



## **Minutes Parish Board Meeting**

**June 6, 2021**

Present: Karla Baehr, Janet Britcher (chair), Alfred Brownell, Emily Cherry, Micaela Coady, Steve Pratt-Otto, Margaret Williams, Bob Williamson (co-chair), Rev Lisa Perry-Wood (Jen Guillemin was attending her daughter's graduation)

Chair Janet Britcher opened the meeting at 1:03 inviting Rev Lisa to call us in. Rev Lisa lit a chalice and read Mary Oliver's poem, This World.

We reviewed together our Covenant by each reading one of our commitments.

We entered breakout rooms trios to check in using this prompt: *What's in a name? In breakout groups tell a story about your first name, last name, family name, sibling names or children's names.*

### **Assessing Congregational Meeting**

To help plan for continuous improvement of our congregational meetings, Board members broke into 3 breakout rooms to share perspectives on *what worked well* and *what needs improvement* about our congregational meeting process based on our experience of this year's May 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting and June 1<sup>st</sup> Special Congregational Meeting on Sustainability. A member of the Executive Committee facilitated each session and took notes. As Executive Board members, Janet, Bob and Margaret agreed to send their notes to the Clerk to be compiled and shared with the full Board at a later date to assist in planning future congregational meetings.

### **Responding to RJAC May presentation to the Board**

Because time was too short at the May meeting to respond to RJAC's presentation on its work related to two projects directly tied to the Board's Social Justice Goal (#4), Janet asked for volunteers to form a small task force to develop a response and proposed next steps. Margaret, Steve and Karla volunteered. She also encouraged members to attend the RJAC presentation to the congregation on June 7<sup>th</sup> about the research completed to date on the historical relationship between First Parish and slavery. Bob, Margaret, Karla and Alfred indicated they plan to attend.

### **Finance Committee Report on Ujima Fund**

Steve Pratt-Otto reported on the financial due diligence research he and Charles Sandmel have done over two years as members of the Finance Committee into the Ujima Fund as a potential investment vehicle for some of the First Parish endowment. He explained the extensive process he and Charles had used to explore the Ujima Fund and their conclusion that a lack of information available to date leads them to conclude that any financial investment in Ujima Funds at this time should be considered a donation, i.e., there should not be an expectation of a financial return on investment.

Board members briefly discussed the process and conclusion. Highlights included:

#### **Called by Love, Sustained By Community, Committed to Justice**

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.

- Other “socially responsible investment” options are available and can be explored
- “Investments” can consist of “time, talent and/or money” and “returns on investment” can be measured not only in financial terms
- Continued development of a partnership with Ujima may focus on investments other than financial and may also yield new and relevant information about its finances.

### **Dashboard Trends**

Micaela presented an update on the Dashboard project. She shared the draft and explained that she expects to have a completed version with a summary of trends ready for the Board’s Planning Retreat. When it is further refined, the Board will discuss how it might be used and communicated more broadly.

### **Formulation of Project Teams for Financial and Environmental Sustainability**

With an eye toward “delegating with constraints”, Board members reviewed the plans for moving forward with the Sustainability projects this summer. Margaret had drafted a plan for the Financial Sustainability project, and Bob had drafted the plan for the Environmental Sustainability Project. Both plans call for creation of representative steering committees to guide the work. Board members considered a request sent by the RJAC to Board members “underscoring the importance of incorporating an anti-racist lens as decisions are made for the sustainability work,”, urging “transparency and engagement”, and requesting that “a priority be placed on selecting BIPOC organizations or individuals for the consultant roles”.

The Board strongly endorsed both plans (7 5’s, 1 4) with these additions and clarifications:

- Participation on the project teams will be open to all members and friends of FPB
- Both project teams will incorporate an anti-racism and social justice lens as decisions are made, including in the process of recruiting and selecting consultants, and will place a priority on selecting BIPOC organizations or individuals for the consultant roles
- The project teams will define for the Board’s approval how they intend to incorporate an anti-racist and social justice lens as decisions are made

### **Nominations for Chair-elect**

Bob, as chair-elect, reported that no members of the Board have yet stepped forward volunteer to serve as chair-elect next year when he steps into the role of Board chair. He indicated that he plans to engage in one-on-one conversations with continuing and incoming Board members over the next few weeks to explore opportunities and options for Board leadership next year.

### **CRE Replacement Process**

Rev Lisa described the process and plan in place to fill the vacancy created by DRE Laci Adams’ resignation. She explained that a committee has been formed to advise her: Matt O’Rourke, Jennifer Goulart, Micaela Coady and Rev Lisa. The committee has drafted a job description for a one-year, part-time position (20-30 hours/week) for a Coordinator of Religious Exploration to serve one year. The committee will also hire a RE consultant to help analyze program and program needs so that we will be better informed in determining our programming needs going forward and the staffing levels and capacities to address those needs. Members offered suggestions for revisions designed to make compensation and duties clearer and more specific for prospective applicants.

### **Reopening Planning Group update,**

Rev Lisa described the process the Reopening Planning Group is using to determine the specifics of how in-person services and activities will resume in the fall. She explained that the RPG has reported to the congregation the principles it is applying to its decision-making and that the RPG Tri-chairs are recommending that the Board authorize the RPG to make all reopening decisions this summer without

having to seek further approval from the Board. The With the highest level of consensus possible, the Board delegated authority with the assumption (constraint) that their decisions will be consistent with CDC guidelines (8 5's).

### **Minister's Report**

Rev Lisa invited questions based on her report which Board members had read in advance. A suggestion was made to include more quantitative information in reports going forward. Board members expressed appreciation for Rev Lisa's leadership this year in responding effectively to the many challenges the pandemic has presented.

### **Old Board-New Board Dinner Planning:** June 16 7-9pm

Janet asked for volunteers for a subcommittee to plan the details, e.g., takeout food delivery, church location, and activities designed to welcome new members, appreciate department members and learn together what service on the Board mean) . Margaret volunteered. Janet will reach out to Jen to see if she will join Margaret to form the subcommittee.

### **Buildings and Grounds**

Janet asked for a Board member to serve as Board liaison to the Building and Grounds Committee. She also asked for a volunteer to assume responsibility to seek out a new chair for the B & G committee so that its long-term chair can retire and so that Bob can step back from too many responsibilities. Board members offered suggestions. Members agreed to keep this issue on its agenda for future meetings until it is resolved.

### **Nominating Committee Representation**

Under our bylaws, the Board names a representative to serve on the Nominating Committee. The immediate past chair of the Board also serves a one-year term on the Nominating Committee. Janet has been the Board's representative this year and will assume the position held by the immediate past chair next year. Janet described the responsibilities of the Nominating Committee. The Board decided to defer discussion and selection of a representative until its August meeting.

### **Recap of goals accomplished in FY21**

Having reviewed the Board's Annual Report summary of progress on its 20-21 Goals, Board members shared in break out rooms what they were most pleased about regarding the Board's work on goals this year. Members returned to the whole group to share highlights of their conversations. These include:

- The inter-connectedness of the goals, especially those related to planning and sustainability.
- The effective use of subcommittees to advance the work on each goal and the focus each agenda placed on reporting and problem-solving related to goals
- Having the congregation (finally) "talk together about money", i.e., sustainability

### **Check Out**

Members checked out by sharing appreciations for each other and their service. Special mention was made of Janet's very effective leadership.

Janet adjourned the meeting at 3:04pm.

Respectfully submitted

Karla Baehr, Board Clerk