

Parish Board 9/10/18

Attendees: Michele David, Gene T-G, Alice Mark, Charles Sandmel, Janet Britcher, David Cave, Dave Demerjian, Laura Hatfield, Stephen Pratt-Otto, Rev Lisa

Rev Lisa **opened**

We **checked in**

We **approved the minutes** from August

Barbara Simonetti presented **two proposals** for the board to consider (attached). She does not want to run these proposals or lead a community but is interested in our reaction and if she goes forward with them, will bring others together to execute.

1. “Beyond our walls” Barbara feels that we do well with internal communication but don’t have great external communication – we want to have the broader community be part of our events at church, including art and music events that are great but not well attended. Plan (attached below) is to have a running list of people who can communicate with others through PTO and school communications, facebook, newspaper, etc. Create a system for alerting these people about announcements and have it live within church so that when events come up, we can quickly communicate it to the public. After a small discussion and no questions, **we reached consensus that Barbara can begin putting an external communication plan in place.**
2. “Artists worship here”. FP has many artists as part of its community. How can we use the church as a place to show their art, open the door to the community, and support other artists? She discussed potential art installations for Brookline Open Studios and/or to correspond with major church events (e.g. Rev Lisa’s installation). Start with own artists and then go from there. The board had questions about the banner – Barbara says it will be installed only when an event is happening and not all the time. We had questions about protocols related to standards (e.g., what art can and cannot be shown in this space?) and protocols about how long art should stay up and when it should be taken down. We discussed displaying FP artists first as we know their work and they understand our community’s standards. **After a discussion and clarifications, we reached consensus that Barbara can begin putting the “Artists Worship Here” in place.**

Rev Lisa gave us her confidential **minister’s report** – she had two action items below.

Rev Lisa asked board to approve a date for her installation (3/3) and a communication related to asking for committee members. **We reached consensus on the installation date and the communication. Dave Demerjian volunteered to be on the installation committee. Laura Hatfield will put out the communication.**

Rev Lisa was invited to co-sponsor the Trans Equality Interfaith Action group. **We reached consensus that FPB would be a co-sponsor of this group.**

Karla Baehr joined us to discuss **planned giving** and the “Fourth Century Fund”. Currently there is matching funding for people who sign up for planned giving, at a rate of 10% (minimum match \$1000 and max \$10,000). Because the fund is likely to run out at the end of 2018, there is some urgency

around communicating with members. This is an opportunity to encourage stewardship among members and begin a conversation with families about planned giving. Funds will go directly to capital improvements at church. We discussed the campaign and communication with members. We discussed that being specific about WHICH improvements this might fund may not be as encouraging as a general description of how the money might get used. We discussed having a table at engagement fair about money/wills/lawyers to help congregants. Karla and Charles feel that the likely impact of the match will be around 20,000 but we do want to encourage future gifts. We discussed whether a campaign like this would be confused with a capital campaign. **We reached consensus that Karla can communicate the campaign to members.**

Charles gave us the **treasurer's report** (attached).

Charles and the committee recommended two signatories for checks greater than \$5000. We reached consensus that checks great than \$5000 have two signatories.

Charles and the committee recommended low-limit credit cards to be used by church staff. After a short discussion **we reached consensus to apply for low-limit credit cards.** Rev. Lisa has identified a card that is typically used by small non-profits that has no personal guarantor.

We discussed the oil-and-gas lease. Stephen has researched the issue further. Basically, if we sign we will get \$59 dollars "signing bonus" and then we can try to sell our portion to the highest bidder, in an effort to rid ourselves of non-cash donations and get out of the oil-and-gas business. **We reached consensus to sign the lease and proceed with the sale.** We thanked Stephen for his hard work on this confusing donation!!

We checked out

Plus	Delta
Clear decision making!	Please have minister's report ahead of time. Focus on the important/urgent points. We recognize that it was hard for Rev Lisa with so much happening at the beginning of the church year!

We closed with our usual prayer.

ATTACHMENTS

Beyond Our Walls - Inviting the Community In Proposal to Form an External Publicity Task Force at First Parish (Draft - 7/17/18)

As a community, we have created great internal communication systems and protocols - Among Us, newsletter etc. What we are lacking are clear protocols and systems for communicating with the community beyond our walls about events like concerts, lectures, social actions, etc. (This became clear while working with Keith and Alisa on advertising the concert series. I have spoken to both about this issue.)

I am proposing a task force to define the available external channels of communication and to create a written protocol for accessing them that would include but not be limited to:

- Websites and Facebook pages that post events (Brookline Town Wide Discussion FB page, FB events page, Artery, etc.)
- Community and school PTO list serves and people who can legitimately post to them. (I.E. I am on a list of the neighborhood to the SW of the church and was able to send the concert announcement to my neighbors.)
- Contact list of community organizations like Rotary, BCAN, etc.
- Places in town where flyers can be posted. (Stores, Town Hall, etc.)
- Local newspapers - Tab, Globe, etc.
- System for posting large signs in front of our building where we maximize the view for traffic at the intersection of Walnut and Warren.
- Branding elements and templates for flyers, press releases, announcements etc. (Make it easy!)

The end result would be a living document (probably a google.doc) that could be accessed and edited by the office, staff and committee chairs.

Why?

- Increase attendance at large events.
- Increase awareness of First P in the larger community
- Make it easier for staff and lay leaders to advertise any event at FP.
- Potentially grow our reputation, membership and revenue
- Share our spiritual wealth with the world!

How?

- Assemble a small task force of people who have a desire to work on this or relevant knowledge. (I am happy to coordinate this and would begin by reaching out to Karen Campbell, Alfred Brownell and Alisa to get started. - other suggestions welcome.)
- Group would flesh out a work plan, timeline and an invitation to the larger FP community to participate on specific tasks. (For example, volunteers to be our contact to a school PTO list

serve, graphic designer to do flyer protocol, someone to create reusable sign infrastructure for front of church, organization contacts, etc.)

- Create the document and a system for keeping it updated and present it to the FP community.
- Turn the document over to the church admin and disband the task force.

Time frame: 2 to 3 months

Respectfully Submitted:
Barbara Simonetti

Artists Worship Here

A Proposal for a Community-wide Arts Event (Draft 7/17/2018)

The arts have always been used to gather, strengthen and heal communities. Art is a spiritual practice for both the creator and the receiver. It is no different here at First Parish in Brookline. In 2005, when our walls were shabby and we were about to celebrate the installation of new called ministers, the artists of First Parish covered the walls of Pierce and Lyon, and the hallways in between, with their beautiful work transforming our space and elevating all of our spirits.

Why?

"Artists Worship Here" is a way to call again on the many creative spirits among us to:

- Increase our connection and visibility in the greater Brookline/Boston Community
- Deepen our connections as a community to our own creative spirit
- Bring joy, beauty and healing to a world that sorely needs it.

What?

A massive banner is hanging from the side of the church that says "*Artist Worship Here*". Inside, all of our walls are covered with the work of our many artists - Sally, Judy, Michele, Madeline, Clint, Nick, Charlie etc. etc. There is a special exhibit of our children's art. The community is invited to a grand opening party. We invite our performing artists and poets to entertain at the party. There is a worship service that raises up creation. There is a collaborative art project. We publicized it widely and invite all of the artists in Brookline especially those who participate in Brookline Open Studios or Porchfest - fellow artists.

When? (Two possibilities)

1. November - between Thanksgiving and Christmas so we can sell what is on our walls or

2. April - in collaboration with Brookline Open Studios - Hold the event the weekend before Open Studios and collaborate with the coordinators of that event to give them a gathering space and an affirming boost. On the weekend of Open Studios, our artists can show their work at FP bringing the community into our space.

How?

A volunteer committee of artists and organizers (I am willing to facilitate getting this started and/or to co-lead).

Then what?

- Some of the people who come may join us.
- Art on our walls becomes normal. We become a gallery space for the community where any artist can hold a show. We increase our rental revenue or work out a sale percentage deal with the artist.
- We continue to create together. We do themed shows like the “Art of Immigrants” or “The Art of Social Justice”.
- We do whatever else we can imagine together!

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Simonetti

**First Parish in Brookline MA
Finance Committee
Report to Parish Board August 2018**

Attending 8/20 meeting: Margaret Beal, Keith Grove, Stephen Pratt-Otto, Charles Sandmel, and Adam Berman (bookkeeper)

Underlined items require Board deliberation.

Financial Highlights

- FY 2018 expenditures were within 1% of budget. No surprises
- Revenues were under budget:
 - FY 2018 pledges received by 6/30 were about \$42k below budget (some catchup occurred in July-August)
 - Building use \$8,700 vs \$16,000 budgeted

- Endowment draw was \$100k under budget, BUT cash was withdrawn just before and after FY 2018. Value of endowment was ~\$2.4 million on 9/9/18
- July operating statement shows \$97K pledge revenue that includes substantial prepayment of FY2019 pledges in April-June. No conclusions should be drawn due to seasonal fluctuations

Revenue Initiatives

- **Gas lease:** Steve Pratt-Otto has direct experience as lessor in such matters. Content of his email to the committee is attached. Revenue impact is likely to be minimal. Steve recommends that we approve the lease on our land, collect the estimated \$59 “signing bonus,” and then attempt to sell our rights to the highest bidder among the other lessors, fulfilling our fiduciary obligation, getting us out of the fracking business, and honoring our practice of liquidating all noncash donations upon receipt. Committee concurs, and defers decision to Parish Board.
- **Space Use:** Please see attached memos from Karla Baehr regarding several initiatives. No Board action needed at this time.
- **Planned Giving:** Committee (Baehr, Beal and Sandmel) met 8/15. UUA is offering a 10% cash incentive to sign up legacy donors through Wake Now our Vision (documents attached). Fund is likely to be depleted by yearend, so we began efforts to recruit and document people who have indicated that they will leave assets to First Parish. Prompt Board approval of our this initiative is requested.
- One-Off items: information on several initiatives attached

Housekeeping Items

- New signature cards. Checks can now be signed only by Michele David, Charles Sandmel or Alice Mark. Discussion of threshold check amount to require two signatures— Our bookkeeper proposes \$5,000, Committee has not set a threshold amount and defers decision to Parish Board
- Debit and credit cards: Alisa, Keith, and Laci currently have debit cards in place of petty cash. Boateng has a Costco card. With Sandmel OK, Rev. Lisa purchased two room air conditioners for offices (no A/C in those offices before now). Rev. Lisa has requested a “company credit card.” See attached email. Committee defers decision to Parish Board
- Committee voted to move future meetings to third Tuesday of each month. Will publicize. Next committee meeting is September 18; next Finance Council meeting is October 16.

Improving Financial Management and Budgeting

- **Unfinished business:**
 - **We** intend to engage an **outside accountant** to perform a financial review of systems and procedure. Funds in FY 2018 budget are held over and available.
 - **Gift acceptance policy.** We have none in writing but have in practice sold any noncash gifts (stock shares) upon receipt. Would be useful in case of receipt of anything not readily salable or controversial.
- **Canvass and Budget:** Hoping to work closely with Canvass; it would be helpful to bring chair(s) on board as early as possible. We intend to refine budgeting to include an allowance for uncollected pledges, so that the budget reflects realistic expectations of revenue. Late expenditure requests: proposals to increase pay for soloists, to fund organ renovation, and to increase staff salaries were received well after the FY 2019 budget was discussed. We need to gather such information much earlier in the cycle.
- **Capital Campaign:** Rev. Rebecca charged Parish Board to begin vision work and preliminary planning as early as possible.