

**First Parish in Concord
Standing Committee Meeting
April 12, 2022**

Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Michael Beer	Standing Committee Member	Y
Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Jim Hawks	Standing Committee Member	Y
Jennifer Izzo	Clerk	Y
C.C. King	Standing Committee Member	Y
Gib Metcalf	Standing Committee Member	Y
Caroline Washburn Minkin	Standing Committee Member	N
Heather Packard	Treasurer	Y
Jim Reynolds	Standing Committee Member	Y
Liz Rust	Chair	Y
Susan See	Standing Committee Member	Y
Virginia Taylor	Standing Committee Member	Y
Peter Nobile	Congregant	Y
Jan Power	Congregant, Representative of the Congregational Life Committee, Representative of 8 th Principle Group	Y
Sally Lewis	Congregant, Member of RJAG	Y
Sue St.Croix	Congregant, Member of RJAG, Representative of 8 th Principle Group	Y

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

Howard started the meeting by reading a selection by Angela Herrera.

Minister's Report and Update

- Howard reported that congregants are increasingly interested in having farewell conversations with him. He welcomes such conversations.
- 95 people attended church in-person last Sunday.
- Howard is asking 6 people to serve on a Covid Task Force. The idea is to shift to this group ongoing responsibility for Covid policy and decision making about FP's response to the Pandemic. The group will consist of 2 staff members, 2 members of the Standing Committee and 2 members of the Congregation. He feels this is necessary because there is likely another full year of managing Covid ahead of us.

Board Operations

- **Director of Operations Report**
 - Fifi sent the February financial reports to the SC last week.

- Gib asked for clarification on the planned deficit of \$75,000 shown on the budget. This deficit will be offset by positive “cash available” reserves. Fifi thinks that end of the fiscal year, we will be close to “breaking even” with the budget.
- Fifi sent a copy of the Staff Compensation Report to the SC. She presents this report to the SC every six months.
- Pledge Campaign.
 - We have achieved 63% of our pledge goals, as of the date of the SC meeting. This amount is about 10% less than what we normally have achieved at this time in previous years.
 - Susan asked if we reach out in an organized way to people who have not pledged in the last few years, but who are active in the church. Howard answered no. Instead, Howard suggested that someone in the Congregational Life Committee needs to follow up with such individuals outside of the pledge campaign. For people who haven’t been at the church for a few years, Fifi sends a letter asking if they want to stay active. She did not send out the letter this year due to Covid and the slow return to normalcy.
 - CC urged the pledge drive committee to communicate with the SC if they encounter individuals who would benefit from having a conversation about how they are doing in these difficult times.
- Budget for Next Fiscal Year.
 - Cost of Living Increase. Fifi added a 2% cost of living increases for staff in the budget, but it is up to the SC whether we wish to provide this increase. (The resulting cost will be around \$19,000.)
 - The budget reflects the \$1,000,000 gift from Ian and Liesel Simmons, \$10,000 of which is allocated to Social Action and \$80,000 is allocated to Operations.
 - Fifi brought up the topic of Interest Income. She recently closed 2 CDs that were held in a bank because the interest rates dropped so low. She deposited the money into FP’s checking account for now, but intends to roll over the money into conservative, low-risk Fidelity accounts. In addition, Fifi intends to transfer some funds in FP’s savings account to the Fidelity account in order to earn higher interest.
 - The Senior Minister line item (approximately \$168,000) has several considerations embedded in the number. Howard will be with FP for another few months and he has accrued vacation time owed to him, in accordance with FP’s policies. The Interim Minister’s Salary is also included. That salary will be at the midpoint of minister salaries for the UUA. Finally, the number includes direct FICA payments to staff.
 - Summer Guest Ministers. The plan is to hire a summer minister (\$4,000 for 8 weeks, up to 20 hours of service per week). This individual will be responsible for coordinating Sunday morning services, providing pastoral care, and leading service. Liz suggested that as we get closer to the summer, the SC should be given a schedule for what is planned over the summer, and staff vacation schedules.
 - Recruiting and Hiring. Fifi added \$500 to this line item because she believes that Tina will be retiring, so we will need to hire a new bookkeeper. In addition, she added \$5,000 to cover the cost of recruiting a new settled minister.
 - Congregational Life (\$5,000). Liz discussed that Congregational Life should have a budget to run events and activities (e.g., video interviews; creation of a master list of congregants of First Parish and their level of involvement, attendance at Sunday

services, etc.). Susan asked for a more detailed description of what line items would be included in that budget.

- Childcare. Amy Freedman wishes to increase this line item to \$4,000 to pay for increased childcare for much of the year.
- Increasing Fifi's Hours of Work. Fifi currently works 35 hours. She and Howard would like to increase her hours to 40 hours because she consistently exceeds her allocated hours, especially during the pledge campaign. The total cost of this line item is a little over \$13,000.
- Moving Expenses for Settled Minister. Fifi allocated \$5,000 into the budget to cover moving expenses for the new settled minister.
- The SC will vote on this budget at the May meeting.

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept March, 2022 Standing Committee (SC) meeting minutes, and to incorporate them into the permanent record.

- **Standing Committee Bulletin Board**

- The SC Bulletin Board in the hall of First Parish is currently empty. Gib volunteered to post biographies and photographs of the members on the Standing Committee on the board.

- **Wright Tavern Preservation Restriction**

- The Wright Tavern Trustees applied to the Town of Concord for Community Preservation funds for the Wright Tavern. In order to receive the funds, First Parish must agree to place a permanent Preservation Restriction on the property.
- Discussions ensued about the ramifications of the proposed Preservation Restriction. The Standing Committee agreed in concept with the idea of the Preservation Restriction, but need to understand all of the details and liabilities. They will likely want to negotiate the terms of the Preservation Restriction.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve in concept only a Preservation Restrictions upon the Wright Tavern, subject to further negotiations and discussions.

8th Principal Presentation

- Sally Lewis joined the SC meeting to discuss the effort to have FP adopt the 8th Principle. The 8th Principle reads:
"We, the member congregants of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

- Sally raised a question about how best to position the 8th Principle effort with the work of the COIC. Sally's view is that the purpose of COIC is broader than the 8th Principle. The 8th Principle is about declaring FP's intention to tackle the issue of racism.
- CC suggested that COIC is about examining our internal church structure (relational, communication, and values). COIC is an internal reflection and rearrangement, whereas the 8th Principal effort is about reaching out to other communities.
- Howard suggested that keeping the 8th Principle closely tied with the UU's Seven Principles will help with the messaging. The 8th Principle is about accountability around racial justice. This is not the first time that a new principle was added to the Unitarian Universalist creed. The 7th Principle was added after formation of the original Principles because people were concerned that caring for the earth was not on the list.
- Gib stated that having the 8th Principle group talk with and coordinate with the COIC group around messaging would be valuable. The 2 groups can develop complimentary messaging.
- Jan Power pointed out that the mission statement of the 8th Principle does not mention a specific race. Sue St. Croix agreed, stating that the Beloved Community concept applies to everyone.
- The congregation will vote whether to adopt the 8th Principle at the annual meeting in June.

Congregational Life Committee Update

- Jan Power, chair of the Congregational Life Committee, offered an update on the Committee's accomplishments. The mission of the Committee is to promote and nurture an experience of belonging and a strong sense of connected community at First Parish. The committee aspires to embody the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and collaboration while fostering a culture of radical welcome. The committee currently has 9 lay members, plus Liz Weber. They will be recruiting 2 new members for next year.
- The first priority for the group was beefing up FP's welcoming process. The second priority was to involve the committee in establishing norms and processes around how FP committees get work done, based upon unitarian values, equity and diversity (e.g., using a consensus model rather than hierarchical model).
- Actions taken this year include: Establishing a welcome table after Sunday services with signup sheets to help individuals get involved; Volunteering to run the Sunday Zoom chat function; Welcoming UU class for newcomers and individuals who wish to reengage; Having the membership book available for signing on the 2nd Sunday of each month; Reading and discussing a book called *Radical Welcome*; Completing preliminary work to compile and publish a Handbook for FP members; Working on the pages on the FP website for First Time Visitors; etc.

Loan to Museum

- Liz offered an update on the loan to the Concord Museum of the following items:
 - A Queen Anne Maple & Cherry Service Table with local provenance: "The work of Barrett's Mill Shop, circa 1765-1775." Appraised at \$75,000
 - A pair of small paintings by Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts (1871-1927): (1) "Concord Women Sewing For the War Sufferers in the Vestry of the First Parish Meeting House", 1915; appraised at \$18,000; (2) "Concord Women Sewing For the Belgium Refugees", 1913; appraised at \$24,000.

- Contracts were negotiated with the Concord Museum and the Concord Art Museum. The Concord Museum will insure and display the paintings and table at their expense pursuant to a 10-year loan agreement. The Concord Museum will also allow the paintings to be displayed by the Concord Art for a temporary exhibit of the paintings of Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts.
- Another contract was negotiated with an art conservator in Wayland. She is currently restoring the paintings.
- Reproductions of the paintings were created and will be placed in the Parish Hall.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

- **VOTED:** to loan to the Concord Museum the following items owned by First Parish: (1) a Queen Anne Maple & Cherry Service Table with local provenance; (2) a painting by Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts entitled “Concord Women Sewing For the War Sufferers in the Vestry of the First Parish Meeting House”; and (3) a painting by Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts entitled “Concord Women Sewing For the Belgium Refugees.”

Next Year’s Chair of the SC

- CC and Virginia will speak with members of the SC to see who would be willing to serve as vice chair next year with an eye to becoming chair when Liz steps down. They will make a recommendation to the SC at the May meeting.

Upcoming Events in the Spring

- SC Conversations about the interim Search Process, April 24/25
- May Fair – A Spring Celebration, May 14
- Offer to interim minister (hopeful), May 18
- Welcome/Re-welcome Class, May 9, 16, 23 (3 Mondays)
- Sign Annual Meeting Warrant, May 20
- New member recognition, June 5
- Annual Meeting, June 12
- Volunteer Appreciation, June 12
- Howard’s Farewell Party, June 18
- Howard’s last sermon, June 19
- General Assembly, June 22

General Assembly

- The UUA General Assembly is scheduled for June 22-26, 2022 in Portland, Oregon.
- Liz Rust, Jan Power and possibly others will be attending.
- Virginia and Susan will write a blurb for the First Parish newsletter to ask if any congregants would like to attend.

May Standing Committee Meeting/Annual Meeting Format

- The SC decided to keep the SC May meeting remote because people had already made plans to be out of town.

- First Parish's annual meeting is scheduled for the second Sunday in June, 6/12/22. The group discussed again whether the meeting should be in person or remote, and the logistical difficulties of running a hybrid meeting.
- CC commented that we may not have sufficient technical capabilities to enable remote viewers to vote in real-time.
- Jim expressed that we should do all we can to enable all members to participate as fully as they feel inclined to do.