

FRS Board Meeting – October 13, 2021

Call to Order/Opening

Holly Cashman called the meeting to order at 6:30.

Members Present

Reverend Rebecca Bryan, Vern Ellis, Lucy Litwin, Michelle Kimball, Tom Himmel, Tina Benik, Holly Cashman (chair), Tim Fountain (Treasurer), Jim Supple, Annie Maurer, Juliana Beauvais, Minnie Flanagan, Micah Donahue, Renee Wolf Foster, Kathy Desilets (clerk)

Check-in/Reading Chalice Lighting, Opening Words

Rev. Rebecca read a passage about the demands of church leadership. It asked us to consider our intentions toward good and to recognize that we do is important even when not perfect.

New Business

Minister's Report The report was included in materials sent in advance of the meeting.

Discussion: The board expressed support for the phone campaign to reach out to members as was done last year. The board will begin to recruit callers and identify questions. These calls should be relatively light- just looking at how people are feeling and whether they have unmet needs. Rev. Rebecca expressed her willingness to work with a small group to plan this campaign.

We need to consider the role of online members and define their stewardship role.

At this point, we need to look at number of people who are engaging with the church and how they engage. Also, how has the church changed...who are we now? If attendance is not the measure of success, what can we measure. Staff will work to count engagement. RR is interested in working on these questions of evaluation and engagement which will require original thinking with others.

Director of Church Operations (DCO) Hire

After many rounds of interviews and review of applications, we have found Rob Authier to be an attractive and candidate for the position of Director of Church Operations.

ACTION: Jim Supple made the following motion (to hire)

I move that we grant the authority to Reverend Rebecca to offer Rob Authier the position of Director of Church Operations at .8 FTE with an annual salary of \$61,320, with a start date of November 1, 2021, or whatever is agreed upon by Reverend Rebecca and Rob.

Tina Benik seconded, and the motion was passed with a unanimous vote.

Rev. Rebecca believes that Rob Authier is perfect for the job. He has had a long history of working with churches and will be able to work in partnership with Rev Rebecca. Both Jim and Tom interviewed Rob and were impressed as well. He is available to start Nov. 1. He lives locally and shares our beliefs and values.

This is a new position and the UUA does not have a specific definition for this role. To figure out compensation, etc. Leslie, Jim, and Tom as well as previous search committees looked at the roles the

person will fill which are listed in two separate roles in the UUA staff descriptions. All staff are at midpoint or above in the UU scale for staff.

Hours for the new position are based on history. The fiscal director will report to the minister, who is designated in the bylaws as providing executive leadership in the role of executive chief of staff.

The board is deeply grateful to the members of the search committee for their long and diligent work on this hire.

Ministerial Intern

David Livingstone will start this Sunday 10 hours a week – alternate Sundays and Wednesdays. He will work with a committee of church members and meet with Rev. Rebecca regularly. He is excited about this. Harvard will pay 75% of his salary.

Covenant Report

- Laura Park described the work of the Covenant Team. To work toward the development of a congregational covenant, the team suggests a process like that used for Vision, Mission and Ends (VME), i.e., the use of congregational conversations. An outline is being developed for these meetings and a current draft was included in the Board Packet. The Covenant Team has agreed that the **Affirmation of Faith** has served as a Covenant in the practice of the congregation. We say the Affirmation every week as part of our worship service, and it says that we are making a covenant. Many UU churches use this covenant. Conversations will be held in small groups, with the hope of engaging a significant proportion of the congregation. Facilitators will be trained to shepherd this process. We will consider how we use the Affirmation of Faith to guide overall operation and ask group members how the Affirmation speaks to them. We might ask people to consider how the words we say every week is tied to behavior.

Questions/ Discussion

- Can we include people of color?
- Could we use examples of situations that might arise? It was agreed that this will be helpful.
- What do we want to come out of the workshop? The idea is that this is a continuation of the VME project. We will bring the process back into life and focus. Move toward defining what actions are needed. We need to look at what the Covenant means to members of the congregation. Talk about what the covenant means to each of us. How do we hold each other accountable within the framework?
- Can also use Spirit Groups to center the Covenant.
- How to center the Covenant in the Life of the Church? People will want to wordsmith – this is not what needs to be done. We need clear goals and questions.
- We need to be able to speak up – and to deal with micro aggressions.
- Clear goals, concrete behavioral questions will help.

VME Update Continuing to work on current goals.

Rob Close applied for a position which is in the budget. Having him on the staff team will be useful both to strengthen communication and to fully incorporate his skills into the work of the staff and congregation.

Finance Report was provided in the Board Packet. Tim Fountain highlighted key points.

- Michele Doucette, recently hired bookkeeper, attended most recent meeting and was helpful.
- Currently closing out FY21. Working to track PPE \$ (originally awarded as loan, transferred to grant) a significant portion of which will be carried over to FY22. Also, the committee is looking to resolve unpaid pledges for 21.
- For FY22 ongoing work is going on to create a more standard fiscal report which shows actual funds and transfers.
- We are in a good position now to cover expenses, but this is partially due to special circumstances such as availability of PPE funds. Pre-paid pledges are about \$65,000 and that money is available but will not show as income for this year. Committee is working on accounting details for these funds.
- Micah and others continue to work to assure due diligence about leasing of Cell Towers. No expenses to date. Micah, Rev. Rebecca, Tom Himmel and Lark Madden (along with interested others) continue to review and advise.
- Tom is continuing to look at air purifiers to make the space safe. Plan is currently to buy 6 air purifiers which will improve air quality. We are also looking at long term actions at HVAC level.
- Special Campaign Fund has enough money to pay off the mortgage on the Lower Meeting House construction. Steeple repairs have been paid off. A final payment will retire the mortgage, leaving \$59,000 which can go into the Futures Fund.
- There is more unpaid pledge \$\$ in the Special Campaign. Contacts will be made to see if these pledges can be met.

ACTION: Lucy Litwin made a motion to use funds to retire the mortgage on the Lower Meeting House renovation.

As intended when we began the Special Capital Campaign, and in order to retire the debt on the Lower Meeting House renovation project, I move that the Parish Board approve a transfer from the Special Campaign Fund to the Lower Meeting House renovation mortgage account in an amount not to exceed \$125,000.

Juliana Beauvais seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Stewardship Report A week from tonight there will be a kick-off meeting for this year's Stewardship campaign. A social event is being planned for October 30. In January there will be a raffle with services and other prizes. The pledge campaign will be held as usual. There is lots of active work on stewardship and the current committee needs more people to help.

Open Issues/Strategic Thinking

Discussion of 2nd Minister – Postponed to a later meeting.

Governance Committee - There has been interest in a special meeting to deal with the by-law change related to the gender pronouns. The Governance Committee has decided that there needs to be more education about other bylaw changes. We want to assure that the By-Laws match our actual work. It was decided that the gender pronoun vote would best be postponed to a later date to allow more time for discussion and clarity.

Consent Agenda

Parish Board Minutes – June 9, 2021

Parish Board Minutes – September 8, 2021

Trustee Meeting Notes – September 15, 2021

Governance Meeting Notes – September 7, 2021

Finance Committee Meeting Notes – October 7, 2021

Community Human Services Meeting Notes – September 19, 2021

Goals and Priorities for FRS Parish Board 2021 – 2022 (Brief Summary)

Tentative date for the Annual Meeting is June 5th. Once the date is finalized the board will need to vote on this.

ACTION: Kathy Desilets moved that all items on the consent agenda be accepted. The motion was seconded by Jim Supple and passed unanimously.

Closing

Closing words Rev. Rebecca focused on humility, fun, and a balanced approach to our work with the board. She reminded us that the things that are most important to us, seldom appear on agendas.

ACTION: Motion to adjourn was made by Minnie Flanagan and seconded by Jim Supple. This was passed by a unanimous vote and @ 8:12 PM, the meeting was closed by unanimous consent and the chalice was extinguished.