

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair
March 17, 2015
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Meeting began at 7:35 pm

Staff: Charlie Ortman, Judy Tomlinson

Visitors: Lee Wilson, Jacob Klonsky, John Wodnick, Max Moore, Emma Silverman, Saija Kagan, Sophia Wadin, Katy Eulette, David Butterfield, Camilo Villela, Luis de León, Ami Brabson, Desiree Kurtti, Avron Stoloff, Hatten Mullins, Jeffrey Gattens

Members: Arlene Dodge, Laura Kushner, Sue Raufer, Dennis Drew, Chris Corbett, Judith Rew, Jerry Fried, Dorothy Sommer, Mary Moriarty, Michael Mernin

Opening Words: Chris Corbett
About generosity

Introductions of visitors and board

Motion to adapt last month's board minutes
Chris moved / Sue seconded / Adopted

Minister's Report: Charlie Ortman
Joel Wexler died.

Since last we met, five people joined (list at the end of the notes).

Charlie will be going to participate in the inauguration of Rosemary Bray McNatt as President of Starr King Seminary School for the Ministry in Berkeley, CA. In response to a question about Rosemary McNatt, who is not really familiar to people who have been here less than 18-19 years, she did her internship in 1996-1997 here. We launched her; she and Charlie did some work on an anti-racism program and they traveled all over the country putting on workshops. She was hired at Starr King School for the Ministry. She began that job at the end of this summer.

UULMNJ held a choir festival to Morristown. It was a wonderful event. Our choir did so well. Markus Hauck has been ill. He may have pneumonia.

Remembrances have become problematic once again: Too many people, too long. Charlie reminded people in the last service that the function is to remember milestones in their lives. Afterwards Charles Loflin shared an idea. Maybe we can make available an opportunity to make a video after the service.

Avron and Charlie have been talking about COA and the crew team (about problem of Coming of Age candidates having a conflict between the ceremony in May and crew competitive events). Charlie spoke to the athletic director at Montclair High

School said he agreed that there shouldn't be an issue. COA should come first. They will be allowed to miss a meet without penalty. But substitutes will be practicing for the following week's meet.

Max (COA candidate visiting) said that his coach may not agree.

Associate Minister's Report: Judy Tomlinson

Judith Stein-Farrell's father died earlier this week. Judith will return late this week.

Many COA'ers will be going to YSOP this coming weekend.

The RE Committee had a retreat at the end of last month. We focused on registration and recruitment. We analyzed a survey. Avron and Shannon Gattens are going to prepare a report about that and the Council on Ministry is going to take a look.

Patty Dow and Judy with Sue Raufer's support led the first Harvest Light for committee chairs. Eight attended. It was a good rollout.

Senior Youth did a Sleep in the Box event last month. A number of younger youth were involved as well. About 40 attended.

We have three new youth participating in Senior Youth Group.

The Path to Membership: We have developed our Path to Membership and Beyond brochure and have been putting a number of the pieces together: the tour and talk that take place once a month. I'm hoping for your continued support (Board). Supporting the committee chair training and having other committee chairs take part as well. Possibly talking to the NLDC, inviting them to take part in this. Let them know that our aspiration is that all significant leaders take the class.

Harvest the Power (see handout): A calendar is being developed for next year. There are 13 topics, 2 of them are covered at a retreat in Ocean Grove the first Saturday in October. The meetings are usually Thursdays, twice a month, October through April. We invite any Board members who have not yet participated to do so.

President's Report: Mike Mernin

Exit/transition interviews: We were contacted by Andrea Lerner, our UU regional office (Metro New York) and they want to conduct an exit/transition interview with Charlie and also other selected leaders of the congregation. We've landed on the date of May 5. We will meet here with Andrea Lerner. Charlie will be meeting for 2 hours earlier, Judy will be meeting 1 hour earlier that same day.

Suggestion: We should include some other leadership in the evening meeting. But we should tell Andrea before we invite more leaders.

Thank you notes and congratulations

Note of congratulations to Rosemary Bray McNatt.
Dana and other senior youth for Sleep in the Box.

(Jerry: Is there a plan to do some type of report about Dana and the whole year?
Would it good to circle back?)

Laurice Grae-Hauck for the music festival in Summit, bringing it to fruition.

Administrator's report: None from Donna but some updates from Charlie

Next week our brand new sidewalk is going to be torn out and road closed while sewage facilities will be brought up to code

Treasurer's Report

Good: February was a pretty quiet month. Our income is \$24,000 ahead of where it was this time last year. Net we're about \$11,000 ahead on where we were last year.

Bad: As we've talked about all year our expenses have been running ahead of where they should. But they are slowing down because the big ticket expenses are done. We're going to end up about \$15,000 over budget. The big expenses were mostly technology related, specifically a very costly server crash.

February is traditionally a low income month. March should be better.

Our net effect: We still have a surplus this year so this year is not a big concern. We still haven't applied some of the savings from last year and might be able to use this next year. We had planned to take money out of some of our funds and if we don't have to we will have that for next year.

Our concern is that we need a good pledge drive because we funded many things this year with one-time money. We will be looking at committee budgets and see if there is any money left that can be made available. Some specifics:

- A gift of \$7,200 for senior youth coordinator this year
- \$4,000 saved up for an intern minister was applied the senior youth coordinator position salary
- \$13,000 left from our surplus from the year before
- \$4,000 surplus from the music fund that we haven't used yet
- We had planned to take \$3,000 out of the RE fund for Sr. Youth and we haven't used that yet
- \$11,000 surplus from last year that we haven't used yet.

But we are real, real tight. We want to look at money left in committee budget that aren't needed.

About funds: They are mostly for emergencies. They are not increasing this year, though. They are moving "sideways." Why is this the case? The market since June

hasn't been down. UUA, who controls the funds, is admitting that they're behind the market this year. The UUA is relatively heavy in the "thinkers" but they aren't as good when things fundamentally change in the market, as a result of things like the price of oil income dropping off.

Mortenson Scholarship: Some clarification needed as to what funds are available: Judy Strachen says it's the gain from the year before. Donna says anything over \$20,000. Charlie says there is some flexibility in how that is interpreted.

The Mortenson Scholarship was started by James and Dorothy Mortenson, long-time members of the congregation and major proponents of education in the community. They had put away some money to offer scholarships to students from the UU who are going to college. All UU students are encouraged to apply. We generally have one to three recipients. It is somewhat merit based. Committee looks for a track record that would indicate success; beyond that involvement in our congregation and need. Dorothy was still around the first five or six years that Charlie was here. One year for the service auction the board offered up the naming of the room now known as the Mortenson Room. The winner, David Alvarez, chose the Mortensons.

Arlene Dodge mentioned that her son Luke was one of the recipients and he is now taking a program into the Vermont prisons to teach prisoners how to do public speaking.

Challenge: Music Endowment. It was up the past two years and it funded Stearns. So this is worrisome as the fund has not produced new income this year. Our assistant music director is very much in doubt.

Big problem: The Stewardship Drive. It is about \$7,000 less than it was this time last year. And our goal is to be \$25,000 over last year. Funds and surpluses can be useful but will not cover all our needs. We are trying to stay even.

We need money for our Interim Minister relocation. The Grounds people would like a maintenance increase. It's currently \$11,000. They'd like it to be \$15,000. They use this up instantly each year, because it's all deferred maintenance.

Annual pledge drive

Next week we begin to go through the budget. It would be much better to improve our pledge drive. We have been frugal. We are not asking of COA youth to pledge yet. Chris did a little analysis: The issue is that 60% pledge exactly the same thing. They are coming in 15% lower, 25% higher.

Mike: Mary Moriarty had stated that we need to start the pledge drive much sooner (October). So what's wrong with our pledge drive? We always have good, committed people running it; but we need to back up and rethink it and have a pledge drive committee who can look at it on more of an ongoing basis, instead of dropping it in

January. How could we go about doing that? Why not involve the Finance Committee?

We should have a fundraising committee that has nothing to do with the pledge drive that is also tasked with the auction and coming up with other ideas throughout the year. A committee that is focused on how to have a successful pledge drive.

Jerry: Each of us is liaison to different committees. How about rolling that communication about the board that they take to their committees. Make a better use of our liaisons.

Chris: However we do it we need more “boots on the ground.” They would have training and go to every house. We need to return to cocktail parties. How do we go about staffing such a committee?

Charlie: It seems to be that the congregation needs an awareness of why our pledge drive is so stuck. Everybody thinks somebody else will do it. Look how many people we put into the auction. We have a lot of people working on the auction. But exactly two people doing the pledge drive.

Jerry: Congregations are in a unique position. Nonprofits are told they have to spend 50% of their time on fundraising. We need more understanding of what it really takes. We need \$2,000 on average per family to run this place. That’s not to excel.

Mike: One small step: No one really reads it but Mike will write something for the Gazette with these bullet points. Talk to the Felixes and wind up with a couple of tables in coffee hour. We need to start a process to move forward in a different way. We need to think how we are going to deploy some people for this year’s.

Could the Felixes give us a list and the Board help out? Even some people who have pledged already and ask them for an increase. Go to your committee meetings talk to friends. Charlie can be a functional element.

Interim Minister Taskforce: Arlene

Our interim taskforce is “on the money.” Described the process and the dates to the visiting COA and other visitors. Charlie is a tough act to follow. Some important dates:

- May 15 offers made. Our application except for one little part will be done by April 1. We are putting all the strengths of the congregation online.
- Andrea Lerner hasn’t sent what she needs to send us.
- If we get packets by May 1, we will do the interviews over the weekend. If we get the interviews done Saturday and Sunday. We can bring it to the Board on the fifth. Charlie suggests that the Board pre-approve a potential contract. There might be a counter offer that comes back from the minister. It’s fairly

common for interim ministers to have a conversation with interim search committees.

Mary: I thought way back when that the interim process involved bringing to the board our top two candidates. A lot of congregations just let the UUA pick the interim minister.

Charlie: (Giving a little overview of the process) You will receive a list of 3 to 5 candidates and at least one person that the interim office feels would be an excellent match for this congregation. Others are there because you may not end up with that perfect person: More reason for our packet to be compelling; our pledge drive to be compelling. [the dropbox will be sent to the whole board]

Essex UU (Orange): Sue

They are inviting us to two events. One is tomorrow night. Some students are going to the Iron Works. They have been studying the City of Orange.

Also, the Orange Congregation would definitely like some cooperation with the UUCM on the 29th of March from 1-3 in the afternoon. The purpose is to help them come up with ideas about the formation of a 501c3 nonprofit, doing social justice ministry in Orange and what that might look like. They want to brainstorm, get ideas.

Tomorrow there is supposed to be a meeting with Bill Slazak, Craig Hershberg, Charlie, and Gordon but Craig can't meet so they should cancel.

Harvest the Power Presentation: Judy and Laura

We were talking about the construction in the area and how it affects us, both positively and negatively, and immediately in terms of parking. They came up with the following ways it could affect us:

- Could affect the Search Committee for new ministers.
- Could affect the Worship Committee as it plans for services.
- Could affect people of disability (parking, accessibility issues).
- Could affect Membership Committee and our efforts at outreach; and ultimately our ability to attract new members. (Do we intentionally reach out to tenants in the new residential buildings very near us?)
- Could be an issue for Buildings and Grounds—litter and maintenance.
- Could affect rentals and tenants (the nursery school, other local businesses, potential new short term rentals)
- Could affect our relationship with other houses of worship.
- Could affect our relationship with the community, ie. police, public service workers.

Jerry pointed out there is a group doing drawings of the congregation to make recommendations about changing our exterior appearance. Dennis reached out to John Carlton this week: we need to pick one of the four plans though they are not refined. Now is the time to refine it as it's being torn up. He also pointed out that our

attitudes about parking have to change (meaning all us suburbanites). There will be a generational shift. Part of our education to new members should be where to park.

Board moments:

Any in the next month have to be about pledge drive.

RE registration will happen next month.

Process observation.

Motion to adjourn/seconded/passed

Adjourned 9:09pm

NEW MEMBERS WHO JOINED IN MARCH 2015

Elaine Gibson & Marcia Mandel

Roz Gohagan

**Ashley Cave Himes
(Ellie Himes)**

Edith Masuelli