred with the march reception and asked how to get those costs covered. Judy had suggested that Fran pay Bridget's (FUSN's beadle) hours for the event from the hospitality budget. Food cost around \$450. Judy said the funds could come from contingency. Jeannie moved the funds come from hospitality which will have an overrun; the overrun coverage will come out of the contingency. Andrea seconded. Approved. Jeannie said those who came to the event were grateful for it. It was also good publicity for FUSN. Jeannie will let Fran and Ron Margolin know of the budget decision.

Jeannie raised an issue concerning the upcoming solstice service. The committee wants to do the spiral dance with candles. Her concern is about passing the flame. Discussion ensued. At the Christmas service, people are seated when the candle lighting occurs. Candles will be permitted only if people are seated, not while moving.

~ **Thank yous:** Bonnie MacDonald and all Holiday Fair helpers; all who participated in the Homebound Holiday program, especially the kids who created the goodies for the gift bags and the other volunteers who helped and delivered them; Jeannie Chaisson for her help with the protest march reception; Julia Huston for directing the Christmas Pageant; the care crew members who provided services in last month.

~ The meeting adjourned at 9: pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wendy Schwartz,  
Assistant Clerk