

FUSN OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES

Wednesday, January 13, 2016

Alliance Room, 7:00 P.M.

Present: Susan Bartlett, John Brennan, Jeannie Chaisson, Judy Curby, Laurel Farnsworth, Andrea Kelley, Rev. Erin Splaine. Guests: Bobbie Sproat (BoT).

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.

~ **Invocation / Chalice Lighting:** Jeannie. The reading was from a John Sebastian song, on a winter in Woodstock, NY.

~ **Approvals:** All

- November Minutes
- December minutes

Jeannie moved to approve both November and December minutes. Seconded. Approved. Some discussion followed as to whether we should send minutes to the Board of Trustees before posting them. To implement this, we'd have to change the meeting schedule, since Ops now meets the day after the BoT. Advantages and disadvantages were discussed. The Finance Committee meets the first Tuesday of the month. Ops meets the 2nd Wednesday. Bobbie will ask the Board if they would like to change their meeting to the 3rd Tuesday of each month, perhaps next year. This will facilitate the flow of decision making and action steps. Erin indicated that when she first came, the Board met on the 2nd Tuesday and the Ops Council met on the 3rd Wednesday.

~ **Staff update:**

Erin: Rowan, the RE Council and parents agreed to split the combined 6th and 7th grade class to do COA and OWL separately, despite the smaller class sizes.. OWL is proceeding at the 4th/5th grade level, with Beth, Rowan, Todd Farrell, and Jules Delamar teaching. Jenn Lerner and Devon Welles are heading an Adult Faith Formation Task Force for next year. Christmas Eve's three services all went well, with 600-700 people attending. Music was excellent and varied, thanks to Anne Watson Born's guidance and participants of all ages.

February's theme is Silence. Erin is concerned that FUSN is doing too much and wonders how we might be able to slow down, despite all the great activities. Less doing, more being. She shared that Liz Lerner's congregation dropped all activities for a month last fall. Liz said it was refreshing for everyone.

Erin said there were about 60 or 70 people at the Quaker service on the Sunday between Christmas and New Year, which is a good turnout for that Sunday. Several people expressed appreciation for this service. When Christmas is on a Sunday, as will be the case this year, she will provide coffee and a place for people to come, but not a service *per se*.

Laurel filled in Bobbie about the van service proposed by FUSN congregant Barry Goldberg at the December meeting. Laurel will look into insurance issues, and Ops had agreed to do it on a trial basis.

~ Report on BOT meeting:

Bobbie filled us in. There were three committee reports from outside committees.

- The budget drive team is in place: Tom Bean, Saul Lookner, Ellen Metzger. The tentative theme is "FUSN is for Life." One goal is to include younger people in a multi-generational approach.
- The Developing Leadership team provided an update. Josie is very active and pulled together a notebook on how FUSN works, an overview of a yearly calendar, and recruiting leadership.
- Opportunities for education and conversation. Karen Edwards will do a class on the spirituality of leadership, based on the book, *Serving With Grace* by Erik Walker Wikstrom.
- The Welcoming Congregation assessment team provided a 17-page report. One notable result was that more survey respondents identified as LGBT than they had anticipated. Discussion ensued on how to disseminate the results to the congregation at large.
- The BoT also discussed our aging membership and how to prepare for the future.

~ Financial update: Judy, All

- Review of year-to-date spending:

Laurel pointed out that, previously, we were making quarterly insurance payments, resulting in finance fees. With the new insurance company, we paid up front to avoid such fees. The final payment for last year's insurance was made in the current budget year.

- Proposed updated financial policies. Judy had circulated a financial policies document prior to this meeting. One person commented that, apparently, Governance and Finance policies are not in sync. The Finance policies need to be updated. One policy is that the BoT must approve any expenditures above \$5,000; therefore, it is implied that Ops can spend lesser budgeted amounts without express BoT approval. John, who is coming to this with a fresh eye, pointed out that there are contradictory and/or overlapping policies. There is a great deal of documentation, and it can be difficult to follow. Laurel pointed out that our

policies have been shortened in recent years. While it is important to keep institutional memory, policies could be further simplified. Susan would like to make comments and will ask Judy questions later. She will also review governance and look for who reviews such policies and changes. Others will also send Judy comments.

- An email exchange had confirmed that FUSN will continue the once a year return of uncashed checks written by FUSN, rather than more frequently. Funds go back into miscellaneous expenses, and the uncashed checks are voided.

- Credit card for RE. Rowan had requested a card to make it easier to purchase supplies for RE. John pointed out that, in general, corporate credit cards can be abused, and a pre-paid card might be more appropriate. Erin thinks Rowan wanted something like a Staples or Michael's card, rather than for staff or individuals having to cover expenses out of pocket and then waiting to be reimbursed. Laurel pointed out that the issue of requiring signatures would be complicated. Discomfort was expressed about having a floating credit card and also with having staffers covering expenses. Laurel said they can submit the expenses before charges come due on their personal cards.

John suggested a credit card could be issued with a dollar limit. Erin asked if Ops could talk to other congregations about how they handle RE purchases. Laurel suggested that we don't want to ask junior staff to pay expenses up front. Clarification is needed on how many staff members would need or have access to a credit card. Susan asked if the Finance Committee or Financial Oversight Committee should look into this. Erin would like only senior staff to have access to any credit card and each would be responsible for it.

- Judy said we have accounts at 3 different banks. We need to look into what card options are available for business accounts. She will ask Dan Brody (chair of FUSN's Oversight Committee) for his input.

- The Council discussed the potential for direct deposit of pledges to the FUSN account, EFTs. Laurel said this may be a fees issue with our database software. Will there be additional costs, in addition to the 25 cent per transaction cost? Laurel asked if the BoT needs to vote on this. An advantage to EFTs is easier posting and identification of payments. A concern is security of payments. Non-profits have a "donate here" button on their websites, which are subject to hacking. Susan will ask Peter Farago if there would be additional cost for direct deposits and if our database is functional for that, and then provide that info to the BoT. Erin said the Sherbourne UU congregation is happy with its database, which is different from FUSN's.

~ Review priorities, identify leads/action steps: All

Laurel said she has already started the Holiday Fair revisioning process; a meeting has been scheduled. New leadership is needed for the Fair. Pat Rohan had recruited a replacement for running Attic Treasures, so recruitment is a possible avenue, rather than waiting for volunteers.

~ **Updates:** All

- B&G: fire safety (Jeannie to review maps); copper vandalism. Some of the new roof copper was vandalised. Laurel is looking into repairing the damage. Laurel reported that the BOT approved funds to design the handicap ramp. The plan will need to be approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.
- RE: CORI update. Susan reported that she is working with the Personnel Policy Committee to implement CORI checks for those working with FUSN's youth. The plan is to have the system in place for Spring teacher recruitment
- Other committee updates. We voted to update one of the rental rates approved in December. The rental for the Head Start room will change to \$300; \$400 with use of the kitchen. Andrea moved and Jeannie seconded the motion to approve this change. Approved by 5 members.

~ **Thank yous:** All

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Schwartz,
Assistant Clerk

ADDENDUM

Operation Council Priorities: 2015-2016			
	Priority	Lead	Status
1	Rental policies	Andrea	
	Charges - Susan sent current rates		Revised rates approved
	Rental agreement [Andrea to send current draft]		One final version needed
2	Database	John	
	Pledge component		

	OC support required [Ash/Fran/Peter to meet; follow-up Dec/Jan]		
3	Communications	John	
	Supporting communications work [John, Andrea, Susan to work with Ash and current members of communications committee]		
4	Newsletter articles		
	Ops [Possible columns: parking, e-mail policy, work of lay ministers]		
	Committees [Email committee chairs for monthly updates; done by Fran? OC?; SB talk to Fran]		
5	Developing Leadership Team (DLT)	Susan	
	Supporting work of DLT		
6	Financial policies	Judy	
	Review current policies and need for various reports—Ops (treasurer), financial oversight committee		
7	Building use		
	Scheduling—more easily visible (electronic, online)		
	o Check Rowan for RE calendar; Erin for staff calendar		
	Use—flexible times; FUSN use		
8	Re-vision holiday fair	Laurel	
9	Prepare fire escape plan & fire drill	Jeannie	
	On-going tasks		
10	Fundraising		
	Schedule—CSA, RE, Music [currently have RE and music]		

11	Signs		
	Summer services [Jeannie to talk with Worship]		
	Other: bathrooms		
	2014-2015 priorities requiring minimal follow-up		
12	Wayside pulpit	Judy	
	Repairs done; Judy to check with Dani about youth group changing message		
13	Coffee hour	All	
	Check out use of quiet space in Alliance Room		
	Wish list		
14	Electronic payments		