

First Religious Society Parish Board Meeting – October 18, 2022

Call to Order: Tina Benik called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. She asked that board members sign and return the Conflict-of-Interest Form during this meeting if possible. The Conflict of Interest Policy was distributed to inform the completion of the form.

Attending: Rev. Rebecca Bryan, Rob Authier, **Tina Benik, Jim Supple, Kathy Desilets, Michelle Kimball, Holly Cashman, Renée Wolf Foster, Annie Maurer, Minnie Flanagan, Marissa Dewey, Tom Stites, Laurie Evans-Daly, Tom Himmel, Vern Ellis, Forrest Speck.** (Note: Names in **bold** are voting members.)

Opening Reading and Welcome: Rev. Rebecca lit the chalice, offered welcoming words focused on the value of community, and led a ritual to help the board members to define their own reasons for being part of this group.

New Business

Minister's Report:

Rev. Rebecca provided a written report. These topics arose out of questions and discussion.

- There is a current feeling of a strong, loving community at FRS.
- The name of the Swazey Orphan Fund has been changed to the Swazey Children's Fund which will allow broader uses for these funds.
- Discussion of shortage of UU Ministers which may make it hard to find interns and could also affect our plans to seek a second minister.
- Discussion of changes in Daily News Editor. Two suggestions to impact coverage were: congregants could write letters to the editor, and it might be possible to have a few congregants meet with folks at the paper or the new editor just to provide background.

Financial Report:

Rob Authier submitted a written report including an update on the Operating Budget. Renée Wolf Foster and Rob reported.

- Work is still in process to assure that income and expenses are reported in the current year. Betsy Latham is working with staff and the Finance Committee on this.
- We are ahead of budget on prior year pledges. Finance folk are working to define a policy on how these funds should be allocated – to the year they are received or to the year they were pledged for.
- Work is ongoing on securing another steeple tenant. Repairs and maintenance are on schedule.
- A meeting is planned with the city to see what help, if any, we can get with sidewalk repairs, etc.
- Board action was needed for a fund transfer to correctly reflect payment from the Futures Fund of a consulting fee that currently appears as an obligation in the CY22 operating budget.

Action: Renée Wolf Foster moved *that the Parish Board approve the transfer of \$9,305 from the Futures Fund, currently held in the Special Campaign account, to the Operating account with an effective date no later than June 30, 2022, to cover the payment to Unity Consulting for services on the FRS Mission/Vision project.*

Tom Himmel seconded the motion which was passed without objection.

Facilities Task Force Charge:

The Facilities Task Force asked that the board add language to its charge more fully defining its function.

Action: A motion was made by Jim Supple and seconded by Vern Ellis to add this language to the charge accepted in September. *Additionally, the Task Force will establish and maintain a financial overview, including a schedule, of all projected expenses related to the maintenance **and proposals for development of Church buildings and property.** The Task Force will regularly report these projections to the Parish Board and the Finance Committee for long-term planning for needed financial resources.*

The motion passed without objection.

Warrant Approval for Parish Hall Use:

Tom Himmel Tina Benik, and Rev. Rebecca reported that congregational approval is needed to extend the use of the Parish Hall by the Mirzayee Family. This will require holding a congregational meeting.

Action: Minnie Flanagan offered the following motion. *The Parish Board hereby authorizes the issuance of a notice for a Special Meeting of FRS to be held on December 4th for the following purpose: To submit a vote to the congregation to extend the use of the Parish Hall as housing for the Mirzayee Family through June 30, 2024.*

The motion was seconded by Annie Maurer and passed without objection.

December 4 planning/November Justice Sunday:

Rev Rebecca, Tina Benik, Tom Himmel, and Annie Maurer discussed plans to assure that the congregation is fully prepared for the vote on 12/4. The warrant will be sent out over two weeks ahead of the meeting, the meeting will be announced at worship, and Justice Sunday on November 13 will focus on the housing situation for the Mirzayee family and steps that are being taken to find and secure appropriate permanent housing.

Charge to Teams to Work on Priority Goals:

Tina Benik, Jim Supple, Rev. Rebecca, and Rob Authier led a discussion of the need to charge and initiate the work of teams to work on the goals that the board set for this church year and beyond.

The Teams are:

1. Covenant of Right Relations (Board Team)
2. PB Congregational Relations (Board Team)
3. Support of Shared Ministry (Board Team)

4. Communications Strategy (Congregational Team)
5. 300th Anniversary (Congregational Team)
6. Governance Structure Review (Congregational Team)
7. Operationalize VME (Board Team – Existing Group)
8. Vote to Become an Anti-Racist Congregation (Existing Congregational Team)

The presenters offered a document laying out proposed charges to each team. They explained that any team could have both participants from the congregation and board members, but those identified as Board Teams are the direct responsibility of the Board.

All board members were asked to respond in the Process Check Survey to indicate for which team(s) they are willing to be lead conveners. Also, members choosing teams should comment on the feasibility of deadlines.

Closing

Closing words: Rev. Rebecca reminded the group that we need to all find time to slow down and enjoy life, that we all need to be loved, thanked, and cared for.

The chalice was extinguished, and the meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

Notes prepared and respectfully submitted by Kathy Desilets, Parish Clerk