

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
May 21, 2013

Staff: Charles Ortman, Judy Tomlinson

Members: Judith Rew, Mike Mernin, Laura Kushner, Cheryl Crawford, Jerry Fried, Connie Thames, Terry Cummings, Judy Strachan, Ed Billy

Teresa at Madison Planning Board, Mike Mernin called meeting to order 7:40.

Mike read statement of guiding principles.

Adoption of Board minutes

Jerry moved to accept/ Laura seconded/ approved

Ed Billy given a plaque in thanks for his service on the board.

Ministers Reports: Charlie

Eight visitors since we last met, who have signed. New UU class has 17 or 18 signed up; we have 3 actual and 1 virtual chaplains functioning on behalf of our congregation: Carol McGough, Kimberly Johnson (virtual), Becky Doggett, and Arlene Marin

Many seriously ill members of our congregation; we should be as good as we can be.

Wants to pose to us for reflection or feedback is the theme selected for next year's February Focus Month: the legacy of Martin and Malcolm, because it coincides with the legacy tours in the south offered by the UUCM in the fall and summer. Cost of tour is \$1200-\$1500 person, including getting to Alabama, hotels, bus, etc. Everybody who has taken it has had a transformative experience. District meeting recently was conducted by people had been on the tour. Could we reserve a busload for our congregation? Cheryl questioned how it would work. Suggestion for while Charlie is away that month: Paul Nick is on the board of trustees of Genesis Farms and the director there, Miriam, married him. He will try to get her to come do a service in February. Charlie and Judy recently met her during a retreat of UU ministers and were very impressed with her. The Board would need to create some kind of scholarship program; we would open it up to the Orange congregation if we don't get enough.

Hold people from Moore, OK in our thoughts. Thursday Charlie will be flying to Des Moines to go to son Will's wedding.

Charlie's schedule is packed.

Judy Tomlinson's report

COA and Senior Youth: We had 15 COA graduates first weekend in May; standing room only attendance. Thanked Terry and Brandon Doemling for stepping in as coordinators of COA while Judy was away. We have a joint Sr. Youth and COA graduate retreat the first weekend in June; almost have full advisor team for Senior Youth, need one more.

Covenant groups: two new exciting ideas. Claudia Sanders continues as partner.

Harvest the Power: this year's class graduated including Michael Premo, Jason Brome, Melinda Loflin, Dennis Kurtti, Emily Mernin, Laura Kushner, Robin Sharif, and Nick Lewis. Patty Dow is now coordinating partner; looking for just one more male facilitator; have two junior facilitators, Laura Mernin and Henry Kanengiser. Next year is almost fully signed up from volunteers.

RE Committee: Working furiously to get the RE coordinator position filled; interviewed two, have four more resumes. Avron Stoloff will be new committee chair; Elizabeth Speidel will be secretary. We are really looking to restructure how the committee itself works, making each committee member responsible for a particular age group; community building and social justice stressed for each age group.

Connie mentioned that teachers like the new schedule; Judy reviewed how the new system works. Folks prepare every eight or nine weeks: Each week there is a lead and assistant; then new lead, new assistant coming on. Off for one week, on for two.

Joel Naftelberg on MESH

September 2011 began our UUCM commitment to host the UU Mesh Cafes on Wednesdays. Over the last two years (including Sat. morning breakfasts), we have served about 2,000 meals; spent 6,000 volunteer hours; washed 12,000 dishes; distributed boxes and boxes of juice, etc. All happened with no organized funding mechanism. Individuals commit to bring 25 servings of lasagna (for example); volunteers come from MHS, MSU, Montclair Girls Club. We have provided spiritual community and dinner; opened up extra nights and hours for Hurricane Sandy, with 12 overnight respites. Asking for a monthly collection to support the MESH effort financially. Putting together two committees: Economic Nourishment, and Volunteer Committee for training. We provide food to seniors, families, people who are perhaps different from who we perceive to be homeless.

Charlie's response at the meeting/dinner held recently for MESH was that if we offered an extra collection each month it would dissipate what we now do. Maybe it's time to change the Human Needs Pantry collection and do MESH instead once a month. We would continue to support Human Needs Pantry once a year. A lot of volunteers are putting out a great deal of personal money. Meals served went quickly from 20 to 40.

Connie asked if we could we be specific about what we need people to bring as some folks prefer bringing things instead of money. Examples: sponges, dishwasher liquid, Nauna's coupons. Make a "shopping list" available.

Joel outlined the kinds of meals and variety we offer (ie., Italian, Mexican, Asian nights, breakfast for dinner); outlined how the volunteers are organized via a MESHgram each week to about 65 people. About 55 are UUCM members who expressed interest in volunteering; other 10 are students, etc. plus a couple from the 12 step community. People give food, money, or time. Two issues: we need to tread lightly through the process of telling Human Needs Ministry and perhaps need to discuss this with the Sunday experience committee. There might be folks who feel strongly about Human Needs. We do not want to dissipate our current Sharing Our Riches program, which reaches beyond the UUCM community. Mike now chairs a committee of three who decides Sharing the Riches. The feeling is to not mix Sharing our Riches with something like MESH's needs. Joel emphasized that this is a UUCM ministry. We are not MESH; funds we collect are for the congregational effort, the UU Mesh Cafe. This might engage members of the Congregation more than the Human Needs Pantry. He thinks \$200-\$250 a week they need. It's not fully calculated because folks bring individual contributions. He doesn't want to take away from volunteerism; just needs some subsidy. We are not walking out of Human Needs Ministry: Thanksgiving collection was about \$2,300. Charlie said he would report to the congregation about this, probably in the fall. Joel added that they have just engaged a local production company to make a 3-5 minute mini-documentary for fall of 2013. Will involve congregations, staff, volunteers, guests, etc. Dinners end in June, so we may finish it in the fall. Joel added: the process isn't broken, just strained a bit, and don't want to burn out individual economically. We will take a month to come up with an idea for the fall.

Charlie made motion to "have a special collection each month in order to supply and support our MESH Café ministry beginning in September." Terry so moved/Jerry seconded/passed.

Thank you notes:

Terry and Brandon Doemling

Peter Arian for his years of service to the Board

PROM: Nick and Judie; Lianne; Diane Specht; Karen Berry; Jerry food; Peter and Colin did the bar; senior youth; Maggie arian counted the money; Markus Hauck; Amy Crafton and Randy; Mahmoud took pictures;

Membership committee report:

Judy Tomlinson reported: Some highlights are website by Jason Brome and Ed Boyle; Nick and Dennis Drew redesigned the Narthex; RE Committee was the first to put the display in the glass case; one of our issues is that fewer and fewer people are signing the guest book; need a different mechanism; maybe clipboards, etc., getting greeters to sign up in advance.

Discussion about greeters included the suggestion to make it a commitment like being the liturgist. Have a committee of former greeters to grab folks as they come in; try to identify new visitors or members and help them get to coffee hour.

In terms of new technology: David Hanley brought a QR code that we will begin putting on emails and newsletter and other pieces of literature. David is suggesting we use Constant Contact. Nick is investigating a video display. Nick has been recruiting mentors for most of the new members. We have been doing that for a little over a year and we are about to do an inquiry about how to do that. Right now it's in Survey Monkey form, created by Judith Rew. But Council of Ministry has suggested we do one-on-one interviews instead. Also organized a mini-UUville for last UU class so people know what they can get involved with. Teresa has asked Nick to reach out to people who have dropped off our membership rolls, to follow up with some of our old solid members.

Policy brief from UULMNJ Fracking Brief to sign on and support to call on legislation

Terry reported that she was at a dinner for Conservation Voters. She thinks the bill is really wrongheaded, that the policy brief urges us to support. A lot of misstatements, which is a little embarrassing. Examples: Talks about how radon is produced by fracking. Not true. Contamination happens every time it fracking is done and that's not true. On balance, fracking is going to save so many jobs, etc. It shouldn't have been a knee jerk reaction to appose it.

Action item is to sign on this policy brief to override the veto. Ed Billy, Judy Strachan agree with Terry. Mike said he is uninformed.

We decided we need more information.

Moved to table (Jerry)/ seconded (Terry)/approved.

Mike reported on an email from Irene Sanderson:

She wants to bring to our attention that there are a number of items in our archives that are at risk because they are not properly stored. She presented a budget of \$600-\$800 to protect our archives. Question was whether this the whole project or just a stopgap? Mike will forward email. Judy will come back next month with research on how to fund.

Judy and Laura: Healthcare taskforce

Under Affordable Health Care Act there is money to train people on how to enroll through the exchange, called The Navigator program. Healthcare taskforce has been reaching out to a consortium for healthcare issues. Suggestion is that we hire a person to perform this task, and therefore be a conduit for the funding. The Navigator program would give us \$15 a hour per employee and \$5 for benefits: could be one person or two persons at 20% time, to manage the flow of information.

There were many questions about how this would work (is this separation of church and state??). That being said, someone can read it thoroughly and maybe in next couple of weeks circulate. We will table it until next meeting.

Donna's report (Office Administrator's report):

Have a deposit of \$5,000 on daycare center; lease has been signed; everything has gone to the state; begin to start up in July or August. Donna is sending emails in last ditch effort to pick up a few more. Pledge numbers is \$436,000. Begin automatic pledges in our checking/credit cards.

Treasurer's report, Judy Strachan

Financials continue to look good; assets have increased almost \$9,000; prepaid pledges \$52,000 at the end of April. Current year vs. last year pledges, we are down 7%, where we expected to be. Prior year pledges low; large matching contributions.

Some highlights:

Short term rentals are actually higher than last year. Endowment earnings way above last year. Everything except auction in fundraising is below budget. 2% less than last year; but above where we thought we would be. Overall difference is attributable to having less staff while Jaelyn was away.

Salaries and water and sewer way over budget.

UUA dues. Need to make last quarter; partner church contribution went out this last month. Sabbatical expenses haven't all come through yet.

Music is over budget; outside guest is under; flowers are under; RE fees appear to be overstated. Some from last year and this year combined.

Worship and spirituality is 9% under over last year.

Social justice expense: UULMNJ dues get paid in June.

Sharing our Riches: paid \$600 to date.

Total income. Still projecting we will come out above even for the year.

May have small surplus.

Balance sheet:

Assets are higher \$5,000 more than last month.

Gift cards were bare bones.

UUA funds have gained \$3,000 over last year.

Liabilities are up 13,000; 5,000 in security

Special purchase funds: Afterschool program and YSOP each spent \$134 and \$240 respectively.

General fund went down \$3,000.

Partner Church visit

Judy Tomlinson explained that ministers and some members of our partner church coming to visit September 2.

June board meeting:

June 18; will invite incoming; Teresa wants to have it here; Judy T. was supposed to make a presentation about sabattical, but she and Judy or Charlie will be at GA. We are re-electing Peter Morales and a new moderator.

Will decide via email where the meeting will be.

Annual report, Mike Mernin

Donna raised today that we haven't done an annual report in four years. Donna sent the last one to Teresa and Mike. Mike will send that email. Now we will do it for Fall. Look at prior format.

Terry raised issue of the UU Solos group have asked if they could have a key.

Process observation: Laura said we did okay tonight; visiting ministers going to hospitals; Feb. focus month ideas; Harvest the Power, youth become more involved; MESH brought up a lot; fracking issue taking care of our environment; preserving the history of our congregation; healthcare taskforce.

Move to adjourn (Judy Strachan)/seconded (Ed Billy) 9:42 pm.