

Regular Attendees		Present
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Jane Barnes	Treasurer	Y
Jeff Brainerd	Standing Committee member	Y
Rev. Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Dave Elwood	Chair	Y
C. C. King	Standing Committee member	Y
Peter Nobile	Clerk	Y
Liz Rust	Standing Committee member	Y
Susan See	Standing Committee member	Y
Kate Svrcek	Standing Committee member	
Lora Venesy	Standing Committee member	Y
Tom Wilson	Standing Committee member	Y
Rev. Liz Weber	Minister for Pastoral Care	
Alec Walker	Standing Committee <i>alumnus, serving tempus esse</i>	Y
Guests		
Adrienne Betancourt	Social Action Manager	Y
Jan Power	Belonging Team	Y
Eric Moore	Nominating Committee	Y

PLEASE NOTE: THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY (VIA ZOOM)

Rev. Dana lit a chalice and opened our meeting with words from Lisle Mueller, *When I Am Asked*.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the March 2020 Standing Committee (SC) meeting minutes as amended, and to incorporate them into the permanent record.

Director of Operations Report

Fifi sought SC approval for an increase of \$6,500.00 on budget line 5740 (technology and equipment) to cover increased expenses on electronic equipment and licensing upgrades including laptop and printer replacements, wireless equipment. and Zoom licenses.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to increase budget line 5740 (technology and equipment) by \$6,500.00.

Senior Minister’s Report

The committee expressed gratitude for Howard’s and the staff’s extraordinary efforts during online Sunday services and how connected it makes us feel even during the forced separation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Howard answered a few minor questions about his report and discussed the strain of the increased technological and pastoral workload on all the staff. There were 265 attendees at Sunday’s

Easter service, which when multiplied by 1.75 totals about 450 attendees total! The online services are attracting new members from far and wide as well as current and former members, and as live (as opposed to recorded) services seem to occupy a unique niche in the current worship offering paradigm.

Treasurer's Report

Jane reported that First Parish has applied for assistance from the Federal Payroll Protection Program, for a total forgivable loan of about \$140,000. Jane and Tom also met this past weekend with Malika McCray regarding a possible fundraising and development brainstorming meeting in May. Howard will attend this meeting and Jane asked the SC to suggest other potential attendees who have development experience.

Belonging Team (BT) Update

Jan summarized the BT's efforts over the past few months around issues of belonging. Per its charge, the group has been assessing relational skills, belonging and connection, communication, and growing and supporting leadership. The BT's upcoming meetings will continue to discuss efforts to support the First Parish community, and to discuss priorities in the coming church year. Currently there is no one person at First Parish tasked with managing "Congregational Life" especially within the current 5-pillar structure of the church life (ministry, music, religious education, pastoral care, and social action) and the BT is looking into how best to bring forward this aspect of belonging. Lora noted that the BT has discussed pathways for making resources again available for supporting membership development and other congregational life activities.

All Committee Chair meeting

The group discussed how best to schedule a next all-committee-chair meeting, both logistics and content-wise. Howard noted that such a meeting would be a good use of staff time, and that the Zoom platform works quite well for large groups as it allows breakout rooms, etc. Adrienne emphasized the need to both honor the existing leadership talent at First Parish, and to also ask the community of stakeholders what leadership skills it would like to develop, rather than simply putting on a leadership development program without such input.

Annual Pledge Campaign and FY 2021 Budget

Fifi and Howard discussed the campaign to date, and how they are setting the coming year's budget. Fifi reminded us that currently we have 303 pledgers and \$779,400 in pledges, compared to the same time last year when we had 327 pledgers and \$817,000 in pledges. Last year we ended up with 400 total pledging households and around \$1,075,000 in pledges, but this year our goal is \$1,225,000 in pledges. There are still a few typically large donors who have yet to pledge. A draft budget was reviewed, and Fifi answered several questions about timing of setting a budget vs confirming the pledge totals for the coming year. Howard noted we have an available cash surplus "cushion" of about \$120,000 from prior pledge years, some of which we may need to use to close any gaps in the budget.

The group had a lengthy discussion about uses of savings and other suggested modifications to the proposed budget in order to save costs. The committee discussed how to set a conceptual cap on how much of the surplus to apply to the FY 2021 budget – how conservative should we be? Howard suggested we use as little of the surplus as possible, to finish the pledge campaign in a strong position,

and to trim the budget without Draconian cuts or reductions. Fifi and Howard thanked the group for feedback and will incorporate this thinking into the next iteration of the budget.

Membership Policy

Susan described changes to the Membership Policy including a new introductory paragraph. A more detailed discussion has been tabled until our next SC meeting.

Selection of new Standing Committee chair

The group discussed how best to determine candidates for chair of the SC, which last time included an interview process of all eligible members. Dave, Tom, Lora and Alec are rolling off the committee; all others are eligible except for officers. Jane is willing to serve again as Treasurer, and Peter will likely serve one more year as a member at-large. The group will discuss further at our next meeting.

With no further business before the Committee, the meeting was closed at 8:55 PM and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter Nobile, Clerk