

First Parish in Concord
Governing Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 8, 2025, 7-9pm

Meeting at First Parish, Brooks room

All but X members present

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	N
Leah Russell	Treasurer	Y
Susan See	Governing Board Member	R
Virginia Taylor	Governing Board Member	N
Rev. Jennifer Johnson	Minister	N

R = Remotely, by zoom

Opening Words

Leah shared an excerpt from “The Hill We Climb” by Amanda Gorman

Check-in

GB members reflected on the line from our FP Covenant “We support each other on our spiritual journeys.”

Administrative Actions

- **March Meeting Minutes** (Meeting Agenda, Appendix II)
→ **V O T E D** : **March 2025 meeting minutes**, unanimously approved.

Operations Report - (Fifi Ball)

- Anticipated pledge gap was met for FY 25 and over by about \$1000 as late pledges came in
- Interest income is down from projection
- Rental income down due to vacancy in Coan house
- Special events income less than predicted by about \$4200
- Admin misc - budgeted for \$2500 but will more like \$8500

- Bottom line still looks good
 - Surplus funds - predicted to be around \$180,000 - money saved due to vacant staff positions

Accessibility Justice Task Force (AJTF) (Peter Nobile and Jan Power from AJTF)

- Task force: Peter Nobile (chair), Jan Power, Sherry Seaver, Dana Snyder-Grant, Lois Suarez, and Bob Andrews.
- The memo shared with the GB was not a full report but an interim snapshot to outline priorities for budget discussions
- Phase 1 report will be released soon - by the end of the month
- Background
 - UUA used to have program EQUUAL Access
 - Churches could become certified regarding accessibility
 - Resources are still available and were used to guide facilities audit
 - ADA in the 90s - primarily addresses mobility and visually impaired - parity in public buildings
 - Awareness and understanding of equity has increased a lot since then
 - Examples: heavy doors that are difficult to open, sound in Emerson room is overwhelming for some kids with auditory processing issues, sensory sensitivities, etc.
 - We want to strive for an environment where everyone feels they belong everywhere
 - We're called to this work via our Covenant and our inclusive, welcoming denomination
 - We are aware that there are people who don't return because they don't feel welcome in the physical space
- Process
 - Audited church beginning with facilities/physical plant
 - A later phase will look at operational accessibility and what we can do behaviorally to be more inclusive and welcoming.
 - Using a lens of broadening concentric circles: Accessibility > Universal Design > Inclusive Design
 - We don't look at it as a to do list but as a dialog with leadership and the congregation
 - Money requested in memo is for assessment/design/advising, not implementation
 - Full report will have a lot more detail
- Comments and discussion
 - The Governing Board thanked the group and noted that this is important information to have and consider as we embark on strategic planning
 - Other building-related initiatives are connected and overlapping and need to be considered together
 - Greening the campus, kitchen renovation, security
 - Strategic planning next year
 - More accessibility concerns may emerge through this process
 - We expect this to lead to a capital campaign
 - Recommendations -
 - There are many because they are specific to different spaces. They will be organized into 11 categories for ease of understanding.
- Congregational meetings will be important - communication and input

- AJTF attended First Tuesday group - well received
- Share about work at annual meeting

→ **NEXT STEPS:**

- AJTF will share the full phase 1 report with the Governing Board by the end of the month.

Emeritus proposal

- Follow up regarding Beth's request to grant emeritus status to Eric Huenneke
- Beth's letter summarizes his role during his long tenure and his legacy
- Propose that we waive the 12-month rule in our new emeritus policy. Otherwise, it wouldn't come to the annual meeting for consideration until next year.
- Two questions for consideration:
 - Should we grant emeritus status to Eric?

→ **VOTED: Bring proposal to grant emeritus status to Eric to the Congregation at the annual meeting** - Unanimously approved

- Waive 12 month rule

→ **VOTED: Waive the 12-month rule in this case** - Unanimously approved

→ **ACTION ITEMS:**

- For future cases, consider whether we can approve emeritus status at an annual meeting but not bestow the status until the 12 month mark has passed - Kristin
- Communicate our decision regarding Eric to Beth - Kristin
- Put this item on the annual meeting agenda - Gib

Concord 250 Planning

- Jennifer, Roselyn Romberg, Gib, Nigel, Tom Wilson - have been meeting regularly to coordinate planning for Concord 250
- Jennifer would like GB to address a couple of points
 - #1 - Request for us to be an emergency shelter-in-place location
 - #2 - Requests from groups within and outside of FP to set up tables on FP grounds
 - Decision had been made to keep the church locked on 4/19
 - Have had requests for access for various reasons
- We have given the town permission for port-a-potties to be placed to the right of the back circle
 - Will be there through Easter
 - Want to keep driveway clear
- Nigel has recently spoken to a private security company and we will have two unarmed guards
- We will close access to the church on Friday at 5pm
 - It will remain locked until 7am Sunday
- Watch teams on Saturday
 - Jennifer, Dave, Roselyn, Gib, CC, Kristin
 - Other GB members have signed up via the spreadsheet the Gib sent out
- Proposed FP Weekly announcement -
 - Building will be locked, don't plan to use bathrooms, ask to come in to get supplies, etc.
 - No FP staff will be available to help any groups who want tables
- Groups given permission to be on FP grounds

- Reclaiming Our Democracy
- WPA - selling cookies
- Discover Concord - special issue for that day - the town urged us to allow this
- Other FP groups could be added if they bring their own tables, supplies, etc. - need to be completely self-sufficient - cannot get in the building
- Other security items
 - Move plastic chairs indoors or secure them - secure anything left out
 - Will have private security as well as FP people inside and outside of building
- Security protocols
 - Jennifer has been in touch with Concord Police. They have requested that we be an emergency shelter in place location
 - Need uniformed police to be in charge - police saying they will do that
 - Need guidance re crowd control
 - What are the hours we'd have to be available?
 - Until 9pm - although depending on the situation this could need to be extended
 - Lock interior doors
 - Parish hall, bathrooms, and possibly sanctuary will be available
 - All else locked
 - Nigel has hired two unarmed security guards
 - Patrol perimeter
 - What would their role be in a shelter in place situation?
 - We would need guidance regarding crowd control
- TriCon has agreed to be an emergency shelter-in-place location, Catholic church has not
- Discussion
 - There are conflicting feelings as we want to protect our space.
 - However, we have a mission to care for people and be a safe haven
 - If Easter is affected, so be it
 - Love is at the center, human life is worth more than any inconvenience or risk to property
 - Town has indemnified us - we are protected
- Decisions:
 - We will agree to be an emergency shelter-in-place location as long as a uniformed police officer and our private security are available for support and to guide crowd control.
 - Additional outside groups will not be granted permission to set up on FP grounds
 - Other FP groups may request permission to set up on FP grounds as long as they bring everything they need and are self-sufficient

→ ACTION ITEMS:

- Put an announcement in FP Weekly regarding access to FP on 4/19 and requesting permission to set up on the grounds - Gib

Fundraising/Fun-raising - (Fifi Ball, Leah Russell)

- Annual Pledge Campaign
 - Have 269 pledges - total of 308 last year
 - \$838,000 has been pledged - goal is 975,000 - We are \$137,000 short
 - Trustees may increase their contribution. They had hoped to be weaned from helping with the operating budget, but they will do so if needed.
 - A significant fundraiser is needed.

- Some trustees increased their pledges after hearing of shortfall
- Auction or other fundraiser
 - We need to do some sort of fundraiser
 - Susan See has volunteered to chair an auction committee
 - Concern is that we don't have a plan B
 - Auction money has been split over 2 years
 - Auctions have been bringing in less money each year but still a significant sum
 - Would something else be more effective or are there ways to simplify the auction?
 - Need to think about what are the important elements to maintain
 - Need to approve tonight as it's already late to get something planned for the fall
 - Decision
 - Green light for Susan to try to pull together an auction committee and move ahead
- Executive Session
- Would GB sponsor a Joy Jam on May 9?
 - Set up and clean up, cooking, organize events
 - "Breakfast for dinner" is the theme
 - Several people volunteered. Others would prefer to not have to work this event and just connect and have fun

Installation

- \$5000 proposed budget
- Travel and lodging costs are still uncertain
- CC distributed a budget

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

(Second Tuesday of the month, 7pm)

Tuesday, May 13, 7-9pm

Brooks Room at First Parish in Concord
