

**Board of Trustees Meeting | First Unitarian Society of Ithaca  
June 13, 2017**

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**Members Present:** Marie Benedetti, Laura Free (President), Scott Grover, Oliver Habicht (Clerk), Wendy Salomon, Whitney Wiggins (Vice President), Angela Zhang.

**Members Absent:** Jennifer Streid-Mullen (Treasurer), Rick Hendrick.

**FUSIT Members & Guests:** Fred Balfour (Scribe), Fran Helmstedter (Social Justice), Jackie Jablonski (Social Justice), Stephanie Ortolano (Music Team), Mark Pedersen (Administrator), Jack Roscoe (Music Team), Rev. Jane Thickstun.

**Handouts:**

1. Board of Trustee Meeting Agenda – June 13th, 2017.
2. Record of Attendance – no date.
3. Minutes of the FUSIT BoT Board of Trustees (BOT) Meeting; Tuesday, May 9, 2017.
4. Board Report; Rev. Jane Thickstun; June 2017.
5. 17 – 18 Budget, 6/1/17.
6. June 13, 2017 memo from Mark Peterson indicating four reports to be available later. (Pledge reports for current and past two years; current number of members)

**Opening:** Laura called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT) to order at 6:05 PM June 13, 2017 in the Annex of the Society. A quorum was present being a majority of the full Board. Rev. Jane provided a reading during the lighting of the chalice.

**Agenda Item # 1: Minutes Approval from Previous Month**

**MOTION:** Approve “Minutes of the FUSIT (BoT) Board of Trustees (BOT) Meeting; Tuesday, May 9, 2017” following minor corrections. **PASSED**

**Agenda Item # 2: Date Reminders**

- Recycle Sale intakes. Tuesday June 20 and Wednesday, July 5.
- BOT Balcony View meetings for June and July will probably be canceled.
- Summer Board Retreat date in June/July not yet chosen, will use Doodle.
- FUSIT Summer Gathering; Friday August 4, 5:30 PM at Ellis Hollow Community Center (Genung Rd.); bring a dish to pass and RSVP for BBQ chicken.
- New minister “startup” facilitated retreat for Rev. Weis tentatively scheduled for Saturday, October 28.

**Agenda Item # 3: Unsung Heroes**

- Stewardship Team, chaired by Dave Salomon, for running the robust and successful pledge campaign.
- UU Ukelele Union (UUUU) Team for their tremendous Ithaca Festival Parade performance.

**Agenda Item #4A, guests for this month: Music Team Leaders & Staff**

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Laura introduced Stephanie Ortolano and Jack Roscoe, representing the Music Team. Jack and Stephanie: 1) Gave an informal report, and 2) Made a request for approval of spending within the 2016-17 Music Team budget. See Appendix for list of some Team activities.

The Music Team requested spending authority for this current fiscal year. Summary:

- The music budget is underspent by \$1,518.13.
- The Team has \$1,315 in legitimate unpaid expenses including things like:
  - Out-of-pocket expenses incurred during a choir director's conference (professional development);
  - UUA annual dues;
  - A budgeted purchase of five ukuleles for the UUUU;
  - Miscellaneous out-of-pocket expenses by choir director and minister of music.

Discussion centered around the financial advice from the absent treasurer, Jennifer Stride-Mullen. Expenditures for this fiscal year are overspent due to building maintenance cost overruns. However Jennifer stated in a recent discussion that there was room for \$4,000 more expenditures in this fiscal year within the limits of fiscal responsibility.

**MOTION:** The BoT approves the Music Team moving requested amounts of money to different line items within its current fiscal year budget for immediate payment pending final approval by Treas. Jennifer Streid-Mullen. **PASSED**

Issue was raised in relation to the emerging framework of Partnership Governance. Could the reallocation of monies within an approved Team budget be done at the Team level in the future? The Board agreed that this should be reviewed for consideration as a practice for the future.

### **Agenda Item #4 B, invited guests for this month: Social Justice Council Presentation**

Laura introduced Social Justice Council members Jackie Jablonski (chair) and Fran Helmstadter who gave a brief report on activities and concerns of the Council.

- A number of the ongoing council activities were enumerated;
- Jackie observed that the Council gets a lot done even with relatively few members;
- Further, that the Council needs to attract new and younger participants.

A Board-wide discussion including ideas of expanding awareness of the Council and its activities. For example, the Council could use event and activity pictures as a way of promoting and building awareness. The newly emerging FUSIT website could be a platform for that purpose. Laura provided a quick demonstration of the newly active FUSIT website on the screen.

### **Agenda Item # 5: Creating the Governance Committee**

Laura introduced the topic noting that the Board Policy Book directs the Board to set up a number of standing committees including a Governance Committee. The Policy Book's one sentence describing the committee is: "Helps the Board to focus on its chosen role, to recruit and train Board members, and to lead the annual Board self-evaluation process."

Discussion wove between two possible different styles: a committee that helps the Board in its governance work versus a committee that reflects on and gives advice as to how the Board is performing. Wendy suggested that the committee could function as an ombudsman on Board practices in the same way that Oliver functions as a conscience for Board processes. Rev. Jane read some selections from Hotchkiss 2nd. edition on his view of the governance committee's definition. There was general agreement that when the Board decides on a governance committee definition then the bylaws and the Board policy book would be updated. Angela observed that some nonprofits organizing under policy governance divide the Board policy book into 12 parts and then review one part at each monthly Board meeting. Marie volunteered to be a member of the Governance Committee.

**DECIDED:** Set aside the task of creating a governance committee until a later meeting.

Trustee Angela Zhang left the meeting at 7:20 PM; a quorum was still present.

**Agenda Item # 6: Leadership Development – Nominating Committee and Beyond**

Laura and Oliver open the discussion noting that the church leadership and emerging leaders would benefit from leadership development. Options include UUA-supplied online leadership training. Oliver observed that multiple people taking a course together has value of a shared activity and subsequent personal interactions. Further, that FUSIT might look into setting up a one year training series. Marie suggested a FUSIT sponsored activity "invite only". All agreed that the Society, as an organization, could do more leadership development. Rev. Jane observed that attending General Assembly is a good way to round out leadership training. Further, that perhaps FUSIT could sponsor a scheduled Saturday local "live-stream" session during General Assembly.

No actions were decided at this time.

**Agenda Item # 7: 2016-2017 Budget Issue.**

The issue of a modest but non-serious shortfall in revenue for the current fiscal year was discussed in Agenda Item # 4. In the absence of the treasurer, there was no further discussion on this issue

**Agenda Item # 8: Human Needs Fund – Changing Ownership...**

Mark noted that the Society operates a small bank account called the Human Needs Fund. The minister and the treasurer have sole signatory access to the funds for use in needs known to the minister through working in the community. The bank account needs to be changed: 1) Taking Rev. Jane's name off the account and 2) Adding Rev. Weis's name to the account.

**MOTION:** The Board of Trustees of First Unitarian Society of Ithaca directs the Society's administrator to work with the Society's bank regarding the Human Needs Fund to:

- Remove Rev. Jane Thickstun's name as signatory, and
- Add Rev Margaret Weis and treasurer Jennifer Streid-Mullen as signatories.

**PASSED**

**Agenda Item # 9: Rethinking the Recycle Sale**

Marie provided a quick overview of the Recycle Sale as having an important impact on the annual income stream of the society but that the time and effort to put on the Sale must be balanced against the revenue. On the positive side, the Sale consistently raises \$20,000 or more towards annual operating costs: In 2015 and 2016 the Sale raised \$23,000 and \$20,00 respectively. On the negative side, two issues: 1) The Society membership and staff contributes a large number of hours during July and August; and 2) The building space is taken over and rendered unusable and unrentable for nearly two months or 16% of church year. Marie noted that getting volunteers to work is a constant and draining effort. Marie and Carol Whitlow are completing their agreed-on three year period of running the sale and they are suggesting an in-depth analysis of the “work vs payoff” of the Sale and a consideration of whether the Sale should continue in its current format.

In discussion, Mark observed that the Lansing Methodist Church puts on two recycle sales a year and each lasts one week. Intake starts after services on Sunday, the sale is the following Saturday and the building is cleaned up and restored to “normal” before Sunday service the next day.

**DECIDED:** Take this matter into consideration in an upcoming meeting, after the current Recycle Sale has completed.

### **Old Business**

There was no old business brought before the Board.

### **New Business: Updating Board Standard Operating Procedures**

**MOTION:** The BoT directs the Clerk to review past standard operating procedures and to prepare an updated set of operating procedures for approval at the July 2017 Board of Trustees meeting.

**PASSED**

Discussion centered around why the Board needs another set of written procedures. Scribe Fred, who helped craft the motion, answered with three reasons.

- First, that the Bylaws specifically require the Board to maintain and update a set of standard operating procedures. [Article IV - Trustees; Section 5 - Sentence 2: *Following the Annual Meeting, the Board shall hold an organizational meeting to elect officers and to adopt standard operating procedures to be updated as necessary.* ]
- Secondly, Transparency. A set of operating procedures publically posted with the “corporation documents” such as by-laws, minutes and budgets will directly contribute to the Society members understanding how their elected Board operates.
- And thirdly, the Board needs to self-monitor as to how it is adhering to the bylaws and/or its own motions. E.G. in the bylaws section noted above, the third sentence states “*Board agendas shall be posted one week prior to a meeting.*” and I can find no consistent public posting for recent monthly Board meetings. Further, a Board motion from 2013-14 stated that the Board would post draft minutes soon after a monthly Board meeting and that has been an infrequent practice.

Chalice was extinguished and meeting adjourned shortly after 8:00 pm.

## Appendix

This section contains information which is not a formal part of the approved Board minutes. Even if not technically required in the minutes, the information may be of interest as they relate to topics discussed at the meeting.

FROM:

**Agenda Item #4A, invited guests for this month: Music Team Leaders & Staff**

The Music Team had an active year including:

- Many fine music soloists and groups in the Sunday services;
- Unitarian Universalist Ukulele Union (UUUU) representing FUSIT in the Ithaca Fest parade;
- UUUU performing at the Fall Creek Porch Fest weekend;
- Growing participation in both the UUUU and the choir.