

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair**  
**May 19, 2015**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting began at 7:30 pm**

**Staff:** Charlie Ortman, Judy Tomlinson

**Members:** Arlene Dodge, Mary Moriarty, Sue Raufer, Dorothy Sommer, Judith Rew, Laura Kushner, Dottie Hiebing, Chris Corbett, Judith Rew, Mike Mernin, Jerry Fried, Cheryl Crawford

**Visitors:** John Carlton

**Statement of Guiding Principles: Dottie**

**Opening Words: Dottie**

Gave a plug for covenant groups

Readings:

Larry James: The Main Thing is to Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing

Homer Simpson: If you really want something in this life you have to work for it.

Now quiet, they're about to announce the lottery numbers.

**Motion to adapt last month's board minutes**

Chris moves / Mary seconded / Adopted

**President's Report: Mike**

Thank you to everybody for contributing the last couple months: to a good annual meeting, a successful interim minister search committee.

June meeting will be held at Jerry's or Laura's.

This fall would be an excellent time to do our retreat as an overnight at Murray Grove. Sue will call Murray Grove. It will be Friday night to Saturday night.

I will reach out to Dr. Justin Osterman (new interim minister beginning in August).

**Associate Minister's Report: Judy Tomlinson**

RE:

- Recruitment of teachers: about 10 positions still open.
- Started a group for middle school parents.
- There is a large new group coming in to senior youth as there were 15 COA graduates this year.
- We need to make plans for the Crew Team situation (COA candidates having to miss either COA or crew practices/events).

- Senior youth conducted worship May 10 and following Sunday in Orange. And the Saturday before that did a Habitat build. 10 youth participated. We will do a retreat combining COA graduates and Senior Youth.

Harvest the Power:

- HTP dinner happened. We will hold two more info sessions: May 31 and June 7. Please encourage potential leaders to take part. (Dottie gave a plug for Harvest the Power.)

Covenant groups:

- Leaders selected themes. There are 10 well functioning groups.

Judy received an award at the District Meeting: The Excellence in Religious Education Award.

We are preparing our Religious Education Sunday. I have reached out to Justin to let him know she is available to talk to him.

### **Minister's Report: Charlie**

Visitors who have signed something this month: One

One signed up for the summer program and one signed up for the alternate, quicker New UU class.

Maybe the Board should start making a list of things to bring up with Justin.

I want to express my appreciation for the leadership of the board as it was reflected and expressed on Sunday at the meeting. I was so proud of us. We ended this year in a position of strength.

An interesting story: Charlie was excused to leave the room during the meeting and encountered a woman in Fletcher Care who talked about her grandchild in Remembrances. It became a pastoral moment. Then he received standing ovation coming back in (and he doesn't know why...).

June 14 will be flower ceremony, last regular service.

I have a greater appreciation of what you all were going through choosing the interim as I was going through the same program.

Judy: Charlie gave the Odyssey talk at the regional meeting and it was one of the better ones she's heard in all these years. It was an incredible experience.

### **Taking Care of Our Spiritual Home:**

#### **John Carlton, head of Buildings and Ground Committee**

Last time I was here we decided to form a committee to flesh out these ideas and do fundraising strategizing. So:

Annual maintenance costs: We need to spend close to \$20,000 a year taking care of our building. We are sort of unique in the way our building represents us with its

various features: Like the Synagogue in the Desert [The Narthex, a Christian term, originated as a place of welcome gathering, which originated in the Torah as part of instructions on building a Synagogue in the desert.] Transepts are reminiscent of a Christian church; The dome reflects the invention of Muslims. The former library [Rotunda] is a symbol of intelligence and learning. Finally the Craftman style was a rebellion against the industrial age.

Our building tells a remarkable story. But to keep us “water tight” we need close to \$20,000: looking at the roof, boilers, gutters, etc. Now, a couple of tiles come loose and we replace them but if we don’t fix them then we are paying for painting and plastering (thinking of the recent roof damage during a rain storm).

Deferred maintenance happened as a result of the recession. But we are getting further behind. We probably have a couple thousand dollars worth of deterred maintenance. Outside the Alliance Room we have a gutter that is worn through. That’s a few thousands to fix.

If we look around we are scraping and fixing but minimally. I don’t fault anyone but now we should think about these things for the future.

Plastering the chimney, replacing rotted gutters: hundreds of thousands of dollars. The roof: a prolonged process of taking the shingles up; fixing what’s under; putting shingles back. In the attic you can see “daylight.” It’s patchwork at best. Each year it’s going to get a little worse.

I wanted to bring a picture of Santa Maria del Fiore [a cathedral in Florence built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century that was proposed to be have a large domed roof in place of a flying buttress but nobody remembered how to build such a roof. The point being that they raised money for and built the cathedral without a real plan for the roof. It got figured out in the nick of time and still stands with its red dome roof]; Frank Lloyd Wright’s Unity Temple in Oak Park has a \$10 million dollar bill to fix its roof.

We have some aspirational things that we’ve talked about, too:

- Kitchen update: There are gaping holes in the ceiling, very old linoleum floor; old stove that doesn’t have an automatic pilot light. Sinks are not up to legal code; cabinets are old. Future revenue might come with having a more contemporary kitchen.
- Build a welcoming kiosk outside.
- Bathroom in the Alliance Room might make it more accessible when we have 100 people in Fletcher Hall. It might be enticing to our revenue. Chris added: We could move everything over a little and fit a bathroom.
- Sanctuary: We need to fix the floor in front of the Chancellery. This is important for the music program (as we move the piano there) and also for potential renters.
- Accessibility: We need an intercom outside our ramp doorway. Now we just have one at our non-ramp doorway.

We would like support creating of a committee to continue the capital campaign. It ended a little prematurely because of the recession. The thought is to include the pledge chairs; a student intern; goal would be to raise \$300,000 and not have another capital campaign in 10 years.

Hopefully the Board will vote to take the next step.

Chris added: To John's chagrin I have pushed back that we don't need a new capital campaign. But I've become convinced. We can't get ahead because we are always catching up. I'm really for this. Members have already come forward with at least \$25,000 pledged. We need to decide what it should be called. Perhaps not a Capital Campaign. John and Ed Martoglio have been "crying in the wilderness" about this for a long time.

Mike asked: Who else sits on this committee? Tim Beacham and Scott Seale want to join it.

Jerry asked: Are we convinced that maintaining this roof going piece by piece is the way to go? If the answer isn't yes, is there a possibility to do something like solar panels at the same time? We once costed that out at \$300,000.

Answer: We have a request for proposal for Bay Roofing to come in and think bigger. I don't know that we have the reinforcement to support solar panels. We could put a philosophical one over Pierles Room just to have it.

Move to form a committee to look into raising money to tend to the capital needs and aspirations of our facilities that will come to the board with options about how to raise the money and what to spend it on.

Sue seconded.

Mary asked: I would like to add somewhere and publicize that we seek some women to be on it. MESH is also very interested in this and there are many women with MESH.

Response: It has to be broad based effort. Would love to have people with fundraising expertise. We should slot this in before the pledge drive but when this year tapers off. John also sees this as a communication effort so people will understand.

Remembering the last Capital Campaign, we asked people to make a three-year commitment. We raised \$1,000,000. We had an outside consultant. Pictures. Diagrams.

Motion made/Seconded/Passed

**Annual Meeting Review:**

Anyone want to raise any issues? Mike's style was procedurally correct enough.

**Thank you notes:**

Becky and Undoing Racism Committee for initiating the Black Lives Matter banner and project (and for organizing URC participation in the upcoming African American Heritage Day Parade.)

Stearns for his involvement in the COA program. Congratulate him on his wedding.

**Treasurers report: Chris**

The story is the same as always. Our income is pretty good but we keep spending more money. The roof doesn't help. We have a lot of overages. We are generally on course but I'm nervous.

Income: April was a great month.

Our year-to-date compared to last year is better.

Again, Auction and RE are a big help.

But what we spent: Much more than last year. More than 2-3% more and we are about \$30,000 beyond where we should be even if we factor in the higher budget.

Bottom line: Difference between our revenue and our expenses: For the year we are \$9,600 in the green. But last year we were \$29,605 ahead. I do have a reserve of \$18,000. And May is a 3-check month (salaries); there will be no prom. With Donna we are calling all big pledgers who haven't gotten their full pledges in yet so we get everything in by the end of June.

We continue to get our pledges in. We need \$10,000 more and we're not quite there yet. If we get three-quarters of these in we will meet it. We need to strike some of those names. There is an updated list that has names after each one. There is one person per each of us. If we could get a few more of these we'll be there. We'll get an email. Charlie did a letter to them and asked to at least meet our pledge and increase it if possible.

Repair work to roof: Will cost \$10,000 and insurance will not cover it most likely. Donna is dealing with the insurance company.

**Questions:**

Dottie: Technology is over by \$10,000. I'm not worried because technology costs. But I'm wondering if there is a way to anticipate these costs.

Answer: The server crashed; Chris's son acknowledged that the repair cost was fair. We need to approach it like deferred maintenance. We need to get in a regular routine of updating and maintaining. We don't have that now.

Dottie: Where the money goes: It's hard to tell the full cost of the staff... It's about two-thirds of our total budget with taxes, etc. Does the UUA does it have a recommended proportion of staff costs as a percentage of budget?

Answer: The only thing that Charlie has seen are ratios of how many people you should see on a Sunday morning as a percentage of membership. Should be 50% (but 25% in Massachusetts). We probably see 40-45% on a typical Sunday.

Chris: It's so hard to cut things. Our biggest budget is our youth but it's only \$8,000. And that's typical of UU congregations, probably all denominations. They are the folks that make this place be a place.

Motion to accept the budget report.  
Dorothy moved/Arlene seconded/Accepted

### **General Assembly**

We have to vote to designate our delegates. Charge the president and the ministers with credentialing members of our congregation. Credential cards will be passed out. At the GA we get together for a dinner. We will also sit together at plenary session. Maybe we need a Board moment about this.

Motion to authorize Mike and the ministers to credential delegates.  
Dottie moved/Jerry seconded/passed

### **Interim Minister discussion**

Judy, Charlie, and Mike will all be reaching out to Justin. Jerry: perhaps one of the interim committee members might be part of the transition team.

Arlene: Justin mentioned that he plans to come one week in June just to drop in.

The Transition Team is not about helping him move. Charlie clarified the relationship of the Council on Ministry with the interim. In a congregation slightly smaller generally the Council on Ministry does not function during the interim. In congregations a little bigger then both the Transition Team and Council on Ministry exist. Jerry guesses that Justin would like having more people involved.

Arlene: Budget is one of the things he gets excited about. So he may really help us. We're giving him money in lieu of FICA. He thought it was going to be on top of this. We need to make sure that this confusion doesn't occur with the settled minister search. Transition team should help him establish his calendar as he comes in.

His first service will be the first Sunday after Labor Day and perhaps a little bit in August. Should we send him to Gail Winston, the apartment real estate person?

We don't know his "drop-in" plans. He will probably come during the week.

Mike: There is no defined procedure for selecting your search committee. We will choose a search committee probably this January. Some do it at their annual meeting in the spring. It is strongly recommend that the search committee be elected. NLDC should come up with a list. When you get some time read the UUA materials on the website. Craig Herschberg (from the District office) will coach us about this. Let's all get very conversant.

Mike will put it in the next *Gazette*. There are many ways of approaching a two-year interim period. The theory is we'll spend the first amount of time "getting rid of" Charlie. Then some time they call "in the hole." Then we pick our search committee.

Things we need to remember to address with Justin (the beginning of a list):

- How to reach out to visitors, making use of our membership committee.
- Parking lot.

When he comes in August or September he'll probably want to meet with us together and individually. Mike will try to get a social get-together with Justin.

Jerry: It is a real compliment to our congregation that none of the people interviewed (we were told) had the experience of a congregation as solid and good with communication as ours.

Recurring business:

- Annual report. Will happen this summer.
- Concert by Jack McKnight discussion. The feeling that it is a bad idea and Cheryl will take this back (tactfully) to the Worship Committee.
- Parking lot policy.

Discussion about Process Observation. We will do it in June over wine.

Scheduling Board moments: In two weeks Mike will do one about GA. On the 31<sup>st</sup> Sue will do one about the June 6 African American Heritage Day Parade.

Process observation: Mike

We did an excellent job of accounting for our diversity ... Black Lives Matter... encouraging Board to attend the AAHDP...

Defibrillator: It is behind Donna's desk and will be going in one of the hallway outside the Narthex by the hallway to the basement. We need to get training.

Mike: Many months ago after service when a lot of people were leaving Carolyn Burr got a little caught in the bathroom by the Narthex. We need a bell in there.

Executive session.

Arlene moved to adjourn/Cheryl seconded/passed

Adjourned at 9:30pm