



Minutes
Parish Board Meeting
November 4, 2020
Wednesday, 7:00-9:00

Present: Karla Baehr, Janet Britcher (chair), Alfred Brownell, Emily Cherry, Micaela Coady, Jen Guillemin, Bob Williamson, Rev Lisa Perry-Wood

Absent due to illness: Steve Pratt-Otto, Margaret Williams

The Board meeting began at 7:04pm with Rev Lisa lighting the chalice and leading us in a guided meditation designed to ground us in our bodies. We took turns reading each element of the Covenant.

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.*

Fun Activity

We replaced our fun activity with a check-in to give space to share post-Election and other feelings.

Reopening Planning Group Charter (RPG)

RPG Tri-Chair Bob Williamson presented its rewritten proposed charter, prepared at the request of the Board to be more specific about the Board and RPB's respective decision-making authority. The Board adopted the charter by consensus with 5 5's, 1 4, and 1 3. (see attached)

Pastoral Care Committee

Jeff Cadow and Jami Jordan joined the Board for a report from the Pastoral Care Committee. Highlights included:

- 2 new Small Group Ministry (SGM) groups begin this month; 2 are continuing from last year.
- Jeff described the process for identifying members' needs which rely primarily on Rev Lisa and the personal connections Care Committee members have with congregational members, and email messages to carechair@firstparishinbrookline.org
- Jami described ways members have figured out how to make and sustain connections by creating their own "small group ministries", e.g., Thursday afternoon Justice Seekers, walking groups
- Jami asked that Board members see themselves as part of the Pastoral Care Committee by reaching out with a card or message when any of us learn of someone's challenge

Board Goals for 2020-21

Board members reviewed rewritten Board Goals. Each has been “polished” by a separate subgroup of Board members since the last meeting to make them more actionable. The Board approved the polished goals with 7 5’s. (see attachment)

Capital Expenditure and/or Investment Policy

Bob shared for initial discussion drafts of three resources that he, Alfred, Karla and Margaret have developed as foundational to developing a policy for prioritizing capital expenditures and investments:

1) a draft Decision Timeline for seeking and making decisions on capital requests,

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1tLozHEA0G8m7IOKUO-fnKoH99Do9_S248Y8pUf_bYqE/edit?usp=sharing

2) a Decision Tree that visualizes the qualitative and quantitative criteria to be applied when prioritizing competing spending requests, and

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cKyAU6SSnfHVxtuLeAbGd7pqDvRmlA9jXMI/AzmLFM_4/edit?usp=sharing

3) a Graphic Organizer for identifying purposes and weighting the criteria

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gieymV9243phIVCuK9F5qdGPCn011ngcO_03aVA4Afl/edit?usp=sharing

The Board agreed by consensus (7 5’s) to adopt as another Board Goal for this year the development and piloting of a process and criteria for weighing capital expenditures (see attached)

Minister’s and DRE Reports

Rev Lisa offered highlights from her Minister’s Report and shared an updated DRE Report

Other updates

- November Virtual Coffee Triads to be held on Nov 9, 7:00 PM (or thereabouts)
Margaret, Steve, Karla Bob, Emily, Alfred Janet, Jen, Micaela
- December Virtual Coffee Triads to be held Dec 1 7:00 pm (or thereabouts)
Steve, Janet, Jen Margaret, Micaela, Emily Alfred, Bob, Karla
- December Board meeting: Sunday 12/6/20, 1:00-3:00pm with Worship Committee
- January Board meeting: Wednesday, 1/6/21, 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM with Digital Ministry Team

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karla Baehr, Clerk

Attachments: Approved Charter for the Reopening Planning Group (RPG)

Approved Parish Board Goals for 2020-21

Action Steps for Parish Board Goals for 2020-21

Reopening Planning Group First Parish in Brookline Charter

Mission

The ministry of the Reopening Planning group is to assess the factors involved in deciding when and how to resume use, or limit use of the building, in light of the pandemic, advise the Board on best options, and support Administration and Committees in the execution of plans approved by the Board. The RPG will exist until such time as our services are no longer needed by the Congregation and Administration.

Vision

We strive to create a safe, welcoming and equitable environment considering the risks and benefits of building use.

Responsibilities

1. Convene monthly or more as needed to review the latest:
 - State guidelines
 - Scientific and medical research, CDC
 - UUA resources
 - Brookline Clergy resources
 - Mass Council of Churches resources
 - Insurance guidance for liability
2. Consider factors such as safety, belonging, cleaning, financial implications, scheduling, phasing for members and guests, staff, renters; meetings and worship.
3. Make recommendations to the Board regarding Safe Practices and Guidelines for worship, meetings, RE, rental, etc. The Board will approve them, as the Board is responsible for the use of the building.
4. Support through effective Interpretation of Safe Practices and Guidelines approved by the Board, the church members, groups, renters, visitors and staff.
5. Make recommendations to the Board for timely changes to the approved Safe Practices and Guidelines in response to changes in conditions including in state and local guidelines, and inform the Board of those changes.
6. Take action in the event of changes in conditions that require immediate action to limit use of the building.
7. Report periodically to the Board on implementation of policies and church usage

Decision Making:

Consensus process will be used to make decisions

Membership

Leadership: Co-chairs: Medical, B&G, Minister

Members

Medical experts

Building & Grounds

Administrator

Approved Parish Board Goals for 2020-21

Goal 1: Resource and Expenditure Benchmarking

The board will collaborate with and support the finance committee to develop the comparative information and process needed for the congregation to begin to prioritize how it will live into our mission over the long term. (Margaret & Steve)

Goal 2: Pilot Data Dashboard for Planning and Organizational Health

For the purpose of developing trend data to help the Board in prioritizing and planning, the Board will pilot the development, collection, review and dissemination of an annual dashboard of trends in such data as membership, attendance (worship views/attendance, small groups, committees), RE (registration, attendance, # classes, events/opportunities by age), and financial (pledges, rental income, expenditures, endowment). The Board will report pilot results and lessons learned at the 2021 annual meeting.

Goal 3: Creating and Supporting a Digital Strategy Team

Facilitate the creation of a digital strategy team or committee that addresses the question, *How can we meet the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of our community in the digital space now and into the future?*

Goal 4: Advancing Social Justice, Climate Justice and Anti-Racism Work

The Board will endorse and publicize the RJAC's efforts to research First Parish connections with slavery and the accumulation of land and wealth; the Board will invite the RJAC to Spring board meeting about their proposal for a congregation wide process for the congregation to "reckon" with what the research uncovers.

The Board will endorse and publicize the RJAC plan for engaging the congregation in a conversation about the racial wealth gap and how an anti-racist perspective can influence attitudes toward and use of personal and institutional resources to address that gap; the Board's budget deliberations for 2021 will include this perspective.

The Board will publicize the work of the Climate Justice Committee to identify a comprehensive set of steps that would Green and reduce the First Parish "climate footprint", including resource management (water, energy, papers use, candles and waste) etc. The Board will sponsor a forum at a congregational meeting in the spring for the Climate Justice Committee to offer their recommendations.

Goal 5: Senior Minister Support and Evaluation

Establish clear expectations of and evaluate our Senior Minister

Goal 6: Inclusive and transparent budget development and monitoring

Ensure the budget is developed and monitored in an inclusive and transparent way

Goal 7: Develop and pilot a Capital Project Congregational Decision-making Process

The Board will develop and pilot a timeline and process for making congregational decisions on capital projects that is transparent as to timing and criteria to be assessed (Bob, Alfred, Karla & Margaret)

Action Steps to date for Parish Board Goals for 2020-21

Goal #7 Action Steps:

1. Share the draft Decision Timetable and Decision Tree with the Climate Action Committee and Buildings and Grounds Committee
2. Support both Committees to develop the information that will be required in order to assess and prioritize capital projects in spring 2021

Goal #2 Action Steps:

1. Micaela to develop dashboard template in Excel, based on historical trend document and including some of Alisa's current tracking data
 - Include data source notes (eg, defining facebook views and inherent limitations)
 - Alisa to help fill in available missing trend data (worship views, attendance, offering)
2. Committees, Small Groups and One-Time Events (note: need to make committees/small groups aware of reporting request now so they start tracking meeting/membership/attendance data)
 - Alisa to coordinate annual update of Committees-at-a-glance to include current committees, frequency of meetings and attendees
 - Alisa to Develop Small-groups-at-a-glance document with same content as above updated annually
 - Rev. Lisa to coordinate updates on small groups from Pastoral Care, drop-in-groups and one-time small groups (eg, poetry workshops)
3. Finance Committee to determine financial-related data to include in annual dashboard (potentially using Budget Building Blocks as a model)
4. Use the annual trends dashboard (shared at Annual Meeting) as a planning tool at Board Retreat; Rev. Lisa to use her monthly minister's report to alert Board of worrisome

Goal #3 Action Steps:

1. November:
 - Reach out to Digital Task Force to assess interest.
 - Do an all-call for people interested in creating a digital strategy.
 - Directly recruit specific expertise
2. December: Host first meeting/explain vision/provide facilitation support
3. January through June: Check in with group