



Minutes
Parish Board Meeting
October 4, 2020

Sunday, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Present: Karla Baehr, Janet Britcher (chair), Alfred Brownell, Emily Cherry, Micaela Coady, Jen Guillemine, Steve Pratt-Otto, Bob Williamson, Margaret Williams, Rev Lisa Perry-Wood

The Board meeting began at 1:03pm with Rev Lisa lighting the chalice and reading from Wendell Berry's *The Peace of Wild Things*.

Board Covenant

Members read our draft covenant:

To be our best selves and do our best work we will:

- *Energy: We will focus our work on policy level issues*
- *We will be responsible for our own limits and self-care*
- *We will invite fun and joy*
- *We commit to listen to understand and learn.*
- *We will practice deliberate ways to give all voices a chance, making space for minority views, and for differences in processing and reflection time.*
- *We will bring clarity and focus to our work.*
- *The board will be a small group ministry with each other, providing support and personal and spiritual growth as we accomplish our work*
- *Our goals will be mission driven.*

By consensus, Board members adopted the covenant to guide its conduct in 2020-21. (2 4's and 7 5's)

Fun Activity

Board members "competed" in two teams in an online version of Scattegories.

Board Goals for 2020-21

Board members reviewed draft goals that were developed as a result of a series of prompts and reflections at its Retreat and subsequently revised by pairs of members. After substantial discussion of each, board members settled on the revised language below with the understanding that Board member will be meeting in pairs or trios to continue to refine several to make sure that the goal:

- constitutes policy work appropriate for the Board,
- is concrete and specific,
- can be accomplished in one year,
- represents a priority issue that supports the vibrancy and viability of the church, and,
- is aligned with mission and in service of our longer-term goals.
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Goal 1: To begin to develop a process for the congregation to better align our resources with our mission, the Board will review and evaluate a comparative analysis prepared by the Finance Committee of 6 other church's that looks at their programs, revenue and spending, how they relate to their mission and the processes each uses to align resources with mission.

Goal 2: For the purpose of developing trend data to help the Board assess the organizational, spiritual and financial health of the congregation, the Board will pilot the development, collection, review and dissemination of a quarterly dashboard of trends in such data as membership, monthly attendance (worship, small groups, committee), RE (enrollment, attendance, events/opportunities by age), and financial (pledges, rental income, expenditures, endowment)

Next Step: Micaela, Karla and Rev Lisa will meet for an initial discussion about available and needed data

Goal 3: So that First Parish can ensure that First Parish thrives in the new normal of social distancing, the Board will support the Digital Ministry Task Force to expand its charter to invite and convene individuals and representatives of groups to explore, co-create and propose a process for developing a digital strategy that supports innovation and engagement

Next Step: Margaret, Alfred and Bob will meet between now and the next Board meeting to further polish this goal to make sure it a) incorporates the concept of co-designing the process and strategy, b) makes it clear what will be done this year for which the Board can hold itself responsible.

Goal 4: Social Justice and Anti-Racism

The Board will support the RJAC to lead a congregation-wide effort to research First Parish connections with slavery and the accumulation of land and wealth and begin to develop a process for the congregation to “reckon” with that history.

In collaboration with the RJAC, the Board will develop a plan for engaging the congregation in a conversation about “money” and how an anti-racist perspective can influence attitudes toward and use of personal and institutional resources

Next step: Jen, Karla and Alfred will meet to examine how the Board might integrate climate justice into its goals for 20-21

Goal 5: The Board will establish clear expectations of and evaluate our Senior Minister

Goal 6: The Board will ensure the budget is developed and monitored in an inclusive and transparent way

Board Updates

Minister’s Report

Board members discussed Rev Lisa’s report with a focus on her suggestion for the Board, Worship Committee, and Pastoral Care to co-sponsor a post-election gathering. Discussion focused on possibilities and the importance of having multiple options (outdoor on our grounds, Zoom, in Sanctuary socially distanced, Reservoir Walk with candles)

Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Margaret Williams reported that income and expenses are on track after first two months of the fiscal year

RE Report

Members offered feedback about Laci’s monthly report for Alisa to share.

Capital Expenditure and/or Investment Policy: Climate Justice Proposal as Case Study

Janet noted that because our discussion of goals had run well over the time allotted, there was too little time to address this agenda item effectively. Board members asked clarifying and probing questions designed to understand the intended outcome and its rationale, i.e., why the Board would not be directly addressing the request of the Climate Justice Committee to move forward with investing in solar panels until the Board has developed and communicated to the congregation a fair and transparent policy and process for soliciting and considering requests for capital expenditures and/or investments that:

- Offers guidance for inviting proposals
- Articulates clear decision criteria for identifying which improvements take higher priority and which get “bumped”, e.g.
 - o improve rental prospects,
 - o provide return on investment,
 - o address urgent needs such as tower or leaks,
 - o Address safety and/or accessibility needs
 - o Address justice or other values)
 - o Cost
- Identifies a list of projects already planned and their costs
- Clarifies Decision-making:
 - o “Out-of-cycle” requests, e.g. What factors should be used to consider whether a proposal for Capital Improvements is considered outside of the budget cycle? What kind of projects can fall outside of annual budget planning? How are they funded? Who owns that decision? How is congregation enrolled
 - o Funding/Financing, e.g. When does the congregation vote on endowment withdrawal as an option? What other funding options can be explored?
 - o Authority, e.g. How does the Board delegate with constraints?

Next Steps: Margaret, Bob, Karla and Alfred will meet before the next meeting to draft a proposal for the Board to consider at its November meeting

Other updates

- Next Virtual Coffee Triads to be held on Nov 9, 7:00 PM (or thereabouts)

Margaret, Steve, Karla	Bob, Emily, Alfred	Janet, Jen, Micaela
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- Next Board meeting: Wed 11/4/20, 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 3:07pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karla Baehr, Board Clerk