



Parish Board Meeting Minutes | December 13, 2022, 7:00PM | Zoom

The First Church in Belmont, Unitarian Universalist

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

Absent: Priscilla Cobb

Guests: Roger Read

7:03pm. Opened by Laurie, Reflection by Rev. Chris, "Belonging Here"

Process Observer: Pam E. volunteered

7:05pm. Approval of Minutes

- Motion by Roger G, Seconded by Martha C, unanimous consent

7:07pm – Strategy Reflections – Rev. Chris & John

- Useful to gather, look beyond the current time.
- Nice to have the youth in the Parish Hall at the same time, building felt lively
- Walking between the tables was meditative
- Good meeting between our youth and UU Mass Action planned focusing on deepening social justice ministry
- John O'C – impressed by the number of times social justice theme was raised during strategy discussions. A way to both attract and engage younger members
- Having this exercise in the Sanctuary made it feel more spiritual
- Appreciated being able to interact in-person; willingness by everyone to participate.

7:16pm. Staff Report – Rev. Chris

- Highlights – sharing staff appreciation
- New initiatives embraced; evaluating which seem to "stick"

- Laurie G. – w/Stewardship, getting info to church membership re: staff initiatives
- Ariane F. – love hearing about successful programs. What about the ten (10) new Path to Membership” attendees? What are pathways people have taken to find us?
- Rev. Chris – about half via R/E and Music, rest other ways. Previous “Pathways to Membership” crew made digital acquaintance. Now more traditional routes now that we’re open again.
- Library refurbishing and arrangement sketch from Deb Lockett discussed; Chris will share costs with Fin Comm
- Received 2 applications for next year’s intern. John O’C. stays until June 11, 2023
- One of applicants is a cellist.

7:27pm. Finance Subjects – Martha R

- 1. Ministerial Housing Allowance should be approved annually. Max \$50,000 allocation of minister’s salary exempt from State & Federal taxation. Asking authority now for FY’23. Will ask for FY’24 authority in June’23.

Motion to approve \$50,000 Ministerial Housing Allowance

- Motion by Martha R
- Seconded by Roger G.
- Passed Unanimously

- 2. Propose Mark Thurber as an assistant to the Treasurer, not as “Assistant Treasurer”. Would not be an elected Board position
- James H. – Do we specify a term?
- Pam E. – ideally a successor s/b identified by the Nom Com.
- Mark Thurber could step in as a bridge at end of Martha R’s tenure
- Martha R: no current plans to step down, just develop backup redundancy in processes
- Limited Authority: no check signing auth; may NOT transact business on behalf of the church, just duties as assigned

Motion by Martha R: The Board may appoint Mark Thurber as Assistant. to the Treasurer

- Second by James H.. Passed Unanimously

7:43pm Bylaws update – Roger Read, Martha C

- Last reported to Parish Board March ’22, discussion is informational
- Task Force is planning discussion meetings Jan-March; targeting Spring ’23 for vote by congregation at a Special Meeting
- Key areas: Committee on Ministry; remote participation; PB terms limits and appointment authority; membership process/provisions; legal indemnification; Parish dissolution process.

8:12pm. “Dexter Hall” idea (Honors proposal by Jim Landfried) – Laurie G.

- Idea started under Rev. Carpenter: What’s the best way of honoring people

- “Dexter Hall” (founders of Unitarian Service Committee) suggested for Parish Hall, but went on to suggest USC supporter names for all the major rooms of FCB
- Sam J. - could take to Annual Meeting for endorsement by FCB members rather than being a PB decision.
- Rev. Chris – what about good works/social action in lieu of a plaque?
- Dave D. – name the event in social justice
- Laurie G. – should we create a fund for plaque, or redirect idea?
- We have some ongoing connection to Dexters’ work
- Suggest we tell Jim Landfried that the idea provoked a lot of discussion and a lot of alternatives
- Dave D. – focus should be on continuing social justice as part of Dexter’s legacy.

8:33pm. Johnson House update – Roger G.

- FCB signed the HFCP Application to get on the docket for Conservation Commission (for playground redesign)
- On building awaiting Building Permit

8:35pm. Compensation Com – Dave D.

- Working for earlier goal setting
- 6 members of committee: Dave Deese, Pam Eggert, Martha Read, Martha Courant; Rev Chris and Ian Garvie
- Want a 3-year plan in place by end of this year to have expanded benefits for eligible staff and at least midpoint on comp.
- Next meeting 12/19; Committee will meet with staff and conduct survey in Jan’23
- Seeking tighter and earlier alignment between Comp Com, Finance & Stewardship
- Discussed at Finance Cte

Process Observer Report – Pam E.

- Process went well, then fell behind, conversations respectful and thoughtful

8:38pm Wrap Up – Rev. Chris – let us pick up the stones we stumble over and build altars

8:40pm General Assembly. Is in Pittsburgh this year, including on-line option for participation, who is interested in attending? Some funding available for those attending.

8:41pm. Adjourned by Laurie G.