



First Unitarian Society of Westchester

Minutes of the Board of Trustees April 10, 2018

Time: 7PM- 9PM

Location: FUSW

In Attendance:

Sue McAnanama, President
Greg Shunick, Vice President
Amy Jo Neill, Treasurer
Jane Lawrence, Secretary
Irene Jong
Rob Politzer
Bill Reynolds
Rev. Peggy Clarke
Tracy Breneman, RE Director
Ross Crolius, Committee on Ministry

Chalice Lighting – Sue lit the Chalice at 7:07 pm in memory of William McEvoy who attended our last Board Meeting.

MOTIONS PASSED:

- A motion to accept the FUSW Board Meeting Minutes from 3/13/18 was made by Greg and seconded by Rob. Motion passed unanimously. A question was raised whether we can tell on the website how many are viewing the minutes there.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Jane will look into whether we can determine how many FUSW “views” there have been of Board meetings minutes on the Weebly website.
- Ross and the Committee on Ministry hold a discussion with the Nominating Committee about how they are functioning.
- Amy Jo will post in The Scoop a report from the Treasurer that our current financial situation is in the black. We will recommend to the new Board and Treasurer that a quarterly Treasurer’s report become a regular feature in The Scoop.
- Sue Mc will draft and circulate to BMOWs suggested words to say from the pulpit regarding the Pledge Drive and that pledging sustains the operating budget, not what’s collected during the offertory.
- Peggy will send the new recommendations from the UUA HR subcommittee on staff relations to our HR Committee (Ron K. and Sarah C.)
- Barbara will be asked to research path-like memorial stones that can be engraved and get back to the Board.
- The new treasurer will do quarterly reports to the board which will be posted on the member’s only section of FUSW’s website.
- The COM is asked to develop ways to help lessen financial anxiety among congregants.
- Peggy will ask Barbara to include FUSW’s mission statement on the back page of the Order of Service.
- Jane is to get an update from the Town of Greenburgh regarding their drainage and flood mitigation efforts in our area.
- Rob is to write-up a blurb for The Scoop on the New Revenue Streams working group and send it to Pam.
- Greg will review last year’s Annual Report and communicate with committee heads regarding preparing summaries for the Annual Report. The report needs to be distributed two weeks prior to the Annual meeting. Therefore, the committee head need to be notified ASAP and their reports need to be in by May 11th

ON-GOING BUSINESS:

- Next Board Meeting Date: May 8, 2018 (2nd Sunday of the month)
- Minister & DRE Monthly Reports
 - Peggy’s hours were detailed in her monthly report and came out of a discussion concerning her letter of agreement.
 - A discussion took place regarding the Nominating Committee. They have not consulted or reviewed with Peggy candidates being considered for several key volunteer roles at FUSW. This has been a standard

practice in past years. The President of the congregation is a de facto member of the Nominating Committee.

- Peggy and Rev. Michael Tino (from the Mt. Kisco UU's) are planning to do a series of shared sermons and switch pulpits.
- Tracy reviewed plans for a 4/20/18 youth group sleep-in.
- Treasurer & Financial Report
 - Amy Jo reported that we are on track with expenditures and collecting pledges for FY 2017-2018 and that there are no red flags. The last quarter's expense and collected pledge levels will be key.
 - The third quarter pledge statement was sent out to members with Jen Rohr's help.
 - We are currently about \$1,000 in the black. A discussion was held surrounding this year's expenditures. Not having a P/T office administrator for a few months, and then hiring Pam, Rita and Barbara on a P/T basis saved money. If this hadn't been done, we'd be approximately \$12,000 in the red at this point.
 - A discussion continued regarding anxiety expressed by members in meetings concerning the budget. Yet, this is the third year in a row that we have collected more funds than anticipated in a deficit budget. Amy Jo predicts we will be \$1,000-\$3,000 in the black at the end of this FY. The Board needs to announce to the congregation that we are operating with a deficit budget but we have never had to touch our reserves.
 - Bill Reynolds will monitor our insurance next year and make recommendations. The Finance Committee is exploring whether to continue carrying flood insurance.
 - The UUA's new annual contribution formula was briefly reviewed which is 6.75% of our budget. A question was raised regarding whether the percentage gets applied to our projected budget or our actual budget (if we spend less).
- Compensation Team Follow-Up
 - The team consists of Peggy, Sue, Amy Jo, Susan G. and Ron K.
 - \$76,000 is the amount we currently have available to allot to Peggy's compensation package and is seen as the low end of the compensation range. Priority is being given to Peggy's health insurance premiums at the UUA leadership level of 80% of employee premium and 50% of dependent premium. Funding health insurance premiums at this level ends up reducing professional expenses, which is a percentage of housing and salary.
 - The UUA HR subcommittee on staff relations is coming out with new recommendations.
- Report from Committee on Ministry
 - Ross spoke to the COM's report to the Board, which Betty G. compiled and was sent to the Board in advance of this meeting. It is an outline of how things appear with the congregation. The COM takes overview on how we – all of our ministries - are fulfilling our mission.
 - The COM currently consists of Ross, Betty, Carol and Jim. Ross will be rotating off the committee.
 - Both issues on which progress was made and areas where perhaps more could have been done were touched on. Ross expressed that the COM doesn't feel it has the support from congregation and the Board. Missed opportunities for the COM to get involved at FUSW were reviewed. The Board and COM need to both be mindful of this going forward into next year.
- Grounds/Driveway – Nancy E. has raised paving our driveway. Possible resurfacing of some kind needs to address drainage, plowing, etc. Paving or adding gravel needs to go through the FUSW budget process. The question of whether the Town of Greenburgh would subsidize a pervious pavement was raised. The Town of Greenburgh's past flood mitigation promises were reviewed.
- Nominating Committee Report – the Committee will be providing a list to Sue in coming days. (This was subsequently done.)
- *EZ PLEDGE DRIVE – Follow-Up
 - 49 of 91 households have pledged. We are a little under where we were last year. There needs to be a pledge push from the pulpit during the next three Sundays. Emphasis needs to be made that pledging sustains the operating budget, not what's collected during the offertory, and that we can't plan our budget without everyone making a pledge. It's also important that the congregation realize that board members don't know if or what congregants pledge. Pledges can even be made with paper and pencil, not necessarily by email response.
 - Barbara has been a great help with the current pledge drive. Approximately 50% have responded so far, which is not that different from this point last year in the pledge drive. It appears we are on track in terms of money pledged and timing. On 4/4/18 a second emailing was sent to about 15 households that were in addition to the 90 households from last year.
 - Amy Jo and Sue will be making phone calls the week of April 23rd.
- Cell Phone Tower – Update and Plans
 - Greg and Sue met with representative from Crown Castle on site here. Crown Castle is interested. Several points were reviewed including the gravel road which will go to the tower from the street, that the tower will be 125' tall or roughly three times the height of trees on our property, that the 70'x70' area is not necessarily a square, that it will consist also of a shed and fence, etc.

- Marin has reached out and researched other cell towers. She has also looked into consultants who would serve as our representatives in negotiating with Crown Castle. Consultant reps work on a percentage basis.
- Different measures to eliminate electromagnetic radiation exist and were briefly discussed.
- Bidding with other cell phone tower companies was considered.
- A vote regarding approving the cell tower idea will have to be voted on at the coming annual meeting.
- Memorial for William McEvoy - William's wife Carrie very much wants to keep a connection with FUSW. Several ideas were discussed. The simple idea of a stone for William, along with rectangular engraved stones that FUSW members can add to the Memorial Garden in memory of loved ones was developed. Costs for such path-like stones are not high (one estimate on-line was \$37.50 per stone). Such stones were discussed as a FUSW fund raising effort too and needs to have a kick-off to launch this effort. A committee will be formed to gather information.
- Budget Preparations – Ways to involve the congregation in the budget preparation process and better ways to communicate about finances to the congregation was explored. We want to lessen anxiety and avoid doomsday reactions among members about our finances.
 - Have a budget hearing with the congregation to help understand the process, not just a discussion at annual meeting. Date to be held: 5/20/18 (3 weeks before the annual meeting).
 - Have quarterly treasurer reports to the board that are also posted on the member's only section of the FUSW website.
 - Budgetary concerns have also led to discussions among congregants of going to a part-time or getting rid of the minister.
 - The COM can be helpful in developing ways of lessening anxiety about finances.
 - There are big decisions facing the congregation, such as the cell tower, etc. It was discussed that a covenant would be helpful so as to encourage a civilized conversation. Ross indicated that a covenant would have been helpful in terms of helping COM achieve their goals.
 - Our mission statement should be prominent and Peggy added the mission statement to the first page of our website.
- Financial reports should be listed on the member's only section of our website – as of May 2018
- Preparing for Annual Meeting 6/3/18 - Congregants need to receive the Annual Report two weeks before the Annual Meeting. Greg has been sent last year's Annual report and a list of committees that will need to prepare a write-up for the Annual Report.
- Working Group Report
 - Rob reported on new revenue streams efforts. He feels the discussions are stymied. There needs to be more communication with the congregation on this effort.
 - Publicity/Visibility In Community – was not discussed
- Miscellaneous
 - A brief discussion took place on how the Board can continue to address the Listening Conversations Committee concerns through transparency and communication.

The meeting concluded at 9:02 pm

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Upcoming Calendar:

April 13th – Medea Benjamin talk on Iran
 April 14th – Sound of Music Fun(d)raiser
 April 15th – Stone Soup lunch at FUSW
 April 22nd – Earth Day Service at White Plains
 April 24th Exec. Team meeting
 April 28th – Poker Night Fun(d)raiser
May 8th Board of Trustees meeting
 May 22nd Exec. Team meeting
June 3rd Annual Meeting
 Closing Words: extinguish chalice

MISSION:

*We are a liberal religious congregation, shaping the world in our image of love;
 Deepening Spirituality, Nurturing Community, Advancing Justice*