

First Religious Society Parish Board

Meeting Minutes

August 19, 2020

via Zoom

Present: Maureen Adams, Juliana Beauvais, Rebecca Brodish, Rev. Rebecca Bryan, Holly Cashman, Vernon Ellis, Judy Fayre, Kristen Fehlhaber, Tom Himmel, Rich Johnson, Michelle Kimball, Forrest Speck, Renee Wolf-Foster

Absent: Micah Donahue

Call to Order

The monthly meeting of the First Religious Society Parish Board was called to order by Rebecca Brodish, Parish Board Chair, at 7:02 pm on August 19, 2020.

Judy asked for clarification about how to carry out her role as official timekeeper.

Check-in/Reading

Opening reading and chalice lighting

Rev. Rebecca Bryan lit the chalice, followed by reading “When the Unimaginable Happened” by Anne Barker

Welcome

Parish Board chair Rebecca Brodish officially welcomed everyone to the meeting, including many at the social time before the meeting (6:30-7 pm)

- Rebecca shared results from the process checks – concerns included time for strategic thinking and timeliness. The social time before the meetings will take the place of the check-ins during the meeting. We will alternate more strategically-focused meetings with more business-oriented meetings. Judy will serve as timekeeper, and do her best to keep everyone on track for time.
- Rebecca mentioned that the process check forms have been more challenging with the remote meetings, but a new process will start with the next meeting. A link to a Google form will be shared in the last two minutes of the meeting.

Opening Issues/Strategic Thinking

Finalize Values Mission Ends (Core Team & Board)

- Last week the Executive Team met with the VME Core Team; suggestion that we really take the time to look at the VME to make sure that they really speak to where we are right now, including the suggestion to include “spirituality” in a more integral way

The following motion was made by Judy Fayre and seconded:

Motion: I move that the Parish Board approve the revised Values, Mission and Ends and that the said Values, Mission and Ends be placed on the Warrant for the Congregational Meeting on September 27, 2020. It was seconded.

Vote: The motion was passed. (I believed it was unanimously, although it was hard to see all the hands – some squares were darker than others)

Next steps for VME process

Rebecca Brodish explained that there are three steps:

- (1) the congregation vote will be Sept. 27.
- (2) Once the VME are voted in, the theological interpretation comes next. Sept. 19 board meeting will include Rev. Rebecca's presentation.
- (3) Parish Board retreat on Oct. 3 at 1 pm will include the "operational interpretation"; e.g. what does the end mean operationally? Create strategic priorities for each of the ends. (pp. 40-47 has examples from Unity Church, which is Laura Park's congregation)

Anti-Racism Work (Vern Ellis & Board)

- Vern Ellis explained the origin of the anti-racism core group following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 and a June meeting with almost 60 people from FRS. Vern described that three committees were created (Within, Among, Beyond) and that the core group was inspired by the VME, which really guided their work.
- Ann Haaser is the convener/facilitator of the core group and the contact person, and there is a listserv that will serve to inform people of the group's initiatives. There was no motion or vote, but board members praised the core group's work and noted how it exemplified living the VME.

Re-engaging the congregation (Core Team & Board)

- On behalf of the VME core team, Renee Wolf-Foster the suggestion that the members of the Parish Board divvy up the congregation and call everyone in the membership prior to the vote in order to establish connection and provide an opening to talk about the VME.
- People would be informed that we would like to call them, and the calls would be highly structured and forward looking. We would start by asking how they were, and we would follow with asking this question, suggested by Rev. Rebecca: "what difference do you think FRS can make in the lives of the members, community and friends?"
- Rev. Rebecca: pastoral associates would be willing to help; a post-card would be sent out in advance with the VME
- There was no formal vote, but board members agreed that this would be a good approach, that we would need to move quickly because the Sept. 27 vote is coming up quickly.

New Business

Conflict of Interest Forms

Rebecca Brodish introduced the Conflict of Interest form that is in the packet for this board meeting; new and continuing board members should fill out and return to Kristen.

Financial update

- Kristen Fehlhaber had no formal Finance Committee report to share because they are meeting tomorrow, but she did share that thanks to the recovery fund, we ended last year positive about \$8,000 even though we were down a bit in pledge fulfillment and we did not have some rental income and the spring fundraiser.
- Tom Himmel, Finance Committee chair, shared that next month the Finance Committee will meet before the Parish Board meeting. He added that we have an approved budget coming out of the annual meeting so we can track to that; this year will be a unique one, so they will be keeping a close watch on how we are doing; they will be putting a group together to work on “income opportunities”.
- Thanks to the Finance Committee for their excellent work last year during a very difficult year were expressed.

New Membership and Communications Manager position

- Rev. Rebecca Bryan shared that the position was re-named from a “director” to “manager” to better align with the UUA pay scale for the position.
- The 25 hours/week job is focused on membership, communications, and digital.
- They will even consider candidates who are not local for this year. The “membership engagement” aspect is crucial this year.
- Rev. Rebecca and Kristen will look through resumes, to narrow down, then they will be reaching out for help with interviews.

Reopening team update

Kristen Fehlhaber shared the update that the reopening team has been meeting; they sent out the survey that has now gone out twice (on Sunday, again today in the Steeple); they are hoping to do less, but to invest time and energy where there is demand/need; the team is meeting Monday or Tuesday to go over the survey results.

Parish Board opening

Rebecca Brodish confirmed that Jennifer Rebold has moved and stepped down from the PB. Options were discussed, including finding a replacement or experimenting with having a smaller board. It was decided that a youth member should be recruited to fill the vacancy.

Other New Business

Consent Agenda

- Minutes from June meetings

The following motion was made by Juliana Beauvais and seconded:

Motion: "I move that all items on the Consent Agenda be approved."

Vote: The motion passed unanimously

Process Check

The Google form is not yet available, so please contact Judy Fayre (jwrenfayre44@gmail.com) directly if you have any feedback. Questions traditionally included in the process check are: What was the most valuable tonight? What could have gone better?

Closing

Centering Moment (Rev. Rebecca Bryan)

Motion to Adjourn

Forrest Speck moved that we adjourn.

Motion was approved.

Adjournment

Rebecca Brodish adjourned the meeting at 8:48 pm.

Minutes submitted by Holly Cashman, Parish Clerk