

**First Parish in Concord  
Standing Committee Meeting  
June 13, 2023**

Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Michael Beer	Standing Committee Member	Y
Lisa Bennett	Standing Committee Member (incoming)	Y
Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd	Senior Minister (Interim)	Y
Jim Hawks	Standing Committee Member (outgoing)	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 (outgoing)	N
Jim Reynolds	Standing Committee Member	Y
Leah Russell	Treasurer (incoming)	N
Liz Rust	Chair	Y
Susan See	Standing Committee Member	Y
Virginia Taylor	Standing Committee Member	Y
Rev. Liz Weber	Minister for Congregational Care	Y

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM.

Liz Rust offered a reading.

Everyone checked in about how they are doing.

**Interim Senior Minister Report**

- Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd stated that the FP staff is looking forward to the summer – it’s been a challenging year, especially with the office manager position leaving.
- Seth thought that the Annual Meeting went well, due, in part to the “good process” that we followed before the meeting. The SC offered people a lot of opportunity for engagement prior to the meeting and kept them well informed (e.g., the Covenant process).

- It would be a good idea to read the Covenant out loud at the beginning of the Annual Meeting each year. It sets the right tone.
  - One thing to improve upon next year is that the people online were not always included. If we are going to be a multi-platform congregation, we need to remember to involve and incorporate the online people attending remotely.
- Assuming all of the equipment comes in on time, our new technology will be installed in the sanctuary on August 1-3. Full use of the new technology will start on the first Sunday of the new church year.
  - The new church management software will be implemented in September.
  - We will save some money at the end of August by switching from Microsoft 360 to Google Workspace for email. Fifi found a new tech support person to help with church technology needs.
  - Bruce is putting a television screen at the side entry door to replace the current easel with printed calendar. The screen will refresh automatically with updated information. There will be a second screen further in the building, in the hallway where the nametags are, where people can advertise their events rather than using posters on easels.

### **Update from Minister for Congregational Life**

Rev. Liz Webster stated that one of the major celebrations for her this year was the Covenant process. CC was a good and solid partner. The team as a whole did really good work, visiting committees and implementing a collaborative process.

In addition, Liz highlighted the success of the Covid team. The team moved to a shared ministry, consensus-based model. Everyone has been able to have their say, but then listen and come together around what would be best for the congregation as a whole.

### **Report from Director of Operations**

Per church policy, Fifi Ball asked the SC to approve 3 line items that exceeded the amount budgeted for such line item:

- The oil bill exceeded the budget by \$4,500
- Technology and equipment exceeded the budget by \$3,000
- Building maintenance exceeded the budget by \$11,500. This is due to the fact that Bruce hired a professional cleaning service that comes in on Mondays. He was having trouble finding assistant sextons to do the cleaning. The professional cleaner started in January, and will cost \$17,000 per year.
  - Caroline asked what our process is for selecting vendors. Fifi answered that we get a W9 from them to confirm that they are lawfully present. In this particular case of the cleaners, Bruce asked for recommendations and found the best, lowest cost alternative. Seth added that in general, the staff try to get at least 3 bids so that we can compare pricing and scope of services.
  - Susan asked what kind of attention we pay to minority owned businesses. Fifi answered that she and Bruce did talk about this issue. As it happens, the cleaning business being used is a minority and women owned business.
  - Jim R. asked about the final budget numbers for the year. Fifi answered that we will

likely come in at negative \$70,000-\$80,000. Jim said that all three amounts together are significant. Did we not know that the fuel costs would be so much more than budgeted? Fifi answered that she was aware of the issue all year and was tracking it. She had raised the fuel line item issue to the SC at an earlier meeting, and the SC decided to wait to vote upon it until the overage actually occurred.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously  
**VOTED:** to approve the three budget overages, as described above.

## **SC OPERATIONS**

### **Minutes Approval**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously  
**VOTED:** to accept the May 9, 2023 Standing Committee (SC) meeting minutes, and to incorporate them into the permanent record.

### **SC Chair for FY24**

- The SC discussed who will be SC chair for next year, and what process to follow to officially elect the chair. Gib served as vice chair this year, and is willing to be chair next year.
- All agreed that whatever the model is, it should be clearly written down, and it should happen earlier in the church year. The SC will address this task next year.
- Gib left the room and the group agreed that he should be elected to be SC chair.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously  
**VOTED:** to elect Gib Metcalf as chair of the Standing Committee.

- Gib asked to appoint Virginia as the non-ascending vice-chair. There is no expectation that because she is vice chair, she will next become the chair. After next year, Gib will select a new ascending vice chair, who would be expected to become chair the following year.
- Virginia left the room and the group agreed that she should be elected to be non-ascending SC vice-chair.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously  
**VOTED:** to elect Virginia as non-ascending vice-chair of the Standing Committee.

- Gib offered a few words about the SC. He said the 3 committees that we currently have are still relevant: Governance, Community and Connection and Financial Sustainability. But one thing to tweak next year is how the work of those groups fits with the work of the interim minister in his second year (i.e., focusing on identity).
- Gib would like to keep the SC meeting on the second Tuesday of the month. He will send out a survey about the meeting format and time.

### **SC Retreat**

- The SC retreat will be on Thursday night, August 31, from 6-8:30pm in the Brooks room.

- Mike asked what the purpose of the retreat is. Gib answered that it is to prepare ourselves for the work of the coming year and have time for reflection. We will also look at our Standing Committee Covenant and see if any changes are needed. Seth added that relationship building is also important.

### **Other SC Business**

- The SC will not meet over the summertime. We will conduct Seth's evaluation in September.
- Gib mentioned that the SC needs to appoint 2 people to be on a 3-person negotiating team to negotiate the contract with the new senior minister. One of the 2 individuals needs to be a member of the SC, and the second can be anyone. The third person on the committee is chosen by the Search Committee.
- The SC also needs to find people to serve on the Nominating Committee.
- Liz stated that she volunteered to run the Membership and Welcoming Committee next year. We haven't had this committee in place for the past 3 years. It would be under the umbrella of the Congregational Life Committee (CLC).
- Seth is thinking about starting a Fellowship Committee, which would be focused on providing social opportunities.
- Caroline suggested that the CLC should focus on retention. For example, we should focus on retention at the point where kids "age out" of RE, because this is a typical time when many people leave the church. She also mentioned that RE wants to start integrating teens and tweens into the service more and finding ways for them to serve and lead, so that they stay involved after RE programming stops.
  - o Seth agrees that retention is an important issue for us to look at, but he's not yet sure where that responsibility should land.
- There will be a service workshop on October 1 called Friendship in the Digital Age, led by Peter Bowdoin.

### **Black Lives Matter Banner**

- Per instructions from the Town of Concord, the SC must vote on whether to keep up the Black Lives Matter banner on the front of the church.
- Gib asked if we should have rotating banners.
- CC wondered if we should have the entire congregation vote on the banner, as a way to keep the topic alive.
- We also have a Rainbow flag hanging in the front of the church. Lisa asked if we should replace the current Rainbow flag with a Progress flag. Seth said it is already ordered.
- CC said that if we are going to have the banner, then we should think again about changing the interior of the church to be consistent (i.e., change the art work on the walls to be more inclusive).

- Caroline said we should have a conversation about the banner regularly. We want to be sensitive to what else is happening in the community, so that we're not excluding some important issues for the sake of other important issues.
- Mike stated that we should consider having a banner that announces our general welcoming philosophy - we are an inclusive church.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to keep the Black Lives Matter banner hanging in the front of the church.