



First Church in Belmont, Unitarian Universalist

168th Annual Meeting Minutes June 2, 2024 Parish Hall

11:30 Call to Order – Laurie Graham, President

Opening Prayer – Rev. Chris Jablonski, “Democracy”

11:34 Opening Remarks – Laurie – highlighting the past year

- ◇ 2 Women’s Retreats
- ◇ Completed Johnson House lease with Henry Frost Children’s Program
- ◇ Welcomed Hungarian School/Scouts as a renter
- ◇ Musical program highlights
- ◇ Ministries of the church
- ◇ Vespers Services
- ◇ FCB Legacy of Slavery Project launched
- ◇ FCB Green initiatives
- ◇ Social Action/ Holiday Fair
- ◇ Kudos to Minister & Staff; esp. Tracey & Raeann for help with this Annual Meeting

11:39 Approval of Minutes of the 167th Annual Meeting held June 11, 2023

- ◇ Moved by Eloise McGaw
- ◇ Seconded by Eleanor Sugarman
- ◇ Unanimous Approval by Voice Vote of the Congregation

11:40 2025 Budget Review by Finance Committee – Doug Burden, Martha Read

- ◇ Lower number of pledging households this Fiscal Year; 218 vs. 234 prior year
- ◇ Strong pledge growth per member
- ◇ Strong rental income growth
- ◇ Higher administrative costs (insurance)
- ◇ \$4,000 of credit card fees to be managed by encouraging pledgers to include fees when making pledge payment

- ◇ Personnel increases driven by health insurance and \$12,000 for music assistant picked up by Music Committee prior year
- ◇ Goal to increase salaries to midpoint but no COLA this year
- ◇ Key item was staff transition to different model
- ◇ Henry Frost program increase from construction level rental rate to \$90,000 annual rent at operating level
- ◇ Hungarian School rent increasing from \$14,000 to 17,000
- ◇ Budgeting \$8,000 for incidental rentals
- ◇ Fundraiser budget will include children's musical
- ◇ Asst. Minister budget includes one-time moving expense & professional expenses
- ◇ Increased Building & Grounds budget
- ◇ Increase for Music but does not include request for instrument rebuilds/repairs needed
- ◇ This year's \$36,994 surplus to be applied to '25 deficit of \$37,277 to extend Adult Programs Director thru June '25
- ◇ Advanced Planning model in place to identify expense requests earlier in cycle.
- ◇ Stabilization Fund around \$81,000 at roughly 10% of annual costs
- ◇ Endowment increased from \$2,054,000 to \$2,343,000 with 3.5% paid to annual budget, \$55,000

12:40 Motion to Approve 2025 Budget

- ◇ Moved by Sam James
- ◇ Seconded by Eloise McGaw
- ◇ Unanimous by Voice Vote of the Congregation

12:40 Report of the Nominating Committee – Jonathan Wolf

- ◇ Review of nominating process
- ◇ Building a funnel for the future
- ◇
- ◇ Parish Board Officers to be Elected (each annually):
- ◇ President: Laurie Graham (since 2022)
- ◇ Vice President: Bruce Kozuma (new)
- ◇ Treasurer: Martha Read (since 2020)
- ◇ Clerk: Peter Whitmer (new)

New Parish Board At-Large Trustees to be Elected:

- ◇ Donna Ruvolo (3 years, 2024-2027)
- ◇ John Howe (3 years, 2024-2027)

Continuing Parish Board At-Large Trustees in the Midst of their Terms:

- ◇ Susan Galli (3 years, 2023-2026)
- ◇ Gabrielle Garschina-Bobrow (3 years, 2023-2026)
- Eleanor Hobbs (3 years, 2023-2026)
- ◇ Martha Courant (3 years, 2022-2025)
- ◇ Ariane Frank (3 years, 2022-2025)

Past Parish Board President:

- ◇ Samuel James

New Finance Committee Members to be Elected:

- ◇ Bob McGaw (3 years, 2024-2027)
- ◇ Brian Kopperl (3 years, 2024-2027)

Continuing Finance Committee Members in the Midst of their Terms:

- ◇ Doug Burden, Chair (3 years, 2023-2026)
- ◇ Joel Mooney (3 years, 2023-2026)
- ◇ Jon Bridges (3 years, 2022-2025)
- ◇ Catherine Claypoole (3 years, 2022-2025)
- ◇ Lauren Corning (3 years, 2022-2025)

Ex-officio Finance Committee , Voting Members:

- ◇ Laurie Graham, Parish Board President
- ◇ Martha Read, Parish Board Treasurer

New Committee on Ministry Members to be Elected:

- ◇ Katie Labounko (3 years, 2024-2027)
- ◇ Nelina Backman (3 years, 2024-2027)
- ◇ Annie Gardner (3 years, 2024-2027)

Continuing Committee on Ministry Members in the Midst of their Terms:

- ◇ Jackie James, Chair (3 years, 2022-2025)
- ◇ Eleanor Sugarman (3 years, 2023-2026)
- ◇ Bayard Klimasmith (3 years, 2023-2026)
- ◇ Livia Racz (3 years, 2023-2026)
- ◇ Leslie Kolterman (3 years, 2022-2025)
- ◇ June Lattimore (3 years, 2022-2025)

- ◇ Rev. Chris Jablonski, ex officio

New Nominating Committee Members to be Elected:

- ◇ Stefan Frank (3 years, 2024-2027)
- ◇ Eva Patalas (3 years, 2024-2027)

Continuing Nominating Committee Members in the Midst of their Terms:

- ◇ Jody Renouf (3 years, 2023-2026)
- ◇ Leslie Talmadge (3 years, 2023-2026)
- ◇ Martha Gallagher (3 years, 2022-2025)
- ◇ Marion Westgate (3 years, 2022-2025)

12:54 Motion to Approve the Slate

- ◇ Motion by Eloise McGaw
- ◇ Seconded by Brian Caputo
- ◇ Unanimous by Voice Vote of the Congregation

12:55 Report of the Covenant Task Force – Laurie (for John Howe)

- ◇ Trial Covenant chosen by ranked choice voting process of Congregation
- ◇ To be used in church for one year and be finalized at the 2025 Annual Meeting

12:59 Motion to Approve the Trial Covenant

- ◇ Moved by Eloise McGaw
- ◇ Seconded by Ariane Frank
- ◇ Unanimous by Voice Vote of the Congregation

1:00 Report of the Committee on Ministry. – Kathy Crawley

- ◇ Survey conducted in lieu of Listening Circles this year
- ◇ Will repeat process on 5-year intervals
- ◇ Follow up on areas for improvement in following years
- ◇ Showed strong evidence of an active & vibrant congregation
- ◇ Written report provided in Annual Meeting packet
- ◇ Staff changes were a tender subject this year
- ◇ Also, fair compensation to all staff a key need
- ◇ 171 respondents to survey, over twice last year's participation in Listening Circles
- ◇ No respondents under 29 years old, key demographic
- ◇ Lacked formal outreach to Youth Group, need for future focus
- ◇ Comments received totaled 477

- ◇ Reasons for coming to FCB: First was belonging & community, second was spiritual & uplifting
- ◇ Needing improvement areas: pastoral care & support for lay leaders
- ◇ Key needs identified: Children's Religious Education and support for parents

1:16 Report of the FCB Legacy of Slavery Project - Gina Carloni (committee recently renamed from Atkins-Cuba Legacy Task Force)

- ◇ Monthly meetings since Oct 2023
- ◇ Reviewed history of Atkins family, including Cuba sugar plantation, use of African slaves
- ◇ Material provided for worship service
- ◇ Tour of Robbins House in Concord
- ◇ Meeting with Dr. Maria Madison
- ◇ Proposal to refine committee name was approved by Parish Board
- ◇ For coming year: share what has been learned in Fall '24
- ◇ Developing a page for church website
- ◇ Offering a 3-prong approach: acknowledging our past, considering reparations, and continuing education.

1:22 Appreciations and Looking Ahead – Laurie

- ◇ Handing out flowers to those rotating off assignments
- ◇ Tackling COM findings, areas for improvement
- ◇ Moving forward with Legacy of Slavery Project
- ◇ Advance financial planning
- ◇ Implementing Cost of Living increases for staff
- ◇ Working to implement Policies & Procedures
- ◇ Weaving the new Covenant into worship services
- ◇ Recruiting; committee re-building

1:27 Final words of encouragement – Rev. Chris

1:29 Adjournment – Laurie

- ◇ Motion – Doug Burden
- ◇ Seconded by Jonathan Wolf
- ◇ Unanimous by Voice Vote of the Congregation