

First Parish in Concord
Governing Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 13, 2025, 7-9pm

Meeting at First Parish, Brooks room

All members present in person

Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Lisa Bennett	Governing Board Member	Y
Kimma Brainerd	Clerk	Y
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
Rev. Jennifer Johnson	Lead Minister	Y

R = Remotely, by zoom

Opening Words

Susan See offered a poem about predictions for the Governing Board to contemplate.

Check-in

Board members shared reflections on “shared ministry” in anticipation of the upcoming Installation.

Administrative Actions

- **April Meeting Minutes** (Meeting Agenda, Appendix II)

→ **VOTED**: April 2025 meeting minutes, unanimously approved.

Operations Report (Fifi Ball)

- Fifi sent around a financial report. We have more surplus cash than anticipated.
- Staffing:

- Assistant is working out great.
- We're receiving really good feedback about Nigel, who is so friendly. We're grateful.

Ministers Report (Rev. Jennifer Johnson)

- A lot of great things have happened this year.
- Hiring and staffing. We're well positioned for next year.
- Optimistic about Jenna.
- Paul's leaving is difficult; we're not in a position to rehire that position. Rev. Jennifer can see ways in which his work can be distributed in a way that is supportive of shared ministry.
- Family ministry. We're listening to our young families more. (Joy Jam is a result.) Did Family circles and Parent circles.
- Our work: mixing intergenerationally.
- Pastoral ministry.
- Financial consequences for disruptive behavior incidents.

Social Responsibility Grant Proposal (Cindy Soule, Wendy Holt)

- Cindy Soule and Wendy Holt presented a Grant proposal "Framing a Reparations Initiative at First Parish." The grant proposal has been put in with a letter of support from Gib. Presented to the Governing Board to make us aware of the proposal.
- The scope focuses intentionally on colonial and pre-colonial era, enslavement as well as indigenous peoples. Researchers at Robbin's House will be looking into the documentation of First Parish; leading, we hope, to partnering with Robbin's House. Would like to collaborate with other towns and/or organizations. Focusing locally.
- Hope to involve people as speakers and with graphic materials.
- Would like to have the congregation vote next year at annual meeting.
- Central questions: What is the action that follows acknowledgement? What impacts are we still living with the privilege of, the benefits of, unpaid labor in our past?
- Dedicate some money towards supporting Robbin's House, towards a scholarship. What will make a difference now? How could we repair inequities? (Not approaching as if finding ancestors.)
- Speaker series will be developed with listening sessions.
- First start talking about reparations. A slow, careful approach, engaging the congregation as the programs are developed.
- Desired outcome: partnership with other Concord organizations such as the library, museum. Making connections.

- There are existing tribes that are doing work... build relationships with the impacted populations. What are your skills, your resources, what can we bring to support the work that you're doing (not just money). Relationship-building.

Nominating Committee Nominations

- Leanne Baxter and Kristin Haddad will be leaving next year.
- New candidates: Susan See, Carolyn Kessel Stewart.

→ **V O T E D** : **Nominate Susan See and Carolyn Kessel Stewart to the Nominating Committee**, unanimously approved (all but Susan See).

Security Assessment Task Force Charge (Meeting Agenda, Appendix III)

- This Task Force sets about to assess the status of and changing needs for all aspects of the security of FPC to ensure that we can continue to pursue our mission as set forth in the by-laws and in a manner consistent with our covenant.
- This marks the beginning of the charge for this group to begin looking at security broadly as it relates to our ability to do our mission. Add: "Identify priorities, strategies and improvements."
- The task force will deliver a progress report by the last Governing Board meeting of the year.
- The initial task force members will include Neal Brock, Jen Izzo, Lois Suarez.

→ **V O T E D** : **Adoption of Security Assessment Task Force**, unanimously approved.

Annual Meeting Warrant (Appendix IV)

- The Governing Board discussed the Warrant.

→ **V O T E D** : **Annual Meeting Warrant**, unanimously approved (all but Susan See).

Annual Budget (Leah, Russell, Appendix IV)

- Leah presented a balanced budget to the Governing Board.
- Excluding the loss of a large donor, pledging is up \$20k over last year. We have some surplus cash.
- We have an \$180k shortfall (largely because of the loss of one large donor this year). Half of this shortfall will be filled from available cash, and half from Trustees. Trustees have asked us to look at how we run the annual pledge campaign, and legacy giving program.
- We will not be funding a Social Action Minister this year.

- Money for the Coan House is going towards the Trust. (So, still coming to First Parish, but moving from the main budget.)
- The Governing Board commits to having an auction next year.
- Interest income is down.
- Fifi sent detailed information about staffing to the board.
- We will be saving some money that formerly went to Paul's salary.
- Increased staffing expense: web & office administrator.
- Spending a little more on pastoral care and facilities manager.
- There will be staff salary increases, to ensure parity given new hires this year, reflected in the budget.
- Leah highlighted other big changes: facilities repair is going down, we're not doing an audit, saving on moving expenses, tech & equipment is down, fuel oil is down.
- A couple of areas where we're spending more: Governing Board (strategic planning, for retreats, ect.), coffee hour and hospitality.
- The Governing Board discusses ways to strategically use our surplus cash. Setting it aside for a few priorities such as buildings and grounds fund, staff leave (sabbatical, family leave, etc.), youth activities, RE events. These areas reflect our priorities: that we value staff, the care and maintenance of this building, care for congregants through hospitality. The Board wants to offer Rev. Jennifer
- Governing Board voting today to move free cash into some funds. More specifics on that to come in September.
- Fifi as well as Rev. Jennifer called out the collaborative process of working together this year.

→ **V O T E D : Annual Budget**, unanimously approved.

Governing Board Operations

- Thanks to Governing Board members who helped with Joy Jam.
- June Governing Board meeting; considering doing a potluck.

Meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

GB = Governing Board

VOTED:

- **April 2025 meeting minutes**, unanimously approved.
- **Nominate Susan See and Carolyn Kessel Stewart to the Nominating Committee**, unanimously approved (all but Susan See).
- **Adoption of Security Assessment Task Force**, unanimously approved.
- **Annual Meeting Warrant**, unanimously approved (Susan See, abstains).
- **Annual Budget**, unanimously approved.

NEXT MEETING:

(Second Tuesday of the month, 7pm)

Tuesday, June 10, 6:30-9pm

Jim Reynold's house
