



Minutes Parish Board Meeting

May 5, 2021

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

Co-Chair Bob Williamson opened the meeting at 7:06 with a chalice lighting and reading from Rev Lisa, an excerpt from Elizabeth Alexander's poem, Praise Song for the Day, written for President Obama's second inauguration.

We reviewed together our Covenant by each reading one of our commitments.

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.*

We entered breakout rooms to check in using this prompt: *Where was the last place you walked. What did you see there, and what did it mean to you?*

Board positions

- Janet Britcher shared the Executive Committee's recommendation that Bob Williamson be named chair for next year, subject to the full Board's approval. The Board approved with a high level of consensus (8 5's)
- Janet reminded members to contact her with nominations for Chair-elect (including self-nominations)
- Janet reported that Margaret Williams and Karla Baehr have agreed to continue next years as Treasurer and Clerk, respectively.

Approval of FY 22 Budget to recommend to the Congregation in May (Board Goal #7)

Having completed three budget workshops open to all members of the Congregation, the Board sought to complete its deliberations on the [Proposed Budget](#) for FY 22 developed by the Finance Committee.

- Parish Board Budget: Board members discussed what level of funding should be appropriated for Board expenses based on spending in recent years. They decided to recommend funding at \$1,500, somewhat below the average spending in recent years. (4 5's, 2 4's and 3 3's)

Called by Love, Sustained By Community, Committed to Justice

We strive to be a welcoming, diverse and loving congregation that nurtures spiritual growth for individuals and families, celebrates multicultural community, and works together to demand social justice, dismantle racism, and care for our living earth.

- **Sustainability Consultant Support:** Board members discussed the Finance Committee's recommendation to provide funding for a consultant to help FPB achieve sustainability, building on the work done by the Finance Committee this year to gather comparative information about other UU congregations' revenue and expenses. The Finance Committee conceives of the purpose as:

The strategic planning Process will engage and align FP Leadership and Members around the same vision for becoming a vibrant and sustainable congregation. The process will identify obstacles and opportunities and help the congregation develop a clear plan with timelines and progress benchmarks. Ongoing coaching by the consultant will help FP get "unstuck" as it moves through implementation.

The Finance Committee consulted with the UUA and learned that the UUA does not have this kind of consultation expertise available to offer congregations. The Finance Committee would manage finding suitable candidates for the Board to interview and select. The consultancy work - without a UUA subsidy - is estimated to be in the \$10k-\$15k range.

Racial Justice Action Committee (RJAC) Presentation related to Board Goal #4

The Board had invited the Racial Justice Action Committee (RJAC) to present at its May meeting. RJAC members presented on two projects tied directly to Board Goal #4 (See [05.05.21 RJAC Board Presentation](#))

- **FPB Connections to Slavery**
 - Mike Luke, Jud Wolfskill, and Kathryn Kirschner shared key findings of their year-long research into the relationship between First Parish and slavery
 - The RJAC had three requests of the Board related to this part of Goal #4:
 - Hire 1 or more professional researchers for 1 year or more
 - Move toward congregation-wide process of discernment
 - *In Worship*
 - *In congregational small-group discussions*
 - Consider how we could make reparations
- **Racial Wealth Gap (Research on and Engagement with Ujima Project)**
 - Ann Gilmore and Jami Jordan shared key findings of the work RJAC has led to explore the racial wealth gap through closer ties with the Boston-based Ujima organization.
 - The RJAC had these requests of the Board related to this part of Goal #4:
 - Carry-forward the Board goal of Reducing the Racial Wealth Gap and
 - Continue to visibly demonstrate Board support of this work

The Board expressed its appreciation for the RJAC's thoughtful work on both projects. Explaining its deadline for completing FY22 budget deliberations is tonight, the Board committed to discussing and responding to the RJAC's specific requests for future Board support before this church year is over.

Climate Justice Action Committee Proposal

The Board is piloting its new [Capital Investment and Expense policy](#) (Board Goal #7). To do so, the Board invited B&G Chair Clint Richmond and Climate Justice Action Committee co-chair Deane Cody describe the Climate Justice proposal that FPB take first steps to becoming carbon neutral. Evolving from its original proposal to invest in solar panels for First Parish, the current proposal seeks a withdrawal of \$32,500 from the endowment to secure the technical consulting support needed to develop a specific plan for action and identify all likely costs . See [Statement of Intent](#) and [Phase One project plan](#)

Consistent with the new policy, the Board heard the Finance Committee's recommendation for what action the Board should recommend to the Congregation at Annual Meeting in response to the Climate Justice Proposal. The Finance Committee recommended approval with the understanding that the initial draw from the endowment would be treated as "pre-development expenses" and returned to the endowment if and when a capital campaign or other funding source for sustainability emerges.

{At 9:00, the planned ending time for the meeting, Board members agreed to remain until 9:30 to complete the most urgent Board business.}

After discussion, the Board reached consensus to support both the Climate Justice request for \$32,500 and the Finance Committee request for \$12,500, both for consulting support (6 5's, 3 4's).

These decisions completed the Board's budget deliberations so that a Board-recommended budget for FY 22 can be presented to the congregation at Annual Meeting later this month.

Preparation for May 23rd Annual Meeting

Janet, Bob, Alfred, and Margaret agreed to serve as the planning team for Annual Meeting. Micaela and Jen will assist Margaret in developing the Board's explanation of its "sustainability recommendations".

Minister's Report

Rev Lisa invited Board members to reach out to her if they have any questions about this month's Minister's Report.

Minister's Evaluation

Janet reminded Board members who have not yet completed the feedback form to do so soon. She explained that there will be another "together/separately" event Thursday, May 6th from 5:00 to 6:00 when interested board members will get together to work on their submissions over Zoom. The link is [here](#).

Next Meetings

- May 23rd Annual Meeting 12:30-2:30
- June 6th Board Meeting 1:00 – 3:00 PM (agenda to include Dashboard and Goals Review)
- June 16th Old Board/New Board 7:00-9:00

Bob adjourned the meeting at 9:32pm.

Respectfully submitted

Karla Baehr, Board Clerk