

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

Staff: Revs. Justin Osterman and Judy Tomlinson

Members: Jim Abramson, Judith Rew, Chris Corbett, Dottie Hiebing, Arlene Dodge, Mike Mernin, Sue Raufer, Ellen Fenster-Kuehl, Steve Ramshur, Dorothy Sommer, Mary Moriarty, Denise Rodgers

Guest: Erin Krupa, representative of Transition Team

Opening Words and Statement of Guiding Principles: Arlene Dodge
Peeling My Onion by Veronica Murphy

Adoption of Board Minutes
Chris moved/Dorothy seconded/accepted

Thank you Notes
Laura Kushner for Harvest the Power Retreat
Peter Arian who has been getting rid of the A&P Cards using them for MESH

President's Report: Mike Mernin
Pleased to see the Mets doing so well...

Interim Ministers Report: Justin Osterman
Been here 81 days. Not long enough to know much really.
People are very anxious:

1. We don't understand the interim process, we don't understand the search process, we don't understand...
2. Significant anxiety about money among lay leaders. More than congregants.

Other observations:

- I'm struck by how really, really busy all of you are. With your work, with your families, here at the UUCM; with how many of you are busy with things outside your Board jobs. The assumption is that this is the most important job in the entire congregation; really, you're kind of running the congregation. Speaking strictly as your Pastor that kind of concerns me for you. At Council meeting and I asked, "To whom is your committee is accountable. 15 said to the board, nine to a staff person, the rest not accountable to anybody.
- The staff doesn't really know who is really in charge a lot of the time.

As a congregation, there are two ways to grow:

1. grow really deeply: spiritually, deep rooted in your faith
2. grow up and out, most obviously in numbers

Think about this and be honest: Do you want to grow. That will determine everything. That will help me understand how I can help you. Determine how I spend my time.

The book *In the Interim*: I would like to make some time to really talk about it. Especially "the most useful chapter, p. 63, "Interim Minister as Systems Analyst." Page after page of questions: How do you see yourself; a whole section on operations, on communications, congregation's emotional health; the unspoken story, what I was pointing at in the sermon on Sunday.

The work of the interim period is yours to do for the congregation. It's really going to require that you as a board are ready to work.

How can we have this discussion? This question lifts up the difference between Boards: the operational board or one that is about the future of the congregation. It's a question of how do you want to govern yourself.

In the best of circumstances we should be intentional in carrying that feeling from the retreat into our work.

The transition team:

Already convenes to help Justin understand the congregation; helped create the congregation conversations on Sept. 27 after the "What is Interim Ministry" sermon. They are creating another one after the sermon in November. They will send out questions through the newsletter out to the congregation. Erin is here to communication with us, the elected members.

Associate Minister's Report: Judy Tomlinson

- RE Program is up and running and going pretty well.
- COA youth are going to Boston on the 16th of November, a pivotal trip.
- Still recruiting for the 2nd/3rd grades but the rest are fully staffed.
- Senior Youth: we've had 14-20 youth in attendance, record numbers.
- Covenant Groups: Has reached capacity and I will ask them, "Do you want to grow."
- Harvest the Power kick-off dinner was in Sept. and the retreat in was the first weekend in October. We were not able to go to Murray Grove so Laura hosted us and we were here. 16 participants which includes 2 youth.
- Membership Committee: Talks and tours are underway. We had 3 people visit at 11 and 3 at 12. Record numbers. Some big conversations were had at the membership committee having to do with communications and how things get up on our website. These will dovetail very well with goals of our retreat.
- Leadership training was offered after the Council meeting for committee chairs. Patty Dow and I will do it Nov. 21.

- This week I will attend LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators Association) in Summit this year, addressing multiple ways of using technology. We will be talking about themes like the covenant group themes. Dana will be going to. Pre-conference trainings will be attended by Becky Doggett, Laurice Grae-Hauck, and Dana Moore will be attending that.
- I led the memorial service for Peter Aoki. He was 101.
- Justin mentioned we had 17 visitors since the last board meeting. We're seeing old timers coming back. Saying going to give this another try.

Office administrators report:

She wants an updated committee list.

Treasurers Report: Chris Corbett

The Good the Bad and the Interesting:

Through the first quarter, income is ahead by \$39,000, as expected, about \$21,000 ahead of last year. But that lead is dropping a bit. We are doing okay. We not doing great but we're doing okay. Issue is our pledges by check have really fallen off. Donna is going to do her quarterly mailing. Our short-term rentals are down, they are volatile. We've been low for two months. It goes up and down. But I budgeted on us doing well. I continually warn that we need a good auction; in the spring we need a fundraiser (\$3,000), we need a good pledge drive. We pay about 4% on credit cards so we encourage the direct withdrawal.

Income:

- Pledges and contributions a little short.
- Facilities rental is good on our long term, not as good on our short term.
- Fundraising low at this point but the auction is coming up.
- RE fees are coming in well, but a little lower than last year.

Expenses:

All standard. Some of our must dos have actually been done. Work is being done even outside these emergency repairs.

Finally on budget: Our difference is -\$21,100.

Funds:

It's all bad news. There was a real disaster on the stock market. UUA is adjusting to the market. Total funds are down from \$573,642 to 538,597. We still think the UUA is the best game in town.

Funding Plan for Urgent Facility Repairs [see Attachment 1]:

Aesthetics committee **has** been consulted and they like the plan.

Overall plan is three fold:

1. What's our problem: The roof leaks; the floor in the sanctuary is week.
2. Do it now: there are liability issues.

3. This plan should not take the congregation focus away from the interim. This plan can be decided by us.

Plan: Take available funding not being used for anything including two bequests that came in (Brach family and someone else). This money has been sitting on the balance sheets since last year. Charlie's feeling was you don't use this for operating budget. This \$11,600 will exhaust those bequests.

We have \$4,500 left over from the last capital campaign. We think this is an excellent use of that money. We're going to just finish it out.

We are looking for donor funding; looking to raise about \$40,000; reaching out at the top 15 givers in the congregation. We're going to ask them to give us one time contributions. We are confident they will say yes. Most of the people in that group already know of the problem and are motivated by it.

Justin: The plan is to do what needs to be done in a way that doesn't require a congregational meeting. There is a way to communicate this that is powerful and effective: your chosen leaders have identified this problem and this will be followed by the pledge campaign in the spring that will appeal to your generosity.

The ask: Have developed a list of those people to ask others to give no more than they are doing themselves.

Discussion: Can we have a little more awareness about these bequests?

Denise: We need to publicize that a certain amount comes from bequests. We need more clear cut messaging.

Chris pointed out: It's in the balance sheet every month called "undesignated funds." You regularly get these gifts that go on the balance sheet and not in the operating budget. (Read the balance sheet every month).

Jim: Maybe we ought to speak to someone about getting money through bequests.

Justin: the four legs of the funding stool are: Stewardship/annual giving campaign; periodic special fundraisers; periodic capital campaigns; endowed bequests.

We still need more money after we raise the \$50,000, we are proposing using the \$15,000 out of Capital campaign; \$25,000 out of the reserve fund. The other way of justifying this we are just taking the gain off of the capital campaign. That's the last piece of the funding.

A couple of warnings: There are unknowns (as in any old building):

- The historical commission could make us use actual slate on the roof. Or there could be damage revealed below the slate. We are focusing on the roof but with money left over we'll fix the floor in the sanctuary.

Contingency plan where that extra will come from if needed:

1. We think the givers might be more generous than we anticipate.
2. We can use more of the reserve fund.
3. By-laws say the Board is allowed to use any shortfall from any project (reserve fund). We have complete discretion as a Board.

Governance: Facilities and Finance Committees combined will oversee this project. Chris will bring any issues and information back to you. We have bids, ready to go. Waiting for the Historic Society. Will happen in November.

In case of unforeseen circumstances:

In summary:

- Bids are all about \$80,000 and \$7,000 for the floor, we may really need \$25,000 more.
- The floor needs to be fixed but it not going to collapse.
- There is a fine line we walk if we go down the rabbit hole of the roof costing more than we thought; then it becomes a board conversation.
- Chris would prefer that the Board authorize up to \$25,000 be approved by the Executive Committee.
- We have another endowment fund that would require congregational (\$36,394) support.

Proposed Board Resolution:

- 1) The Board approves the Funding Plan for Urgent facility Repairs (see attachment 1) and authorizes the Treasurer and the Finance and Facilities Committees to manage raising and expending funds under the Plan with regular reports to the Board on progress.
- 2) Upon the recommendation of the Treasurer that such withdrawals are fiscally prudent, the Board authorizes the withdrawal of \$15,000 from the Capital Fund and \$25,000 from the Reserve Fund for use in the Funding Plan.
- 3) The Board authorizes: a) The use of \$4,574 of funds on hand from the earlier Capital Campaign in the Funding of the Plan; and b) That \$11,600 in funds on hand from donations not designated for a specific use be deposited in the Capital Fund and then utilized in the Funding Plan.
- 4) The Board authorizes that further expenditure up to \$25,000 from the reserve fund with the approval of the Executive Board

Steve moves to accept/Denise seconds/accepted

Move to accept treasurer's report
Sue moves/Arlene seconds/ accepted

UULMNJ: Every year we give to the UULMNJ we budget \$2,200. I would like the Board to approve this.
Dotty moves/ seconds/approved

Ministers' Housing Alliance: Last meeting we approved Justin's housing allowance. Judy has now submitted her housing allowance. We are asked to designate a certain amount of our minister's salary on housing. Chris has reviewed the request and it seems reasonable to me.

Chris moves that we accept/Mike seconds/passed

Quick reminder: Nov. 8 lunch meeting with Craig Hirschberg after the second service. We should all plan to attend. This is critically important. This is the person who is going to explain how the search committee will be selected.

Retreat review: Justin

Goals (from Justin):

Denise and Dennis weren't there. This is an opportunity to to share this with them:

Talked about four goals for the coming year (brainstormed):

1. Communicate with the congregation to include creating the timeline for public display
2. Adopt an organization chart for the congregation.
3. Effect Repairs of the facility
4. Address governance issues; address what kind of Board we want to be.

There were other goals, some of which we're going to do anyway.

Communications discussion:

Mike: I'm still fuzzy on how we move forward on a day to day basis on our communications plan.

Sue: Once you start discussing one thing about communications it bumps up against other problems. I honestly thought it would be very straightforward. It's not. It's a can of worms. Because Donna keeps the calendar there is no way to get a calendar up on our website. This to me is elementary. The sticking point is that we can't have just anybody throwing just anything up on the calendar. I raise this as a symptom of bigger problems.

Justin: You are the elected leadership of the congregation. You should not be worrying about how to populate the calendar on the website.

Ellen: When I went to the Interim meeting, it seemed to me that there was a significant amount of anxiety from some of our members... we need to get some communication out about our goals.

Immediate plan and suggestions:

1. The plan should be presented as what will make us successful for the next 20 years.
2. Board communication with the transition team. (Maybe they should have a member at our meetings).
3. Immediately communication through Board moments (this coming week on fear and anxiety); talking in coffee hour; regular pieces in the Gazette.
4. We need on our website a special section about the interim process including a special email address to ask questions.
5. An understanding about our timeline. There is a way that we need to do in the interim messaging that is rooted in our faith.
6. Reach out through our Facebook page (we already have).
7. Update Board members picture in the hallway (Judith will take care of).

Timeline: Erin

Transition Team started taking on some of these things:

- historical timeline; getting landmark dates from Irene.
- Ask each congregant to put something on there.
- Need a timeline with basic dates for the search process during the Interim period. Need somebody to help create the timeline. Goal to get timeline up on Nov. 8.

Justin summed up:

The transition team is helping to get that conversation going with the congregation about the five developmental steps during the interim. It's our job to talk about the search committee process. When things happen institutionally.

- The congregation is going to ask us about everything and you want to be the most knowledgeable about what's in this book. We've all got to be in complete lockstep.
- Mike is going to prepare for this Sunday's board moment. The next Board Moment will be after we meet with Craig.

Undoing Racism Committee

Will have a march on Friday, Oct. 23, 5-7.

Motion to go into executive session

Dottie moves / Mary seconded / passed

Approved.

Move to end executive session

Chris moved/Steve seconded/passed

One more bit of new business:

Lawsuit with Grabowsky: Mike will attend hearing.

Motion to allocate up to \$5,000 for attorney.

So moved/approved/passed

Chris moved to adjourn / Ellen seconded / passed

Adjourned 9:45

Attachment 1:
Funding Plan
for Urgent Facility Repairs

(10/20/15)

Goal \$100,000

1. Available Funding (cash in hand):

- Gifts not designated for specific use:	\$11,600	
- Remaining balance of 2005/08 Capital Campaign:	\$ 4,574	
Total:		\$15,174

2. Donor Funding:

- Leadership donation:	\$25,000	
- Matching donations:	\$25,000	
Total:		\$50,000

3. Funding from our emergency funds.

- Capital Fund:	\$15,000	(\$29,849
remains)		
- Reserve Fund:	\$25,000	(\$50,081
remains)		
Total:		\$40,000

Total Funds for Projects

\$105,174

Priority Projects: 1) Replace east side of Sanctuary roof (Approx. \$80,000); 2) Repair damaged Sanctuary floor (Approx. \$7,500). Other projects as designated by the Finance and Facilities Committee as urgent shall be undertaken as funds allow.

Governance: Plan overseen by joint efforts of Finance and Facilities Committee and Treasurer. Regular updates to the Board.