

**First Parish in Concord  
Standing Committee Meeting  
May 10, 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
Toby Smith-Ropiek	Congregant, Co-Chair of COIC	Y
Darien Smith	Congregant, Co-Chair of COIC	Y
Virginia McIntyre	Congregant	Y

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

Howard started the meeting by reading *The Sunflowers* by Mary Oliver.

**Minister Report and Update**

- Howard reported that the governance/policy work that was going to be a priority this year is on hold, given the ministry transition. Gib asked Howard to provide a list of what he considers to be the top priorities for church policy changes to be addressed after he is gone.
- Howard reported that attendance in Religious Education is small, but steady. Families are coming sporadically, but we are seeing good attendance by teens. Rebuilding will be necessary next year.
- Ken Langer has been hired to be FP's Summer Minister from Sunday, June 29 through late August. Ken is a third-year seminary student at Starr King School. He has completed his chaplaincy requirement and will be working next year as the Ministerial Intern at the UU church in Chelmsford. Ken lives in Maynard. He will come to the June Standing Committee meeting.
- The Annual Pledge Campaign has been slower than in past years. Many donations simply have not come in yet. Howard asked members of the Standing Committee to make phone calls to outstanding large donors. Jim R., Virginia, Liz, Jim Hawks, Jen, Susan, CC, Gib and Mike offered to call 22 individuals.
- Church Administrator Sarah Burns resigned on Tuesday, May 4. She will work two more weeks. We may try to find a temporary person to fill the position during the summer. The group discussed that before making another permanent hire, First Parish should restructure this

position for the current needs of the congregation, likely with a greater focus on electronic communications and membership.

### **Commission on Institutional Change (COIC) Update**

- Darien Smith and Toby Smith-Ropiek joined the meeting to offer an update on the COIC's activities. The committee has 7 members, who have been meeting every 2 weeks. The COIC has 3 goals: (1) assess congregational policies and procedures for alignment with UU values; (2) engage FP members, friends and staff to identify opportunities for systemic change; and (3) identify actions to dismantle white supremacy in FP's practices, policies and procedures.
- Plans for next year include: (a) look at policies and procedures; (b) offer programming to the full congregation; and (c) offer educational sessions.
- Toby stated that the COIC is thinking about how to best work with the interim minister. Toby would like to meet with the interim early in his tenure, and coordinate the timing of the interim transition with the COIC goals.
- Toby asked if the COIC should present at the Annual Meeting to let people know what's been happening, and to ask for input and ideas. Liz and CC agreed this would be a good idea. Susan mentioned that we will be voting on the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle at the Annual Meeting, and it will be important to clarify how the two initiatives differ.

### **Board Operations**

- **Budget.**
  - Fifi shared an updated copy of next year's budget. Fifi does not think that we will come close to the "top-line" pledge target for this year (\$1,08,000). Therefore, she adjusted the top line estimate to \$970,000. This would put the bottom line/use of pledges left from prior year to negative \$169,000. In other words, we will use \$169,000 of the pledge surplus built up from prior years.
  - Howard commented that we are in a time of transition. The pledges came in slower than usual, and we started the year with a sizeable hole. Our pledge goal was probably too ambitious, given the headwinds we had going into the year.
  - Mike asked how much money FP has in reserve. Fifi answered that we have available cash of \$128,000 (not including the ~\$74,000 from this year).
  - Susan commented that we keep on using up a portion of the surplus every year. We can't count on always having the surplus. Liz and Howard stated that, in fact, we don't spend the surplus every year. It is largely untouched. Howard said that we under-spend the budget and bring in more money than expected every year. He also stated that if ever there was a time to use the surplus, this year is the time, given the many challenges and changes that we are facing (e.g., pandemic, decreased membership, Howard's departure, etc.).
  - Mike asked if we should institute a policy that we always leave a certain amount of money in the surplus fund under which we will not draw.
  - Liz asked if a small group of SC members should work with staff to figure out how to decrease expenses. Howard stated that most of the budget is tied up in the building and staff, so it can't be reduced much. Several SC members stated that we should approve the current budget (which draws upon the surplus), because now is not the time to be making drastic changes. We will likely be making big changes as part of the interim minister transition process. We could spend hours and try to find small

ways to reduce expenses, but it probably won't amount to much. And we do not want to reduce staff resources at this time, with so much change happening. However, everyone acknowledged and agreed that we should not continue to spend down the surplus every year.

- Jim asked about the \$1M donation made by a congregant this year. \$80,000 of that amount is already reflected in the budget, as well as \$10,000 allocated to social action.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to accept the budget and move it forward to the June, 2022 Annual Meeting.

- **Minutes approval**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to accept the April 12, 2022 Standing Committee (SC) meeting minutes, as amended, and to incorporate them into the permanent record.

- **Next Year's Vice Chair of the Standing Committee**

- The group proposed that Gib serve as the SC vice chairperson next year, and become the SC chair after Liz leaves. The SC will not vote on this proposal until after the congregation votes to approve the SC slate at the Annual Meeting in June.

- **SC Bulletin Board**

- Gib posted biographies and photographs of the SC on the bulletin board.

### **Pride Flag**

- The SC was asked to fly the pride flag on the church building during the month of June because June is pride month. Everyone was in favor.

### **Museum Contract**

- Virginia (Dinny) McIntyre joined the meeting to discuss the two paintings of women sewing by Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts that used to hang in the Parish Hall. They are currently being restored off-site. The SC had previously discussed lending the paintings to the Concord Museum, along with the church's Queen Ann table and silver. However, Dinny asked the SC to reconsider and to lend the paintings to the Concord Art Association instead, because the artist founded the Art Association, and two of her works are already there. Dinny stated that the Art Association would likely display the paintings at all times, unlike the Concord Museum. Admission to the Art Association is free, unlike the Concord Museum. Dinny believes that the paintings should join the painter's other works in the Art Association.
- On the other hand, the group discussed that the Concord Museum would be simpler because they will have our table and silver. Having everything in the same place would be advantageous.
- Gib suggested that the people in the church who care deeply about this issue should come to consensus.
- CC asked about the safety and security levels in each museum. Liz will get more details.

### **Wright Tavern – Preservation Restriction**

- The Wright Tavern was granted funds from the Community Preservation Fund – about \$500,000 over 2 years. The funds come with the requirement that FP place a historic preservation reservation restriction upon the Wright Tavern. The grant funds will flow to the Wright Tavern Legacy Trust, but the preservation restriction will run with FP’s land and encumber the property in perpetuity. The SC agreed that FP needs to enter into a “side agreement” with the Wright Tavern Legacy Trust to clarify roles and responsibilities.
- Mike stated that achieving historic protection for the Wright Tavern would be a big positive for both FP and Wright Tavern.
- Susan asked what would happen if the preservation restriction were not approved at Annual Meeting. Liz answered that if the measure does not pass, then the Wright Tavern could not accept the grant funds.

**Transition: Interim Search update**

- 6 individuals applied to be FP’s interim minister for the next 2 years. The Interim Minister Search Committee elected to check references and interview 5 of these individuals. Interviews will be conducted in the coming week. The Committee will provide their ranked choices to the UUA on Monday, May 18.

**Spring Events (for information, no discussion required)**

- May Fair – A Spring Celebration, Saturday, May 14
- Offer to Interim (hopeful), Wednesday, May 18
- Volunteer Appreciation, Sunday, May 22
- Sign Annual Meeting Warrant, Friday, May 18
- New member recognition, Sunday, June 5
- Annual Meeting, Sunday, June 5
- Howard’s Farewell Fiesta, Saturday, June 18
- Howard’s last sermon at FP, Sunday, June 19
- General Assembly, Wednesday, June 22