

First Parish in Concord Standing Committee

Meeting September 14, 2021

Fifi Ball	Manager of Operations	Y
Michael Beer	Standing Committee Member	Y
Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Jim Hawks	Standing Committee Member	Y
Jennifer Izzo	Clerk	Y
C.C. King	Standing Committee Member	Y
Gib Metcalf	Standing Committee Member	Y
Caroline Washburn Minkin	Standing Committee Member	Y
Heather Packard	Treasurer	Y
Jim Reynolds	Standing Committee Member	Y
Liz Rust	Chair	Y
Susan See	Standing Committee Member	Y
Virginia Taylor	Standing Committee Member	Y

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

Howard opened the meeting with a poem.

Check-In

Liz polled the group to see who prefers to meet in person versus remotely over Zoom. Given the rise in Covid-19 cases due to the Delta variant, the group decided to meet over Zoom for at least the month of October, and to wait and decide about future months closer to the actual dates.

Howard suggested that the Standing Committee meet in person for a team building exercise before the weather turns cold. The group decided to meet somewhere outside on October 30, 2021.

Minister's Report

Howard shared the following Sunday Worship Attendance numbers in 2019-2021:

Date	2021	2020	2019
June 6	126 devices + YouTube	274 devices	341 in-person
June 13	173 devices + YouTube	420 devices	173 in-person
June 20	153 devices + YouTube	179 devices	170 in-person
June 27	61 devices (GA service)	170 devices	68 in-person
July 4	90 devices + YouTube	185 devices	56 in-person
July 11	120 devices + YouTube	143 devices	61 in-person
July 18	100 devices + YouTube	153 devices	87 in-person
July 25	96 devices + YouTube	158 devices	73 in-person
August 1	87 devices + YouTube	149 devices	52 in-person
August 8	89 devices + YouTube	137 devices	65 in-person

August 15	82 devices + YouTube	147 devices	72 in-person
August 22	135 devices + YouTube	139 devices	127 in-person
August 29	131 devices + YouTube	239 devices	112 in-person

Howard's proposed goals for work with the Standing Committee in 2021-2022 are as follows:

- **Goal One**—Assist the Standing Committee in reviewing existing church policies to form a basis for understanding the current church structure. Help the Standing Committee revise and publish the revised policies.
- **Goal Two**—Work with the Standing Committee in its formation of a Development Committee to attend to the long-term fiscal strategies for First Parish in Concord.
- **Goal Three**—In monthly Minister's Reports and at Standing Committee meetings share more thoughts about staffing successes, challenges, and programming for each pillar.

These goals are intended to mirror those of the Standing Committee, even though they are worded slightly differently. Sunday, September 12, was the first in-person worship service since the church shut down due to Covid. The attendance numbers were: 123 people attended in person, 70 devices were tuned in, plus there was about 50 children and families at the family service.

Director of Operations Report

Fifi noted that July was a quiet month, with smaller services and the building remaining closed. Monthly pledge income was average: \$450,471, compared to \$487,339 in July 2020 and \$434,584 in July 2019 (average \$460,962). Pledge income is usually high in July as many congregants pre-pay their FY22 pledges in the spring before the fiscal year starts.

Monthly expenses were average-high: \$113,294, compared to \$109,737 in July 2020 and \$78,746 in July 2019 (average \$94,242). Average (one twelfth) monthly expenses for FY22 = \$119,414. There were 1.7 payroll runs in July because work done in June, but paid in July, was expensed in FY21 (which ended 6/30/21). The difference in monthly expenses from one July to the next is mostly payroll and benefits. Monthly net income/loss was low: \$391,931, compared to \$425,547 in July 2020 and \$405,218 in July 2019 (average \$415,383).

The 2021-2022 budget is based on \$1,080,000 in estimated pledges. As of 9/9/21, actual pledges are \$1,079,197, just \$803 under budgeted. The church had a big surplus in July. The surplus offsets the projected loss for the year due to static pledge numbers and stalled growth.

The roof above the parlor ceiling needs repair with copper sheeting and flashing. The recommended vendor's quote is just under \$10,000. This project was approved by the Standing Committee on June 8, 2021, but the work was not completed in FY21. Therefore, Fifi again sought approval from the Standing Committee.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the \$10,000 expenditure to repair the roof.

The Steeple refurbishing and the Sanctuary insulation projects were started in August 2021, and will likely be completed by the end of September 2021. Bruce Davidson is overseeing both of these projects.

The church is spending about \$5,000 on video and audio recording/streaming equipment to broadcast the worship services on Zoom, along with \$200 per week on a technician. The church also spent about \$200 on additional fans and \$1,000 on air purifiers

Jim asked if the church's PPP loan had been forgiven, and how the loans effect cash flow this year. Fifi answered that the PPP loans are the reason why the church had a surplus in July. If we hadn't received the \$118,000 loan, the church would have had a deficit, not a surplus. The loan was forgiven on December 31st of 2020.

Liz asked for a recap of pledges. Heather will distribute this information to the Standing Committee.

Standing Committee Operations

- Ministerial Support Subcommittee: Liz, Susan and Michael are working on setting the meeting schedule.
- First Parish Weekly: Virginia and Jim Hawks will submit a Standing Committee update once per month.
- All Chairs Meeting: Susan and Liz hold an all-committee meeting 2-3 times per year to give group leaders a chance to meet, collaborate and share ideas. These meetings are well attended and appreciated.
- Jim will send around a schedule for people to sign up to serve as coffee hour hosts and door greeters.
- CC asked what the plans are for coffee hour. On September 12, the church only had coffee hour in the Parish Hall. If there is demand for a Zoom coffee hour, it can be added.

Standing Committee Goals for FY2022 and Personnel Assignments

The Standing Committee's goals correspond to Howard's goals. The members of the Standing Committee were placed in groups to work on each of the Standing Committee goals. The groups are as follows:

- Governance: Jennifer, Michael, Virginia, Caroline.
- Focus on community, Belonging and Communication: Susan, CC, Liz.
- Sustainability and Long Term Finance: Jim Hawks Heather, Gib, Jim Reynolds.

Each group will meet once prior to the next Standing Committee meeting in October.

FPC Mechanical Engineering Consultant

Liz reported that the First Parish Greening the Campus Task Force went to the Annual Meeting in June of 2021 and got a charge to move forward with certain sustainability measures, such as upgraded windows and insulation. The task force has received approximately \$60,000 in donations, and has spent about \$28,000 thus far. The task force identified a mechanical engineer consultant to prepare a cost estimate and analysis for a geothermal system. The contract for this work is approximately \$32,000, and the task force has asked Liz to sign it.

A discussion ensued regarding the proposed contract. The Standing Committee would like to understand the goal of the contract, how it fits into the larger greening project and how much more money will be needed. First Parish in Bedford recently went through a similar project. The Standing Committee would like to be briefed on what was done in Bedford. They also wish to understand how the task force will engage with the congregation. The task force's chair, Peter Lowitt, will come to next month's Standing Committee meeting to answer these questions.

Policy Review

The group discussed the current governance model at First Parish, shown in the following chart:



This model was put into place during Gary's ministry. The hallmark of this model is that the staff performs operational tasks, the senior minister is the chief of staff that interacts with the Standing Committee, and the Standing Committee does fiscal and policy oversight and oversight over the senior minister. The congregation establishes the mission, holds volunteer leadership positions, etc. This model is commonly used in large churches.

Howard would like First Parish to consider whether this model still serves us well, or whether it should be modified. His sense is that First Parish acts more like a mid-sized church than a large church. The chief differences between the two are the number of staff and the amount of involvement from laypeople. A large church generally has more staff because congregants are willing to pay more money

for staff to do work for them. By comparison, a mid-size church has less staff and most church operations are run by the congregants. Committees support all the different church operations, such as fundraising and building maintenance. All projects and initiatives are lay-driven. Standing Committee meetings would consist of hearing reports from various committees. Howard believes that First Parish currently acts more like a mid-size church than a large church. Our governance structure looks different than how we are actually operating .

Discussions ensued on the implications of Howard's supposition.

Vice Chair Appointment

Liz asked if people had a preference for whether the Standing Committee should appoint a vice chair. Her preference is to appoint one. She asked anyone who is interested to contact her.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Izzo, Clerk