

Regular Attendees		Present
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Jeff Brainerd	Standing Committee member	Y
Rev. Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Dave Elwood	Chair	Y
Michelle Fortier	Treasurer	Y
Laurel Gray	Ministerial Intern	Y
Kristin Haddad	Standing Committee member	Y
John Lowe	Standing Committee member	Y
Peter Nobile	Clerk	Y
Toby Smith Ropeik	Standing Committee member	Y
Kate Svrcek	Standing Committee member	Y
Valerie Vallancourt	Standing Committee member	
Lora Venesy	Standing Committee member	Y
Marion Visel	Minister for Pastoral Care	
Tom Wilson	Standing Committee member	Y
Guests	Representing	
Eric Moore	Nominating Committee	

Howard lit our chalice and opened our meeting with a reading by Francis Anderson *"To Free the Heart,"* and we held a moment of silence together.

Approval of Minutes

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

Director of Operations' Report

Pledge campaign update

Fifi reported that there is a total of \$1,055,377 pledged to date, and she shared a few other highlights of the campaign. There are currently 70 \$0 pledge active households. In the fall, if these households remain inactive, an outreach letter will be sent to ascertain continued interest.

Budget review

Fifi shared notes on the proposed FY 2019-20 budget, including updates on interest income, salary and benefit adjustments, and pledge income details. The budget includes a new State tax that goes toward paid family and medical leave. The Social Action budget lines are placeholders because the Social Action Coordinator has not been hired yet, and because the Social Action Council will have input on the specific line item distributions. There are also set asides for long-term building maintenance and lawn maintenance. We are including our full \$64,332 contribution to the UUA/NE Region for FY 2020. Staff merit raises are included for Amy Freedman, Fifi Ball, and Sarah Burns, as are increased hours for Reverend Liz Weber, incoming Minister for Pastoral Care, Dawn Van Patten, Assistant Director of Religious Education, and for the incoming Social Action Coordinator.

There was a discussion about the Social Action lines in the budget. Given the vote to discontinue the 7.5% set aside, there were questions about when and how social action grants will be phased out. Fifi and Howard explained that such grants will likely phase out of the budget and move over to the Share-The-Plate model, although the social action reserve budget will continue to be a source for future grant monies. A suggestion was therefore made to move money from “Contributions to Other Charities” to another line in the budget.

Toby asked about two potential budget impacts: first, whether the sound system in the sanctuary needs adjustments, because of some recent complaints, and second the need for a coordinated communications plan and/or director. Howard said that he was aware of some of the sound system issues, and that he would encourage better use of existing hearing-assist devices. Howard also said that Sarah Burns is increasing her communications responsibilities, especially focused on web site maintenance, but that there is no plan for another staff member right now. Michelle suggested that long-term maintenance should be much better funded, and whether our current 10% reserve should be increased.

The group discussed how best to approve staff compensation adjustments in the future, and Michelle suggested that our current policy may need amending in order to allow the Senior Minister latitude to negotiate with staff for amounts greater than the current limit.

The group then discussed budget details including several potential uses of free cash in FY 2020. The group also discussed staff anniversary and retirement gifts, including those to Beth and Doug. Howard and Fifi recommended a net gift of \$5,000 to Beth, and a recommended gift amount for Doug’s retirement will be forthcoming. Finally, it was noted that surplus cash will be used to pay for reappraisal of the church’s fine art and antique furnishings.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve in the budget \$3,000 in additional prepaid moving expenses for Liz Weber.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve in the budget uses of free cash including \$2,000 for appraisals, \$8,000 for updates for the phone system, and \$18,700 to increase our UUA fair share contribution to 100% and the same amount (\$18,700) toward our long-term building maintenance fund.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve in the budget an additional \$5,000 from surplus cash for a gift to Beth Norton.

It was generally agreed to table a final vote on the budget for two weeks, when we will have a special SC meeting at 7PM on May 28th.

Minister’s Report

The group discussed facilitated discussions with Howard and the Social Action Council, which have

included an airing of old hurts and revealed the need for more spiritual caretaking. A similar meeting will take place at the SAC meeting on 5/15. Howard commented that one reason for dropping attendance numbers is that Sunday morning service may not really be the center of the First Parish community, which reflects the fact that the wider religious world is experiencing a general decline in participation. Peter asked about Howard's comment that some members are "pestering" Doug with "pet projects," and how best to help reduce that potential conflict. Peter will approach Howard and Fifi outside this meeting to help mitigate some of that friction.

Nomination for Trustees of Parish Donations

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to endorse the nomination of Patty Popov as a Trustee for Parish Donations.

Endorsement of Green New Deal Resolution

The Environmental Action Team (EAT) has asked the SC to endorse the Green New Deal prior to this year's annual meeting. The Green New Deal will likely be endorsed by the UUA at this year's General Assembly. The SC discussed the merits of such an endorsement as well as the practicalities of implementation of the Green New Deal at First Parish. After a lengthy discussion a decision was made to take No Action right now, and to request more information from the EAT about how such an endorsement and the resulting momentum would play out in practical terms. The SC strongly desires more EAT outreach to the congregation about the Green New Deal, especially before bringing the Green New Deal to a vote at annual meeting. It was noted that this week's Forum will be a presentation of the Green New Deal. Peter will summarize our request to the EAT, to be reviewed by the SC prior to distribution.

Governance subcommittee

John and Kristin briefly reviewed the SC self-evaluation process, which will not be as "deep a dive" as last year's process and more like a survey. Howard's evaluation will be overseen but not administered by the Ministerial Support subcommittee. The Governance subcommittee is also reviewing policies regarding new employee contracts and is suggesting a review of salary ranges to be agreed upon well before hiring negotiations begin. Membership policies are also under review.

Annual Meeting

Howard suggested beginning annual meeting at 11:00AM at the conclusion of the service. The group will discuss this possibility at future meetings – logistics around participation are complicated no matter what the start time.

There was a short Executive Session, during which a motion duly made and seconded, and it was unanimously

VOTED: to nominate Leanne Baxter and Kristin Haddad to the 2020 slate for positions on the Nominating Committee.

With no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:54 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Peter Nobile, Clerk