

# First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

Minutes - Board of Trustees Meeting

July 19, 2017

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**Members Present:** Marie Benedetti, Laura Free (Chair), Scott Grover, Oliver Habicht (Clerk), Rick Hendrick, Wendy Salomon, Jennifer Streid-Mullen (Treasurer), Angela Zhang

**Members Absent:** Whitney Wiggins

**FUSIT Members & Guests:** Fred Balfour (scribe), Mark Pedersen (Administrator)

## **Handouts:**

1. MEMO dated July 19, 2017; TO: all Board members; FROM: Mark; RE: Enclosures. (Includes list of handouts plus data on: Pledge amounts for fiscal years 2016, 2017, and 2018; Current number of members.)
2. First Unitarian Society of Ithaca; Board of Trustee Meeting Agenda; July 19, 2017
3. Board of Trustees Meeting; First Unitarian Society of Ithaca; June 13, 2017 (meeting minutes draft; Four pages)
4. FUSIT financials 7/16/17 (income – expense statement; four pages)
5. First Unitarian Society of Ithaca; Balance Sheet Standard; as of June 30, 2017 (two pages).

**Opening:** Clerk Oliver Habicht, chairing for today, called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT) to order at 6:03pm in the Annex Room of the Society. A quorum was present being a majority of the full Board. Laura Free provided a reading as the chalice was lit.

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

Moved to approve the minutes of the BOT meeting dated June 13, 2017. No discussion. Motion **PASSED**.

## **Agenda Item: Upcoming Dates**

1. October 7 – 9 is the Startup Weekend for Rev. Weis. Originally scheduled for October 28 but changed due to Harry Potter weekend in Ithaca.
2. August 13 Board meeting replaced by Board retreat. Potluck, with Rev. Weis joining.
3. August 4, Friday afternoon and evening, is the second annual FUSIT summer gathering at Ellis Hollow Community Center. Bring a dish to pass.
4. August 5 at 2 PM is the Religious Education Team retreat at Angela Zhang's.

## **Agenda Item: Unsung Heroes**

1. Summer services organizers: Rick Hendrick and Carol Nickerson.
2. Developer of FUSIT's new website: Gretchen Ryan

**Agenda Item: Recycle Sale Status**

Marie Benedetti supplied the following comments:

- The sale is exactly one month away August 19, 20th, and 21st (Saturday, Sunday, and Monday) with Tuesday cleanup and trucking of unsold items.
- We are ahead on donations.
- We need people to help out on the Sunday before for First Setup.
- We need sale days volunteers for some rooms.
- We accept non-FUSIT member volunteers on non-sale days.

**Agenda Item: Miscellaneous items (not on agenda)**

- The Unirondack weekend is filled and there is a waiting list. 109 people committed.
- The RE retreat will focus on bringing Rev. Weis up-to-date.

**Agenda Item: Election of Board officers: Chair, Vice chair, Clerk, Treas.**

**MOTION:** Approve the following slate of officers:

- Chair: Laura Free
- Vice chair: Whitney Wiggins
- Clerk: Oliver Habicht
- Treasurer: Jennifer Streid-Mullen

No discussion. Motion **PASSED**.

**Agenda Item: Review and Confirm Committees of the Board.**

Committees include: Endowment, Finance, Governance, Nominating, and Personnel.

Discussion: Since the trustees lacked a definitive list of the five permanent committees, the Board decided to postpone review until a list was available. Whitney Wiggins will be asked to confirm and provide membership of the committees.

Also discussed: A) Should the Board standing committees report monthly or twice a year in October and February; and B) Should the Board establish some cross-pollination between the finance and endowment committees and the stewardship team?

Also discussed: Board representation on committees and teams:

- Personnel committee: Marie Benedetti
- Endowment committee: Rick Hendrick
- Finance committee: open

**Agenda Item: Financials. Wrap up of last year's closing numbers and looking forward to FY 2018**

Treasurer. Jennifer Streid-Mullen offered the following comments on FY 2017:

- Approximately \$15,000 is held in "retained earnings" coming from a number of sources including unexpected additional pledge income.
- The treasurer approved the music committee request to move money between budget items in FY 2017 spending.
- Repairing the stained glass windows in FY 2018 was budgeted at \$15,000 but has been bid at \$22,000. The difference will be made up from retained earnings in FY 2017.

Mark Pedersen observed that pensions are coming in higher than expected.

There was a suggestion that the Board establish funds for certain future expenses. The Board generally agreed with this suggestion.

Some members recommended that excess dollars, such as the above-mentioned FY 2017 retained earnings, should be split between mission and non-mission expenditures or planning. It was noted that the five-year strategic plan, currently in development, should guide us in prioritizing issues such as retained earnings. It was observed that Rev. Weis may have ideas in this general area.

**MOTION:** The Board approves committing to the Stained Glass Window project acknowledging that the full cost will be about \$22,000, with the additional cost to be funded from the net income/equity from 16-17 operating budget. **Motion PASSED.**

Jennifer Streid-Mullen noted that a "hearing loop" for the sanctuary has been discussed and some estimates developed. (Definition: A "hearing loop" establishes an audio broadcast within a facility, such as our sanctuary, at a frequency that can be picked up by hearing aids and other such devices). She will obtain specific estimates.

Another suggestion involved looking into LED backlighting for the stained-glass windows as part of the planned repair. This feature would make our church attractive and noteworthy at night on our busy street corner.

**AGENDA ITEM: Governance Committee Work**

The chair noted that the full Board will operate as the governance committee until that committee is formed. Tasks will include: define, prioritize, and track completion with associated two-do's. Expand contributions beyond Board members, ideally.

**AGENDA ITEM: Transition Team and Board's role and responsibilities in supporting Rev. Weis.**

Laura Free said that Don Barber was asking about activities for the transition team. Discussions on this issue included Rev. Weiss. The outcome is summarized in four groups:

1. Logistics. Works with minister to describe who does what and when throughout the church year.
2. Evaluation of minister. Doing evaluation effectively will include an outside consultant. Some of this work might include an “intervention team”.
3. Feedback from congregation on ministry (not the minister). Rev. Weiss noted that, in her previous church, some of this was accomplished by a “shared ministry committee”.
4. Basic supporting information – to be supplied by the existing transition team.

It was raised that there is a distinction between “intervention” as opposed to “how are we doing”, and also issue of interfacing with the congregation.

**AGENDA ITEM: BoT Standard Operating Procedures.**

Oliver Habicht noted that Fred Balfour had reviewed existing bylaws, BoT minutes and policy documents and documented 12 operating procedures currently in place at FUSIT.

**MOTION:** The BoT directs the clerk to work with the church administrator to review and implement the standard operating procedures as approved by the BoT at their July 2017 meeting. Further, that the clerk and the church administrator will review and update the BoT archives and related processes to assure security and accessibility. Motion **PASSED.**

To facilitate transitions related to Rev. Weis’s arrival and at least the first year:

**MOTION:** Empower a Transition Team, consisting of the former members of the Settled Minister Search Committee (SMSC), to support the minister and the congregation through the 2017-2018 church year. (to be revisited in 2018 if needed for 2018-2019.) Motion **PASSED.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

The BoT generally agreed that a future agenda topic should deal with “the FUSIT congregation and politics”. Reference was made to the May 2017 annual meeting where the organization voted to support a political issue. It was noted that the UU World published at least one article on this issue. Oliver Habicht agreed to distribute that article.

Another discussion covered “balcony meetings” in transparency. It was agreed that the governance committee should evaluate ourselves at the Board retreat and deal with this issue.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 PM