

**First Parish in Concord
Governing Board Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2024**

Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Lisa Bennett	Governing Board Member	Y
Kimma Brainerd	Clerk	N
Neil Brock	Governing Board Member	Y
Jennifer Izzo	Governing Board Member	Y
C.C. King	Governing Board Member	Y
Gib Metcalf	Chair	Y
Kristin Moore	Governing Board Member	Y
Jim Reynolds	Governing Board Member	Y
Leah Russell	Treasurer	Y
Susan See	Governing Board Member	Y
Virginia Taylor	Governing Board Member	Y

THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN PERSON AT FIRST PARISH, CONCORD.
Reverend Jennifer Johnson was in attendance.

Neil Brock offered opening words: Pete Seeger’s version of How Can I Keep From Singing.

Gib check in invitation - Consider our FP mission: To deepen spiritually, to build community and to make the world a better place. What speaks to you for the work ahead of us for First Parish?

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

- October Meeting Minutes - No objections to accepting the minutes.

OPERATIONS REPORT

Fifi submitted financial report prior to meeting.

Fifi flagged the building maintenance expense as it may overrun this year, based on quarterly run-rate.

Audit is budgeted for, is it currently planned? Fifi has higher priority projects currently, so it isn’t scheduled yet.

- Gib requested identifying the schedule for doing the audit.
- Fifi suggested it could be executed as an internal audit if there are interested and qualified people in the congregation.

- Happy news with the hire of Karen Lee Fisk. Starts two days before Thanksgiving.
- Fifi emphasized the facilities gap in the short term that will require volunteers to continue services like Coffee Hour.
- Jennifer noted the need for patience through the additional hiring searches for Facilities Manager and the Minister for Congregational Care.
- Fifi observed it would be useful to have a team to assist in the Search process, reviewing candidates and interviewing.
- Gib asked if there needs to be a sub-committee of the GB to assist in these searches? Jennifer has a hiring team for Minister, but Fifi could use assistance with the Facilities interviewing process.

SENIOR MINISTER'S REPORT & Items

Jennifer appreciated the offer to defer the written report until after the meeting. Staff updates:

- Good-bye event and ritual for Rev. Liz Weber went off really well. Deep appreciation for the offering that Virginia and how CC shaped and contributed to the event.
- Beth reports that choir is going amazingly well. Very full.
- RE - there are families coming, not always regularly. Still struggling to identify the patterns. Jennifer enjoyed spending time with the COA youth
- Pastoral care is waiting for revitalization
- Grateful that worship is a two-way street, being open to the congregation and letting it guide her.
- Need for Facilities Support
 - Time to start working on a structure for lay leadership and involvement
 - Need to create more structure around hospitality and events. To help support events, not plan events. Make it easier for lay people to host events.
 - Hoping to identify people to work with Jennifer on how to structure this. Looking for the GB for suggestions.
 - Susan See volunteering. Jennifer thought Barry Copp and Marilyn Lowitt, given her involvement in the WPA. Kristin Moore volunteered to help with process documentation.
- In light of election outcome and the upcoming Concord 250 celebration, anticipating needs for safety protocols for the building and grounds. Churches on all sides need to be
 - Propose creating a Risk Assessment Task Force to think through the risks and the security protocols we should put in place. What measures could be taken to secure the building. Also what content is on our website is something to consider. Covid Task Force is a good model of the Task Force approach.
 - Paul Langston-Daley is connected within UUA and other UU congregations and has interest in the topic.
 - In regards to 250, there could be coordination with the community security planning.
 - GB volunteers for the Task Force (with Paul): Jennifer Izzo; Neil Brock volunteered

Wright Tavern Legacy Trust Trustee Candidates

GB appoints the Trustees. Peter Nobile has resigned.

Gib spoke with Nancy Johnson and that it didn't make sense for her to be a Trustee for Wright Tavern Legacy Trust AND chair FP 250. She agreed and will work to find the FP 250 Chair replacement.

Governing Board approved both nominees.

Connecting with the Congregation

Jennifer offered ideas in thinking about how to connect to committees and aligning work with the FP mission:

- Thinking about organizing conversations by length of time at First Parish: Long timers, Returners, Newcomers, In-Betweeners. Listening circles around these groups. Offering a couple opportunities for each group. Include GB members and Committee on Ministry to listen and bring back comments to GB.
- Working Group for Strategy Assessment will volunteer. CC volunteering for listening circles.
 - Develop the structure for the listening circles and facilitation guide. Start them up in January.
 - Jennifer will convene initial meeting. Maybe before December so we can start the groups in January.
- For church dynamics, circles are really useful as people are coming to the church.

Financial Policies

Leah for the Financial subcommittee (Jim, Neil and Leah) proposing policies.

1. Proposed financial reporting policy to apply to groups using FP tax exempt status for fundraising. Two amendments proposed by Leah:
 - must provide financial report unless funds are held by First Parish
 - submit information for the fiscal year by August 1

Discussion on reporting on what money is spent on to minimize risk of violating tax exempt status. Does FP offer guidance on spending requirements given the tax-exempt status?

- Proposal to provide a policy for compliance with tax-exempt status.

Alternative is to create a policy that discourages this type of arrangement. Recommend a second paragraph to address any new group formed post policy date must have funds held by First Parish. Leah will rewrite the policy with amendments and new addition and bring back next month.

2. Brainstorming to help put together a fundraising policy

Existing policy: if you are raising less than 2K approval by Fifi, and more than 2K approved by Jennifer.

Seeking a policy to set more tiers and guidelines.

Jim talked through goals and example approval and tiers to illustrate potential policy

Fundraising Goals

- Well defined and in keeping with our values and goals
- Coordinated with other fundraising efforts so spaced logically through church year
- Communicated in a way that congregation is informed but not pressured
- Sized to fit with FP's financial goals

Involvement of FP resources

- Facilities
- Mailing list

- Name

Activities & Tiers of fundraising

- Must be sponsored by a group, not individuals
- Must have member of group designated as fundraising contact. Staff and family cannot be fundraising contact.
- \$3K approved by Director of Operations,
- up to \$20K Senior minister,
- \$20-\$50K Senior Minister and GB, and >\$50K above + congregation

GB discussion.

- Application to capital campaigns?
 - Capital spending should be coordinated with capital planning process and the long term strategic planning process. Not just amount, but how it fits into the strategic plan.
 - Provide guidance on pre-funding efforts for capital campaigns
- Make distinct: Operational Fundraising from Capital Fundraising.
 - Well-defined and coordinated with the vision. The financial planning has to track the strategic plans for the congregation. Money needs to follow where we want to go, not dictate direction.
 - So the tiers/approval is tied into keeping the fundraising in line with the End Statements.
- Discussion on examples of previous fundraising effort
- Consideration for tiers is the economic diversity of the congregation and ability to fundraise
- Consider guidance on how to accommodate things that might be timely? Urgent need

Leah: What the group is also working on:

- Want to bring recommendations for budgeting and finance for the strategy process next year. E.g., broadening our revenue generation.
- Policies for drafting the budget, the timing, the process, whether we do 3-year budgets, other alternatives
- Maintaining alignment with our evolving strategy
- Also putting in recommendation for reinstating the Legacy Giving Program. Goal is to have it in a good place next year.

GB request for improving forecast of capital spending requirements. Example spreadsheet from Kel Keleher on cadence of replacing/maintaining building. Need to include financial sustainability in our strategic assessment process.

GOVERNING BOARD OPERATIONS

Kimma planning to return to Clerk responsibilities in January.

Mid-Year Mini Retreat - considering January timeframe.

- Opportunity to reflect on where we are and where we are going. Gib will propose dates.

The Governing Board went into executive session.

The Governing Board meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:20.