

FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN NEWTON
OPERATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES
Wednesday October 14, 2015
Alliance Room, 7:00 P.M.

Present: Susan Bartlett, John Brennan, Jeannie Chaisson, Judy Curby, Laurel Farnsworth, Andrea Kelley, Rev. Erin Splaine, Rowan van Ness, RE Director. Guests: Becka Lozinsky, Board Rep (Youth).

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7 p.m.

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: Erin

~ Approvals: All

- September minutes were approved, pending minor updates sent by Susan.
- Project Zambia concert was approved via email vote on September 23rd.

~ Staff update

Erin:

- Erin will participate in a panel discussion, November 4, on “Faith & the Public Square, the Use of Religion in 2016 Republican Presidential Campaign,” at Myrtle Baptist Church.
- June 12 is the proposed Annual Meeting date.
- The Membership Coordinator has been hired. Ashley (“Ash”) Engle begins Monday, October 26. The committee was very happy with her. She will be introduced to the congregation on November 1.
- We will re-introduce the children’s music coordinator Ellie Foster and youth coordinator Dani Negus on November 1, as well.

Rowan: DLRE Updates (from notes she provided)

- RE Council Retreat
 - Continue working on a mission statement as a guide for our work
 - Setting goals and priorities for this year (tactical & strategic timeline)

- Inventory of what we do: what is core, what is valuable but needs work, valuable but needs new partners, valuable but not every year, and what no longer serves us.
 - Figuring out the capacity, will, and competence of RE Council Members & Staff (Skills and interest inventory)
 - Conversation about RE vs. Faith Development
 - RE Sunday discussion
 - “RE Table” discussion
 - Pushing for safety in our building and congregation
- Completed Sexuality Issues for UU Religious Educators Course →
 - LREDA Fall Con
 - Adult Faith Formation Task Force postponed

Additional notes from the meeting: Rowan’s update, continued...

Is RE Sunday for children or lifespan?

The special COA collection will be on hold until such funds are needed at some point in the future.

Rowan proposed that, on the Sunday after Thanksgiving, FUSN have a collection for a special donation for the [Sophia] Fahs Collaborative, a UU RE think tank. A motion was made to do this on Sunday, 11/28. Jeannie seconded. Passed unanimously.

Laurel moved that a special collection be held at the spring Music Sunday, March 20th, for the Music Committee. Jeannie seconded. Passed unanimously.

~ **Report on BOT meeting:** Judy

- The Board voted Ashley in as member coordinator.
- Laurel proposed changing FUSN’s insurance company, based on our agent’s recommendation. Liberty Mutual’s quote was quite a bit higher than last year. GuideOne was \$11,000 less than budgeted, and the Board approved.
- Personnel Policy Committee - Policies are available to staff, PPC and Board members, but not to others who are not involved in personnel matters.
- The Board also reviewed the issue of Women’s Alliance funds available, raised in prior years. The Alliance is not currently active. Currently the funds are under FUSN’s tax ID, while a decision is pending on how to disperse them. Under discussion is whether the Alliance has final say on the use of the funds.
- There was discussion among Ops Council members on whether this information should or should not be shared more widely.

~ **Financial:** All

- Review year-to-date spending. Laurel said it is still the first quarter, and there's not much to discuss. It's too early in the year to predict budget outcomes.
- Judy: Roof work began. A temporary restricted account will be set up a to pay for it. It will probably fall into the major maintenance category.
- Discussion on whether the rental agreement is ready was postponed until the next meeting.

~ **Review of proposed updated e-mail policy:** Susan and All

Jud submitted proposed updates to the email policy, which he previously wrote. One is that authors should provide clear signatures, since the sender's email address sometimes does not appear. The body of the message should include the sender's name. Etiquette is also an issue, such as being careful not to Reply All when a message is intended only for the sender. Susan said she would add the suggestions to update the policy. Jeannie suggested sending the policy out annually. Susan will send out the policy.

~ **Committee Updates:** All

- Fundraising activities: The Music Committee gave Susan their fundraising dates. Still needed are social action and RE. It is important to coordinate fundraising schedules.
- Jeannie: If no one comes forward to chair the Alternative Gift Fair, we should drop it. Ops members agreed, as it is labor intensive and not necessary to invite people to give additional donations in the busy fundraising month of December.
- Jeannie: Social Action: Can the Habitat special collection be moved to January? Who is the point person for the Zambia special collection? The collection of supplies for prisoners will probably be held in November, so it can be sorted in time for December disbursement.
- Erin: We try to keep special collections at least 2 months apart.
- B&G: fire safety (an issue raised by the RE Council): Rowan reports that parents raised concerns about how we would evacuate the building if necessary, whether due to fire or some other issue. There should be signage. Laurel mentions that there is no ideal way out of the basement, since the building was constructed 100+ years ago. She suggests everyone go out through the bulkhead door, where the Food Pantry door was. She tried to get a professional opinion, which was not forthcoming. She suggests we come up with a plan. Judy says we should develop a plan and practice, even if it's not an ideal plan. Susan suggests there should be maps up as guides throughout the building. Laurel says there are emergency lights in the corridors. Jeannie said we should have maps with all exits and recommended routes for specific locations. Laurel recommends not sending

people upstairs, if they would be coming to where the fire is; typical fire locations would be in the boiler room and kitchen. Laurel said there should be no more than two doors required to exit the building. She said we do have lighted red exit signs. Jeannie said, when fire alarm goes off, the signs light up, and they are hard-wired and have a backup battery.

Andrea said she would be willing to look at creating building maps.

Rowan also said parents need to know where to find their kids. Judy said there should be specified gathering points.

Judy said we need to be sure the bulkhead door access is shoveled. Laurel said it is included in the snow removal plan.

- Music: Evening Song - Vespers-like services will restart in January. Laurel said the vespers folks would like to put up many posters in the building; she thinks we could limit posting. Erin is having coffee with Amy LeClair on October 28, and they will discuss it. Jeannie said in the past they could put out easels on the day of the concert. They wish to keep posters up for the duration of the year. Perhaps there are other ways to get better attendance at the concerts. Andrea will help them get a note in the Newton TAB. Another idea is to put postcards in the pews. Rowan asked about bulletin board space. Erin pointed out that the new Membership Coordinator can be involved in solutions.
- Communications: A Chair is still needed for this committee. It was suggested that a meeting be held with key members to see what their priorities are. Perhaps Ash could be involved here, too. John, the Communications liaison, is in favor of these suggestions and will meet with Ash. Since John and Ash are both new, Andrea said she could attend, depending on when the meeting is.
- Membership: A "New To UU" class will be held Saturday morning, November 7th. Laurel will be the Ops Council representative.
- Holiday Fair: Laurel needs help with Friday setup, and Saturday and Sunday cleanup. She is willing to pay for this. Perhaps the Youth Group can help. Jeannie suggested adding pizza to make it more of a fun activity. Perhaps the payment for labor could go to the Youth Group fund. Becka says she thinks the Youth Group would like to be involved with this. Maybe the Youth Group could also do the wreath table.

At this time, we are still seeking a co-chair for the Fair and other replacement roles, such as the baked goods table.

~ Plans for the Ops Council retreat: Saturday October 24, 12-3: All. Laurel agreed to host at her house. Food choices will be decided by email.

~ Thank yous: All

- Vern Ellis for Ferry Beach, after it happens.
- Naomi Olson for organizing and leading the Rosh Hashona gathering. Google: Hashanah

The meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Schwartz,
Assistant Clerk