Frequently Asked Questions About the FY21 Budget

Why is the Sexton line so much lower in FY21, and why didn’t we spend what we had budgeted for in FY20?
A. When our sexton left mid-year, we had a hard time replacing him. Volunteers stepped up to do minor repairs and cleaning. When we did hire a new sexton, he could only work 25 hours a week (he has another job that provides health insurance). Even after bringing in a cleaning company to fill the gaps, we save money. This year’s line is a more accurate accounting.

I heard we received a PPP Loan of $65,000 from the federal CARES Act – how does that impact the budget?
A. We applied for and received $65,100 for two months of salary for staff. That money must be spent by the end of June and so doesn’t impact the FY21 budget. It does impact our draw from the endowment (see line 56 – middle column). We will not have to draw the third installment from the endowment this year.

What is the Cedar Tree grant?
A. This is a sum of money FPB has received from a family foundation for the past several years. It was originally slated for racial justice education, activities and partnerships, and the Parish Board had asked the RJAC to oversee it and report spending to the Board. For the coming year, the foundation has broadened its scope to include racial justice, climate justice and immigration justice, and has asked the senior minister to oversee the grant. Rev. Lisa has indicated that she will used a shared leadership process to do this.

The rental line looks ambitious for next year – will we really get that much?
A. We agree that the original rental line of $36,000 now seems too ambitious, given recent guidance from the UUA about building use next year, and the line has been reduced in the final budget recommendation to $15,000. Having said that, all three long term renters (VOICES, Lin Center, SAI Center) have indicated they want to return – but we won’t know until the fall if it will be possible. All three organizations face big hurdles (singing, young children, chanting) that may mean they can’t meet in person. We will also have to assess risk and cleaning responsibilities. We are hopeful we will lease parking spaces in the upper lot to a construction company, and the size of our sanctuary with its sound system and capacity to project videos might make it attractive to one time renters.

Why is RE being reduced? When we return, will all RE classes resume?
A. Only teaching materials are being reduced – all programs are sharing the lift. The RE Committee is already planning for a variety of possibilities for next year – from completely virtual to a hybrid. Join them if you are interested!

How does our denominational contribution affect social change; is it all UUA salaries for member churches or is there some outreach? Does support for “UU the Vote” come from this, for example?
A. As a congregation, we get a great deal of support and many services from the UUA, and the amount we have budgeted is not in any way meant to indicate that we don’t value those services. As a Board, we cannot support a larger draw from the endowment in these uncertain times.

Are salaries commensurate with other churches?
A. They follow fair compensation guidelines for size and location of our church. The UUA recommended COLA for the coming year is 1.8%, or about $4500. The staff indicated that they are willing to forgo their COLA this year.

Will cutting nursery care hurt?
A. Nursery care supports meetings and services, which we may or may not have in person next year. The EEC guidelines for young children will likely be difficult for us to meet as a non-educational institution.

How is the reduction in the Worship Committee being accommodated?
A. We will have fewer guest preachers, as Jud needs to preach as part of his ministerial internship; Laci will also continue to preach. The amount on line 31 was recommended to the Board by Rev. Lisa.

What happens to money from grants and committee budgets that doesn’t get spent?
A. Unspent Cedar Tree funds for social justice carry over to the following year; committee funds go back into the budget, or could be allocated through a process of shared leadership comprised of committee chairs. The Board reconfigured committee funding so it is more transparent, and recommends that Committee Chairs keep track of their spending on a spreadsheet that is accessible to all committees.

Something out of the budget for a while was fundraising. Do we have anything on the table?
A. Yes, an online auction is being envisioned for the Fall of 2020, with a few congregants already taking the lead on organizing it. We think $7,500 is a realistic number.

Are negotiations with preschool about construction and renovation of lower level on hold?
A. Talks ended once it became clear what work was involved, as they needed an easier option to pursue in the near term. Maybe something will be possible in the longer term.

If we get more revenue, where would we put it? Can we develop a list?
A. We could. With rentals likely to be way down, however, this is unlikely.

Is there a document that explains which line item is in which category (mission, administration, occupancy)?
A. Yes – it is posted on the FPB website with the budget documents.

Could we track social action efforts such as hours and activities after meetings to more accurately document how we live into our mission – we might also want to track volunteer hours, time, and energy toward activities such as maintaining the building. Quantifying volunteer efforts would show what we’re really about.
A. Someone could try to do this – most everything we do at FPB is done by volunteers, so it is a huge job. In effect, we would be asking the people who volunteer their time to spend even more time documenting/calculating how their time is spent.

**Other big questions it was suggested the congregation could address:**

- How does our endowment contribute to social causes by being invested in socially responsible businesses via the UUA? How does this create corporate change?
- Can we save more by investigating how poorer/less resourced congregations manage the work?