

Regular Attendees		Present
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Jeff Brainerd	Standing Committee member	Y
Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Dave Elwood	Standing Committee member	Y
Kristin Haddad	Chair	Y
Peter Nobile	Clerk	Y
Patty Popov	Standing Committee member	Y
Toby Smith Ropeik	Standing Committee member	Y
Mark Russell Prior	Standing Committee member	Y
Lora Venesy	Standing Committee member	Y
Tom Wilson	Treasurer	Y
Kate Svrcek	Standing Committee member	Y
John Lowe	Standing Committee member	Y
Guests		
Doug Hardy	Nominating Committee	Y
Margie King Saphier	Racial Justice Group	Y

Howard opened the meeting with Margaret Gooding’s *Why Not a Star?*

Chair’s Report

Kristin reported that the Communications subcommittee met and discussed ways to get Standing Committee (SC) proceedings distributed more effectively, including efforts to get minutes reviewed, approved and posted quickly, as well as the Chair’s summary of SC proceedings that is posted to both the Meetinghouse News and the church’s website. In addition, Kristin led us through the following observations and news items:

- A good level of participation around our Transylvanian delegation visitor’s activities, with thanks to all who participated.
- The SC has received another letter from the Concord Historic District Commission’s (HDC), dated 11/21/16. The letter essentially still requires First Parish to submit a formal signage application for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) banners, which we have said we do not want to do. The letter acknowledges receipt of our response, but disagrees with our conclusions. Mr. Gregory once again politely requests an application. Various responses were suggested, but prior to making any decisions, it was suggested that we first complete the discussion scheduled later in the meeting on the status of the banners.
- The committee unanimously approved the drawing up of a formal letter of support for the Islamic Center of Greater Boston in Wayland. Kristin will draft the letter.
- The committee was reminded that the next SC retreat will be held on February 4, 2017.

Minister’s Report

In addition to the notes Howard shared with the Committee in his written report, he reported that 5 new members have joined the Church so far this month, and that a total of 10 joined last month.

Howard also attended an SAC board meeting on 12/8 which was also attended by Lora, Jeff and Kristin. Suggestions were made at that meeting about the SAC board's role in the Annual Campaign, and the SC's relationship to the SAC board was again clarified. Howard and the SC attendees sensed both the board's grievances and the board's desire to move forward. The board is clearly looking for guidance and support.

The SC discussed the following 2017 housing allowances for Senior Minister, Pastoral Care Minister and Director of Religious Education:

- Rev. Howard Dana: \$53,037
- Rev. Marion Visel: \$34,200

Motions were made to approve the 2017 housing allowances for Howard and Marion, and the motions passed unanimously. The 2017 housing allowance for Rev. Freedman will be reviewed at the next SC meeting.

Director of Operations' Report

Fifi's October 2016 report, sent to the committee by email, is hereby summarized with comments and notes made during our meeting.

- Current Year Pledge Payments (#3020 on the Income Statement)—\$64,704 in October 2016—are up slightly compared to \$59,955 in October 2015, \$64,783 in October 2014, and \$62,807 in October 2013 (average of these three prior-year months = \$62,515).
- Total income for the month is up: \$98,564 in October 2016, compared to \$80,262 in October 2015, \$84,306 in October 2014, and \$81,395 in October 2013 (average \$81,988).
- Prior Year Pledge Payments—\$13,434 in October 2016 (\$254 October 2015, \$0 October 2014, \$0 October 2013). Quarterly pledge payment statements were mailed late October 2016. These included mention of any balance due for *last* fiscal year (FY16).
- Percent paid of *FY16* pledges: Final FY16 pledges totaled \$972,750. During FY16, pledge payments totaled \$924,201 (95%). Prior Year Pledge Payments received July-October 2016 (3050 + 3055 on the Income Statement) totaled \$21,448, increasing the FY16 pledge paid percentage to 97.2%. The committee noted how remarkable that percentage is!
- A sneak peek at November 2016 reveals an additional \$2,200 received, bringing the percentage of FY16 pledges paid to 97.4% or 2.6% unpaid.

Fifi walked the committee through expenses related to upgrading the Sanctuary sound system. In October 2016 (\$2,800) and November 2016 (\$2,400), for a total of \$5,200, we completed Phase 1 of a Sanctuary sound system upgrade. These expenses are listed as 7175 Unbudgeted Expense (and on the sheet of Changes relative to the FY17 budget, for Standing Committee approval). Phase 2, replacing the Sanctuary speakers, is planned for next fiscal year (FY18 = 7/1/17-6/30/18) and is estimated to cost less than \$10,000. Fifi asked for an SC vote to approved the \$5,200 in expenses; a motion was so made and was approved unanimously.

- After paying the final cost of the building the organ in September, we closed the Capital Campaign checking account (#1080 on the Balance Sheet) in October and moved the balance in that account (~\$2,400) to the Music Reserve account (#2170 on the Balance Sheet) to help cover organ dedication expenses.
- Music Reserve/Music Events (2170/2180 Balance Sheet) were increased by \$1,200 net proceeds from the Holly Near concert in October and November 2016. In November, half of this was moved to the Diversity Committee, with the other half remaining in Music Reserve.
- Income exceeded expenses in October 2016, showing monthly net *income* of \$23,857,

compared to a monthly net *loss* of \$14,502 in October 2015, a monthly net *loss* of \$40,196 in October 2014, and a monthly net *loss* of \$31,235 in October 2013. See the bottom “Net Income” line of the Income Statement.

- Total expenses for the month were down in October 2016: \$74,707, compared to total expenses in October 2015: \$94,763, October 2014: \$124,503, and October 2013: \$112,631. See the line immediately above the Net Income line on the Income Statement. There were three pay periods (rather than the standard two) in October 2014 and October 2013 (and three pay periods in September 2015 and September 2016).
- Our FY17 budget includes \$15,000 use of savings. However, additional pledges have come in since the budget was set—\$12,410, or \$10,900 with a 5% unpaid assumption and less 7.5% SAC. Also, 3025 Non-Pledge Contributions (\$1,200 over budgeted) and 3050 Prior Year Pledge Payments (\$8,700 over budgeted, excluding 7.5% SAC) total \$9,900. These three sources total an additional \$20,800. A sneak peek at November reveals that 3330 Gifts will also go over the annual budgeted amount.

Treasurer’s Report

Tom reported progress on the compensation survey discussion with Howard and Fifi and others, and he expects to provide an update to the committee in January or February. Some current compensation-related items (e.g. corrections to administrative errors) can and will be adjusted by Howard with little or no financial impact. Tom also reported:

- The Legacy Giving Program is underway, with the group developing various print and electronic information conduits, developing ideas for informational forums, and plans for a Giving Program legacy committee.
- Howard announced that Jane Barnes has agreed to be Campaign Manager for next year’s Annual Pledge Campaign.

Member’s Reports

- Mark reported on a member coming back to the church after a long absence, with this member talking about a feeling of belonging at First Parish.
- Several members reported on a positive reception to Howard’s sermon today on “joyful resistance.” A member reminded the SC that all sermons are available as podcast and via iTunes, and printed copies are available via email to Howard at any time.
- Patty reported a substantially larger outpouring at the craft fair this year - 130 children, up from the last several years’ attendance of about 100.
- Doug Hardy, wearing his Nominating Committee hat, reported a surfeit of congregation members ready and willing to serve on the Standing Committee.
- Howard told the committee that the Partner Church visit could not have gone better. The delegation was supported and warmly received, and as they are going through a sometimes painful transition their meetings with First Parishioners and staff were both encouraging and helpful.

Group and Liaison Reports

Subgroups:

Governance – Kristin reported that a rough draft of a charter is almost ready for review.

Nominating – the gathering of potential candidates for SC is going well. It is to be determined whether the Nominating Committee will have vacancies for the SC to fill.

Liaisons:

Denominational Affairs – John reported that the committee is on hiatus until January 2017.

RE Council – Dave reported his sense of a good, high functioning group, with an ongoing need for teachers.

Membership – Kate reported that the committee is working well. All new First Parish members are assigned mentors.

Ministerial Internship – Jeff reported that we have one applicant so far for 2017.

Arts Council – Kate told us that the group is moving along and that the current chair has resigned for non-church related issues. Kate has volunteered to be interim convener.

Forum – John reported that the Forum is booked until April, and that Forum group has offered April slots to the SC or to other church groups for budget or other such discussions.

Black Lives Matter (BLM) Banner Status Discussion

Margie reported on the past year's activities around Racial Justice, including a special service in August where First Parish members of color or minority status discussed their life experiences. In October, there was a program with the Concord Museum and the Robbins House that included a showing of the documentary "Traces of the Trade", including a revelation that the DeWolf family of RI was the largest slave trading family at that time in the country. There was work with The Trustees of Reservations in developing a discussion about racial issues, and in November there was a panel discussion on racial equity in the Concord public schools around the hiring of the new superintendent. The Netflix documentary "13th" was shown at First Parish in December, which cast into relief both current voices in the political arena and both past and current enslavement issues including chain gangs and mass incarceration. Race Conversation group efforts continue on several fronts including book sales and grant applications. All in all, Margie summarized that the participation in and reaction to the past year's Racial Justice activities AND the results of the recent election have both made our commitment to the BLM movement all that more important.

- Dave and several other committee members emphasized the need to continue to offer strong programming and social action efforts behind the banner so that we don't risk losing momentum and credibility in this important initiative.
- John asked if there might be other ways to build momentum on our banner activities to increase our presence in racial justice discussions, including possible alignment with groups like Movement for Black Lives. Margie will consider and report back to the SC.
- Howard suggested and the group discussed that we consider having a motion made at Annual Meeting, so to memorialize the decision via a congregation-wide vote.
- Some committee members feel strongly that we continue to support the BLM movement.
- Margie feels strongly that our education – the education of white people – about injustices that have been committed in our names.
- Doug Hardy offered the suggestion that the congregation be asked to approve support for the Black Lives Matter movement in general, and that tactical efforts such as signs be approved by the SC.

The committee discussed the extension of the timeline to keep up the BLM banner on the front of our church until annual meeting in June of 2017. A motion was made, and was enthusiastically approved, to extend keeping the BLM banner up until annual meeting 2017.

Standing Committee Goal Formation

The committee discussed our remaining 2-year SMART goals. After some discussion, a motion was made to accept Leadership goal no. 1 as follows:

Nurture Leadership within First Parish.

- *Support Howard in the organization of an annual First Parish leadership meeting, including all*

chairs/co-chairs of FP committees with an agenda aimed at strengthening relationships and leadership capabilities.

The motion was approved unanimously.

The committee discussed Social Action goal no. 2, and a motion was made to accept this goal as follows: *Complete a congregation-wide exploration on social action funding.*

- *Initiate discussions aimed at re-affirming, modifying, or eliminating our annual allocation of 7.5% of annual pledge payments to social justice.*
- *Coordinate timing with SAC pilot initiatives.*
- *Create and disseminate objective information at Annual Meeting 2017.*
- *Evaluate congregational input on funding mechanisms from last year's SAC survey, and assess whether and how further input should be gathered.*
- *Determine if and when to hold a congregational vote regarding our policy on SAC funding mechanisms.*

The motion was approved unanimously.

All our 2-year SMART goals are now approved! A comprehensive version of these our goals will be shared as soon as possible.

The public portion of the meeting ended at 854 PM. There was no Executive Session, and the meeting formally adjourned at 855 PM.

/pn