

UUCM Board Meeting Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Attending were Reverend Justin Osterman, President Michael Mernin, Vice President Sue Raufer, Treasurer Dennis Kurtti, Secretary Sheila Eby, and Trustees Jim Abramson, Doug Andrews, Ellen Fenster-Kuehl, Dottie Hiebing, Steven Mintz, Mary Moriarity, Steve Ramshur and Denise Rodgers.

Present from the Coming of Age program were student Zachary Devito-Paulson, his mentor Ed Boyle and his mother Denise Paulson. Ed Martoglio and David Bessey were also present.

We called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Consent Agenda

Mary moved and Denise seconded that the minutes from the February board and budget meetings be removed from the consent agenda. The motion carried.

- It was agreed that the fourth paragraph of the Treasurer's Report within the board meeting minutes should be changed from "cash received" to "excess cash received."
- It also was agreed that those minutes be amended to include that the meeting adjourned and who motioned for that adjournment.
- Justin pointed out that Steve Ramshur's name was listed as seconding a motion, when he had not attended the special budget meeting.

Dottie moved that we accept both sets of minutes with the suggested amendments. Sue seconded the motion, which was adopted.

The board discussed designating a board member to collect in advance suggestions for thank you notes. The designate would have the notes prepared and stationed by the snacks; board members would sign them as they helped themselves to food. Dennis volunteered to play that role on a one-year basis; Dottie officially nominated him and Doug seconded the nomination. The motion carried.

President's Report

Mike Mernin reported on Ed Martoglio's update of the real estate tax assessment. Only one of our five leases involves a renter that is a non-profit organization, and thus it is the only one that is tax exempt for our purposes. The IRS statute is clear, and it drives a \$12K charge for us. Ed spoke to real estate lawyers who believed a challenge would not succeed. He raised the possibility of authorizing someone to speak to the assessor and seek a modest adjustment. But assessors are tough. The figure could go up.

Justin said the assessor is a reasonable guy who said that if we shed some renters, he would take a look at the assessment.

Denise elicited that tax assessments are based on property values, not the amount of money renters paid. Ed agreed that we could increase rents and not increase our taxes as long as the renters didn't increase their square-footage. He recommended:

- Speaking to the assessor for an adjustment (though he doubted this would work) or
- Lodging an appeal, which he could do.

Denise moved to have Ed act for the board, speaking to the Montclair tax assessor and, if need be, filing an appeal on the congregation's behalf by March 30. Steve Ramshur seconded the motion, which carried with Denise's point that Ed must get back to the executive committee before making an appeal. He cannot do it on his own.

Mike pointed out that the tax bill pertains to 2017. The year runs from July to July. The money is paid on a quarterly basis.

We discussed our practices with respect to our representatives at the GA. There is no formal process for making someone a delegate. It was suggested that we ask anyone who wants to go or plans to go to let us know. With that slate of people, we can ask them to make themselves available to the congregation to get people's views. In addition, this year people can vote on line and live stream the process.

Sue suggested this be the topic of Gazette article due Monday. Also Weekly Announcements. "If you're going, let us know. If you'd like to participate on line, let us know." When delegates come back, they can do a worship service. Dennis made a motion that representation at the GA would be the subject of the next edition of the mentioned communication vehicles. Mary Moriarty seconded the motion, which carried.

Justin asked who was responsible for preparing the vote for the new minister. Mike replied that the procedure was akin to the process used in regular proxy voting. Justin advocated for an abundance of communication.

Sue wondered whether Jaclyn Puleo and Danielle Carlo have a model for this. Mike will call Danielle tomorrow and let Sue know. Sue can send it around. Figure out the process so we can write about it. The votes are May 7 and May 21.

Treasurer's Report

Dennis Kurtti talked about the idiosyncrasies of the congregation's bookkeeping practices. Water and sewer payments were unexpected because of old bookkeeping methods. Flowers represented another bookkeeping irregularity, as income was booked onto an expense line in the budget. Dennis feels the new minister must oversee the staff; without Justin, they don't pick this up.

Dennis will cover this material in more detail on March 29. The special meeting will start with the budget, and cover our financial details comprehensively. Denise suggested an audit might make sense. Justin recommended seeing what other congregations do in that regard.

Senior Minister's Report

Justin talked about having convened the social justice groups within the congregation. The purpose: to figure out how the congregation should respond to changing times, and give congregants the opportunity to involve themselves in social justice. It was a revealing conversation; people wanted to figure out who's responsible to whom to get good things done.

Associate Minister's Report

Judy reported a great response to the Pathway to Membership class, with more than 20 in attendance. She noted the work of the new Welcoming Committee Chair Nelia Sellars. Thirteen people signed the membership book on March 5 and two more on March 12. Three more plan to become members. A Welcome to Membership Coffee Hour is scheduled for April 23 for all who joined this year. There's an End of Year picnic on June 18.

An RE Retreat is planned. RE is being restructured because volunteers are stretched; without one-on-one outreach, the same people are tapped over and over. We will begin using parents as assistants. We began OWL. Harvest the Power is winding down with a dinner on April 23rd. There was no update on the nursery.

Task Force on Job Descriptions for DRE and M&CL Director

Doug said that job descriptions were sent back to David Pyle to see if he had any salary adjustments. The M&CL position was changed from manager to director. That involved an extra \$4K compared to what we'd seen earlier.

Salary ranges are fair compensation. Sick time, professional expense and vacation are the open questions, and they were all discussed. It was observed that Judy and Iris both have professional expenses; any credentialed educator would expect this.

Doug said that someone on the board, probably Judy, should look at this again. Chris Corbett, he said, had recommended the midrange for salaries, and maybe vacation to be negotiated. Anyone working more than 20 hours a week would get a maximum of 24 hours sick leave in the course of a year.

Three motions were proposed by Steve Ramshur:

- 1) Incoming DRE can negotiate professional expenses up to a max of 7% of salary.
- 2) There are no professional expenses for the other position.
- 3) There is no paid vacation time for either role.

Dottie Hiebing seconded the motion, which was adopted.

Michael brought up the subject of populating the Personnel Committee. Justin Osterman said that we need people with specific talents. We know who they are – Deb Corbett and David Hanley -- so let's just ask them.

Dottie moved to form a personnel committee with one board member and two general members of the congregation, with the board identifying all those individuals. The group will be accountable to the Board of Trustees. Sue seconded the motion, which carried.

Dottie moved that the Personnel Committee ensure that appraisals are taking place, etc. Doug seconded the motion, which was adopted.

Mike moved to go into executive session. Sheila seconded the motion, which was adopted.

We came out of executive session, and Ellen moved that we adjourn the meeting. Sheila seconded the motion, which carried. The meeting ended.