

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair
August 19, 2014
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Meeting began at 7:37 pm

Staff: None

Members: Sue Raufer, Dennis Drew, Scott Seale, Laura Kushner, Chris Corbett, Dottie Hiebing, Mary Moriarty, Judith Rew, Arlene Dodge, Mike Mernin, Jerry Fried

Opening Words: Arlene Dodge

Women's Foreign Policy Council "I Pledge Allegiance to the Earth"
"Soul Work" by Rosemary Bray McNatt
Statement of guiding principles (not read)

Adoption of July minutes

Chris moves to accept / Dotty seconded / minutes accepted

President's Report: Mike Mernin

Charlie has shared a document debating the reasons for a one- or two-year interim ministry, which we will circulate to the whole Board. This will be the focus of our retreat, discussing the upcoming interim minister selection. I don't have a restaurant picked out yet.

Board liaisons: Please sign up for about 3 committees that you are interested in. Then you will be asked to remind them about the High Coffee in just under three weeks and also start talking them about the Path to Membership.

Discussion: (Jerry) There are some under populated committees. Should we address this? For instance we have an aesthetics committee. Particularly now that we have site plans in the works we need many more on this committee. The feeling is (Judith explained) that the problem of recruiting for members on committees will become easier once the new Membership Plan is introduced and implemented.

Other points made:

- The 2-person rule should be loosened up to take into account the relative size and activity/nonactivity of the committees.
- Everybody should have at least one committee that actually does something.
- The committees should be listed on the website (Judith said she would follow-up with Jaclyn—or Jaclyn's stand-in while she is on maternity leave—about getting the committees on the website).
- The Board members can use their own discretion about how best to reach out to committees based on the size and amount of activity of the committee.
- The Membership Committee will be going directly to many of these committees to explain the membership plan. The expectation (Dotty

recalled) is that the liaisons will accompany the Membership Committee members on these visits to committees.

Becky Doggett: Undoing Racism Mass Incarceration Initiative

You may recall that over a year ago the UUA called on all congregations to read Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow*. We did here and now as a result we have been keeping up an ongoing effort to raise our consciousness here at the UUCM and in the general community about how incarceration has escalated to epidemic proportions. So much so that it has really skewed our perceptions. A number of national groups have declared October as a month to ask for the end to mass incarceration, so our group has agreed to be a part of it. In addition, the Mass incarceration committee of our UULMNJ is working to sound the alarm about what is happening. Charlie thought the Board should endorse and support these efforts. We are planning 4 events (see report Becky provided the Board earlier):

- Coffee hour the first Sunday of October run by the Mass Incarceration Committee.
- A Board moment (Judith volunteered) perhaps this same day.
- A lay-led service on Oct 19 on Mass Incarceration.
- Oct. 22 is the nationwide (Wednesday) day for focusing on this issue and we will organize a rally at the Church St. Plaza, handing out flyers and explaining what we can do locally. Then we will do a march to this building (the UUCM). Charlie and Judy are talking to the Clergy in the town.
- We can spread the word that our congregation as a whole is joining forces with this national campaign. Some of the literature has been rewritten by Becky to be more in line with what we UUs will be comfortable endorsing.
- We will have publicity available every week for the congregation. Each of us should make a commitment to be part of the rally. If you are member of other committees spread the word, take information to those committees.
- The committee will have a table at the High Coffee.
- BlueWaveNJ should be approached to endorse it. Judith will talk to Marcia Marley (ask Becky first as she has been seeking endorsements herself.)

Mary moved to make a motion to support the work/duly seconded/passed

Ministers Report: Judy Tomlinson was away on vacation; Charlie Ortman was away on a family emergency.

Thank you notes: Markus for filling in this past Sunday, Laura who sang and played the piano for that service.

Some discussion about Markus's sermon. Most people found it very powerful but Dotty pointed at that some people didn't like it, maybe finding it too personal. The question was raised, should Dotty reach out to the Council on Ministry just to let them know that there were some of these feelings. Arlene said it's important to

remember that it's a free pulpit. It was decided that Dotty should not do that. Just perhaps encourage that person to say something directly.

We sent cards from the Board expressing our support and concern to Charlie, who is in Boston, with his daughter Laura and Laura's husband Ed, who was hit by a car and is hospitalized with very serious injuries; and to Cheryl Crawford, who is in Tijuana with her husband, who is seeking treatment for (recently diagnosed) pancreatic cancer.

Sue will send a note to Laura Ortman.

No report from Administrator, Donna Laukner, who is away on vacation.

Treasurers Report: Chris Corbett

High points from the July summary sheet:

We balanced the budget and more

We have a surplus of \$11,000 (expenses minus income)

The different is increased pledges, Prom, expenses lower than we anticipated, but it's hard to say why that is exactly. The staff is really good about not spending money for the sake of spending money and we had some left over. There really are no lessons for what to change for next year as it's too soon.

Where our funds ended up:

We ended up with this surplus even though we took \$10,000 out for capital improvements; we took money out of music fund for the asst. director. The Traiwan's gift was one important factor. Chris's recommendation is that we sit on it for now. This past year we did and the reasons for using the funds presented themselves, the Green Sanctuary, for one.

Scott suggested that we let people know they can donate to the funds.

August Report: It's too early to draw any inferences; you're going to see a big uptick in expenses but it doesn't mean anything at this point.

Our budget is 3% higher than last year and our expenses are 3% higher.

The cautionary note, which Chris will keep repeating this year, is that we put forth a lot of funds that are non-reoccurring to fund new budget items. We will need \$27,000 more this coming year in order to refund these things (the new youth director, music assistant, music director's salary increase, Green Sanctuary). We will need a very successful pledge campaign, increased by \$27,000. Maybe the \$11,000 surplus will be a down payment for the \$27,000. We have to get ready.

Discussion about fundraising: Charlie brought it up at the last meeting that we have to change the format, keep it fresh. We also have the factor of Charlie leaving and the unknown effect that will have on fundraising. The new interim will be officially on board by next September.

The point was raised: The UU rules require that the interim get paid the same as the minister. It's interesting that they have a position about that but not for staff. We were reminded that we gave raises last year and we are going to talk about staff bonuses.

Chris reminded the Board that we'll start talking about details, trends, etc. next month. And he will spend some time explaining the funds for the sake of the new Board members, maybe schedule a funds seminar in October.

Move to accept July treasurer's report / Mary moved / duly seconded / accepted

Move to accept August treasurer's report / Laura moved / duly seconded / accepted

Getting out of politics initiative

Cecelia Cosca of the UULMNJ explained in an email: Support for a campaign to overturn Citizens United is being sought. The pending Senate SJR that is not coming up for a vote any time soon, but there is a motion to have a citizens action at the Morristown Congregation. They would like our endorsement of the work and the Board to sign up for us to be a cosponsor on the flyer; event is on Sept. 11; continue to support as they continue to work on this issue.

Laura explained: The only reason UULMNJ didn't sign on is because it's a national not a state issue. Charlie favors cosponsoring this event. There is probably no other action required except allowing the flyers to be distributed here. There is no financial commitment involved.

Move to be a cosponsor with Morristown UU / Dotty moved / Dennis seconded / passed

Publicity/communications initiative

Judith did an analysis and proposal last year about getting our publicity more structured... recommending the possible creation of a vice president of publicity. Recently, Judith has begun a small effort to form a communications committee, with John Chadwick offering to help with press releases.

Mike favors we get it off the ground organically. The question was asked about funding. For now Judith will just work on establishing this committee and report back.

Judith will send out the document prepared last year to the new board.
Motion to create Communications Committee / Passed

Dennis: Buildings and Grounds

Now on the facilities committee are John Carlton, Nick Lewis, and Dennis Drew. Some recent concerns (see Dennis's hand-written report for details):

- Kitchen: MESH taking care of it, especially Peter Arian.
- Narthex: Two steps: first to tidy up, second to make it more special. Nick is looking for someone to do this.
- Sanctuary: making chairs that don't tip; upgrade electricity.
- Fletcher Hall: curtains? Bathrooms? Stage ropes?
- Kiosk outdoors.

Dennis expressed the concern that this has morphed into this major project involving designs and kiosks, solar panels, gardens, etc. But nothing can happen until we establish the funds. Silke has the dream of having waterless, compost toilets, the refrigerator question is still being figured out. Chris reminded us that we have to prioritize this list and we can make progress. Some things have already been done.

Scott: requests that we make the changes (especially to the kitchen) in a way that is appropriate to the space and beautiful.

All MESH money is being used for the kitchen repairs. The work being contemplated is not of enough breadth or depth that we need to get aesthetics involved. Funds are coming from special collection, plus they have a basket out.

The concern was expressed by Chris that MESH is spending money—which is all generated here at the UUCM, not coming from the town MESH organization—on their own and he would like to have a list of exactly what they are doing. Dennis will talk to them about this.

We should reach out to MESH and invite them to a Board meeting so that we can applaud their amazing efforts but also get some understanding as to who keeps the books, how expenditures are monitored, etc. Dennis will reach out to Beth Anderson or Peg Seip, who may be the treasurer.

Mike felt guilty for a couple years that he hasn't volunteered but maybe Board could get involved and volunteer one month at MESH.

Retreat: October 12-13. Mike Mernin

We are going to focus on Interim Ministry. Given we had budget for on off-site we'll use some of our discretionary fund to cover a restaurant. We'll have a nice evening on Friday.

Arlene: UU Marketplace is looking for artists of the month.

Board moments:

Communications Committee, Sept. 14th, Mike

Budget changes, October 5, reminder about the need for fundraising, Chris

Undoing Racism endorsement of the Mass Incarceration, Sept. 21st, Judith (or Sue, notes aren't clear), but Sue will check with Becky

Executive Session.

See Chris's hand out about staff bonuses.

Motion to approve these bonuses / Dotty moved/ Dennis seconded/ accepted

Motion to leave executive session / Laura moved / duly seconded/ passed

Laura: Process observation

Dennis, Chris, Becky reports efficient, well prepared, informative. Antiracism/anti-oppression: Mass incarceration, our support for MESH, Citizens United, opening words: our pledge to our planet.

Motion to adjourn / Chris moved / Jerry seconded / passed

Meeting adjourned 9:37

Sign-ups for snacks, opening words, process observation

September:

Snacks: Scott / opening words: Mike / process observation: Dottie

October:

Snacks: Mike / opening words: Sue / process observation: Arlene

November:

Snacks: Dennis / opening words: Mary / process observation: Sue

December:

Snacks: Laura / opening words: Dennis / process observation: Jerry

January:

Snacks: Mary / opening words: Arlene / process observation: Laura

February:

Snacks: Sue / opening words: Scott / process observation: Mary

March:

Snacks: Arlene / opening words: Chris / process observation: Dennis

April:

Snacks: Chris / opening words: Laura / process observation: Scott

May:

Snacks: Dottie / opening words: Jerry / process observation: Mike

June:

Snacks: Jerry / opening words: Dottie / process observation: Chris