

**First Parish in Concord  
Standing Committee Meeting  
November 14, 2023**

Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Michael Beer	Standing Committee Member	Y
Lisa Bennett	Standing Committee Member	Y
Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd	Senior Minister (Interim)	Y
Jennifer Izzo	Clerk	Y
C.C. King	Standing Committee Member	Y
Gib Metcalf	Chair	Y
Caroline Washburn Minkin	Standing Committee Member	Y
Jim Reynolds	Standing Committee Member	Y
Leah Russell	Treasurer	Y
Liz Rust	Standing Committee Member	Y
Susan See	Standing Committee Member	Y
Virginia Taylor	Standing Committee Member	Y
Leslie Fischer	Representative, Welcoming Walls Project	Y

THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN PERSON AT FIRST PARISH AND VIA ZOOM.

Jim Reynolds offered opening words.

Everyone checked in about how they are doing.

As the first order of business, Gib requested that it be “spread upon the minutes of the meeting” that Jen and Liz did a fabulous job in organizing and running the auction. Besides being a successful fundraiser, it was a great community building event. The motion was passed by acclamation.

**DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS REPORT**

- Fifi Ball distributed the September financials. Nothing unusual to report.
- The FP Auction was held on Nov. 4. Liz Rust mentioned that the Auction raised approximately \$40,000, which will be divided and added to the church budget for the next 2 years.

**INTERIM SENIOR MINISTER REPORT**

- Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd reported that he and Amy are feeling the impact of Liz Weber being out on sick leave.
- The Breeze church management software transition has not been going as smoothly as hoped. Our existing database is complex and difficult to transfer over. Fifi and Seth are concerned that we might not be able to use the Breeze software after all.
- Sanctuary Technology Modernization
  - o We had 3 major technology issues in the past 5 weeks, none of which had anything to do with the new technology.
  - o The rate of congregational feedback on the technology has slowed down, which suggests that people might be getting used to it.
  - o Seth feels that we are making better use of the technology by integrating new elements into the services.
  - o In addition to the screens in the sanctuary, there are 2 new screens in the side entryway of the church – one for calendar event postings, and one to replace the easels that were used to advertise events.
- Interim Ministry. The Transition Team hosted 2 different groups regarding the transition. About 40 people attended.
- Worship.
  - o Last Sunday was the first service where Seth led the congregation in an examination of the meaning of our Benediction.
  - o Christmas Eve is on a Sunday this year. There will be a 10am service as per usual. Seth asked for the SC's opinion about when the Christmas Eve services should be held that day. In the past, we offered a 4pm service (which was the most popular), and a 7pm and 9pm service (where were moderately attended). This year, we will offer 2 services at 4pm and 8pm.
- Janet Smylie will now be handling *FP Weekly*.
- CC asked if the church should make a statement about the war in Israel/Palestine. Seth mentioned that Paul Langston-Daley will be leading a church conversation on the topic in a few weeks.
- Members of the SC commented on how great last week's service was. Seth's words about the war in Israel/Palestine really resonated with people. Leah also complimented Seth on his words about the Benediction.
- FP is shifting its email service from Microsoft 365 to Google on Friday.
- Seth brought 2 funding requests to the SC:
  1. Sanctuary Technology Upgrade. Last spring the SC approved \$61,000 for the technology upgrade project, but costs on the project now exceed that amount. There have been 3 change orders. In addition, Seth reported that we didn't realize how much the electrical and wiring would cost. To date, total expenses for everything are \$75,622.88. Seth asked

for the SC to approve another \$20,000 for the project, bringing the contract total up to \$81,000. The SC discussed the request and ultimately voted to approve the additional funds. The money will come out of FP's surplus cash reserves.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to approve an additional \$20,000 in funds to cover cost-overruns on the sanctuary technology upgrade project.

2. Lead Technology Coordinator/AV Technician. Seth stated that there needs to be a point person in charge of church technology to make improvements, trouble-shoot and pool knowledge. Seth would like to hire David W. to serve as FP's lead AV technician for a few hours each week, through the end of this church year. Seth asked the SC to approve up to \$6,000 to cover David's hours serving in the role. At the end of the church year, we will reassess whether this role is needed in the future. The money for this expenditure will come from surplus cash reserves. The SC discussed the approval request, and ultimately voted to approve the expenditure. The SC agreed that the expenses are necessary, but expressed concern that surplus funds are being depleted by the unbudgeted expenses.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to approve up to \$6,000 in funds to cover the cost of a technology coordinator through the end of the current church year.

#### **WELCOMING WALLS COMMITTEE REPORT**

- Leslie Fischer attended the SC meeting on behalf of the Welcoming Walls Committee. She reported that the Committee has held 2 more listening sessions, for a total of 4. There is interest in replacing the minister portraits in the Parish Hall with a screen that would feature revolving images of the ministers and other persons of importance to FP's history. This would liberate our Parish Hall for more colorful, up to date and inviting wall hangings. The screens would enable supplementary information and education about the images to be included. A professional photographer is willing to take photographs of our 11 portraits for about \$850. Leslie is speaking with the Concord Museum and the Concord Library about archiving the portraits.
- The SC discussed the Committee's plans and offered feedback. Liz Rust pointed out that the Welcoming Walls initiative is operational, not an SC policy decision.
- Leslie mentioned that the Welcoming Walls committee has offered to meet up with and update all of the FP committees and groups, and welcome feedback.

#### **GOVERNANCE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

- Virginia reported on behalf of the Governance Subcommittee. She stated that the Committee on Institutional Change (COIC) reviewed the Bylaws and made suggested edits to remove what they describe as a lack of transparency, archaic language, and a tone of white patriarchy. They COIC gave their suggestions to the Governance Subcommittee, who then made further edits. The Subcommittee brought their edits to Bylaws #1-5 to the SC for discussion. We will discuss Bylaws #6-10 later in the church year.
- The COIC requested that the SC change its name from "Standing Committee" to "Governing Board" because the latter is a clearer, more accurate name.

- The SC discussed the Subcommittee's suggested edits to Bylaws #1-5, and made further edits. The Subcommittee will incorporate the new edits and then return to the SC with the final language to be voted upon at the next SC meeting. Gib requested that the Subcommittee bring a redline document showing the changes made from the current version.
- Liz then briefly discussed the Subcommittee's plans for the Ends Statements, which are intended to be the goals for the church and its staff for the next few years. The Subcommittee will use the congregational feedback gathered by the Transition and Interim Ministry teams to help refine the Ends Statement by drafting interpretative statements. They will come back and report to the SC at a later meeting.

### **SC OPERATIONS**

- Minutes Approval. Gib asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the SC's October 10, 2023 meeting.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to accept the October 10, 2023 Standing Committee (SC) meeting minutes, and to incorporate them into the permanent record.

- Update from the SC Nominating Committee Representatives. CC and Jim reported that they continue to have difficulty finding people to serve on the Nominating Committee. They will talk to the Nominating Committee to get their opinion about whether we can reduce the number of members from 7 to 5.
- October 19, 2024 is the date of the party that the SC offered for the Auction: Soups, Stews and Games Night.

The SC meeting was adjourned at 8:38pm.