



## Parish Board Meeting Minutes | January 10, 2023 | Zoom

### The First Church in Belmont, Unitarian Universalist

Parish Board in attendance: Laurie Graham, Martha Read, James Hencke, Pam Eggert, Doug Massidda, Ariane Frank, Sam James, Rev. Chris Jablonski, Roger Gallagher, Priscilla Cobb, Martha Courant, David Deese, John O'Connor

Absent: Anjali Kumar

Guests: Samuel Foster

7:00pm - Opened by Laurie G.

Rev. Chris – “Don’t leave your broken heart by the door”

7:05 Process Observer Volunteer – David D.

7:12 PB Member Check-ins

7:21 Approval of December 13, 2022 Minutes -Moved by Arianne F. , Second by Pam E.

- Approved unanimously.

7:22 Staff Board Report – Rev. Chris

- Churches have been hemorrhaging children. We have a plan.
- Long-term plan - Henry Frost Children’s Program coming, growth in Musical participation; retooling middle school program, OWL, Coming of Age, Neighboring Faiths.
- CRE Staff(Wendy, Nate, Raeann) is retooling junior/youth group & Coming of Age. We have only one (1) 8<sup>th</sup> Grader. Chance to shore up leakage points.

Priscilla C. – how many kids do we have currently participating?

- Rev. Chris – We have a team of high schoolers helping teaching class, 30-50 kids in Sunday AM plus 20-35 in youth group attending later Sunday evening, we just don’t see them at services.
- We are struggling with the “sandwich generation”, evolving strategies. Catch them as young adults.
- Panama trip now totals 12, including adults. Future possibilities for service trips include Costa Rica and Uruguay. Climate connection for future theme.

Pam E. – suggest a party for alumni choir performing at Christmas services; Ariane F – in prior years, pot lucks after musical and holiday performances enjoyed by kids.

Pam E. - question of rationale for cost to join Fall theatre(Musical) and choir programs

- David D. - Partly to engage parents, provide music training, and as a fund raiser to defray costs.
- Rev. Chris – very modest cost compared to other venues and scholarships are available.

7:36 Finance report – Martha R

- Overall, in good shape. Watching pledge collection for 2022-2023 last fall and response to pledge reminder letters sent before end of year.
- Rental income in flux. HFPC coming in vs. Powers leaving. Front loaded but will even out.
- Auction budgeted for \$30,000. Auction funds are for 2 years, year of auction and following year.
- There is staff time budgeted in the Community Collaborative. Grants have come in from UUA . Personnel \$'s look high but are offset by grant \$'s.
- We are alert to utilities with rate uncertainties. Watching winter expense.

7:42 Membership Outreach – Samuel Foster

- Fellowship at exciting place. Judi Berman is new volunteer. Upcoming Valentine cards workshop and planning a dancing evening.
- In our post-COVID world, want folks coming back in as a community.
- Will hold a fellowship brainstorming in a few weeks to consider kinds of events. Open to all for input.
  - Hospitality – eg. Wednesday lunches
  - Games nights and special evenings
  - Expeditions- eg. skiing and hiking
  - Our beloved Sandy Island
  - Will keep smaller teams organizing specific events
- Membership and Outreach super teams approach tricky to figure out:
- Outreach -
- Created in 2018, not enough young families were coming in; now remarkable success since Chris' arrival. On-line outreach taken on by staff – eg website redone, calendar of events
- New arrivals – 50% via website; 50% word of mouth (Music, CRE, minister)
  - Belmont Town Day, Meet Belmont
  - Membership2 Membership initiatives - Journey to Membership last fall; this Spring will hold 3-part workshop
  - Start more pot lunches/dinners for new members.
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- Children's' Music Festival at end of year to help anchor newbies. About 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of those involved in Musical move into membership.
- 400-450 is our estimated membership roll. UUA used to charge per head, changed to charge as a % of budget. Pledge units is our most tangible number.
- Discussion of using Upper Gathering Hall , coffee hour, setup with tables & chairs to promote membership. Evolving/changing ways to using coffee hour

8:05 COVID – Rev. Chris

- COVID Com reviewing whole issue again, meeting this Sunday on protocols. Wastewater readings are back up.
- Sam James – question on restoring masks at services and church events
- Laurie – consider staff exposure
- Chris – members are self-masking or seeking alternative ways to connect such as Thursday Vespers, open parlor doors. Not planning on returning to mandatory masks.

Henry Frost update – Roger G

- Fall '24 is current opening plan. Possible soft opening Jan '24.
- Plans scaled back -need time to recruit teachers. Jan 10, meeting with conservation commission on playground will be attended by Bob Corning.
- Joel Mooney and Bob Corning to meet Saturday 1/21 with IRIS re: playground site. Grade & drainage issues.
- Start playground work this spring. FCB may use prior to school opening. At some point will need a Memorandum of Understanding re: hours playground used and which group has oversight/liability
- Budget impact of delays is next FC fiscal year, not current.

8:15 Compensation Committee – David D

- Com includes Martha C, Martha R, Pam E & David D
- Outline overall process by end of year
- Question of 10 vs 12 month comp year, part vs full-time, move toward UUA recommended midpoint.

Music – Pam E

- Recruiting a new alto soloist

SAC – Priscilla C

- \$1,600 income from Holiday Fair, \$11,000 total proceeds
- Supporting 2 Afghan families
- UU the Vote – celebration over Zoom
- Working with David D and Raeann for Sunday, Jan 29<sup>th</sup> @ 5:30-6:30 Climate Crisis discussion with Youth
- FCB Green preparing article for Unitarian on carbon neutrality by 2035 initiative.

- FCB Green identifying organizations for member volunteer opportunities and climate actions
- FCB Green working on draft of 13-year plan for how to meet carbon neutrality to present to PB, Fin Comm,

April 2 – ByLaws Special Meeting of the Congregation

- Covenant separate exercise next year.
- Roger Read & John Howe discussed removing the Ames Covenant from the Bylaws.
- Covenant will take longer to include membership more in making decision about wording of Covenant.

Trivia Night – Laurie – a “Shout out”!

- Program was driven by youth group
- Laurie suggests as a fellowship event .
- Noted camaraderie by Raeann.

Upcoming:

- May 6 – Auction
- May 7, 4pm – Installation of Rev. Chris Jablonski
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Process observer: - David – meeting well organized; everyone got to speak.

828pm          Rev. Chris - Adjourned