

FUSN Board of Trustees  
Tuesday, December 13, 2016  
Children's Chapel, 7:30 PM

<p><b>Staff:</b> John Nichols, Sabbatical Minister Rowan Van Ness, Director Lifespan Religious Education</p> <p><b>Board:</b> Cathy Morocco, Chair Brian Burba, Vice-chair Gregg DiBiaso Sara Fasli, Youth Josie Greene Eric Haas Julianna Lakomski, Youth Lesley Sneddon Clerk: Kit Ryan</p>	<p><b>Operations Council:</b> Kate Mason</p> <p><b>Visitors:</b> Jacki Rohan - Name Change Task Force Greg Sullivan - Chair, Search Committee for Congregational Engagement Coordinator</p>
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MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:30PM

**Meeting Highlights**  
**Plans for Engaging Congregation in Name Change Issue**  
**Consideration of staff Health Benefits Policy Change**

**Chalice Lighting/Reading of Covenant**

**Check-in**

**Procedural**

- October 11, 2016 and November 8, 2016 minutes were unanimously approved.

**Staff Update**

*John Nichols, Sabbatical Minister*

- John announced plans for two topics for future newsletters: 1) a reminder of his contracted time limit which is 25 hours a week through the duration of Erin's sabbatical, through the third Sunday in February (February 19). 2) "Perfect being

the Enemy of the Good” that is, striving for perfection can be an impediment to progress.

*Rowan Van Ness, Director of Lifespan Religious Education*

- Rowan expressed appreciation for Beth’s and Dani’s work in Children’s Religious Education.
- Their team is looking at ways to keep volunteers/teachers engaged in the face of increasing challenges in the classroom. Some potential solutions include adding Youth teachers in Children’s RE to assist children requiring additional support.
- A new Children’s and Family Ministry has had their first meeting at which they discussed how Children’s RE is working and several specific issues, including how to balance long-term versus immediate goals and needs and how to better respond to children and adults with special needs. Rowan met with the DRLE of the Bedford congregation regarding their AIM (Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry) program to research additional ways to support the increasing challenges faced by our RE program. Bedford’s approach is to partner with a local college to provide students in need of service hours to support children who require accommodations.
- Discussion yielded several suggestions: to include Lay Ministers and/or to identify special needs professionals in the congregation or lay ministers who may be willing to lend support.

The RE Council is considering the pros and cons of creating paid positions for Youth versus making their jobs unpaid, community service. Working for pay and for service may represent different values. At this point, the Youth are drawn more to the paid teaching opportunity than to youth group meetings.

Meetings with parents of children of different age groups will begin January 8, 2017. The purpose is to discuss the Sunday program, and learn how it is working for the parents’ children and families and whether the program is energizing for them.

### **Generative / Strategic**

*Jacki Rohan, Name Change Task Force*

Jacki is working with Allan Hartman on the issue of whether FUSN should officially change its name to Unitarian *Universalist*. Jackie provided a brief history: in 2013 a proposal was presented to the Board to add “Unitarian Universalist” to FUSN’s name. At the June, 2014 Annual Meeting, the congregation voted to seek congregational input on the proposed name change. At the June, 2016 Annual Meeting, the Board of Trustees resolved that a congregational vote be taken at an annual or special meeting in 2017, on the following resolution: That the Bylaws be amended to change the name of the congregation to The First Unitarian Universalist Society in Newton.

Discussion followed, including cost impact and historical definitions of “Universalism.”

Jacki described the process for vote preparation, including communication through email, newsletter, and after-service meetings. Jacki expressed her interest in “modern universalism.” John Nichols offered to give a sermon on “traditional” Universalism. Jacki circulated the following report to the Board:

#### REPORT TO FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN NEWTON BOARD OF TRUSTEES

##### INTENT:

To inform the BoT of this task force's plans and timeline for educating our congregation pursuant to the mandated 2017 vote on changing the name of the First Unitarian Society in Newton to the First Unitarian Universalist Society in Newton

##### PROCEDURE AND SCHEDULE:

Beginning in February, information about the proposed change would be sent to our congregation through e-mail, our Society’s newsletter and other communications channels. Information would include a brief visual education on historical and modern Universalism and Unitarian, as well as a calendar of meetings to discuss the proposed change. We also hope to publish the date of the vote for the bylaw change at that time.

Educational opportunities would be expanded in February and March including coffee hour displays, social media blurbs, etc..

On two Sundays in March/April, after-service meetings would be held to discuss the pros and cons of changing the name. The meetings would be conducted with a moderator, allowing for everyone to speak their thoughts so as to gain a sense of the membership on the proposal. Dwight Golann has agreed to perform this function. Following the meetings, a report would be prepared for the Board on the results of the meetings, with a recommendation on how to proceed. If necessary, a third meeting would be conducted early in the fall to give the task force an opportunity to give final shape to its recommendation.

The congregation must vote on this proposed bylaw change at a congregational meeting before December 31, 2017, as mandated by the June 2016 vote.

Allan Hartman & Jacki Rohan  
Name Change Task Force

*Options for Amending FUSN's Health Benefits Policy, Discussion and Vote. Cathy, Greg Sullivan, Brian Burba.*

Greg Sullivan, representing the Search Committee for the Congregational Engagement Coordinator, discussed how the FUSN health policy change arose as an issue. In finalizing the offer of employment, the candidate requested health care coverage for his spouse. In FUSN's current health benefits policy, FUSN pays 100% of health coverage for the individual employee. FUSN is one of the few congregations to pay the full premium, so it is considered generous. To cover a spouse or partner, the employee pays the the difference between an individual premium and the premium for an Individual plus Spouse/Partner premium.

Currently, FUSN staff have opted only for the Individual plan, so the request for coverage of a family member is new. The request could be covered by increasing the new employee's salary to accommodate a payment for the additional cost of the spouse. Alternatively, FUSN could change its health benefits policy. Personnel Policy Committee recommended that FUSN should pursue a policy change because it's the right thing to do from a broad, community perspective rather than in response to a single request. In this case, a more family supportive benefit seemed consistent with FUSN's support for families.

Cathy provided and explained handouts outlining two proposed options for a policy change for discussion:

Option 1: FUSN would pay 100% of Individual, Individual plus Spouse/Partner or Individual plus Child(ren), and for a Family the employee would pay the difference between Individual and Family premiums.

Option 2: which is closer to industry standards of cost-sharing: FUSN would pay 100% of individual, but 80% of all other options.

Rowan pointed out that the UUA recommends a 50/50% split, so that 80% is still a very generous approach. Brian raised questions about the financial risk of an 80/20 split and suggested that the risk of 80% coverage is almost as high as 100% of the premium cost. After lengthy, thoughtful discussion, the Board decided that it was not ready to change the FUSN policy regarding Sam Foster's offer in particular, though they would like to continue to investigate options, taking financial risk into consideration, in the future. Regarding Sam's offer in particular, the Board discussed increasing his base salary by enough to cover the additional premium cost to cover both himself and his wife.

Greg thought that the UUA might approve the increase as pre-tax dollars and will investigate this with Karen Davis. The Board approved an increase in Sam's salary and asked to review a revised offer letter. (The UUA is able to provide pre-tax dollars and the Board approved a revised offer letter of December 17, which Sam has accepted.)

**Regular meeting adjourned, start of Executive Session**

**Executive Session adjourned: 10:02 PM**

