

Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair
July 21, 2015
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Meeting began at 7:40 pm

Staff: Judy Tomlinson

Visitor: Becky Doggett

Members: Arlene Dodge, Dorothy Sommer, Judith Rew, Dottie Hiebing, Chris Corbett, Judith Rew, Mike Mernin, Jim Abrams, Ellen Fenster, Steve Ramshur, Denise Rodgers

Opening Words: Mike
From *In The Interim*

Statement of Guiding Principles:
Mike

Check-in (get to know each other)

Minister's Report: Judy Tomlinson

UMLMNJ called us to come to New Jersey for the Million Persons March, so brought in Becky and Undoing Racism Committee. We have become a co-sponsor with the People's Organization for Progress organized event.

Becky Doggett, chair of the Undoing Racism Committee

Most of you know Larry Hamm, who heads POP. He has spoken here several times. He called the march with the theme: MILLION PEOPLE'S MARCH Against Police Brutality, Racial Injustice, and Economic Inequality. The URC had agreed some time ago to join in so we were pleased when the ULMNJ picked up on it as well.

Our name will be listed as one of the sponsors, along with other UU congregations. People from all over the country are supporting it. Our name UU Montclair would be listed as one of the sponsors.

Also we would ask the congregation for some financial support if possible; \$100 would be great.

As many of you as possible attending would be great. The march route is three miles round trip. We will begin with a rally at the Lincoln Statue and march down to the Federal Building and back. There is also going to be a bus or two for people who aren't able to walk it.

It should be a grand day. Also Jane Gaertner has arranged for us to park at NJIT. There will be a car pool meeting here at 11. Many are taking public transportation.

We will also be carpooling and people are planning to meet here at the UU. The congregation has a banner. We are asked to wear Standing On the Side of Love t-shirts.

It would be a continuation of our commitment, and one of the first concrete things since we put up the banner. There is no age restriction. There have been children before.

Chris: We can donate \$200 and URC will also donate.

Mike explained: We can not vote as a congregation to sponsor it. But we can as a Board. So in the spirit of the congregational meeting we are not doing anything out of line by endorsing the event.

Dotty moved to donate \$200 and also sponsor the event.

Moved/seconded/passed

Becky: The congregation agreed to sponsor it.

Minister's Report: Judy Tomlinson

First, welcome new folks. Thank you to everybody who contributed to Charlie's send-off celebration. We had a full slate of delegates at GA. The delegates gave their report at the July 12 service. Next year it will be in Columbus, Ohio. Theme will be Inner Faith Connections. Also, our new UU Presidential Candidates will be put forth.

RE is doing fine. We need about 4 more teachers to fill out our staff.

Covenant group ministry: We will be adding one new one, Parents of Young Children, bringing us up to 11 groups. All are continuing. There is no limit to the number of groups we can have.

Harvest the Power: Right now we have recruited 16 people. That is a bumper crop. We considered turning some people away and decided we needed to include as many as want to come. There are always at least two people who drop out. We have two youth in the class as well, Anna Karapin-Springorum and Giancarlo Ponticello. With our new facilitator team of Patty Dow, Laura Kushner, Ellen Fenster-Kuehl, Dennis Kurtti, Joel Naftelberg. We cleaned the Alliance Room this past Sunday.

This Saturday we are going into Newark for the march and rally. Jan Carlsson-Bull in Connecticut along with 17 members of her congregation in Connecticut were arrested in Hartford in a march on June 17. She is a member here.

On a somber note: Peter Aoki passed away in DC area where he has lived for several years. His memorial service will be here on September 26.

ON Sunday we lit a candle for Judy Bluestein Ortman, whose mother just passed away. There will be a memorial service in Chicago.

Two people have signed the book since the last board meeting.

Acceptance of June Board minutes
Move to accept/second/accepted

President's Report: Mike

Described GA; expressed how wonderful the June celebration was for Charlie; we are mostly here getting into a mindset for when Rev. Osterman joins us. In the next couple weeks I will send a draft of a report to read through for the August meeting and the retreat in September.

Treasurers Report: Chris

Fiscal year just ended on June 15. We've just started the new fiscal year July 1. There are small changes over final report. But in general:

The Good the Bad and What We've Learned So Far:

Our Pledge Drive ended above our goals. We are up to \$429,000.

We completely balanced the budget. We finally got the UUA payment for the Endowment Fund. We ended up with a small deficit of \$200 and an anonymous gift of \$200 took care of that.

We had more income than budgeted.

The Bad:

Our expenses were over by \$33,562. We had a lot of infrastructure problems. We had to rebuild our server technology. Building repairs and supplies over by \$15,000, mostly the roof. Charlie's send-off cost us \$7,400 and we only raised about \$1,000. Medical insurance was \$1,500, more than we thought.

Some of our professional expenses are up. We're going to ask for more reports. The Youth Coordinator's hours got out of whack because of the overnights. So we'll get in control of that.

We still have not completed the work on the roof. It will take about \$16,000 more. We know we have to deal with the infrastructure of the church. The Board voted in May to have some kind of capital campaign. We've done well but we have a gap mostly because of deferred maintenance.

The bottom line is we had a great month in June. We took in a total this year of \$645,164—across the board—everything is a little higher.

Overall we took in \$33,217 more than we expected.
We will do a Board Moment in September.

The Music Group put money into it's own fund.

Question: Why is social justice budget under what it was? About a quarter of it comes from Sharing Our Riches. But our collections are lower. So SJ's budget had to be lower.

Question: Feeling good is good but it needs to be in the perspective because our expenses were high. I would be curious as to why we got more pledges and contributions.

Chris: Three things: 1) New UUs during the year that gave; 2) we got almost 100% of pledges in; 3) several people did more than their past pledges.

Question: Do we have more pledge units than in the past?

No not really. And people who don't pledge for two years are dropped as members.

The retreat will include some work on how to increase pledge units. We could do a better pledge drive. We do have challenges: We need to build up a war chest for repairs.

MESH is self-funded. They are doing very well. So they don't show up on the budget. Also some other committees have funds that we hold that aren't reflected.

Summary: Ending balance should be \$645,174; Difference is 0.

Finally, our Funds, which are our long-term savings. It has been very lackluster. We have asked Andy Wilson on the Finance Committee to examine the funds and see why they haven't grown. This is surprising. The UUA funds have done very well in the past. The Minister controls a fund for people who reach out to him with special financial needs. Charlie left all of his fund behind. The UUA has been divesting from energy companies; this has caused some shifts. But this has been surprising.

Finance Committee has started working on the UUA equitable compensation plan; looking at pensions, etc. This information will bring back to the board. It could get expensive. We voted to become a Fair Compensation Congregations over five years. Salaries aren't that bad; but it could mean medical insurance, life insurance, long term disability insurance, etc.

Motion to accept the Treasurers Report:
Jim moved/Dennis seconded/Approved

General discussion of the role of the Board member: The idea that we are leaders but also first among equals. We have the same responsibilities as all members. SWE should reflect stability. There can be a little tension between us about bold movements and we must make sure we are shepherding the process.

Fundraising ideas: spaghetti dinners; some regular Flesher Hall events. The Board can sponsor these initiatives, a great way to open lines of communication. And make a little money.

Once a month we should try to have a couple of people at a table, The Board table, in coffee hour, to encourage transparency.

Jim: I would like to talk about at some point that we have a special obligation because we don't have a minister that is going to be around more than two years. We have to maintain a continuity and cohesion of the membership.

At the retreat the third weekend in September we will address each board member's role the Board is:

- Leader/Caretaker
- Role vis a vis the membership of the Congregation
- Fiduciary responsibility
- Special challenge of Interim Ministry
- Board member covenant
- Committee liaison roles

The retreat is going to be jam-packed but there is only so much we can get done. We will wrap it up around 3 or 4 on Saturday.

Additional point: We need more committee reports—will do that via liaisons.

Homecoming Sunday (formerly UUville)

We were hopeful that we could put something together for September 13. But it takes two people and we don't have more volunteers. We were thinking of Jerry Fried and Laura Kushner. And of course Sue Raufer as she is connected to the committees. Mike will reach out to Jerry and Laura. Maybe even Connie Thames.

Core Concerns

Membership growth/stability (need to reach out to Jaclyn for the numbers of people who attend each week)

Physical plant (Need \$100,000; need a plan for maintenance that John Carlton is developing); we have an anonymous gift of \$25,000 to go toward this new capital campaign.

Reminders

Aug 18 is Board meeting, our first with Rev. Osterman

September retreat is September 18-19 at the Murray Grove Retreat Center.

Process observation form:

Dotty will take a stab at reorganizing the form.

At this meeting we:

--talked about the March in Newark

--Mesh

--Our desire to be good stewards of this place

--defibrulator project needs to be completed; we need training (CPR training is good but the defib just requires that you turn it on and listen--Denise)

Motion to go into executive session:

Chris moved/seconded/passed 9:35

Motion to adjourn

Moved/second/passed

Adjourned 9:52

es/Dotty seconds/adjourns