

**FIRST PARISH BROOKLINE
PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
March 16, 2015**

PC Members Present: Sue Andrews, Greg Buckland, Ann Congleton, Steve Davis, Ann Dinsmoor, Elena Garofoli, Ann Gilmore, Stacey Raczek, Corey Thomas. Also present: Rev. Jim Sherblom

Minutes from our March 2, 2015 meeting

The minutes from our March 2nd meeting, with changes suggested by Ann C. to the description of our discussion of worship, were **Approved**.

Ministerial Dialogue

Issues discussed included:

1. Changing the norms of our culture at FPB to be more inclusive –a new growing edge involves recognizing more fluid gender identities and expressions and RE is sponsoring an upcoming workshop on that. Also, this spring we will be having a workshop series developed by Rev. Mark Hicks, “Beloved Conversations,” where we will explore concepts and assumptions about race and ethnicity and encourage seeing anti-racism work as a spiritual practice of faith formation.
2. Fund-raising – in contrast to larger, more involved fundraisers we sponsored in the past, we have had several smaller fundraisers including a Beer Fest, a concert with the Maryhurst Choir from Portland Oregon, directed by Jack and Linda Smith’s son, Justin, and an upcoming memorial concert in memory of Kamal Scott organized by Madeline Fine. These events are more focused on community building.
3. Proposed New Photo and Video Use Policy – as we are creating and posting more photos and/or videos of our church events and Sunday services, we feel the need to change what has been an RE policy to a congregation-wide policy and change the policy from an “opt-in “ to an “opt-out” policy. In order to raise awareness and create an opportunity for feedback on this new policy, we **APPROVED** the following: the policy, along with an explanation, will be sent out by e-mail to the congregation with an opportunity for feedback or for “opting-out,” a reminder will be sent one week later, and two weeks later, the policy will go into effect. We will use this same communication strategy for subsequent new policies set by the PC. We also want all of our policies to be available on our website.
4. Our DRE, Rebecca Keller Scholl, has requested that we share half of the offertory plate next Sunday with Meadville Lombard to help offset all the materials they have contributed/created for that service. **APPROVED**
5. Rental Waivers - we need a process for occasional adjustments or waivers of our rental policies. We agreed that our Executive Committee, consisting of our Chair, our Vice-Chair, and our Senior Minister, could make any requested adjustments. Steve will ask Sonya to draft a statement to this effect.
6. Delegates – we need to find out which congregational members are interested in being delegates to this year’s national General Assembly, as well as to the assembly of our local Mass Bay District, and to our Urban Ministry.

Song Sue led us in a energizing rendition of “Down in My Heart”

Finance Council Update

In line with our PC Goal #4, “Begin to align our shared mission, financial resources, and diverse needs to best serve the long term needs of the congregation,” Stacey, along with Sue, Steve and Rev. Jim have revived a Finance Council to consult on financial decisions. The Council drafted a set of Budget Guiding principles with “Continue to be a UU fair compensation and Fair Share congregation” at the top. The PC reviewed the principles, and it was suggested that the final principle – “Use increases in pledge income above budget to lower endowment draw” be amended to prioritize increasing fair compensation of staff over lowering endowment draw. With that amendment, the PC **APPROVED** the Guiding Principles, which will be incorporated into a Finance Council charter. Our goal is to plan and create a Capital Campaign Committee for our next fiscal year 2015-16, leading to the launch of a capital campaign in 2016-17.

One of the goals of the Finance Council is to collect existing documentation. To that end, Sonya combed through documents and collected over 200 pages of longitudinal data since 2004. Stacey then converted that data into a spreadsheet, which, for the years 2004-present, shows our data on pledges, membership, endowment, other income, staffing, RE and Sunday service on a two sided sheet of paper. We are so grateful to Stacey and Sonya for this awesome compilation!

Canvass Update

As of mid-March, we are one third of the way to our goal. Those who have pledged are averaging 9% above last year’s pledges. Letters went out asking everyone to increase their pledges by at least 10%. Those pledging in the mid-range were asked to think about doubling their pledges. This has been offensive and/or guilt inducing to some. In most cases, we don’t know people’s financial situations, so it is hard to target the requested increases. Also, we should be sure to thank everyone for their past and current pledges in the letters that go out. Steve and Sue, who have been past canvass chairs, spoke to the difficulties of having only two people primarily responsible for the annual canvass. The responsibility/workload needs to be spread among more people and over a longer time period. There is an enormous lack of awareness about our budgeting process and timing. Elena shared that, at her former congregation in Northampton, they had a whole committee working throughout the year.

Action items:

1. Steve will write a letter for the April newsletter thanking our current canvass chairs, Alice Mark and Dave Demerjian, for their heroic efforts.
2. We will discuss creating a new Stewardship Committee at our PC retreat in June.

Executive Session

For the final portion of our meeting, we went into executive session, with only the members of the Parish Committee present. We debriefed our March 2nd dialogue circle with Rev. Jim and recommitted to our remaining terms of service in order to communicate with LDC regarding our lay leadership needs for nominations.

Review of Process/Covenant

Thanks to Greg for serving as our Process Observer for this meeting!

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Gilmore, Clerk