

**Parish Board Meeting**  
**Sunday February 6, 2022, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM via Zoom**  
**Minutes**

Present: Karla Baehr, Micaela Coady, Jen Guillemine, Jody Leader, John Mignano, Margaret Williams, Bob Williamson (Chair)

Absent: Alfred Brownell

Other: Rev Lisa

**Opening**

Board chair Bob Williamson called the meeting to order at 1:09 as Rev Lisa lit the chalice and read *Where the Mind is Without Fear*. Members deepened their connection with one another and with our mission first by sharing something that happened for us this week that relates to one of the [Seven Principles](#), and then taking turns reading the Board Covenant.

**Monthly Matters**

**Ministers Report**

Rev Lisa offered highlights from her monthly [Minister's Report](#), including:

- The RPG is recommending that in-person services begin once again on February 27th
- Progress being made on the search process for a part-time ministerial intern for 2022-23 and 2023-24

**Fiscal Health Status Report**

Treasurer Margaret Williams applauded the work of bookkeeper Adam Berman. She reported on the need to address administrative challenges that have emerged in accepting non-cash gifts like stocks, as well as the need to recruit new Finance Committee members.

**Reopening Planning Group Report (RPG)**

RPG tri-chairs, Rev Lisa and Bob, reported on the RPG's conclusion and recommendation that we begin in-person services on February 27th. Rev Lisa will prepare a special email communication to the congregation of this good news.

**On-Going Work: Goals**

**Context**

Bob reminded members of the need to focus our work on goals on this element of our covenant:

*We will focus our work on policy level issues especially as they relate to the community's well-being and rebuilding of a sense of community*

He framed the work ahead to finalize the goals and build a calendar to accomplish them. He shared the Executive Committee's draft meeting calendar identifying when the Board will be sure to address each goal. Members agreed that the 8 Justice Pause questions should appear on each meeting agenda to help make considering the Justice Pause questions a way the Board "does business".

1. **Awareness:** What would we like to say that hasn't been said?
2. **Inclusion:** Who are we not hearing from? Why?
3. **Relationships:** Is this conversation/action/project moving towards relationships?

4. **Acknowledgments:** Are we acknowledging the history? What and who would you like to acknowledge and celebrate?
5. **Process & Practice:** Are we on the right track? Do we need to update our practices and processes?
6. **Goals:** Are we moving towards more justice and/or improved equity and inclusion practices?
7. **Implicit Biases:** Where are our blind spots and biases?
8. **Never Would I Ever:** What social issues do I feel I must recuse myself from, that I would risk publicly refusing my work to support?

### **Financial Sustainability (Draft Goal #2)**

Margaret reviewed the work done last year on the Financial Sustainability Goal and reminded members that we had decided at the Retreat to defer further action until next year, but had neglected to inform the broader congregation.

### **Community Building (Draft Goal #9)**

Margaret framed the purpose of discussing the goal related to “growth, connection and growth” as fundamentally about community spirit, explaining that community spirit has a major impact on community financial health as evidenced through the annual canvass.

Jen Guillemain described challenges we face inspiring members’ growth, connection and growth during the now two-year old pandemic. She asked that we talk about inspiration in pairs, responding to two prompts:

- Where do or have you found inspiration at First Parish?
- Brainstorm at least 3 concrete suggestions as to how to continue to infuse inspiration into what we do at First Parish.

Themes emerging from the pairs included: the power of “invitation” and universal truths through personal storytelling, the value of expecting engagement and expressing appreciation personally and directly, and the longing we all have for connection and inspiration.

Jen captured the spirit of the message we want to convey through the Board’s work on community engagement this way:

*You are part of something special here. YOU are special here. Together, we can make incredible and special things happen. First Parish is a joy center where we can refuel, refresh and replenish.*

### **Adopting Board Goals for 2021-22**

The Board reached the highest level of consensus to adopt [Board Goals 2021-22](#) for our work through June (7 5’s).

The Executive Committee will use the Board Goals Calendar draft it developed as a planning tool to help the Board hold itself accountable for achieving the goals it has adopted.

**Data Dashboard (Goal #1)**

Micaela walked members through the completed and updated Data Dashboard designed to support the Board in identifying and addressing trends in key indicators of organizational health. Highlights included:

- Number of current members is consistent with average membership since 2004, with recent declines in number of overall members, new members and worship attendance (*note: the active membership list will be updated during canvass—this number will likely decline further*)
- RE enrollment and class attendance have declined significantly
- Income: Canvass results have been strong, with recent decreases in rental income and offering
- Spending (program and functional-related) declined in last year

**Next meetings:**

- February 15th 7:00-8:30pm: Presentation of RJAC's research on FPB connections to enslavement and land dispossession (co-sponsored by Board, Racial Justice Action Committee and Immigration Justice Committee) Register [here](#) Link to webinar [here](#)
- Exec Committee Wednesday February 23, 5:00-6:15 (Zoom)
- March Board Meeting Wednesday March 2, 7:00 – 9:00 PM via Zoom or in person TBD

**Upcoming Triad "Coffees":** Bob/Alfred/Karla Margaret/John/Jody Jen/Lisa/Micaela

The chalice was extinguished and the meeting adjourned at 3:14pm

Respectfully submitted

Karla Baehr, Clerk