

## First Parish in Brookline, Board Meeting

March 4, 2019

Attendees: Michele David (via Zoom), David Cave, Laura Hatfield, Stephen Pratt-Otto, Lisa Perry-Wood (via Zoom), Janet Britcher, Gene Thompson-Grove (via Zoom)

Absent: Charles Sandmel, Alice Marks, Dave Demerjian

Reverend Lisa opened our check-in with a reading from Brene Brown, *The Anatomy of Trust*, that lists, by the acronym B-R-A-V-I-N-G, qualities that constitute trust, and then asked us each to mention what is new or good in our life and what, at the moment, is keeping us from being present for the meeting.

Before we started into the agenda, Michele circled back to the **Feb 8/9 Start-up retreat** with Meck Groot to allow time for anyone to share their thoughts about the retreat.

The **February minutes**, written by Laura Hatfield, were approved.

1. Reverend Lisa commented on the **Minister's Report**, saying she had "no hot button issues" to bring forward. She did refer to one item: whether the congregation needs to approve FP becoming a Level 2 Sanctuary in agreement with a church in Newton, which currently has someone in sanctuary, and, she wondered, if FP has the volunteers it needs to manage a Level 2 Sanctuary commitment, should services, help, be required. Michele responded saying that the congregation voted in 2017 (?) to become, in principal, a Level 2 Sanctuary Church, whether FB is linked to a particular church or not, though at the time of the vote we would be in agreement with St. Mary's, in Dorchester, currently a non-sanctuary church. Given that the congregation voted in principal to become a Level 2 Sanctuary, we, therefore, do not need to return to the congregation for a vote each time we would consider adding a church, said Michele. It was approved that we did not need to return to the congregation for another vote.

One final item regarding the monthly Minister's Report: Rev. Lisa said she would like to have her monthly Minister's Report as part of the public record to accompany the Minutes. She's accustomed to having them shared this way. Should she wish to include any delicate matters in her report, she would simply make a judgement of what to include and what to say, but regardless the Minister's Report should accompany the Minutes each month. The Board approved this recommendation. Minister's Report attached.

2. Steve updated the board on the **progress of the Canvass**. He is pleased with the response and the level of volunteer engagement, citing that fifteen of the twenty-one signed-on Canvass volunteers attended Alice's dinner. He was pleased with the Canvass kick-off on Sunday (March 3). He said he's received 27 pledges to date. Others commented on the positive spirit behind this year's Canvass and think the model we are following this year is a good one and should be used next year. Steve said that he liked the brief rationale for Canvass that Rev Lisa wrote for

Sunday and recommended that callers refer to it when approaching members for Canvass. Here is what Rev. Lisa wrote:

*Our First Parish board, finance committee and other volunteers are leading our Canvass this year. Soon one of these fine folks will be calling you to talk about your annual pledge. They are eager to hear your stories, happy to listen to what you love about First Parish and the vision you have for deepening our shared ministry here. Please welcome these conversations, in the spirit of beloved community. Together, we can share both what we love and what we have to offer.*

3. Michele brought up the need to add an **amendment to the UUA Ministerial Agreement** for Senior Ministers as “Head of Staff.” Because a prior FP senior minister assumed greater discretionary authority as Head of Staff to the diminishment of the Board’s oversight, the FP Board decided, after the minister’s term, to restore to itself authority over operational matters and invest this authority with the Chair of the Board. Investing the weight of staff oversight on the shoulders of the Chair, however, was found to ask too much time and energy from the Chair, who is a volunteer, after all. It was decided, then, at this time, with the coming of Rev. Lisa, that an amendment at FP was needed to the UUA Ministerial Agreement that would restore to the Senior Minister the role of Head of Staff over operational matters, but to restore this authority with the proviso that the Senior Minister act *in consultation with the Board*. A uniform consensus was reached by the attending Board members that the following amendment to the responsibilities of Rev. Lisa as Head of Staff be accepted and followed. See here:

*2.5.1. Minister’s Role: The Minister is Head-of-Staff and is expected to supervise the day-to- day performance of all staff members. The Minister may delegate supervision of individual staff members. The Minister is responsible for ensuring appropriate staffing practices are followed including clear job descriptions, timely enrollment of eligible staff in offered benefit plans, annual compensation reviews, staff evaluations, and a dispute resolution process. The minister has authority to hire, discharge, change the compensation of Congregational staff or implement other major personnel-related **changes in consultation with the Board.***

*Ministerial Agreement*

*THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CITY/STATE (“The Congregation”) AND THE REVEREND NAME (“The Minister”) JOINTLY ENTER INTO THIS AGREEMENT*

*1. GOALS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND RELATIONSHIPS*

*1.1 Intention*

*The intention of this Agreement is to set forth the responsibilities and obligations of the Minister to the Congregation and of the Congregation to the Minister as we seek to dwell together in peace, to seek truth in love, and to serve one another and the larger community. It is recognized that no matter how carefully this Agreement is written and observed, the relationship between the Congregation and the Minister must be grounded on both sides in open communication, mutual trust, good faith, and an open and agreed upon process. In most situations, the Congregation will act through its Governing Board (referred to as the "Parish Board").*

## *1.2. Shared Leadership*

*1.2.1. The Minister and the Congregation share responsibility for the leadership and ministry of the Congregation. This relationship is one of discovery, of each other, in a context of mutuality. The relationship of the Minister and the Congregation will be in accordance with the Guidelines for the Conduct of Ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (see <https://uuma.site-ym.com/?guidelines>).*

*1.2.2. Consistent with our shared values and Principles of Unitarian Universalism, the Congregation looks to its Minister to provide spiritual leadership and initiative, assistance in setting and articulating its vision, leadership and supervision of the staff team, professional and inspired performance, oversight of the Congregation's programs, and administration of its business operations in collaboration with the Board and Congregational committees.*

*1.2.3. Consistent with our shared values and Principles of Unitarian Universalism, the Minister looks to the Congregation to live out its mission and vision, demonstrate effective leadership, be open to change, broaden the meaning of community, and to communicate issues or concerns that may arise in a forthright and respectful manner.*

*1.2.4. The Board, on behalf of the Congregation, commits to remaining in covenant with the Minister and holding members of the Congregation to behavior that is respectful of the Minister and of the office, and that is consistent with our shared values and Principles as Unitarian Universalists.*

4. Michele mentioned that the **Executive Committee** of the Board agreed that the Executive Committee succession plan should be left to the next roster of Board members, and not be recommended by the current Executive Committee.

5. The Welcoming Committee of FP, believing that an additional committee was warranted to help new members be better engaged in the life of the church, has put forward establishing a

**“Community Happenings Committee,”** comprised of roughly eight members. After some discussion it was decided that this recommendation should be re-explored by the Welcoming Committee. The Board was not persuaded on the feasibility and strategic merits of a stand-alone Community Happenings Committee independent of the Welcoming Committee. Rev Lisa and Michele will circle back to the Welcoming Committee.

6. Janet said she had a **list of the FP Committees** and of their current members. She asked that it be circulated to FP members for “greater transparency.” List attached.

**7. Check out:**

Despite three members calling in on Zoom, we again left persuaded that business can be conducted, and efficiently, via Zoom, when its use is necessary. Gene thanked Michele for coming to the meeting with recommendations rather than having them arise once we were in session. Coming prepared with a recommendation enabled the meeting to move forward more efficiently and quickly. Others were pleased with the meeting, and that, a rarity, it concluded well before the standard terminus.

Minutes submitted by David Cave