

2 parishioners plus Kristin Haddad, Toby Smith Ropeik, Zach Rowe

Kristin Introduction

Review current policy

- 7.5% is only part of what First Parish gives for social action causes
- Example: FP gave more than \$147K in 2015, not counting goods gathered
- 7.5% currently covers Zach's salary \$32,148 plus \$40K for grants
- SAC also has reserve fund (Evan Seitz salary and expenses will come from this)
- SAC plans to pilot alternative fundraising methods this year

Three likely outcomes to 7.5% consideration:

1. Formalize what we are doing now into policy
2. Use alternative SAC funding mechanism(s)
3. Keep 7.5% exclusively for external causes, move Zach salary into regular budget, make budgetary adjustments or cuts to accommodate change

Discussion

Preference stated for #2 option - alternate funding - instead we add a SAC line item into budget the way both RE or music have.

It's odd putting part of 7.5% into salaries. Salary needs to be part of operating budget.

We should be doing more social action, either through more services or money. Not sure if 7.5% should be kept the way it is.

There are 3 pillars of church (RE, music, social action). Generally, music and RE get about 10% of budget, including salaries. But SA now gets only 7.5%.

We should bring all of SAC under the regular budget - pay Zach's salary - **AND** establish line item for supporting activities

Currently there are no funds available to support parishioners' SA activities. Only salary and grants now covered.

We need policy language that sets targets for the portion covering salaries and the portion going to worthy causes.

Within 7.5% - we should divide it up into segments that cover both ongoing needs and some funds to hold for emergencies

Seems like most people agree that Zach's salary should be part of regular HR budget and 2018 would be the transition year for doing that. There is less certainty around whether we want to give us remaining 7.5% in favor of other funding mechanisms.

SAC wants to find causes that cause our "hearts to swell" for share the plate, whereas some of current grant recipients don't fit into that category.

Zach reviewed Harrisburg model of "share the plate." They were giving 3-5K a month to organizations. Pledge money did not decrease.

Last year's church budget ended with 60K surplus.

Years ago, surpluses were added to cash reserves. But they kept accumulating. Standing Committee then decided to use some of that money to seed salary for Pastoral Care Minister and to pay off remaining capital campaign loan from Trustees. A small amount was also used to fill a small gap needed to install solar panels.

We also now have a line of credit of 100K from Trustees for emergencies.

Toby reviews history of SAC coordinator salary.

- Originally intended to be a position with fewer hours and temporary funded from 7.5% until position could be folded into regular budget.
- Folding in only happened for a few years.

- The result is messy from a governance standpoint - to have a staff member hired by a segment of the congregation (SAC Board). Who hires for that position? Who does that person report to?
- Standing Committee goal in this year's 7.5% review is to clean up messiness.
- If full congregation wants a SAC staff member, we probably need to move that position into regular budget and perhaps reduce 7.5% to fund it.

Kristin asks - Why is 7.5% important?

What we need is a smaller portion for grants but, in addition, build relationships with organizations and give those larger amounts of money.

I hate the 7.5% - because it doesn't move the congregation. It builds a wall.

I see 7.5% as a baseline, we should be doing more. One of my issues at First Parish in social action is that too many of our efforts are self-serving. Like showing a movie or reading a book. While education is important to understanding causes, it needs to be a starting point. That alone is NOT social action.

I wonder if we are a leader in SA in the UUA? We need to do social action, though maybe not funded through 7.5%.

Yes, we need to be giving. First Parish tends to give money. But I want us to go places and do things. We need to be in relationship with people. Like doing a targeted food drive - 50 bag challenge.

We want a coordinator who is paid in the normal way, like the rest of the staff. Rest should go to a grant process.

If grant process can't or doesn't generate interest from congregation (i.e. inability to find replacement to administer the program), then it may no longer be what congregation wants. It may be time to let it go.

All-congregation survey is coming about THE YEAR FOR REFLECTION AND VISIONING which will include a section on the 7.5%.

Standing Committee plans to use info from discussions and survey to put forward a recommendation that reflects "the will of the congregation." Assuming congregation is ready, final decision will be made by congregation at Annual Meeting 2018.

It would be helpful to have a pro and con sheet put together on 7.5%. With history included.

If we only do share the plate, that gives you 11 shots (months) which might not cover those organizations accustomed to getting grants. A hybrid approach to provide for them might be better.

The church is in a good place financially. We maintain a 10% budget reserve in cash. We have a line of credit from Trustees. There is money to be had. We raised almost 20K in one week for Hurricane Harvey. We don't need to be afraid that there won't be funds to support emergencies.

7.5% is an empty ritual. Sharing the Plate is another way to ritualize SA giving. One that may be more meaningful.