

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair**  
**January 20, 2015**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting began at 7:35 pm**

**Staff:** Charlie Ortman

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

Visitors: Francesca Elms, Dana Moore, Luis Deleon, Emily Roberts, Devany Kurtti, Lanka Ramsey, Samara Moore, Rowan Ramsey, Jacob Sailer, Steve Ramshur, several Coming of Age candidates

**Opening Words:** Arlene Dodge  
7,000 Ways to Listen

**Statement of Guiding Principles:** Arlene Dodge

**Adoption of December board minutes**  
Chris moved / Arlene Seconded / Passed

**Minister's Report: Charlie**

Personal note: Thank you all for your expressions of support for my mother-in-law, who is in hospice.

I did not get a report on the number of visitors this month.

Malcolm Campbell passed away. Memorial service will be in February. **Ann Karmer** is in hospice (lives in Westfield).

About last Sunday (the service was cancelled because of the ice storm): It took an hour to drive from Charlie's house to the UU, coming by way of Little Falls. Minutes after he left we cancelled the 9:00 service and by 10:00 we decided to cancel 11. However, about a dozen people were here. They gathered in the Narthex, including Jim Johnson who visits often but is a member of All Souls in New York. He sang a couple of hymns. Stearns played the piano. Charlie did an impromptu homily.

Jason Brome spent a lot of time on the site because it was not getting updated though he uploaded the info. So we are dumping the company that has been the carrier of our website that has not been responsive.

Judy T. says things are going very well and she will be back the second week of February. A couple of issues came up in RE so they reached out to Charlie.

A new opera company has been rehearsing in the sanctuary and will be performing Nambucco the next two weekends. No holes were drilled, no nails pounded. They now know the rules (about parking, using chairs, etc.)

Next month is Feb. Focus Month. The Council on Ministry exists to assess how the ministers are doing and also let the ministers know what the congregation is saying. This year they decided that given the transition and the focus month theme of UUCM history, they will interview a number of congregation members who have been under other transitions. We want the ability to witness through those members the continuity, consistency, and reliability that will allow us to come out in a very good place at the end of the transition. We are asking all members to focus in their meetings on this history a bit. I hope there will be plans made for the board to focus on our history as well.

Thank you notes:

Laura Kushner for the Wassail and Deb Ellis and Hal for helping. A huge thank you to Sue Raufer for preparing all the great food for the UUCM Council meeting. Danny Guevara, our custodian, who consistently goes above and beyond, demonstrated again on the Sunday we cancelled services.

**Administrators report.** She said she had nothing to report.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

The Good, the Bad and the Interesting:

We had a very nice December. We had a good increase from just pledges. Our big gap had been people who pay by check. They came in big time in December: \$42,000. Our pledges are right where they should be. The Auction was excellent; RE fees good; our income right on target. Right now we have a surplus of \$42,000. But generally the first half income comes in faster and then it tails off. But expenses stay the say or even go up a bit.

The bad is our expenses are still running high. About \$30,000 over where we should be. Our technology crash cost, we had building repairs, and our health insurance went up. No reason to panic but we are looking very closely at our expenses. If we needed to we could take out of our funds.

Year to Date: we are a little behind last year but we expected that. But our other income is making it up. Total income is actually up: \$375,588 vs. \$356,966.

What We Spent:

Nothing is unusual. The YTD balance: We've expended \$83,664, last year it was \$66,667. We are still a bit too high on facilities expenditures: replaced a roof; had a boiler mishap. Administrator expenses are also over. Some things are ahead. Jaclyn was away on maternity leave; senior youth advisor started late.

In summary: Ahead by \$44,000 but last year we were ahead \$71,000. We do need to tighten up a bit on our expenses.

UUCM Funds Balance:

We have long-term savings. We've been going up and down but we are relatively flat because the market hasn't done that well this year.

**Defibulator:** John Carlson gave Chris a nice lead: the supplier for the machines at MKA, a company called Cardiac Science. They will first help you place it and then give one-hour trainings. There are some continuing costs. The company will come in once a year at \$50 to check the machine. They charge \$150 for the one-hour training.

It's agreed that we need to find out who in the congregation is already certified; make sure we understand the full costs of purchasing and maintaining the machine; what level of training is really necessary. Charlie believes we shouldn't be making a decision like this. Donna generally approves of this plan.

Motion to approve the treasurer's report/Mary seconded/Approved

### **Senior Youth "Sleep in a Box" event**

Dana, Luis, Emily Roberts, and some younger folks, Devony Kurtti, Lanka Ramsey, and Samara Moore, described the event with a very comprehensive PowerPoint presentation (attached here). It will be held February 28. Senior youth and perhaps some community youth will actually sleep outside in decorated boxes in order to highlight the plight of the homeless. This is a Habitat for Humanity Newark project.

Samara: In school we learn that the best way to share information is to address who/what/where/when/why and how. Our Senior Youth members and adult volunteers will organize this.

What: An event to bring awareness to Homelessness in Essex County.

We will collect donations to benefit local organizations that cater to our community's homeless population.

We chose to hold this event because approximately 835 homeless individuals and families live in Essex County. We want to educate and inspire our youth to get more involved.

How: We will create fliers, use social media and crowd-funding #SleepInABox.

We will prepare a press release to share with local news outlets.

Encourage a Bring a Friend policy.

Our schedule: We will partner with the Salvation Army, which has a homeless shelter. They've agreed to give us a tour and a chance to chat with families maybe in the midst of homelessness.

We will come back to the UU to decorate boxes with inspiring messages and UU values and statistics about homelessness.

In order to bridge the gap between old and young we are proposing a chili contest. Adults can "enter" chili, which will be judged. Plus will have a Hot Chocolate Bar.

We are hoping to create a "luminary" of lights around us to create a barrier for safety and also to attract attention.

At 8pm we'll go outside. Boxes will be judged and winners will be selected. While we are out on the lawn and getting cold, getting a real life experience about what it's like to be homeless. We are planning to have an open mic. At 10 anyone under the age of 12 will be picked up. There will be a "relief room" to get warm, with snacks and hot chocolate.

11pm: We will have group meditation; reflection and sharing.

12 midnight: Midnight sermon on the lawn.

We are planning on staying outside until 6am. Of course anyone can come in who doesn't feel able to make it the whole night. We are definitely looking for support from our adult congregation. We are planning a blanket drive, pants drive, etc.

We might try to share some of our work at Montclair Art Museum.

We are asking for donations from the community.

Donations (fees):

box contest \$5 to enter

luminaria \$2

hot chocolate bar \$1

chile contest \$5 to enter

Go Fund Me page will have a \$500 goal

Senior Youth Emily Roberts and Debono Kurtti are heads of the planning committee. We are inviting individuals who are younger to join us. This is an event that is open to our entire congregation.

Any child under the age of 12 will need to be picked up by 10pm or have a chaperone. We are opening this up to other high school students as part of our

community building goal and also to grow our program. We will get permission and waivers from anyone who takes part.

In the event of an ice storm or something we will continue it inside. We will still plan to spend some of our time outside. We have tarps to put over our boxes. This event is really for the experience.

Charlie: It would be great if we got participation from other schools, other congregations. But it would only be great up to a point. I'm wondering if we should consider what would be the number and not go beyond that number. We should create a cap of participants.

We will use the same rules as those established for Cons.

The chaperone ratio will be 1/5 for all age groups but hoping to surpass that.

We would like help with our documents that will be going out to the community ( via Communications Committee).

A motion was made to approve and applaud this effort and also give permission for the fundraising effort.

Laura so moved / Chris seconded / motion carries

**Mike:** Described issue around charging a small fee for events that are happening here at the UU. Should we charge the \$100 custodial fee?

This came up when Cecilia Cosca was asking for a room to hold an event to create awareness about "pay-to-play" or Citizens United. Francesca asked Cecilia for support and she contacted us. We suggested it could be a pass the hat event. Francesca was unaware of the policy and thinks there is a bit of a disconnect between what was and is the policy.

Francesca: I heard about it because I've been involved in Peace and Justice Activities for over 20 years. For awhile I was chair of the Peace and Justice Committee. But now it is the Peace and Justice Coalition and it is just me: We put out the S&J brochure, I am in charge of the bulletin boards, and put out the "just one thing" email. We understand that we can't as a congregation "sponsor" these kinds of events but we do want to support them. In the 20 years that I've been running these events the only time we've ever been charged a fee was Hear Our Voices and the peace calendar event (BlueWaveNJ, Succeed2gether). The email came to me about the \$100 charge and it was totally out of my experience. The building was already open. There was MESH. There was an environmental meeting. My feeling was very strongly that as a congregation it would be very helpful to put money where our mouth is and have a discretionary fund to deal with these things. It's good to plan ahead but sometimes we can't. It seems like a decision has been made. It should be

clear in the budgetary process that we want to encourage these events to happen. We had over 50 people come to that event and we did ask for donations and got the \$100.

Sue: First, when do you pay for which rooms?

Charlie: Until about 10 years ago or longer we had custodians on duty a minimum of five nights a week. There never was a charge for anything. But then when things started getting tough budget-wise we eliminated custodial coverage except for certain events that could pay for it. The intent was to cover the cost by the event themselves. I don't know why it hasn't happened in the past. There was a S&J fund now that's just for UULMNJ. But it would be very easy to add a line item for P&J or for other events? Any member can call up Donna and book a room for a meeting with no cost.

Francesca: There is not a clear policy. Which is why I was asked to become involved. Stefano and Cecilia asked me to get involved

Jerry: There ought to be a policy but it's impossible to craft one that addresses all events. Ultimately it's really complicated and someone like Charlie or Donna will have to decide. The Haiti concert is one end of the spectrum and another end is a smaller thing. One important goal is to not make Donna's life miserable. Custodian is \$100. Easy.

Whatever the policy, the funding should be a line item. If there is a P&J line then there has to be some understanding of what it pays for. Could get very tricky. Dennis and Chris could maybe do it (Dennis as liaison to the Facilities).

We will tell Donna that we will cover as a stop gap anything not covered at the next event of the Pay to Play event no. 2.

The Board will then draft a policy about when we might and might not cover that \$100 janitor's fee. A line item will be added to the P&J Board.

Francesca should put in what she wants as a guideline in the budget. This discussion will continue into the next budget year.

Budgeting starts in March.

Chair of the Council (VP of the Board) will oversee this.

**Interim Minister Task Force: Mike**

For the selection of our Interim Minister we asked for a few volunteers. Laura, Judith, and Arlene, Jerry (for gender diversity) will become this committee.

The Board will support us in terms of getting all needed documents.

Motion made to create a task force of those four people.

Dotty moved / Laura seconded / passed

**Recurring business:**

Sue attended a meeting Dec. 14 at the UU Essex as part of their continuing vision quest. They are going to have another meeting. Sue put the word out to those who were involved in the past and no one from our congregation came forward. The Board feels that perhaps more of us shouldn't be involved. Sue is more of an observer but they want some more participation.

**Options:**

Do we collapse and cease to exist or do we become a different form of UU presence in Essex County. There are a lot of small, like-minded groups that have no place to be. UU Essex could be that place. We'll cease to have Sunday morning worship, a minister, etc. But how does that fit into our relationship with UUCM.

Second part: the ill-fated partnership committee has not met since then. They are looking to have another meeting to see where we go from here. It has been scheduled for February 26.

Jerry emailed Charlie and Mike a framework about trying to make a draft resolution that would define a structured sort of partnership. Jerry shared with them a solution he wrote. It was made in October so it's a little old but worthwhile because it creates a structure. Jerry created this as a result of our retreat.

Sue reminded them that we're in our own transition period so there's a lot of transition going forward. Do we have thoughts about tweaking this?

**Communications Committee: Judith**

We now have a committee and have met once: Steve Ramshur, Jason Brome, John Chadwick, Laurice Grae-Hauck, Francesca Elms, and Judith Rew. We have created a system whereby anyone in the congregation who would like something to be publicized can send an inquiry and details to [Communications@uumontclair.org](mailto:Communications@uumontclair.org). The info will go to the entire committee, which will allow it to be instantly sent out via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and begin the process of trying to get it in the local print media and corresponding website committee calendars. We will create a running log of activity, to which Charlie and anyone else who should will have access.

**Congregational Council: Sue**

25 people attended; exceeded turnout from past couple of years. It was very successful. Quiche was served! Very popular.

**Coffee Hour**

Mary was prepared to begin the survey the week that services were cancelled. So she will continue the following week.

**Music Montclair**

Jerry: It was beautiful, accessible. Judith: It brought in more than \$1,900.

**Board moments:**

Mike will announce the interim minister task force and introduce the members. Interim Minister committee introduced by Mike.

Mark and Nancy are going to do chalice lightings for the campaign starting the second week in February.

**Dotty:** Greeters please sign up.

**Operational issues:**

Judith: Shouldn't there be a list of contacts handy in the office area for renters? Jerry's number, MESH schedule, would be a good idea.

**New business: Mary Moriarty**

Time is going to be wooshing by and Charlie is such a repository of information. What is the best way to "extract that" information? We need a list of categories perhaps? Let's all start thinking aggressively about categories.

**Process observer: Laura Kushner**

Reports were useful and clear; senior youth presentation was really great and addressed issues of oppression, poverty, etc.; talked about UU Orange; Jerry added diversity to our group.

Charlie: Thought it would be very nice for the Board to communicate with the Senior Youth group directly.

Motion to adjourn: Laura moved / seconded / passed

Adjourn 9:55 pm