

**FIRST PARISH BROOKLINE  
PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
May 4, 2015**

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

**Ministerial Dialogue**

Issues discussed included:

1. Lay delegates to this year's General Assembly in Portland, Oregon include Elena Garofoli, Ann Gilmore, Anya Thomas, and possibly Ellie Richardson. Jack and Linda Smith, who recently moved to Portland but have pledged to FPB for FY2015, will be back-up delegates as needed. It was suggested that the delegates report back to the congregation in the fall. Delegates were **APPROVED**.
2. Three members of the Committee on Ministry are rotating off and David Cave, Jody Leader and Scott Ullrich have been tentatively selected to replace them. In keeping with our past practice, the PC **APPROVED** these new members.
3. Our Challenge youth have asked us to approve a special collection at the worship service on Challenge Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, in honor of, and to add to the bequest of, Jane Hoey. This request was **APPROVED**.
4. Rental Policy Adjustments - Usually our rental policies require a fee for custodial services. The proposal that Sonya Abbott, our Parish Administrator, have discretion to waive or adjust the custodial fee was **APPROVED**. She may also consult on this decision with our Executive Committee, consisting of our Chair, our Vice-Chair, and our Senior Minister.

**Minutes from our April 6, 2015 meeting**

The minutes from our April 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, with changes suggested by Stacey and others, were **APPROVED**.

**Budget Update**

Stacey reported back on two energized congregational meetings she facilitated concerning our budget proposals for FY15/16. The focus of the discussion was on the tension between moving to the mid-point of the UUA Fair Compensation guidelines for our staff and lowering or maintaining the current level of the draw on our endowment. Stacey presented three possibilities for our next fiscal year - raising salaries one third, one half, or all the way to the midpoint. The message from those in attendance was loud and clear – in keeping with the development of our new mission statement and its focus on justice, we want to move right to the mid-point of the UUA Fair Compensation guidelines for our staff. While we usually talk about the importance of “sustaining” our endowment, we need to expand our concept of sustainability to include “sustaining” our staff.

The discussions also included adding a fundraising expectation of \$12,500 to our budget as well as working on selling our silver assets within the next year. Multiple people at the budget meetings also expressed a willingness to contribute more for next year's budget by increasing their pledges by a minimum of \$80 to cover the per person cost of our Fair Share dues to the UUA.

We discussed the importance of both being transparent in our budget decisions and aligning our budget with our mission and values. There is a growing feeling that the goal of maintaining our wealth, including our endowment, our antiques, our stained glass and our building, must be examined in light of our new mission statement.

Based on the discussions at the two congregational budget meetings, Stacey presented a revised budget proposal, which, on the expense side, increases staff salaries to the midpoint of fair compensation, and on the deficit side, increases the draw on our endowment from \$104,000 to \$166,000, or from 5.5% to 7.9%.

A motion to present this revised budget proposal to the congregation for a vote at our annual meeting on May 31<sup>st</sup> was **APPROVED**.

A proposal to keep our stained glass windows fund with the Brookline Foundation was **APPROVED**.

A proposal from David Hawkins to add a budget expense of \$1,000 for organ repair was **DEFERRED** for consideration until next year, based on the recommendation of the Finance Council.

**Song** Greg led us in three unifying, centering, calming “Ohms.”

### **Mission Sub-Committee Update**

Ann Dinsmoor reported that we had a huge response from the congregation on May 3<sup>rd</sup> to our request for their preferences on the five proposed mission statements. 74% of those responding expressed a preference for either statement # 2 or statement #5. The mission sub-committee is recommending that we propose adopting a revised statement # 5 as our mission statement: “ **Called by Love, Sustained by Community, Committed to Justice.**”

We are also recommending that we propose adopting a revised version of statement #2 as our vision statement: “**We strive to be a welcoming, diverse and loving congregation that nurtures spiritual growth for individuals and families, celebrates multicultural community, and works together to demand social justice, dismantle racism, and care for our living earth.**”

The mission statement describes who we are as a congregation and why we exist, whereas the vision statement is aspirational and describes more of what we would like to become.

A motion to present the aforementioned proposed mission and vision statement to the congregation for a vote at our annual meeting on May 31<sup>st</sup> was **APPROVED**.

### **PC Task Forces on Mission and Ministry and HR**

Steve reported that based on the work of the By-Law Subcommittee, including leading multiple PC discussions, a half-day workshop with Doug Zelinski, New England Region’s UUA leadership Development Director, and a congregational meeting on some initial proposals, the following are recommended:

- 1) that we affirm the existing role of the Committee on Ministry and continue our practice of having new members recommended by the COM and approved by the PC:
- 2) that we reinstate a Human Relations task force to review our policies and process on HR issues:
- 3) that we create a new Task Force on Mission and Ministries to support the intention of the PC that the goals and programs developed by all of our committees are aligned with our new mission statement.

### **Emeritus status for Rev. Martha Niebanck**

We resumed a conversation begun at a previous PC meeting to consider whether the timing is right for us to propose granting emeritus status to Rev. Martha Niebanck, who retired from her co-ministry with Rev. Jim at the end of December 2012. This role would allow for Rev. Martha to attend church, to preach occasionally, to offer workshops, to perform weddings and funerals, and to mentor Rev. Maria Cristina. As part of her role, she would be in covenant with our senior minister, Rev. Jim, to support his ministry and not to express opinions on the performance of any of our staff. Rev. Jim reported that he is comfortable with this as is Rev. Maria Cristina.

A motion to recommend granting emeritus status to Rev. Martha by congregational vote at our annual meeting on May 31<sup>st</sup> was **APPROVED**.

### **Preview of Annual Meeting Agenda**

Steve discussed the agenda for our upcoming annual congregational meeting on May 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Executive Session**

For the final portion of our meeting, we went into executive session, with only the members of the Parish Committee present. In response to a decline in our Sunday worship service and RE attendance, we discussed and devised a process by which we will gather feedback from a representative sample of lay leaders and participants, past and present.

### **Review of Process/Covenant**

Thanks to Ann D. for serving as our Process Observer for this meeting!

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Gilmore, Clerk