

Regular Attendees		Present
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Jeff Brainerd	Standing Committee member	Y
Rev. Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Dave Elwood	Chair	
Michelle Fortier	Treasurer	Y
Laurel Gray	Ministerial Intern	Y
Kristin Haddad	Standing Committee member	Y
John Lowe	Standing Committee member	Y
Peter Nobile	Clerk	
Toby Smith Ropeik	Standing Committee member	
Kate Svrcek	Standing Committee member	
Valerie Vallancourt	Standing Committee member	Y
Lora Venesy	Standing Committee member	Y
Marion Visel	Minister for Pastoral Care	
Tom Wilson	Standing Committee member	Y
Guests	Representing	
Jim Sherblom	Denominational Affairs	
Peter Lowitt	Environmental Leadership Team	
Darien Smith	Choir, Denominational Affairs	

Howard lit our chalice and opened our meeting with a reading, and we held a moment of silence together.

Reports from the congregation:

Denominational Affairs

Jim Sherblom updated the standing committee about General Assembly (GA) this year in Spokane Washington, and to ask us for some Standing Committee (SC) involvement in denominational activities. The Denominational theme this year is the “Power of We”, and is designed to address the question: “what do we want Unitarian Universalism to be?” As of right now 7 congregational onsite delegates plan to attend GA this year, along with ministerial delegates. We have 7 more offsite delegate slots that we hope to fill. Jim asked if two additional Standing Committee members could volunteer to be offsite delegates – Peter and Dave are already registered. One vital responsibility of an offsite delegate is to attend a group session on Friday and Saturday June 21 and 22, interacting with other First Parish (FP) delegates while watching and electronically participating in GA. Jim suggested that the standing committee ask Beth Norton how music culture is affected by the denominational changes, as well as how our music program is doing considering these changes. The committee had a lengthy discussion about bringing Gen X and millennial leaders into First Parish. Jim framed what he called a “big ask”: would the standing committee mind having conversations next year with Millennials and Gen X’er along the lines of “How would First Parish look different if you were in charge?” Jim also mentioned that GA will be in Providence in 2020 and hopes that FP will have significant involvement, beyond our delegate allotment.

Environmental Leadership Team (ELT)

Peter Lowitt described the ELT's proposal to ask the congregation to endorse the aspirational goals of the Green New Deal. He reported that Tom Tarpey has created a 10-bullet point list that will be available at coffee hour describing what this entails. The ELT is hosting an event on April 26 with Congresswoman Lori Trahan to answer questions about the Green New Deal. Students from various schools, including Concord Carlisle (CCHS), Acton Boxboro (ABHS), Middlesex Academy and Concord Academy will hold a panel discussion at the event. Peter requested that the SC take a position on the article, so Kristin asked him to submit the details in writing about what endorsement of the aspirational goals of the Green New Deal would mean, accepted the request and stated that the Standing Committee would vote on our position at a future meeting, but before annual meeting.

Gifts for Staff Members

Darien Smith led a discussion about a possible gift for Beth Norton for her 25th anniversary at First Parish, which will be celebrated on Music Sunday, June 2, 2019. A discussion ensued about past retirement and anniversary gifts to employees.

Time for Action Reports

Lora and Kristin discussed the need for better collaboration amongst the four Time for Action task forces to avoid redundancy and overlap. A meeting to get the leads of those four groups is being planned. Howard emphasized how important it was that staff be included in this process. Kristin volunteered to write an email to the chair suggesting a meeting amongst the team leaders with at least one staff member present. The group discussed the need to communicate to the broader congregation about the happenings in each group. One way to share information is to update the congregational photo bulletin board adjacent to the SC bulletin board. Tom Wilson offered to set up an area with labeled quadrants for each of the four groups. This information will be contained in Kristin's e-mail.

A discussion ensued about overall church communication. It is believed that our congregation could use different or better technology to collaborate online. Val suggested surveying other congregations to figure out how they best communicate with members. It was noted that this could be a future goal for the Standing Committee.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March SC meeting were accepted with minor corrections, and will be posted to the First Parish web site.

Director of Operations' Report

Fifi reviewed an analysis on the pledge payment for FY18. Over 98.9% of pledges were paid for that fiscal year. Fifi described a need to spend \$4,300 with Lexington Alarm on fire alarm upgrades for the main sanctuary area as required by a change in Concord Fire Department regulations.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to spend \$4,300 on the fire alarm system.

Fifi reviewed how the Share the Plate program is working far better than estimated this year. We expect

both plate collections and share the plate recipients to exceed our budget by over \$10,000. Fifi discussed three potential uses of available cash that may be voted on at next month's SC meeting. The first potential use would be to spend approximately \$18,000 to reach 100% of the required UUA Annual Program Fund contribution for FY19; the second potential use would be to send approximately \$2,000 to obtain an updated appraisal on the fine art and antiques at First Parish; and the third potential use would be to spend \$8,000 to upgrade the church's phone system, last updated in 2003. A discussion ensued. Howard commented that he felt good about the ongoing pledge campaign and the ability for the church to meet 100% of the UUA Program Fund contribution in 2020. The Committee agreed to revisit these proposals and vote on them at our May Meeting.

Fifi and Howard reviewed the terms of the employment agreement for the new Minister for Pastoral Care, Reverend Liz Weber, whose appointment will be announced on April 14. Liz's employment will begin in September. A discussion ensued about the process of approving employment agreements. The governance subcommittee was asked to look at the clause regarding contracts in our finance policies, as it is currently ambiguous. As Head of Staff, Howard oversees all hiring.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the employment agreement for Reverend Liz Weber as Minister for Pastoral Care.

Lastly, Fifi discussed the Contributions to Charities and the various discussions she has been having with members of the Social Action Council (SAC) regarding various organizations that have applied. The SC discussed the budgeted amount of \$15,591 (\$15,091 remaining) for this line item in the annual budget. It was agreed that the will of the congregation is that the Social Action fund should not be limited to grants and that SAC budget lines ought to be used in the manner that they were designated. Thus, any line item overages would need to be funded out of the SAC Reserve Fund.

Minister's Report

Howard reviewed how the search for the new Pastoral Care Minister was completed and what an enjoyable experience it had been to work with that search committee. In contrast, there have been more challenges creating the job description for the vacant Social Action Coordinator position. It was suggested that the perhaps the search could be framed more like the Ministerial search, with a joint effort in creating the job description between the SAC Board and Howard. In order to ensure good process, the church will conduct a one-day professionally facilitated retreat that will include all parties involved in this work, on a Sunday in May from 11am until 6pm.

Governance subcommittee

The group reviewed a proposed Nominating Committee charter, that was slightly modified from what had been distributed at the March SC meeting.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Nominating Committee Charter.

With no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michelle Fortier, Clerk *Pro Tempore*

MF/pn