

First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington
Parish Committee Meeting Minutes
June 13, 2023
In person in the vestry

Attendees: Sara Galantowicz, Anne Quaadgras, Joanna Pushee, Celia Wcislo, Jeff Keffer, Al Tosti, John Stutz, John Anderson. (Not in attendance: Carolyn Hodges.)

Rev. Marta Flanagan, Rev. Erica Richmond, Guests from the Leadership Development Committee: Helene Newberg, Kiki Giatis, and Amy Fardella

The Parish Committee held a potluck dinner at 6:30pm in the vestry and were joined by outgoing members Marie Mateer and Tom Estabrook until about 7:09pm.

Call to order (Sara G.) at 7:03

Website update (Marie M.)

- The goal is to have the website ready by fall 2023. [Update: September 7.]
- An original quote of about \$10,000 was increased to just under \$12,000 based on the contractor's more detailed assessment.
- After working with the developer/designer, volunteers will migrate content over during the summer. Marie has reached out to volunteers.
- Meetings ongoing with the office manager, Sara Hidalgo, doing design reviews.

Gratitude was expressed by the rest of the Parish Committee and was followed by some discussion about application of the projected budget surplus to cover the website work and any other anticipated year-end expenses. The Honor Tina Fund raised over \$14,000, which meant the Parish Committee will contribute ~ \$1,000 to bring the total to the previously approved \$15,000. This is a smaller contribution than expected, due to the successful fundraising. In addition, the Gardening Committee may be asking the Parish Committee for more funding by fiscal year-end.

Review of financial reports and dashboard (All) – The Treasurer, Carolyn Hodges, sent the financial information prior to the meeting.

- May financials and year-end forecast which anticipates the end of June bills (see balance sheet) are available for review.
- Questions for the Treasurer were collected. Among these were a request and suggestion for a quarterly check-in on what the expenses have been. Regarding the surplus, the

budget for fiscal year 2023-2024, presented at Annual Meeting, included a surplus of about \$60,000. Members discussed how allocating prior year pledges might be done differently next year and strategic use of previously not used funds.

(Vote 1, Discussion) – Consent agendas, minutes, financials, ministers’ reports

I move to adopt the consent agenda. (Joanna). Seconded (Celia and Al)

8 of 8 in favor. None opposed.

Leadership Development Committee (LDC) – Helene Newberg (LDC chair since 2018), Kiki Giatis, and Amy Fardella.

- LDC expressed deep gratitude for the volunteership of the Parish Committee and mentioned Woody Kay’s memorial, Tina’s farewell celebration, and putting heart where the energy is.
- A reflection on LDC workings since March 2020 including challenges and opportunities throughout the pandemic (Amy/Kiki)
 - Challenge of contacting people and finding out what folks are interested in
 - Committee chairs taking charge of recruitment more and more
 - A number of metrics were discussed; for example, looking at members who joined in the past three years and finding the opportunity to do some discernment to leverage their energy.
 - UUA consultants and blogs highlight volunteer recruitment and show that First Parish UU Arlington is not alone in navigating a lot of moving parts. “It’s not just us,” in other words.
 - First Parish has LDC, Shared Ministry, the Parish Committee, and people self-selecting to serve as volunteers.
 - Concern about the standing committees which are mentioned in the bylaws and the fact that some such as LDC will have folks cycling off at the same time rather than having staggered terms.
 - An opportunity for discernment and introspection of how we do things, visioning for the 2023-2024 plan.

Discussion followed:

First Parish has a great number of standing committees (Update: There are currently 11 standing committees, with one being inactive: The Denominational Affairs Committee, which sends representatives to the General Assembly of the UUA. The other 10 are the Trustees of Trust Funds, Religious Education, Music, Finance, Membership, Property, Social Justice, the Human Resources Committee, the Leadership Development

Committee, and Stewardship. Under Article X, Section j, it is the Leadership Development Committee's role to fill open positions in the standing committees.)

There are concerns about attracting volunteers for three-year commitments. Questions arose: What do we really need to run this church? What is absolutely critical? How do you keep the trains moving? What would happen if X committee didn't exist?

A new task-based, temporary model is emerging in which a skilled volunteer drops in and out of a committee when needed, such as was done for Stewardship in 2023.

The discussion included a suggestion by a Parish Committee member to make the Workings Booklet readily available on Sunday mornings.

Gratitude from the Parish Committee was expressed to Kiki, Helene, and Amy.

Break from 7:45pm to 7:50pm.

Committee on Ministry candidate review (Rev. Marta)

The Committee on Ministry looks at the overall well-being of the ministry of the church and its relationship with the hired and called ministers. The Committee on Ministry creates the annual evaluation of ministers.

The ministers submit names of members to the Parish Committee which votes on a candidate. Currently, Tina Silberman is the chair with Julius Perelli, Ebonie Smith-Cooper, Andrea Winslow, and Marc Jacobson. Elizabeth Hunter's term of six years has closed.

The Parish Committee voted on paper ballots which were collected by Rev. Marta.

Review summer schedule 2023 / Parish Committee calendar 2023-2024 (All)

The Parish Committee discussed its traditional meeting logistics, including feedback on the reading each meeting as well as the two minutes of silence. Members raised the issue of how volunteers might be shown appreciation in the upcoming year. Discussion highlights included:

- August 29th will be the next monthly meeting. Sara Galantowicz will be the reader/host.
- Parish Committee members to indicate which month to read/host and provide input on meeting format (in person or online).
- A discussion around who does readings and why we do them at the beginnings of Parish Committee meetings ensued. It was suggested one of the ministers do a reading. Some Parish Committee members like different readings from individuals and giving space to consider the spiritual dimension for the governing board.

- A demarcation of a new start could also be a personal statement on what sustains you; or prayers could be written on papers and collected in a basket to be pulled from each month.
- Discussion of showing appreciation to volunteers included publicizing which way will be chosen as a key feature. The need to let the entire congregation know is important.
- Discussion about Parish Committee Executive (ParCom Exec), which is not in the bylaws, and is a group that conducts meetings between the monthly Parish Committee meetings. It includes the chair and vice chair. It can include the clerk, and at times rotating members of the Parish Committee. The hope is that there are four people on it to discuss emerging issues and setting the agenda of the Parish Committee meetings. ParCom Exec has been meeting the second and fourth Wednesday of the month for an hour to an hour and a half.

Gratitude for all.

I move that we adjourn the meeting. (Joanna) Seconded (Al T.) 8 of 8 in favor. None opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:29 PM

MOTIONS:

1. I move that we adopt the consent agenda. (Joanna) Seconded (Celia and Al). 8 of 8 in favor. None opposed.
2. I move that we adjourn the meeting. (Joanna) Seconded (Al Tosti). 8 of 8 in favor. None opposed.