

**First Parish Church in Concord
Minutes of the Annual Meeting
June 9, 2019 11:30am**

The meeting was called to order at 11:35 AM by Moderator Kristin Moore. Kristin was sworn in as Moderator by Peter Nobile, serving as Clerk. Rev. Howard Dana opened the meeting with a prayer.

Article I: To hear and act upon the reports of the Senior Minister, the Standing Committee, the Trustees of Parish Donations, and other committee reports.

Upon motion duly made Dave Elwood, Chair of the Standing Committee (SC), and seconded, it was

VOTED: to hear and act upon the reports of the Senior Minister, the Standing Committee, the Trustees of Parish Donations, and other committee reports

Senior Minister report: The report was distributed in the Annual Meeting handout, which is available at the Church Office. Congregants thanked Rev. Howard Dana for his leadership. Jim Snyder-Grant noted that no people of color applied for the position of Pastoral Care Minister, and Howard reported that while there was a great deal of interest in the position, New England is seen as very rocky ground among people of color.

Standing Committee report: Dave Elwood reported on follow through by four Time for Action working groups that were an outgrowth of the Year for Reflection and Visioning. Dave summarized our good financial state, noting that First Parish (FP) underwent a thorough financial review and that while we are in good shape some work is still to be done to improve our internal financial processes. Standing Committee policy efforts included continuing work on signs and banners, membership definition, and the development of a charter for the Nominating Committee. The Governance and Ministerial Support subcommittees are active and working with Howard and staff members on several issues. First Parish hosted the ordination of Mark Richards, and prepared traveling and remote delegates to the 2018 UUA General Assembly. David Ropeik and Regina Corrado asked clarifying questions about banners and signs, especially processes for approval and how decisions can/should be made on behalf of the congregation, especially if the decision is time sensitive.

Trustees of Parish Donations report: Philip vanderWilden reviewed the structure and meeting schedule of this group, which oversees our investment fund and various property and other financial matters. Phillip described a review of property management and ongoing maintenance issues. The Trustees will be contributing approximately \$138,000 total to the Church budget this fiscal year. The current value of our legacy fund, which continues to follow guidelines for socially responsible investing, is approximately \$3.247 million. The Planned Giving Committee reports 16 new participants this year. Roselyn Romberg and others are working to evaluate all First Parish properties with an eye toward creating a 5-year master maintenance plan. The Concord Museum will be moving out of the Wright Tavern in August, so a new tenant may be occupying the ground floor. Any new tenants will be operating under 1-year leases in order to maintain flexibility for First Parish. Philip thanked Victoria Rizzi for her service to the Trustees.

Time for Action Working Groups: Eric Moore reported that the Belonging Team is working toward making First Parish more welcoming, focusing on issues like communication, leadership development and lowering barriers to encourage better connection within First Parish. The group has identified several

strategies and potential Pilot programs that the group will continue to help First Parish continue to evolve ways to connect and belong at First Parish.

Tom Wilson reported for the Growth and Diversity task force, which is examining ways to grow FP in both numbers and diversity. Tom distributed a brochure that the group has prepared, which summarizes who we are. A welcoming table in the vestibule will be tested out this coming fall, and efforts will be made to better connect with groups who use FP facilities but are not necessarily members. The task force is also examining how to better reach out and build relationships with outside groups.

David Ropeik reported for the Deepening Our Spirituality group's efforts, which included an inventory of activities that are purposefully spiritual in nature such as covenant groups, small group ministries and other groups, some in need of rejuvenation. The group has discussed several potential programs including Neighboring Faiths for adults, Coming of Age for adults, Jim Sherblom's offer to run programs on engaging elderhood and Spiritual Audacity, spiritual autobiography, lunchtime spirituality discussions and other ideas. The group is focused on creating avenues to bring spiritual matters more deeply into our culture and services, emphasized the importance of moment of spiritual observation in every meeting using, for example, opening prayers or the lighting of a chalice. The group is looking to encourage spiritual practices at home, working with youth, and other methods of engagement.

Article II: To choose all Parish officers for the ensuing year. A motion was made by Kristin Moore who moved that we nominate the following candidates for the terms noted:

Upon motion duly made Kristin Haddad, former Chair of the Standing Committee (SC), which was seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: To choose all Parish officers for the ensuing year. Ms. Haddad's moved that we nominate the following candidates for the terms noted:

SC member at large

Susan See, Standing Committee Member-at-Large, for a 3-year term

Liz Rust, Standing Committee Member-at-Large, for a 3-year team

CC King, Standing Committee Member-at-Large, for a 3-year team

Officers

Jane Barnes, Treasurer, for a one-year term

Kristin Moore, Moderator, for a one-year term

Peter Nobile, Clerk, for a one-year term

Upon motion duly made by Phillip vanderWilden, which was seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: To nominate Patty Popov to the Trustees of Parish Donations for a 5-year term.

Upon motion duly made by Kate Svercek, which was seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: To nominate the following candidates for the Nominating Committee for the terms noted:

Mark Russell Prior, Nominating Committee, for a 3-year term

Jen Izzo, Nominating Committee, for a 3-year term
Alane Wallis, for a second 3-year term
Bruce Blumberg, for a second 3-year term

Eric Moore thanked Elaine Wallace and Bruce Blumberg for their service to the Nominating Committee, and Dave Elwood thanked Standing Committee members Kristin Haddad, Toby Smith Ropeik, Michelle Fortier and Val Vallancourt for their years of service to the Standing Committee.

Article III: To ratify the 2019 UU General Assembly (GA) delegate slate. A motion was made by Jan Power to nominate a slate of delegates.

Upon motion duly made Jan Power, which was seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: To ratify the 2019 UU General Assembly (GA) delegate slate. A motion was made by Jan Power to nominate a slate of delegates as listed below:

The list of delegates travelling to this year's GA is as follows:

Darien Smith
Sara Ballard
Stoney Ballard
Lillian Anderson
Lauren Evans
Elizabeth Norton

Off-site delegates include:

Peter Nobile
Jan Power
Jim Sherblom
Dana Snyder-Grant

Article IV: Michelle Fortier moved that we raise money for all Parochial Purposes, including the Budget for 2019-20.

Michelle thanked Fifi Ball and Tina Storey for their work in preparing the annual budget, and the Finance Committee for their hard work in helping to manage financial matters at First Parish. Michelle also thanked the pledge campaign stewards for their work on the Annual campaign, which for the second year in a row passed \$1,000,000 in pledges, this year coming from 386 families. Michelle summarized the new and successful approach to funding Social Action at First Parish, and thanked Liz Rust for her work. Michelle summarized our well-running fiduciary practices, confirmed by Sheid & Co. review of our procedures, and a bit more detail about the legacy giving process.

Michelle reviewed the budgeting process and drivers, the most important of which is the pledge campaign. Our three top priority areas are: to increase staff compensation, to increase our UUA dues, and to increase funding for long term building maintenance. Michelle reviewed details, noting that it costs about \$2,800 per household to run First Parish but that our average pledge amount is \$1,200. The

proposed budget also includes salary and benefits for a full time Minister for Pastoral Care and a 10-month Social Action coordinator, as well as cost of living increases for all staff. The budget totals approximately \$1.4 million of expenses. Michelle answered several questions about the budget and discussed long term trends, noting that we are increasing our reliance on large donors. Howard addressed the issue of increasing the basic level of financial contribution Parish-wide, noting that new members tend to pledge at higher amounts than existing members. Michelle was thanked for an excellent, comprehensive and clear presentation.

Upon motion duly made Michelle Fortier and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the First Parish budget for 2019-20.

Article V: Peter Lowitt moved that First Parish adopt the aspirational goals of the Green New Deal (GND).

Peter reviewed the GND, a bill in the US House of Representatives, which addresses climate change through a comprehensive set of aspirational goals. Peter noted that the Concord Select Board and other entities and organizations have already voted to support the goals of the GND.

Doug Hardy wondered if there are governance implications for First Parish, especially ramifications to the annual budget. Peter noted that while some of the GND's goals do not have any specific immediate impact, there may be financial implications down the road. Mary Ann Barton likened endorsement to "turning on a flashlight" to help us find our way. Peter explained that the GND originated with the Sunrise Movement and several Democratic House legislators including Sen. Markey and Rep. Ocasio-Cortez, and that work is being done around the country to build support for the legislation. Dian Pekin encouraged FP to remain independent of other organizations, to be very cautious about future legislative implications, but that she is voting for the aspirational goals today. Bob Andrews spoke in favor of the motion. David Ropeik noted that the Democratic Party has decided not to hold an environment-specific debate, and that GND has come to mean "what tribe are you in," which has begun to bind up the efforts of candidates who do not support the GND. Berni Jenkins noted the enthusiastic support of young people who she thinks urgently need our support. Kitsy Rothermel cautioned against our implicit support of the GND and that it may be too political a statement for FP. Other parishioners spoke both in favor of and against endorsement of the GND and for different reasons – generally, those in favor support the aspirational goals and the need for urgent action, and those hesitating are concerned about a lack of specifics, a lack of political inclusiveness, and that the bill outlines issues only marginally related to climate change.

A motion was made to call the question, which passed by a near unanimous vote.

Upon motion duly made by Peter Lowitt, which was seconded, and passed by a near unanimous vote

VOTED: To endorse the aspirational goals of the Green New Deal.

Article VI: To act upon any other business that may come before the meeting.

There was no other business, although the Meeting was asked to stay for a short presentation by the Transylvanian Partner Church Committee.

A motion was made to dissolve the Annual Meeting; that motion was seconded and approved, and the meeting adjourned at 12:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Nobile, clerk