



FIRST PARISH IN CONCORD FINANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes, March 12, 2015

The meeting was called to order shortly after 7:30 PM in the Emerson Room.

Present	Tom Wilson, Howard Dana, Fifi Ball, Patty Popov, Gib Metcalf, Fred Van Deusen and Carol Smith
Discussions	<p>We covered several items in this agenda:</p> <p>Tom asked Howard and Gib about their prior experiences with Finance Committees. Howard's church in Harrisburg had a Finance Committee that functioned much like Fifi and her team does – administering pledges, managing the budget, making cash deposits. The Office Manager paid the bills. Gib's experience in Stow was somewhat similar. The committee constructed the budget, ran the budget meetings with the congregation and took the lead on longer term projects. The Treasurer took care of writing the checks and managing the books.</p> <p>Tom then asked Howard what he wanted from the Finance Committee and how he sees its role. Foremost, Howard wants to make sure the work of the Committee doesn't ask more of staff, since they are already overextended. The capacity for change is not high, and he would like to see us be slow, contained, deliberate, and fruitful (no more than 1-2 changes per year). There was some discussion about how Finance Committee work has impacted Fifi to date. The Committee has discussed how some additional analysis (e.g., bar charts, projections) might be added to the monthly reporting, but this has not been implemented given other demands on Fifi's time. It was noted that Fifi's work on the fall budget presentations to the congregation was reduced relative to last year because of the work done by the Committee. The Tasks taken on by the Committee for the last few meetings are as follows: 1) address cash counting (an audit concern), 2) improve the financials web page, and 3) prepare for budget presentations in the spring. And none of these should put additional work on the staff.</p> <p>We had a general discussion about how the Finance Committee can facilitate communications around the budget process and in communicating our financial needs to the congregation, particularly in this pledging season (e.g., keeping Marion is dependent on 7% increase in pledges). Howard would like to make financial issues in the church more transparent and for the Finance Committee to be cheerleaders for the campaign. Toward that end we talked about communications relative to pastoral care. It may not be widely known how much time pastoral care requires in a congregation this size. Marion could easily fill full-time hours meeting the need and Howard is still doing several hours a week of pastoral care.</p> <p>We talked some about the work that the pledge campaign committee is already doing and how to get the message out about the need. Howard believes that fundraising is the most pressing issue the church has at the moment. There are a few hundred households that pledge well below \$1,000 and Howard floated the idea of presenting norms around a typical starting pledge (e.g., two-earner households usually pledge at least \$1,000). Beyond that, this congregation has median pledge of \$1K or less, which is very low so we'd like to get the median to</p>



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	<p>\$1,500 or \$2,000. Ideas: have a Finance Committee member bring the value proposition to new member orientation sessions.</p> <p>We have \$530K pledged so far, slightly better than at this point in the campaign last year. Howard asked members of the Finance Committee to go to church meetings that are being held in the next few weeks to make the case for pledging. There is a list of 12 – 15 events that Fin Com members could attend for 10-15 mins or so, discuss where the \$\$ comes from and where it goes, and high-low-med budget. Tom will create a page of talking points to support the meetings and Carol will</p> <p>Howard’s suggestion for framing goals for the Committee: choose one or two concrete activities annually that are visible to the community, and do them well. Our accomplishments to date: educating and communicating about the budget in the fall, and working on the website. Future plans: address cash issue for the audit, communicating to the congregation the Finance Committee’s perspective on the importance of the pledge campaign. Including things like: cost to the church per household (\$2,000), initial pledging norm of \$1,000 per household going forward, need for pastoral care and for maintaining Marion’s funding. Fred pulled some nice language from a pamphlet from the Belmont UU church.</p> <p>Regarding our role in the budget: Howard will present the budget to the Standing Committee in May, with community meetings to follow in late May/ early June. There was some discussion about our role in managing expectations about the budget and whether we should reach out to the community to get input, but the consensus seemed to be that at this stage of the budget there aren’t many decisions to be made so no communications would be required of the Committee.</p> <p>Updates:</p> <p><u>Cash Counting:</u> Patty and Fred got together with Fifi and Peg. They came up with a plan to get a volunteer to come in on Tuesday morning (approx. 9 to 10am) to come in and count the money with Peg. The plan is to get a rotation of 3 or 4 volunteers. Patty and Fred have been reaching out to get those volunteers.</p> <p><u>Website:</u> Limited progress this month. Fifi moved forward to add a new abridged report to the roster of reports that are usually uploaded. Last month we’d talked about creating this new summary report which involves uploading a PDF of a spreadsheet she usually completes.</p>
Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance column in the monthly report (‘a chart a month’)
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance Committee will send a member to some committee meetings on Jane Barnes’ list during the next several weeks to talk about the campaign. • Tom will draft a message to the community, pass along to us for review and editing by end of the week, for distribution early next week. This piece will also be put into the monthly Meeting House News as our first column. • Fifi will send copies of financial policies to the committee.
Next Meeting	<p>Thursday, April 9 at 7:30 PM. Carol will do opening reading.</p> <p>Agenda item we didn’t complete: Financial Policies.</p>



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The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Smith