

Minutes – September 15, 2010
Operations Council
First Unitarian Society in Newton

Members attending: Pat Rohan (Ch), Jeannie Chaisson, Laurel Farnsworth, and Kim Shanks.

Also attending: Rev. Erin Splaine and Mr. Barb Greve. As well, Bill Dusett and Sharon Sisskind attended portions of the meeting, as indicated below.

1. Opening Words: Pat lit a candle and read some wise words to inform the meeting.

2. T-Mobile construction: Laurel explained that our existing tenant, T-Mobile, seeks to replace the lines to the tower. The new installation will involve fiber optic lines for enhanced data transmission. Laurel rejected T-Mobile's initial proposed location, but now a route for the lines has been identified (under the parking lot, through the sanctuary's crawl space, through the boiler room and up the tower). Laurel sought the Council's approval, characterizing the route as "least inconvenient" to the Society. She has worked with Bill Horne on the proposed written terms with T-Mobile.

Motion: Jeannie moved to approve execution of such terms; Kim seconded.

Vote: Approved 4-0.

3. Planned Giving Committee: Bill Dusett attended the meeting for this item, as he seeks to re-activate the Planned Giving Committee. Bill explained that the committee's purpose corresponds with the work he does in his professional life. He seeks to get a group organized to renew the work of encouraging planned giving to the Society's endowment. Bill noted that the committee would begin by reviewing existing written materials, then making an announcement and scheduling a kick-off gathering. Stressing the need for sensitivity in committee operations, Bill also noted that the success of the committee will require one on one conversations and multi-year efforts.

Laurel mentioned the goal of updating the existing donors' plaques at the rear of the sanctuary.

Pat explained that the relevant vote would be to approve Bill as chair of the committee. Pat brought up the matter of a budget for the committee, and Laurel suggested that Bill put together a proposed budget that could be voted by the Council.

Motion: Laurel moved to accept Bill Dusett as Chair of the Planned Giving Committee; Jeannie seconded.

Vote: Approved 4-0.

4. Alternative Gift Fair: Sharon Sisskind appeared on behalf of the Social Action Council for this item. Sharon explained that the process for such a fair, as follows: On a chosen date, tables would be set up in the Parish Hall, each table representing a different charitable organization. "Shoppers" would visit

each table, purchasing "virtual gifts." Sharon passed around a sample card showing examples of gifts, including building materials for Habitat for Humanity, and school uniforms for Communities Without Borders.

The clear consensus was that the project is worthwhile, but concerns were expressed about financial logistics. Social Action Committee sought an arrangement that would allow each shopper to make out a single check to FUSN. Concerns were expressed about the staff workload involved in accounting for each receipt and distributing proper amounts to each participating organization. Members mentioned that they wanted input from Alan Cody, who was absent from the meeting.

Separate concerns were mentioned about the potential impact on established programs, including "Healthy Baby" and the annual holiday fair. Barb indicated that the Healthy Baby event could be treated as part of the Alternative Gift Fair. Various dates were discussed for the Alternative Gift Fair, and December 12 was particularly identified as a likely date.

Pat stressed the need to avoid any interference with the holiday fair, which provides significant revenue each year. Laurel made a motion to approve the project for Dec. 12, subject to coordination with Holiday Fair Committee, but the motion did not receive a second.

Pat indicated that he would talk to the Holiday Fair Co-chairs. The discussion ended with an understanding that the Council would seek to wrap up this matter via email vote.

5. Update: Hearing Aids for Parish Hall: Laurel acknowledged the importance of the item, indicating that she would make every effort to include it in the proposed Building and Grounds budget for next year. However, she recommended taking it off the ongoing "to do" list because there is no money to move ahead during the current year. Pat agreed to defer discussion until the budget process.

6. Update: Bank parking lot: Jeannie has yet to speak to the bank manager, but will do so soon.

7. Update: Youth Pro Musica: Laurel sent another email to YPM about the indemnification issue, and is waiting to hear from them.

8. Update: Pine Village Preschool: Laurel explained that a 3-year lease was signed recently. Terms involve deferral of \$20,000, with 18% interest on the deferred amounts, and interest payable monthly. The first rent payment will be due on 10/1/2010. The preschool is fully enrolled, with a waiting list.

Pat asked about the impact of the expected \$20,000 shortfall. In response, Laurel stated that the Finance Committee has met and concluded there is no need for line-item cuts. The committee considered a) expected savings on natural gas, b) the \$50,000 reserve now in the hands of the Board of

Investment (not part of endowment), and c) the fact that the annual budget did not take the full draw from the endowment.

With regard to Major Maintenance items, at this time Laurel anticipates asking to sign the organ maintenance contract. Jeannie spoke in favor of moving forward on the organ plan.

9. Retreat plans: The Council's Retreat is scheduled for September 29. Pat will put together and circulate an agenda. He anticipates including a discussion about governance, which will include Barbara Bates. He proposed engaging a facilitator, and it was the sense of the meeting that that would be a good approach. A number of possible agenda items for the retreat were discussed, most of which touch on how the Council can best carry out its work.

10. Review of follow-up list: In advance of the meeting, Pat had circulated such a list. He explained that he intended it as a tracking system, seeking input whether anything should be added or deleted. He also provided a list showing annual tasks, shown month by month.

11. Electronic votes noted for the Record: Pat noted the following votes, which took place via email between the August and September meetings:

- ✓ Minutes from 8/18/2010 meeting – Approved;
- ✓ Adoption of Financial Reporting Practices (copy attached) – Approved.

12. Membership Coordinator position: Pat explained that a committee has been formed, with the goal of filling the position. The group – consisting of Tom Bean (for Membership Comm.), Pat (for Ops Council), Pamela McA’Nulty (for Board), Noreen Kimball, and Rev. Erin Splaine – will soon hold its first meeting.

✓ **13. Dispute Resolution Process:** Pat advised that Harvard Law School has a program whereby students put together mediation programs. Barbara Bates is doing the footwork for submission of a proposal on behalf of FUSN. No vote is required now, but one may be required if the project moves forward

13. Committee meeting schedules: A brief discussion considered whether committee meeting schedules should be published. Much of the discussion centered on the calendar function on the church website. The sense of the meeting was that requiring such publication is not feasible.

14. Resignation of Carla Erb; vacancy on Council: Pat stated that Carla has resigned from the Operations Council. A brief discussion took place about filling the vacancy.

15. Massachusetts Architectural Access Board: By way of background, Laurel explained that the recent construction of the basement classroom involved a waiver from this agency of the Commonwealth. Given that the classroom is not HP accessible, the waiver nonetheless requires certain affirmative steps on the part of the Society. Laurel sought approval of a letter

that will make commitments as follows: 1) posting of a floor plan; 2) that whenever among the class using the designated classroom there is a child who needs accessible space, that the group would be re-assigned to a different (accessible) space.

Motion: Pat moved to authorize Laurel to send such a letter to the Commonwealth; Jeannie seconded.

Vote: Approved 4-0.

16. Purchase of tables: Laurel passed out an illustration and quote for purchase of 24" X 72" tables. An anonymous donor has offered to pay for purchase of 6 such tables for use in the Children's Chapel, at a cost of \$3240. The design allows such tables to be flipped up and left in the room. The donation would be made in January, 2011.

Motion: Pat moved to approve purchase of 6 tables, and to accept the anonymous donation of \$3240, in January, to cover the cost; Kim seconded.

Vote: Approved 4-0.

17. Budget: Social Action Task Force: Noting that the Social Action Task Force will be carrying out congregational meetings, Jeannie proposed establishing a small budget to cover refreshments.

Motion: Laurel moved to add the Social Action Task Force to the schedule of committee budgets, and to budget \$300 for it; Kim seconded.

Vote: Approved 4-0.

18. Committee coordination: Laurel noted the need for communication/coordination with committees, occasioned by ending the old Council structure. She raised the possibility of creating a regular slot on the Council's agenda in the nature of an open invitation, to allow committees to report, seek support and approvals. A brief discussion took place.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle Smalley
Assistant Clerk

Attachment – Financial Reporting Practices, dated August 18, 2010

Information Memorandum

August 18, 2010

To: Operations Council

From: Alan Cody

Subject: FUSN Financial Reporting

This memo and Attachment I outline current financial reporting within FUSN, objectives and recommendations for reports, reporting frequency and report recipients. Financial reporting should achieve several objectives:

- Provide reports whose content corresponds to the scope of responsibility of the recipient
- Provide information on budget income and expense variances frequently enough to allow timely corrective action
- Indicate how well FUSN can meet its near term cash obligations
- Monitor the current value of FUSN's endowment assets as a source of future operating income

Current Reporting and Recommendations

Attachment I which is attached to this memo lists the financial reports being prepared currently along with responsibilities and recipients of the reports. This Attachment reflects the changes and edits suggested and agreed upon at the August 18, 2010 Operations Council meeting. Upon final approval by the Operations Council, Attachment 1 will provide a basis for more organized distribution of the financial reports prepared with the FUSN community.

Enclosed – Attachment 1

Report	Purpose	Frequency	Responsibility	Recipients	Recommendations
Monthly Operations Report	Monitor income and expenses against budget YTD	Monthly	Administrator	Finance Chair Treasurer	Continue present practice
FUSN Monthly Budget Tracking	Monitor income and expenses against budget YTD/forecast whole year	Monthly	Finance Committee	Finance Committee and Ops Council (recommended)	Continue present practice – add Ops Council monthly
Utility Expenses Tracking Report	Track gas, electric and water usage and rates	Monthly	Finance Committee	Finance Committee	Continue present practice
Selected Expense Reports	Actual vs. budgeted expenses by area, e.g. Music, RE	As requested	Administrator	Program leader	Continue present practice
Quarterly Monitoring Report	Summarize FUSN financial performance to Congregation	Quarterly	Finance Committee with advance copy to Ops Council/BOT	Congregation via web site and newsletter insert	Continue present practice
Capital Campaign Report	Summarize and reconcile donations/income against expenditures	Semi-annually	Capital Campaign Treasurer	FUSN Treasurer and Congregation (Annual Report)	Discontinue after transfer of remaining funds to BOI – Special Roof Fund
Board of Investment Report	Report on market value of investments by fund type	Semi-annually	BOI	FUSN Treasurer and Congregation (Annual Report)	Continue present practice
Statement of Funds Balances/Statement of Financial Position	Report on amounts of FUSN funds held on account	Semi-annually	FUSN Treasurer	BOT/Ops Council	Continue present practice
Annual Budget Proposal	Indicate the sources and uses of FUSN funds for next FY	Annually	Finance Committee and Ops Council with BOT approval	Congregation for approval at annual meeting	Continue present practice but initiate earlier in year
Multi-Year Projections	Provide a longer term perspective on income and expenses	Annually	Finance Committee	Ops Council (review) BOT (review) Congregation (information)	Continue present practice