



# First Unitarian Society of Westchester

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## Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees Tuesday, August 8, 2017

The meeting came to order at approximately 7:05 pm.

### **In Attendance:**

Sue McAnanama, President  
Greg Shunick, Vice President  
Jane Lawrence, Secretary (prepared these minutes)  
Rob Politzer, Trustee  
Bill Reynolds, Trustee  
Tracy Breneman, DRE  
Amy Jo Neill, Treasurer (by phone)

### **Absent:**

Irene Jong, Trustee  
Rev. Peggy Clarke

### **Chalice Lighting:**

We read together the FUSW Mission Statement:

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

Sue shared that her serving as FUSW Board President is her spiritual mission and she highly recommended the book Serving with Grace about living our values.

**Check-in** - Sue lead the check-in. All in attendance spoke.

### **Minutes of Prior Meeting**

- Thanks were extended to Greg who prepared the 7/11/17 Board Minutes. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Rob and seconded by Bill. All approved.
- Jane will include the May, June and July Board meeting minutes in the office binder. Tracy will post on the FUSW website a notice that Board minutes can now be read there by using a security password which can be obtained from the Minister and Board, COM and staff members. (The password is. 25OJA). Sue will also put a similar notice in the Society Scoop about Board minutes being accessible on-line with password protection.

### **Minister's Report**

There was no Minister's report because Peggy is on Study Leave. However, the Board held a brief discussion regarding the new Ministerial Intern who will start in September. Peggy will be supervising William but the Board is interested in having input regarding the position and his responsibilities. It was noted that we need to re-establish the Intern Committee and Sue indicated that she will discuss this with Peggy. It was recommended that Peggy join the next Executive Committee meeting to continue the intern discussion. Date to be determined. The board also decided to place a review of the Ministerial Intern's activities on the Tuesday, 9/12/17 Board Meeting Agenda.

### **DRE**

- Tracy discussed her RE 2017-2018 Planning Report which she emailed to Board members prior to tonight's meeting including her study leave 8/13-8/17 RE Week retreat in Ocean Grove, NJ where she will participate in two learning modules on Youth Ministry and Youth and Family Ministry.
- Reference was made to the article she emailed to Board members on "The Death of Sunday School and the Future of Faith Formation", by Kimberly Sweeney. The article, which discusses the decline in Sunday school attendance, will also be discussed at the retreat. Tracy has arranged for Kim Sweeney to attend an October 2017 RE Sunday.
- A discussion followed regarding changes in our RE program that may be necessary such as shifting the focus of RE in the future to include the entire family- a Family Ministry. A Family Ministry approach requires additional volunteers, which are hard to come by these days. It was also noted that a strong youth ministry is key. (*Tracy: please enhance this section, if you wish.*) The concept of Family Ministry has been talked about among FUSW's RE committee. It

was generally agreed that it is important not to over react and throw out good aspects of our existing RE program while looking into new concepts.

- Lack of adult RE was brought up by those proposing the focus groups. Ideas were suggested by Board members such as Building Your Own Theology workshops, seminars on sermon writing, etc. lead by Peggy. A vibrant adult RE program is on our “wish list”.
- Tracy reported that she met with Svetlana to review room usage and Barvinok’s cleaning up of some classrooms before RE begins in September.

### **Treasurer Report**

- Amy Jo will send out a financial report after the meeting. \$23,000-26,000 have been collected in advance pledges for start of 2017-2018 FY. A few thousand dollars were collected from people who were completing pledges from last FY. Collection for the 2016-2017 FY budget is now 100% complete but not all were able to give or give as much.
- The Finance Committee did not endorse this year or last year’s deficit budget. Amy Jo has recommended to the Finance Committee that they keep a close eye on finances. The Board agreed to do the same. It was noted that the budget deficit and declining membership are also concerns of the Focus Groups Proposal
- A discussion followed about the need to plan this year and beyond what can we expect going forward in terms of our operating budget. It was noted that we may need to invest in our building structure and programs even though we have a deficit budget. For example, if we want more families to attend/participate in RE, we will need to invest in it. (The RE budget has been cut twice in as many years.) It was recognized that we will need to carefully identify what and where those areas are for “investment” and to think creatively about it. We are a spiritual community that is mission oriented and driven by the relationship members have to this place. We want members to feel excited about our programs and want to pledge to support them.
- Concerns were aired regarding the structure of the meeting room and the hope to be able to build a new one with enhanced features in the not too distant future.

### **Business**

- BMOW: Greg on 8/20/17 and Bill on 8/27/17
- Progress regarding the three-part administrative position was discussed. No one has been found for the handyman job but Svetlana may know of someone. Sue spoke to our cleaning service about perhaps adding more to Juana and Edgar’s job responsibilities in connection with the handyman position. We have not been publically advertising for the handyman and the FUSW’s Personnel Committee has not been involved yet. We need to place the ad in the Scoop again. It was recognized that we will also need someone to do a monthly review of the building. Rob will write up a job description so the position can be discussed with our cleaning service and others. Peggy knows of someone to do the Scoop. Rita is on board and doing a great job. Rita will submit her hours to Amy Jo and Rita will prepare her check, as done in the past.
- What is procedure if fire alarm goes off? Who gets contacted? This item needs to be researched.
- Calls to FUSW are being screened by Sue. Our current phone message directs the caller to not leave a message but to call Peggy’s phone number instead.
- We did not get to discuss the Time and Talent Survey next steps. (Added as a September agenda item.)
- Master Calendar – Amy Jo reported that good progress has been made. This is also an agenda item for September.
  - The Auction will be on calendar and perhaps expanded. (Marin will coordinate the Auction again.)
  - A Rock & Soul Dance Party is planned for Saturday December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 which will be open to the public. Exact date is forthcoming.
  - Program Groups & Themes will be listed. It was reported that April and Betsy Kates have divided congregation into new program group compositions for the fall.
  - Tracy to put on the calendar the 9/10/17 Board Proposal Meeting at 1 pm in rooms 1 & 3.

### **The Focus Groups**

A wide ranging discussion took place regarding the Focus Group proposal. Sue recommended that all Board members read over the proposal again.

- A meeting with the FUSW members who have proposed self-assessment focus groups will take place at 1 pm after the Ingathering Service on Sunday, 9/10/17. It will be facilitated by Betty Gilmore. Sue will share with Betty tonight’s discussion and ask Betty to come up with an agenda. The idea of reading the FUSW Mission Statement at the start of the meeting was suggested to frame our common interests and goals.
- The discussion included the importance of deep listening to the issues being raised by the proposal group. However, the Board wants to convey that it too has been studying and confronting these issues on different fronts and is looking into trying different strategies. Again, the importance of not throwing the baby out with the bathwater was discussed. There was also acknowledgement that we don’t just need to tweak what we have; we will need to look out of the box. Ideas from the focus groups and the Board will be incorporated into a positive plan going forward.
- Perhaps Peggy can speak about her sabbatical research and findings during this meeting also.
- Tracy will scan and email to all Board members the 2005 FUSW Long Range Planning brochure for historical context.

- Tracy will not be at the 9/10/17 meeting.
- The Board will not be meeting again before the 9/10/17 meeting but will have an Executive Committee meeting. Date to be determined.

### Finance

- Leaving a Legacy - Sue reported that the Finance committee wants all Board members to fill out the Planned Giving form, which she handed out. Completed forms should be put in the Finance Committee mailbox. 35 people have filled out the form so far. There are both long and short term benefits: it helps to fund the future but a UUA matching program will provide ten cents on the dollar to FUSW now for future legacy gifts made.
- Kensico Cemetery plot – Whether to sell the plot or not was not discussed. (Added as a September agenda item.)
- Can There Be an Alternative To the Pledge Drive – can we make it obsolete? Jane has the book on this topic which recommends that 75% should be raised from no pledge sources. Jane is to pass book along to other Board members.

### Facilities

- To be discussed more at the next Executive Committee.
- Jane is to contact the Town of Greenburgh to see if they can pave the pothole at the entrance to our parking lot.
- A discussion of the piano key mishap took place. It had been put in the administrator's mail box by mistake.
- Phone system replacement was briefly discussed. There will be only a one line phone and an upgraded Wify.
- Room 3 Key. A copy is to be given to Sue

**Closing words** – Bill Reynolds read closing words.

**Sue extinguished the Chalice at 9:05 pm.**

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### ACTION ITEMS:

1. Jane will include the May, June and July Board meeting minutes in the office Board Minutes binder.
2. Tracy will post on the FUSW website a notice that Board minutes can now be read there by using a security password which can be obtained from the Minister and Board, COM and staff members.
3. Sue will also put a similar notice in the Society Scoop about Board minutes being accessible on-line with password protection
4. It was recommended that Peggy join the next Executive Committee meeting to continue the discussion surrounding the ministerial intern. Date to be determined.
5. Amy Jo will send out a financial report after the meeting
6. We need to place the ad in the Scoop again for the handyman position
7. Rob is to write up a job description for the handyman position
8. Jane is to contact the Town of Greenburgh to see if they can pave the pothole at the entrance to our parking lot.
9. Tracy will scan and email to all Board members the 2005 FUSW Long Range Planning brochure for historical contact
10. Board members are asked to re-read the Proposal
11. Sue with share with Betty tonight's discussion about meeting with the Proposal group on 9/10 and ask Betty to come up with an agenda.
12. Board members are to complete the Planned Giving Questionnaire and leave in the Finance Committee mailbox
13. Who is notified when the alarm goes off? What is the protocol?
14. Jane to pass along the book on ending pledge drives
15. Sue needs to be given a key to room 3.
16. Tracy to put on Master calendar the 9/10/17 Board Proposal Follow-up Meeting at 1 pm in rooms 1 & 3
17. Sue to discuss with Peggy about re-establishing an Intern Committee.

### SEPTEMBER AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Discussion of Ministerial Intern position and an Intern Committee
2. Time and Talent Survey follow-up
3. Master Calendar
4. Kensico Cemetery Plot – to sell or not?
5. Facilities Items, i.e. Phones – is there more to discuss about this?

### Upcoming Calendar:

Tuesday, Sept 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
 Tuesday, Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
 Tuesday, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
 Tuesday, Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017