

**First Parish in Concord  
Standing Committee Meeting Minutes  
May 7, 2024**

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

THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN PERSON, WITH A FEW INDIVIDUALS JOINING VIA ZOOM.

Virginia Taylor offered opening words.

Everyone checked in about how they are doing.

**STANDING COMMITTEE OPERATIONS**

- On Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, the Congregation voted to call Rev. Jennifer Johnson as FP's new senior minister on Sunday, May 5.
- Gib asked for a motion to approve the Standing Committee meeting minutes from April 9, 2024.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to accept the Standing Committee meeting minutes from April 9, 2024, and to incorporate them into the permanent record.

## **DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS REPORT**

- **Howard Dana Pulpit Handrails.** The total cost for the Howard Dana Memorial pulpit handrails was \$11,700. Thus far, \$3,200 has been donated by members of the Congregation, and the Women's Parish Association donated an additional \$5,000. Mike Beer has been spear-heading an effort to solicit donations from the Congregation to pay for the remainder of the cost for the pulpit handrails. There is \$3,500 left to raise. If we are unable to find enough donations to cover the deficit, we will cover the cost through another means, such as through FP's long-term building maintenance account.
- **Miscategorized Expenses.** Fifi reported that over \$2,200 of costs in the balance sheet had been miscategorized as part of the Sanctuary AV Upgrade Fund. She adjusted the expenditure to fit under the Equipment & Technology line item, which has increased the total over-expenditure of that line.
- **Shanahan Sound.** We paid Shanahan Sound's final invoice. The final cost overrun was \$6,000 less than had been approved by the SC.
- **Freelancers.** As of 5/3/24, \$7,500 of the \$12,500 approved by the SC to cover freelancers has been spent. The total cost ended up being \$3,000 less than anticipated and approved by the SC.
- **Offer from Congregant.** Fifi reported that a member of the Congregation had approached Fifi with an offer to personally pay the costs of having Jok return to working at FP on Sundays through June 30, 24, because they miss seeing Jok and appreciated what he added to Sunday mornings at First Parish. Seth and Fifi appreciated the offer but recommend that we not accept it because it sets a bad precedent. We wouldn't be able to set a proper budget if individuals can swoop in and offer to pay for their favorite person or project. Susan pointed out that we should instead ask the congregant to pledge that amount more in future years. The SC discussed the matter and ultimately agreed with Fifi and Seth's position. FP will not accept the offer.

## **INTERIM SENIOR MINISTER'S REPORT**

- **Sanctuary Tech Finalized.** Seth reported that Shanahan Sound completed their work on the technology upgrade in the sanctuary. The system has been stable and working as designed for the past two months.
- **Annual Pledge Campaign.** The Annual Pledge Campaign is winding down. Preliminary results will be discussed later in the meeting when we discuss next year's budget.
- **Welcoming Walls.** The Welcoming Walls committee has taken down the portraits of prior ministers. The portraits have been professionally wrapped and are awaiting disposition to their next destination, which is still to be determined. The Welcoming Walls committee is installing a TV in the Parlor. The Social action committee purchased the TV.

- Summer Staffing. Gib asked Seth what the plan is for staffing the church in June and July. Seth answered that there will be coverage because Rev. Elizabeth Ide will continue to work half-time during the summer months. Seth will be taking study time in early June, and is on vacation in the last part of June and July. Gib asked for a schedule of planned time off for the staff.
- Rev. Liz Weber Update. Jim asked for an update on Liz Weber's health. Seth reported that Liz is doing better, but still is not well enough to come back to work. Rev. Elizabeth Ide continues to fill in on a part time basis. Barring anything significant changing in Elizabeth life, she will likely be able to stay at FP through at least September or October.
- In light of Seth's coming departure at the end of the church year, CC asked Seth whether there are any issues that he feels are still unresolved. Seth cited 2 open issues that he suggests the Standing Committee and Rev. Jennifer Johnson focus on next year: (1) Forming a Leadership or Operations team to share some operational responsibility with the new senior minister, and (2) Creating a Social Events team.
- Liz Rust pointed out that Rev. Liz Weber's absence and the temporary solution of having Elizabeth Ide serve in the role at a half time capacity has left a gap. Rev. Liz used to provide staff support for the Membership Committee. The Committee has keenly felt the lack of staff support, and progress in the important area of recruiting new members has been stalled.
- Susan added that Rev. Liz was also supporting the Congregational Life Committee. That committee, too, feels the lack of staff support.
- Everyone acknowledged that we need more social events at FP to foster connection and social bonds among members. Jim mentioned that if we are going to create a social event committee, then ideally we would get it going over the summertime, so that we can hit the ground running in September.
- It is time again to perform an evaluation of the Interim Minister. Gib will distribute materials to the SC.

### **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

- The Annual Parish meeting is scheduled for June 2.
- Refreshments. Gib asked if someone at FP could organize the SC's provision of refreshments for the congregation prior to the Annual Meeting. Jen Izzo offered to organize the refreshments. Liz stated that the Membership Committee is thinking about providing a cake in honor of new members.

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

- The SC will advance a proposed slate for the Nominating Committee (Nom Com) to be voted upon by the Congregation at Annual Meeting.

- The Nom Com needs 2 replacements. Gib asked Caroline Minkin to leave the room for a discussion about the Nom Com nomination slate. He then told the rest of the SC that Caroline Minkin is leaving the SC in June, but she has agreed to be considered as a new member of the Nominating Committee. Peter Nobile also is willing to fill this role. Gib recommended to the SC that it put forward Peter Nobile and Caroline Minkin as the new Nom Com members for consideration and vote by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting on June 2.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to present to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting on June 2 the names of Caroline Minkin and Peter Nobile to serve as new members of the FP Nominating Committee.

- After in-person meeting, the SC conferred via email about the rest of the slate for the Nominating Committee. They voted over email to approve the re-nomination of Jeff Brainerd and Suzie Webster to fill a second 3-year term each.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to present to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting on June 2 the names of Jeff Brainerd and Suzie Webster to each serve a second term of three years on the FP Nominating Committee.

- The complete Nominating Committee slate for FY 25 will be as follows:
  - Caroline Minkin, First 3-year term
  - Peter Nobile, First 3-year term
  - Suzie Weaver, Second 3-year term
  - Jeff Brainerd, Second 3-year term
  - Leanne Baxter, Second term, 3rd year
  - Darien Smith, DEPARTING
  - Kristin Haddad, Second term, 3rd year
  - Lora Keane Brown, Second term, 2nd year

#### **BYLAW REVISION**

- Virginia pointed out that the current draft of the revised FP Bylaws does not specify the percentage vote need to call a new senior minister. The current Bylaws are also silent on that topic. UUA suggests that the percentage be high because you want the bulk of the congregation to be on board with a new minister. Virginia proposed that we add language stating that at least 4/5<sup>th</sup> of the congregation present at a meeting called for that purpose should vote in the affirmative to call a new called minister. The SC made a motion, which was seconded, to approve her proposed wording.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to add language to the revised FP Bylaws clarifying that at least 4/5<sup>th</sup> of the Congregation must vote to approve a new called senior minister.

#### **FY 2025 BUDGET DISCUSSION**

- Fifi reported that the current bottom line of the draft budget for FY 2025 is now negative \$18,200. Our goal was \$990,000, but we knew that was a stretch.
- A discussion ensued about the budget. The SC directed Seth and Fifi to make some edits to the budget for our final budget meeting scheduled for next week.
- Jim Reynolds offered to join a newly formed Social Committee and to organize a Welcome Back party, which could foster increased pledges.
- Gib offered to organize a fundraiser related to the Patriot's Day 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event.
- The SC will have a retreat with Rev. Jennifer Johnson in September to think about long-term planning related to the budget.

The SC meeting was adjourned at 8:08pm.