

**FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN NEWTON
OPERATIONS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
October 10, 2012**

The meeting started 7:10 pm.

Present: Pat Rohan, Kim Shanks, Laurel Farnsworth, Rev. Erin Splaine, Perry Montrose. Rev. Cheryl Lloyd joined at 7:12.

~ Guest: Rev. Cheryl Lloyd came to discuss her role as Community Minister, with particular emphasis on increasing the FUSN community's awareness of the CM role, greater participation in its activities, and assistance with fundraising to support the CM work.

A focus of Cheryl's Community Ministry work is low income sites like Dorchester. The Mather School is only 10 miles from Newton, and she wishes everyone could see the project. Helping low income children, with intergenerational participants, breaking down stereotypes and racial issues, and immigration are all incorporated in this Ministry.

Cheryl pointed out that the Community Minister receives a small stipend and that any fundraising goes to the communities served, such as Mather Elementary School. She spoke of the importance of FUSN's work there, in that "education is freedom." This is FUSN's 3rd year at the Mather. Many volunteers have continued and new volunteers have come forward, as well. One benefit of the project is that it is an intergenerational activity. Last year, the Youth Group contributed child care and supply drives. COA kids and parents came, too. Volunteers gather 4 times a year to debrief and discuss challenges in the school.

In addition, the partnership with the Mather School was endorsed by Boston's Mayor Menino and Boston School Superintendent Carol Johnson. The City supports this effort, showing its value.

This year the Mather program would like to start a literacy program for Vietnamese families. A Vietnamese teacher is available. Cheryl would like to raise funds to implement it. She points out the importance of crossing boundaries to help the kids. Kim mentioned how engaged FUSN kids were in Zambia and that it's good to have the Mather opportunity close to home vs going overseas; many more could be involved.

Also, in the past, non-FUSN volunteers to the Mather School later became FUSN members. So this is a way Community Ministry can bring people to FUSN.

Cheryl mentioned that she feels she is kind of on her own and that one voice is not enough. She's requesting a team or a committee for support in the CM efforts.

Pat: We need to publicize what Cheryl does, make it more high profile. One option is to set up a committee.

Cheryl mentioned that volunteers can't also be on a committee; they are doing enough. The job of a committee would be to help publicize the project, including being present at FUSN on a Sunday.

Erin: A committee would help coordinate; provide an overview; include RE kids; determine how to make donations; integrate CM more in the life of the congregation.

Pat - Under which domain should this committee fall? Social action?

Cheryl suggests it doesn't fit there. A Community Minister should not be a subset of Social Action.

Pat asked the group what they thought the next step should be.

Erin: First, decide if it's ok to create such a structure/committee. Then ask Jeannie Chaisson to help, as she's the liaison.

Pat suggests that a creating a Community Ministry committee would require a Council vote. As only 3 council members are currently present, no votes may be taken this evening. A Council quorum is 4 votes.

Discussion on fundraising for CM: Perhaps an additional Second Collection. Or as a First collection, like Music Sunday and Association Sunday (funds to the UUA). The Council needs to vote every year on dedicated 1st collections. Social Action handles 2nd collection approvals. Special collections do not carry over from one year to the next. If CM is designated as a First collection, this would mean 3 First collections total: Music Sunday, Association Sunday, and Community Ministry.

Cheryl requests that a CM committee include variety of ages, as well as someone active in RE and Social Action.

Suggestions for moving forward, if a committee is created: Maybe invite Membership Coordinator Kristen Cleveland to help find people. Talk with Rachel Yee, who knows lots of people. Take 5 minutes in a service to share information and invite volunteers.

Pat can take an email vote of the Council to approve her setting up a committee.

[Asst Clerk's note: I have rearranged for clarity a few of the comments above during a wide-ranging discussion, to put related items together. No content or meaning has been affected.]

~ Pat - Review of spending:

FUSN has already collected more than \$11K in prior year pledges, even before phone calls are made to follow up on other late pledges.

There was a recent \$3500 donation; it is not clear who this is from or what it is for. Maybe some of the \$3500 from the Hearn Foundation? To be clarified.

The Clare Karlson bequest was \$1K. Perhaps the Board needs to vote on where to apply it? Should it would be treated like a pledge and go into the regular operating budget? The Board of Investments? It was suggested we go back to family and ask where they'd like it applied.

~ Pat: FUSN insurance needs to be reviewed every year.

Laurel has already requested the insurance company provide a current valuation of property.

~ Pat: Committees update:

The Committee on Ministry still has an opening.

The Denominational Committee is not currently staffed.

Sheila Ardery would like a co-chair for the Holiday Fair, someone who would take over the following year.

There are currently no chairs for the Memorial or Services Auction Committees.

Does the Worship Committee need a co-chair? Erin: For now, the WC needs more participants, but not necessarily a co-chair.

~ Pat: Membership committee: There's lots going on. Coming up: a New UU class starting Saturday; a newcomer potluck; a Halloween party. Dinners for 7 will start again. On 2 recent Sundays, video tapes were shown on radical hospitality -- to help make FUSN more welcoming. Viewers reported getting new ideas, some of which have already started, including Greeters on Sundays, in addition to Ushers.

Erin: This Sunday at 9 in the Nursery a focus group will be held for people who've attended 5 years or less.

~ Laurel: The Green Sanctuary has met. The UUA committee found a weakness in the application, concerning social justice as part of the application.

Rachael White of Greener Day will visit on a Sunday after service -- soup and bread will be provided -- perhaps Jan 13? Topics: energy efficiency, use less, waste less, etc.

Erin: As that's Association Sunday, it would be a good day for this.

~ Laurel: Building & Grounds: The summer projects are complete: Perry's office, copy room, kitchen were painted. New LED light fixtures in Sanctuary are now "twinkling" improperly. Laurel has called regarding this, and someone is supposed to come today. Meanwhile, until it's fixed, we can dim it.

~ Gordon Moriarty had asked about capital needs survey. Per Laurel, a "needs" study has been contracted to Chapman Construction, who have been working on it this summer. They will do an infrared heat loss check, among other reviews. A Capital Campaign Committee should be set up in Spring 2013. Also, we need to put money in the next year's budget for a consultant, who would start next fall. The consultant does a sample survey of 30 or so congregants, to determine how much people would give and for what purposes. Then a complete capital campaign would be designed to launch/run the campaign.

Certain committee roles require FUSN membership to participate: Board, Investments, etc.

~ Perry is working on restructuring the RE council, including subgroups and task forces. Pat indicated the Council does not need to approve this.

~ Erin reported on the Board meeting: A conflict transformation working group has made progress, having written a report by Carl Metzger, Barbara Bates, Alice Nichols, Alan Cody + herself. Several documents are included. The report is currently in preliminary presentation to Board. As part of their research, the writers checked with other congregations; ran ideas by lawyers (such as FUSN's Dwight Golan and others). They are now at steps 4 and 5. The next step is to get congregational input. She feels it's an impressive document for dealing with disruptive or threatening behavior. Erin will work with Perry on Safe Congregation issues and points out that some other congregations didn't have a policy until a problem arose.

A concern was raised about the amount of activity certain members are engaged in. We need to be aware of the possibility of burnout or being overwhelmed. She threw out for discussion the question, Is there too much going on? Currently, there's quite a bit, and is it too much? For example, this Sunday, there were two 9 am meetings at the same time as the Community Breakfast, plus Social Action; the OWL parent group; orchestra rehearsals, etc. FUSN needs to be also a place to come and replenish. Too much activity could create a feeling of competition for some people.

~ Perry: FUSN needs an updated hotline calendar, that shows everything going on. Many activities/meetings are not yet on the calendar and many listings don't indicate what room they are in, unless you click on it.

Erin suggests a calendar needs to integrate it all, especially when there's cross-participation. Laurel: For example, the Green Sanctuary and Rachael White event is also working with RE. Also, the Green Sanctuary group is presenting a Fair Trade expo/exhibit on Sunday, 11/11, in the upstairs in Head Start room after lunch. Pat asks if will they sell items. *[Asst. Clerk- I believe the answer to this was 'yes' but not primarily as a sales event???*

~ Erin would like to have a conversation about the use of FUSN's front hallway/office corridor and perhaps finding a different place of honor for former ministers and leaders. Could we use that hallway to be more informative and welcoming? A brief discussion followed, concerning where to put the photographs, if elsewhere.

~ Pat raised the issue of Ops Council committees preparing newsletter articles. The Board has assigned people and topics for every newsletter. The idea would be that the Ops Council, Board, or a committee have an article in every newsletter.

~ Pat provided brief article re governance.

~ Pat: A request was made to put at least \$100 in the next FUSN budget to support the West Suburban Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer Youth group, WaGLY. FUSN would not take it on as a project, but only provide funding, and some FUSN kids could go to their meetings. It's a safe place for kids to meet, with good speakers. If we did this, where in the budget would it go? Laurel suggests Welcoming Congregation. Erin suggests FUSN could be a sponsoring "church," with no other official duties. It could be a "Home" for youth, with funding by Welcoming Congregation.

~ Pat: External Communications

The Board would like to set up a committee. Would this be separate or a subset of Communications?

Discussion: Laurel: Do we already have too many committees? Maybe this could fall under Kristen/Membership, with volunteers to help. Kristen tweets, Facebooks to the congregation, Maybe expand to an external audience? We should be careful not to have too many people doing too many things.

Perry: Maybe a bigger question concerns coordinating all communications. The Holiday Fair has its own publicity person. Maybe one person on the Communications Committee could focus on external communications?

Erin suggests we proceed with caution. We need to sort out what we want to do and be sure it is done successfully. One question is, how much of what FUSN does do we want the public invited to?

~ Pat: Governance and By-laws changes update:

The working group includes Pat, Gordon, Pam McA'Nulty; Ann Woodbury, and Susan Bartlett. They are exploring what we need to fix and what we want to implement. There needs to be multiple communications to the congregation. A suggestion is to vote By-Law changes at a special March meeting.

Proposed: The Board will be 6 adult members and 1 youth member. There would be the same rotation of 3 years with staggered terms, but people can re-up with no term limits.

Proposed: The Ops Council would consist of 6 people, including the Treasurer.

Roles for officers of the Ops Council would be spelled out in the By-Laws, as they are for Board Chair and Vice-Chair.

Each group would continue to elect its own Chair and Vice-Chair.

While a Leadership Development Committee is desired, the group is not ready to move forward on this yet.

The Board of Investments would report to the Board of Trustees.

Under consideration: Should the Council for Social Action (CAS) be elected by the congregation, in order to make it more high profile?

Laurel: Liability insurance covers officers named in the By-Laws. Can we get some language to be sure Conflict Group members are also included by liability insurance? Carl, who spoke with the insurance agent, would be the resource on this.

~ Pat on Ops Council succession: Does any current member want to Chair next year? If not, we need to recruit someone soon, so s/he can learn. Pat would be available to assist a new chair.

~ Pat on policy listing events in the Order of Service: Only FUSN related events may be listed in the Order of Service. Exceptions may be approved by the Ops Council. Erin requests that it be changed to the Minister approving such requests; everything that happens in the Sanctuary should fall under the role of minister and staff. The OoS is part of Sunday/ Sanctuary use. The rest of building may fall under Ops Council jurisdiction.

The current FUSN Newsletter policy is to include only FUSN-related events. Exceptions may be approved by the Ops Council. Do we need to change this policy, too? Some newsletter material is not strictly FUSN-related, and maybe it's okay for staff to decide what to put in their individual columns.

~ Laurel: The Newton Cultural Alliance has requested free use of space at FUSN. The NCA is trying to save the Allen House from development. Nathaniel Allen was a founding member of FUSN, an early abolitionist, an outstanding educator, etc. The NCA goal is to purchase and use the house as a multi-cultural facility -- arts, poetry, a Suzuki school, concerts, etc. This would require a special permit by the City of Newton, along with community input. The latter requires meetings, which could be held on Friday or Saturday evening or Sunday afternoon. Pat will send an email for a vote.

~ Pat raised a question about using online services for payments to FUSN. This arose when someone requested to pay for Ferry Beach online. Further discussion is needed: issues include fees, privacy, liability, etc. The topic was tabled till the next meeting.

~ Pat: For the Semi-annual committee chairs meeting, 6 people have responded so far that Saturday, 11/10, 9-11 am is ok.

~ Pat: Thank you's: Vern Ellis & Rachael Yee for Ferry Beach; Dwight Golan for drop box slot in the pre-school office door. Mindy Scharlin and Rachael Yee for the Rosh Hashona dinner.

~ Pat: A 2nd collection will be held for Habitat for Humanity. Habitat requires a \$750 fee for an organization to be involved. Alan Cody and Pat authorized an advance, in anticipation of the 2nd collection proceeds; funds will be deducted from the 2nd collection to cover that amount.

~Pat: Confirmed that the Council had approved Helaine Golan's yoga class may meet at FUSN.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Schwartz,
Assistant Clerk
10/29/12, Revised 11/2/12