

First Unitarian Society in Newton  
OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES  
February 21, 2017  
Children's Chapel, 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

**Present:** Susan Bartlett, Judy Curby, Laurel Farnsworth, Andrea Kelley, Kate Mason, Rev. Erin Splaine, Dir. RE Rowan Van Ness. Guests: Cathy Morocco and Josie Greene (BOT); Linda Ross to observe minute-taking, as she will take minutes next month.

~ **Invocation / Chalice Lighting:** Susan

**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.

~ Erin was welcomed back from her sabbatical!

~ **Approvals:** All

- December Minutes were approved
- A Communities Without Borders January 29 fundraiser was approved by e-mail on 1/15/17 w/5 votes; also approved by minister.
- Acceptance of Bartlett church pew - Approved. Laurel pointed out that all chairs should be stored on their racks in the parish hall. The hall has room for the racks single file against the exterior wall.
- Updated youth policy (attachment) - Laurel moved to accept the updated youth policy. Approved.

~ **Staff update:** Erin, Rowan

Rowan:

- Rowan updated the Council on RE discussions around how to better integrate UUism into families, especially at their homes.
- She is taking a course in the Religious Education credentialing program.

- Discussions were held with parents about the impact of paying youth as assistant teachers. It was agreed that the experience of being assistant teachers has value.

Erin:

She reported how she spent her time on her sabbatical, ranging from time with family not possible otherwise to doing clergy development work. She offered praise for the staff, who helped keep the “ship afloat”. She said the sabbatical was wonderful, expressed gratitude for the time away and is glad to be back.

~ **Report on BOT meeting:** Susan

- The Board has turned in their FY18 pledge cards.
- Welcoming Congregation provided an update and ideas about how to proceed. They discussed budgetary implications based on proposed ideas.
- Syrian refugees - Is there anything FUSN can do to support immigrants and refugees at this time? Dick Bail brought up the general issue on behalf of several FUSN members. An idea is to have congregational conversations around this topic. Laurel pointed out that such activities are labor intensive and that perhaps FUSN could support another group’s work with this population, such as another UU congregation.
- Nominating committee - They discussed the kinds of talents and skills that would be desirable in nominees. They proposed developing job descriptions and clarity about roles and responsibilities.
- There was some discussion around FUSN’s mission and big picture views.

~ **Financial:** Judy, All

Review Year to Date spending: Judy indicated there were no troubling issues at this time. Laurel said she expects a snow removal bill.

Under our financial policies, FUSN must keep a reserve of two months’ expenses at all times. The Finance Committee includes the \$50,000 held by the Board of Investments in calculating this reserve. The Board of Investment proposal -- that this account be drawn on to repay possible loans or be used in lieu of any loan -- conflicts with the way we calculate the two-month reserve. If we followed the Board of Investments’ proposal, the Finance Committee would have to cut expenses/slash budgets rather than take a loan for one time expenses, if such expenses came up unexpectedly.

- FY 2018 Budget preparation schedule - Susan:  
B&G will propose its ‘FY18 budget tonight; next month the RE budget will be presented, 3/21; the Personnel Policy Committee’s budget will be shared 4/18. The Finance Committee finalizes its numbers 5/2. Ops should plan to meet on budget issues after the the May board meeting. Suggestions were to have a joint meeting on May 4 or 11 with Brian Gill and/or

Karen Bottar, co-chairs of the Finance Committee. A board meeting will agree on the final proposed budget the following week.

~ **Buildings and grounds FY18 budget request:** Laurel

Laurel distributed a preliminary proposed budget. She is trying to get on a regular painting schedule, so each year we would know which rooms would be painted. She also discussed unexpected repairs that have been made so far this year, pointing out that unanticipated expenses can occur at any time. The numbers in the proposed budget will be adjusted pending the outcome of the budget drive. She mentioned a number of repairs she has in mind for next year.

Andrea expressed gratitude for all Laurel's work on B&G and for developing and overseeing its budget. Others agreed.

~ **Review of safety evacuation plan and map:** All

Appreciation was expressed and suggestions proposed for further tweaks in the map of the basement classrooms and exits. Laurel pointed out that stairwells must have closable doors for fire safety. We also agreed that simply stated directions should be on each map. Rowan said she would attempt to simplify the language.

Discussion continued on the wording of the plan's procedures and some language was tweaked. Susan will make the edits already discussed. SEE Appendix 2 for draft plan that will be updated as discussed.

Andrea moved that we accept the simple one-page plan, post copies of the map in each classroom and the RE office, and that future revisions and updates may be added as needed. Kate seconded. Approved.

~ **Room Rates update:** Andrea

Rates had been raised by an agreed percentage. Andrea proposed rounding up the rates to avoid including cents in the numbers. New numbers were discussed and agreed. Andrea moved to accept the new rates. Kate seconded. Approved. *[Andrea will send a copy of the revised rates to incorporate in the minutes.]* Andrea and Susan will meet to finalize the room rental agreement forms.

~ **Room Rental Request:** Laurel

Laurel relayed for Fran Clancy a request to rent the Alliance Room for a potentially controversial discussion about taxes. Erin commented that Ops can decide if it is appropriate. FUSN would not be endorsing the group, and they are willing to pay, so it was agreed that it is okay to rent to this group.

~ **Updates:** All -- Committee issues/reports

- The next combined Ops Council and committee chairs meeting will be March 18<sup>th</sup>, 12-2.
- Parking: Rockport Shoes has moved into a nearby building with a parking garage. It was suggested that someone talk with their management about possible Sunday parking there. They are not yet fully moved in. Andrea will talk with Ted Hess-Mahan (FUSN member and Newton City councilor) about possibly contacting them.
- Review committee chair needs: Kate  
Communications and IT have had no chair all year. Laurel suggested that new Membership Coordinator Sam Foster be involved.

*The Assistant Clerk left at this point in the meeting.*

- Newsletter columns (need March; due 3/14)

~ **Thank yous:** All-

Pat Rohan for work on Services Auction. Thanks to John Nichols for sabbatical ministering. Bob Persons for help with the boiler room. John Brennan for saving the BLM banner.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wendy Schwartz, Assistant Clerk  
Linda Ross, substitute Assistant Clerk

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

Youth Protection Policy, rev. 1/28/17

#### **FUSN Issuance 2010-13: Policy**

**From:** Pat Rohan/revised by Susan Bartlett  
Chair, Operations Council  
**Date:** November 13, 2010/Revised March 22, 2016 & *DATE?*, 2017  
**Subject:** **Child and Youth Protection Policy**

**Purpose:** To publish the discussion and the policy formulated by the FUSN Board of Trustees in June, 2003 and revised by the Operations Council on March 22, 2016 (with minor

editorial changes on DATE, 2017), regarding the responsibility of FUSN adults for the well being of our children and youth.

**Discussion:** Adults working with children and youth have a crucial and privileged role, one that may carry a great deal of power and influence. Whether acting as a teacher, mentor, chaperone, child care worker, minister, youth advisor, or in other roles, an adult has a special opportunity to interact with young people in ways that are affirming and inspiring to young people and the adult. Adults can be mentors, role models and trusted friends of children and youth. They can be teachers, counselors, and ministers. To help our children grow up to be caring and responsible adults can be a meaningful and joyful experience for the adult and a lifetime benefit to the young person.

Adults must exercise good judgment and mature wisdom in using influence with children and young adults as well as refrain from using young people to fulfill their own needs. Young people are in a vulnerable position when dealing with adults and may find it difficult to speak out about inappropriate behavior in adults. It is important that adults, including parents, listen to their children to determine the cause of anything occurring in the FUSN community which upsets them.

Adult leaders need to possess a special dedication to working with young people in ways that affirm the Unitarian Universalist Association's Principles. Good communication skills, self awareness and understanding of others, sensitivity, problem solving and decision-making skills, and a positive attitude are all important attributes. Additionally, in recruiting adult religious leaders we should also seek persons who have two important traits. The first is an ability to foster a social network outside of their religious education responsibility in which to meet their own needs for friendship, affirmation and self esteem. The second is a willingness and ability to seek assistance from colleagues and religious professionals when they become aware of a situation requiring expert help or intervention.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the entire FUSN community, not just those in leadership positions, to create and maintain a climate that supports the growth and welfare of children and youth. Unfortunately, neglect and emotional abuse of children is a significant problem that has often been ignored or covered up.

**Policy:** In recognition of the above, on June 12, 2003, the Board of Trustees adopted the following policy; the Operations Council revised the policy on March 22, 2016, adding the third point.

1. A Code of Ethics (developed by and available from the DLRE), shall be read and signed by anyone in the FUSN congregation working with youth.
2. The presence of a minimum of two adults shall be a general requirement in FUSN religious education classes.
3. All adult volunteers in religious education classes and programs involving youth shall be required to successfully complete a Massachusetts CORI ("Criminal Offender Record Information") background check prior to beginning their volunteer assignment(s). FUSN shall conduct these checks in compliance with then current Massachusetts law and guidelines. The Minister and/or Director of Lifespan Religious Education will review the results of all CORI checks.
4. It shall be a usual requirement that a volunteer should have been involved with, or a member of FUSN for a minimum of six months prior to working with youth in a leadership role.
5. In the event of an incident, any individual should direct concerns privately and confidentially to the minister, the DLRE, or the Board of Trustees Chair, who will proceed in accordance with the Massachusetts Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse by Certain Massachusetts Religious Professionals.

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## **Appendix 2**

### **FUSN Fire Safety and Evacuation Plan for Classrooms - DRAFT**

**December 20, 2016**

#### **OPERATIONS COUNCIL**

Fire safety precautions at FUSN include maintenance and testing of certain equipment by contracted vendors and a building evacuation plan for the classrooms. In addition, the Newton Fire Department may at any time conduct an inspection for compliance with City fire code regulations.

Everyone at FUSN should be aware of the location of the building exits and to be aware of and take action if any of the exits are blocked or even partially obstructed by furniture and other debris.

The responsibility for ensuring that equipment is maintained and tested lies with the FUSN administrator (currently Fran Clancy). The equipment includes:

- Fire extinguishers
- Fire alarms

- Smoke detectors
- Carbon monoxide detectors
- Auxiliary emergency lighting
- Exit signs

The responsibility for communication of the building evacuation plan for the classrooms lies with the FUSN Director of Lifespan Religious Education (currently Rowan Van Ness). A map showing directions to the exits are to be posted on the wall next to the door of each classroom in the basement and first floors. The classroom evacuation plan is as follows:

1. One of the two responsible RE adults leads the children to the exit and out of the building.
2. The other responsible RE adult ensures that all of the children have left the classroom before following up behind them to the exit.
3. Everyone will meet in the playground to the right side of the building facade.
4. Attendance will be taken from the roster.
5. Parents and other caretakers are expected to meet at the playground as well.
6. Responsible RE adults are to debrief with the RE director as appropriate.

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**Appendix 3 Updated FUSN Room Rental Rates, approved Feb. 21, 2017**

	Rate	Member Rate	Non-Profit Rate
Alliance Room	\$250	\$125	\$185.00
Parlor	\$100	\$50	\$75
Parish Hall	\$400	\$200	\$300
Kitchen	\$150	\$75	\$110.00
Chapel	\$200	\$100	\$150
Head Start	\$300	\$150	\$225
Head Start w/upstairs kitchen	\$400	\$200	\$300
Classrooms	\$75	\$35.00	\$55.00
Sanctuary	\$1,000	\$500	\$750
<b>Minimum cleaning fee</b>	<b>\$125</b>	<b>\$125</b>	<b>\$125</b>

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