

**FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN NEWTON
OPERATIONS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
February 13, 2013**

The meeting started at 7:05pm.

Present: Pat Rohan, Kim Shanks, Laurel Farnsworth, Alan Cody, Anne Hess-Mahan, Rev. Erin Splaine, DLRE Perry Montrose. Also attending were Bruce Henderson and Susan Bartlett.

Laurel did the introductory reading and led the reading of the Covenant.

Bruce Henderson presented the plans for the Annual Budget Drive. The Board has set an ambitious goal of a 10% increase over last year. There will be pledge parties again. That worked quite well last year. There will also be some rooms at the Annual Fellowship Dinner where people can pledge if they care to. The March 3 service will be the kickoff for the Budget Drive and the pledge parties will follow. If folks prefer a one-on-one pledge meeting, that will still be available. Bruce and Josie are still looking for help.

There followed a discussion of the Long Term Forecast. The forecast is not quite finished. There is one major new initiative in the forecast. Kristin has privately indicated her intention to leave FUSN at the end of the church year to return closer to her home. The board, with input from Erin, has decided not to fill Kristin's position, but instead to replace her position with an Assistant Minister position titled Assistant Minister for Pastoral Care and Congregational Engagement. The idea is to hire someone for one year initially with a long term goal to move the position to a called position in the future. This would increase our overall expenses. One way to somewhat offset the increase is to delay hiring an intern minister for some period of time. There are still a few moving pieces in the numbers before the Long Term Forecast can be finalized and there needs to be an announcement about Kristin's future at FUSN before the forecast is published to the congregation.

There was a brief discussion on the budget. Our income is actually better than budget and our expenses are running below budget. So there is a good chance that our final deficit will be significantly less than originally projected. Fuel bills for the rest of the winter and success in collecting pledges will be the key determinants.

The Religious Education budget was presented by Kim and Perry. There is a 12% increase in the preliminary budget. The bulk of the increase, \$2000, involves various social and community building functions. There was some discussion on whether or not these types of items should be in the RE budget or in another budget, perhaps Membership or Worship. This will need to be resolved before the final budget request. The Operations Council also concluded that we will need to be vigilant in questioning and justifying any increased expenses.

There was also a brief discussion on whether or not committees can exceed their budgets. Some feel that committees cannot exceed their budgets without specific Operations Council approval. Others believe that committees can exceed their budgets by up to \$1,000. We need to do some

research to resolve the issue. (Note: after the meeting, it was determined that committees cannot exceed their budgets by any amount without Operations Council approval).

On behalf of Buildings and Grounds, Laurel presented the preliminary Building Condition Assessment prepared by Chapman Construction Design. Some significant items need to be added to the assessment, which will form the basis for the next capital campaign and future major maintenance budget requests. When finalized, the assessment will detail in excess of \$2,000,000 in needed maintenance and improvements. Laurel also reported that the organ is now in poor shape and is not able to be fully utilized for playing during services. Costs to repair the organ will be several hundred thousand dollars.

Laurel also presented for approval a \$21,400 contract for a written condition assessment and plan for preservation for the stained glass and leaded glass windows throughout the FUSN complex. The funds for this were included in the major maintenance budget for this year, so this is not an increase in budgeted expenses. The five council members in attendance unanimously approved the contract.

Anne Hess-Mahan reported on the Communications Committee. Bonnie McDonald will be heading up an effort on external communications, but wants to have any external communications reviewed before going out. After some discussions, it was agreed that Erin would review any external communications. The Communications Committee would also like the Operations Council to publish articles on a more regular basis in the newsletter, similar to what the board does. Anne agreed to create an article for the newsletter. We did however point out that there is now a vehicle in place to solicit and schedule articles from committee chairs.

Pat indicated that the Denominational Affairs Committee has been dormant for the last few years and needs a chair to get the Committee active again. Pat asked the Council to give some thought to a possible chair for the committee.

Pat reported that Ted Hess-Mahan attended a meeting with city officials and other interested parties to address parking issues. Lots of ideas are being discussed, but no solid solutions have yet been proposed. There will be further discussions at the City Council in March and FUSN will have representation.

The congregational meeting to vote on proposed by-law amendments is scheduled for Sunday March 17 after services. The youth group will be selling soup to raise funds for a charitable organization after services. So the hope is that folks will buy soup and then participate in the meeting. The proposed by law amendments have been circulated several times to the congregation and there will be one more meeting to discuss the changes on the evening of February 25th.

The Council concluded to thank Jackie Colby for donating the piano now in the Childrens Chapel and the Services Auction committee for their work in putting on the very successful Services Auction.