

Minutes of FUSIT Board of Trustees (BoT) Meeting

Tuesday, May 9, 2017

Members Present: Marie Benedetti, Laura Free (Chair), Scott Grover, Oliver Habicht, Rick Hendrick, Wendy Salomon, Jennifer Streid-Mullen, Whitney Wiggins.

Members Absent: Angela Zhang

FUSIT Members & Guests: Fred Balfour (Scribe), Rebecca Elgie, Frand Helmstedter, Mark Pedersen (Administrator), Rev. Jane Thickstun.

Handouts:

1. First Unitarian Society of Ithaca; Board Of Trustees Meeting Agenda; May 9, 2017.
2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE (weekly attendance: 2012 2017).
3. Minutes of FUSIT Board Of Trustees (BOT) Meeting; Tuesday April 11, 2017.
4. First Unitarian Society of Ithaca; Board Of Trustees Meeting – May 9 2017; Treasurer's Report.
5. 17-18 budget proposal. 5/7/17.
6. Board report; Rev. Jane Thickstun; May 2017.
7. 2017 RECYCLE SALE SCHEDULE
8. Document starting with: "To: The New York State Assembly and Senate"

Opening

6:00 pm - Laura Free brought the meeting to order and provided an opening reading while lighting the chalice.

Minutes

Moved, seconded and passed unanimously:

The Board of Trustees approves "Minutes of FUSIT Board Of Trustees (BOT) Meeting; Tuesday April 11, 2017."

Dates Reminders

- Balcony Board meeting: None for May. Annual meeting instead.
- Next regular Board Meeting: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 at 6 pm.
- Annual Meeting: Wednesday, May 31, 2017. 5 pm dinner, 6 pm meeting. The Agenda will include motions to approve: 2017-18 Budget; Updated Bylaws; Updated Covenant. The agenda will also include elections for: Board of Trustees and; Nominating Committee.

Unsung Heroes

- Settled Minister Search Committee for year-long work to bring us a wonderful Candidate.
- Stephanie Ortolano for scheduling Samite Mulondo, Director of Musicians for World Harmony to provide the music and reflections for the Sunday service May 7, 2017.

- Nominations Committee, Chaired by Marsha Kardon, for their hard work to bring forward candidates for upcoming annual elections.

BoT Support for Recruiting for Recycle Sale Staffing

Marie Benedetti reported that recruiting has started for the August 2017 Recycle Sale. She passed out the schedule, Handout item 7. She asked for Board support to recruit for volunteers signing up to work. She noted that heavy lifters are needed for the first setup, Sunday, 8/13.

DECISION: The Board of Trustees agreed that the minister and the administrator should contact team chairs and co-chairs and ask them not to schedule team meetings during Recycle Sale's intake, setup, sale, and cleanup days.

Sundae Sunday Ownership

Laura Free noted that the Membership Team had requested to be relieved from managing the Sundae Sunday event on Sept. 24, 2017 coinciding with Ithaca Porchfest. Discussion centered around whether the Board has ultimate responsibility to take over this task; the general agreement was that the Board was not the appropriate group as it was more a Ministry function. Scott Grover suggested the Unitarian Universalist Ukulele Union (UUUU's) could do the planning, coordinate volunteers, and ensure music is done. Willing contributors, but not leaders, include Mark Pedersen, Religious Education Team, Membership Team, and individual Board members.

DECISION: Scott to ensure UUUU's will lead the Sundae Sunday community event.

Bylaws: Legal review status update.

Scott Grover reported that the review has gone forward and that there are no conflicts found between "*Constitution and Bylaws The First Unitarian Society of Ithaca...*" and New York State law. Further, that article 12 of the Bylaws contains the typical contractual language protecting the overall document from any unforeseen conflicts with state law, specifically: "If any portion of this Constitution and Bylaws is illegal or unenforceable due to New York State or federal law, the other portions shall remain valid."

Ballot Box Security Protocol

Oliver Habicht discussed the voting protocol used during the April 30, 2017 post-service meeting held to consider and vote on the proposed settled minister candidate. A number of issues were raised by the Settled Minister Search Committee and by other church members. Issues included: Conflicting announcements on when the meeting started; Ballot box being present before the meeting and after ballots have been handed

out; Members voting and leaving before the meeting started; and Ushers collecting ballots and inserting in ballot box instead of members personally inserting their ballots.

Oliver proposed that he work with administrator Mark Pederson to draft a policy and protocol for voting and submit for review and approval.

DECISION: The Board of Trustees authorized Oliver to lead the effort to draft and submit, for Board review, a Policy Manual addition defining a congregational meeting voting protocol.

DECISION: The Board of Trustees authorized Laura to send an email to the Settled Minister Search Committee apologizing for the confusing voting process at the April 30, 2017 meeting.

SJC Request to add a voting item to Annual Meeting Agenda

Rebecca Elgie and Fran Helmstadter, representing the Social Justice Committee, requested that the BoT vote, on behalf of the congregation, to formally support and/or endorse proposed single payer health care legislation that will soon come up before the New York State Legislature: New York Health Act (A.4738 / S.4840). Rebecca and Fran asked the Board to vote on the three paragraph statement, Handout No. 8. Summary of points made by Rebecca and Fran:

- The legislation has been before the legislature for several years.
- The Assembly has passed the Act each year.
- The senate is close to a majority of co-sponsors.
- The next vote is expected to occur this spring.
- Statewide supporting efforts are now focusing on endorsements from communities of faith.
- Past endorsement efforts have garnered a wide variety of business and nonprofit groups.

The Trustees first agreed that the Board does not want to vote on behalf of the Congregation for such an endorsement but that a vote should come before the Congregation at the upcoming meeting.

Trustees then asked a number of questions: Would the three paragraph motion (Handout Item No. 8) require a large amount of annual meeting time to consider? Does the three paragraph statement have more detail than needed for a FUSIT endorsement? Could the proposers reduce the statement to a simple sentence or two? Has the congregation received adequate information and discussion time on the proposed legislation currently before the legislature? Could Rebecca and Fran provide some pre-congregational-meeting events for outreach and promotion such as a “congregational conversation” during the May 21st service?

MOTION: The Board of Trustees directs the Church Administrator to add an item to the agenda for the May 31, 2017 Congregational Meeting consisting of a shortened endorsement statement. Adding the agenda item is contingent on scheduling a congregational conversation or other outreach activities before the meeting. **PASSED**

2017-2018 Budget

Jennifer Streid-Mullen reviewed the "Treasurer's Report" referenced in Handouts No. 4 and 5. These minutes will not review her spoken summary since full details can be read by obtaining copies of the Handouts. She pointed out that revenue is expected to be higher for 2017-18 due to: Good response to stewardship pledging; A late pledge campaign matching fund; Some changes in Team budgets as indicated in the Treasurer's Report. The Treasurer's Report presented three options to deal with the higher-than-expected revenue.

- A. Propose a budget with the higher forecasted income and include expense wish-list items ignored in the past budgets. (see list below)
- B. Propose a budget at the lower forecasted income without added wish-list items and if the income exceeds forecast, call a fall Congregational meeting to approve and direct additional spending.
- C. Budget lower forecasted income and use any excess income to reduce endowment contribution to operations, then spend available freed-up endowment monies on capital projects.

Discussed wish-list items include:

- Installing a "hearing aid loop" in the sanctuary audio system.
- Repair and restore stained-glass windows that are in serious condition.
- Fund SJC projects such as Black Lives Matter and related social issues.
- A number of smaller issues: Implement campus ministry; Expend Re: assistant hours; Fund guest minister honorariums; etc.

Trustee discussion included comments such as:

- The Board has a multi-century commitment to maintain the building so restoring and maintaining the windows should have a high priority.
- The OWL program should be considered a long-term investment, say 2 to 4 years and we should plan to "run it right".
- The Board would be best off to budget high (Option A) and, if income falls below budget, cut back special projects spending during the year.

Regarding essentially Option A above:

MOTION: The Board of Trustees authorizes the Treasurer to submit a budget for fiscal year 2017-18 of \$447,200. **PASSED**

Recognition of Fewer Members Than Bylaws, prior to changing bylaws at meeting.

Oliver Habicht noted that the Board of Trustees has maintained itself at nine members which is the proposed level in the new bylaws to be voted on May 31, 2017. The existing bylaws call for 12 members.

NOTED: The Board of Trustees decided to not address the issue of number of Board of Trustee members between now and May 31, 2017.

Preparation for Annual Meeting

Laura Free noted that she was preparing a sign-up sheet for Board members to indicate where they would work during the annual meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Board of Trustees went into executive session for 20 minutes.