

First Unitarian Society of Newton  
OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES  
Wednesday September 11, 2013  
Alliance Room, 7:00 P.M.

*Present:* Susan Bartlett, Jeannie Chaisson, Alan Cody, Anne Hess-Mahan, Andrea Kelley, Laurel Farnsworth, DLRE Perry Montrose, Rev. Erin Splaine, and guest appearances by Board Representative Anne Woodbury and Communications Committee chair Nancy DuVergne Smith.

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

► Invocation / Chalice Lighting ~ Jeannie. Poem about “flowing.”

► *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.

► Updates ~ Erin, Perry

Erin asked about the status of getting a database for FUSN. Anne Woodbury said it had been agreed that Board and Ops Council reps would attend each other’s monthly meetings. She reinforced the value of obtaining a database system, so FUSN’s programs would be able to communicate with each other. Anne W. is proposing to the Board that they set some target dates for moving forward on this.

Erin said she received a request regarding an upcoming conference, the Continental Gathering of UU Seminarians (CGUUS), on October 11-13. Attendees are requesting housing, funds, and meals. Erin would like to support them, but their request was not as timely as it could have been. She asks if she should send a message out on the list serve, to see if congregants want to offer housing or contribute money. She pointed out that is Ferry Beach weekend, so many will not be home.

Jeannie moved that we put a note out to the FUSN list asking if anyone wants to offer housing and/or food and that FUSN provide \$200 cash. Laurel seconded. The motion passed. Erin will reply to the request and send the note to FUSN. The funds will come from an Administrative line item in the budget.

Perry: The Coming Of Age planning meeting preceded the Ops Council meeting this evening. The leadership coordination team has been expanded. A UU heritage trip has been added to the schedule, including such sights as King’s Chapel, Author’s Ridge, etc. A few more RE teachers

are needed, but Perry is confident they will be found. Also, teachers will not teach each Sunday all semester. Instead there will be 4 teachers who rotate through the whole year; each pair coming every other week. This helps prevent burnout and allows teachers to attend services every other week.

Perry continued: Parents and Youth met to discuss programming, which will be expanded. There will be a retreat so youth can discuss what they wish to include and accomplish for the year. Also, the Adult RE catalog is coming out this weekend for the fall schedule. Two "Topic Tuesdays" will be held each semester, with each topic having 2 meetings. The first week will be a topic presentation, followed 2 weeks later by a discussion on that topic. Fall's sessions include: Divorce Support and Care for the Caregiver. In spring: Loss of a Loved One and Downsizing.

► Review of Ops Council committee liaisons ~ All

There was discussion about the role of the liaisons, such as how often to attend committee meetings or to be in touch with committee chairs. This was especially to familiarize Susan and Andrea, who are new to the Ops Council. Jeannie said it is not necessary to attend every meeting of the liaison's committees; she said she requests copies of minutes from any committee that takes them, and she allocates her time to any committees that need more of her involvement. Laurel pointed out that the role is also to be a resource, so that committees know whom to call if they have an issue, and that the liaison is not a member or director of the committees.

**Committee list for 2013-2014:**

SUSAN BARTLETT (Chair of the Operations Council) - EDUCATION, including the Religious Education Council, Adult Education, Coming of Age and the Nursery

JEANNIE CHAISSON – WORSHIP, including the Worship Committee, Music Committee, Ushers and Social Action

ANDREA KELLEY - FELLOWSHIP, including Lay Ministers, Membership Committee, Small Group Ministry, Social Activities (Ferry Beach, Sandy Island), and the Fellowship Dinner

ANNE HESS-MAHAN – OUTREACH, including Denominational Affairs, and Communications; and SOCIAL ACTIVITIES (Ferry Beach/Sandy Island).

ALAN CODY – STEWARDSHIP, including the Finance Committee, Annual Budget Drive, Services Auction, Holiday Fair, Planned Giving and Capital Campaigns. Alan also serves as the elected Treasurer of the congregation.

LAUREL FARNSWORTH (Vice Chair of the Operations Council) - FUNDAMENTALS/ ADMINISTRATION, including Building and Grounds, Computer and Administrative Services, Memorial Committee, Preservation Committee, Green Sanctuary Committee and Hospitality Committee.

Laurel asked if we need to re-activate the Welcoming Congregation, Denominational Affairs, and Bylaws committees, as they are currently inactive. Also FUSN still needs to identify Stewardship Campaign and Fellowship Dinner chairs. Discussion ensued.

► Sunday Special Collections ~ All

It was agreed to have a Sunday special collection each year to benefit the following: Council On Social Action, Music Committee, UU Association Sunday, and Community Ministry. This year, however, the UUA requests those funds go to “Join the Move” to support moving the headquarters to a new location. Erin asked if FUSN should table the UUA special collection this year and revisit next year.

Alan moved that we approve as unrestricted funds three Special Collections this year for CSA, Music, and Community Ministry and revisit including UU Association Sunday next year. Anne H-M seconded. The motion passed.

Erin pointed out that **Special** Collections is different from **Second** Collections. The latter are for outside-FUSN charitable causes, selected through the Council for Social Action, recommended by FUSN members. Erin is requesting that this year, we drop from 6 to 5 Second Collections and also that there be only one request for money in a single service. This means dropping the 5 FUSN operating budget collections during the services that include a Second Collection. She feels that asking for funds twice in a service causes giving fatigue, is not worshipful, and can be confusing. Discussion ensued.

If next year involves a financial crunch, due to the hiring of the new Assistant Minister, Erin says she would be willing to drop all Second Collections for a full year.

Jeannie moved that we have five special collections for this year for groups selected by the Council for Social Action; and that these will be the sole collections during those services. Laurel seconded. The motion was approved with 5 votes in favor and 1 opposed.

► Community Minister - November 17 is Cheryl Lloyd’s FUSN preaching date.

► Communication priorities ~ Nancy DuVergne Smith

Nancy came to discuss priorities for this year’s communications committee. She also noted that 2 members dropped out, so new members are needed. She says the committee would like to do a Monkey Survey to get congregational input on current communications behavior (how do you find out about...? etc.); if the website is meeting the needs of the congregation; how well social media is functioning; etc. Can we simplify and/or improve the newsletter process and content? Do we need to update how the online calendar is used. The format for the survey would be multiple choice. Alan suggested such a survey also include questions about communicating with the outside community; how well informed FUSNites are about social action programs; and which FUSN programs need more communication to the congregation.

Erin likes the idea of being paperless but wonders if we should consider reinstating the paper newsletter. Perhaps more people would actually read it in physical form, such as having it on the

table or the refrigerator. If some people who are active in FUSN are not reading the newsletter online, the paper version might be easier to read. Discussion followed about online and email overload, a reason that many people do not read newsletters online.

Discussion followed about the Business, General, and Digest versions of FUSN emails and whether everyone is aware of the options.

Nancy requested suggestions for additional members for Communications. Current members include Nancy, Greg Sullivan, Kevin Osborne, and Joyce Pollock. Anne H-M is liaison. The committee is seeking a tech-savvy person and a writer. They also want to focus more on communications with the outside community.

Laurel wonders about asking for "guest" editors, as a way of adding people without requiring major time commitments on their part. This could be COA/mentor project, for example.

► Financial Report ~ Alan

Alan submitted a 3-page report with 4 attachments:

Statement of Financial Position as of May 31, 2013

Statement of Fund Balances as of May 31, 2013

Reconciliation of Unrestricted and Temporarily Restricted Cash as of May 31, 2013

Reconciliation of Statements of Financial Position and Fund Balances 5/31/08 - 5/31/13.

Alan discussed the process of reconciling the numbers and providing the reports. He expressed appreciation for Nancy Tobias' assistance with accounting.

Alan pointed out that we do not have an inventory of FUSN property, and suggested that this is a weakness. He points out that the value could be amortized. Laurel pointed out that it is quite difficult to value FUSN's physical assets.

Andrea asked about doing an audit. Alan said it would probably cost around \$15,000.

Organizations can also have financial *reviews*, which are less expensive than audits. Alan also reminded the group of the Financial Oversight Committee, which contributes confidence to FUSN's financial accountability.

► Pine Village Security ~ Laurel: No update at this time.

► Ops Council retreat: Susan wrote to Sue Phillips to request input on having a facilitator. Erin mentioned an additional person who might be a candidate as facilitator. The Council is holding October 5 as a tentative date.

► Fundraising ~ Jeannie provided an update on fundraising policies at FUSN but will have more information next month. More discussion will follow then.

► Laurel raised a concern about unsupervised children at FUSN. Last Sunday, some

youngsters left black marks on the Head Start room floor. Since there was no RE last Sunday, children were unsupervised. Laurel offered to draft a policy regarding supervision of children. Erin and Perry will edit, and it will be sent to the FUSN business email list.

- ▶ Thank yous ~ All
- ▶ The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wendy Schwartz, Assistant Clerk  
10/8/13