

Parish Committee Meeting Minutes  
First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington  
March 21, 2023 | In-person in the Parlor | 7:00PM - 9:21PM

Attendees: Sara G., Anne Q., Celia W., Joanna P., Jeff K., Marie M., Rev. Marta and Rev. Erica, DRE Tina S., Tom E., Al T.; Carolyn H.; Guests: Ellen Robie and Anthony Fernandez

7:00 Call to Order (Sara)

- Reading (Anne Q.) and Chalice Lighting (Rev. Erica)
- Two minutes of silence (let us bring our best selves to this meeting)
- Check-ins: a word or two about the beginning of spring.
- Financial report & dashboard (Carolyn)
  - The February financials are tracking to the forecast. The revenue category is doing well. Expenses are tracking consistently.
  - Enrollment in Adventures in Montessori (AIM) is up; payment has increased.
  - Pledges are tracking well. A couple of stock donations have been made in March.

Brief discussion followed in which the following questions and comments arose:

- Pledges show on track for March through June. June is a higher expense month typically with committee expenses / reimbursements.
- A question about a pre-paid pledges category arose. As February was before the start of the Stewardship campaign, there were none. Starting in March, pre-paid pledges get reserved aside and are booked in July as income.
- Regarding the Cummings grant for which Inez Folsom applied: There is \$1,000 total and it must be recorded and spent in a way that is “not religious” in nature. The Parish Committee had previously stated that \$800 would be used for the training / licensing fee for the Welcoming Renewal workshop through the UUA.

*Update: Rev. Erica has purchased the six sessions on the Transgender Inclusion in Congregations workshop from the UUA. This institutional purchase will allow the newly launched Welcoming Committee to offer sessions as a program. Rev. Erica also purchased Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and Their Families (Peggy Gillespie, ed.) and Ace Voices: What it Means to Be Asexual, Aromantic, Demi or Grey-Ace (Eris Young). The total cost of these three items is \$956.95.*

*Gratitude is expressed to Inez Folsom for securing the funds from the Cummings Foundation grant. Gratitude is expressed towards all who are making this work possible.*

- The status of Your Part-Time Controller (YPTC) recommendations and the building asset working group: The Treasurer requested that a subcommittee be formed to evaluate the value of First Parish’s property (the meeting house/campus) for accounting purposes, to support

adequate insurance coverage. Suggestions were made to reach out to members such as: Diane Schafer, Steve McMullin, and Robie Rinearson. First Parish reports the building's value to the UUA (Credentialing). The Town of Arlington assesses the value. Communication around what will happen would be important, if the decision is made to remove the building/campus as a line item on the asset sheet..

- Questions from the February meeting were answered by the Treasurer offline since the Treasurer was not present at the February meeting. These answers will be distributed by the Chair to the rest of the Parish Committee via email. Highlights included the ongoing discussion with the Trustees, seasonal forecasting, and the correct accounting of \$60,000 in Property funds. The goal is to avoid discrepancies in reporting the budget. The trust fund contributions to the ministers' housing had been increased from about \$10,000 to \$20,000 (for two ministers). This is a flat amount drawn from the trust funds and not a percentage of earnings. At the budget meeting, housing contributions can be reviewed. As for the \$60,000 in the Property fund, it was not extra money; it was simply not transferred to the Operations budget.
- The quarter is closing. The Director of Religious Education and the Treasurer will catch up on Youth accounting.

**(Vote 1, Discussion). Consent agenda: Minutes, Financials, Ministers' Reports: so moved (Anne Q.) Seconded (Celia W.) 9 of 9 in favor. None opposed.**

Stewardship update (Marie and Rev. Erica)

- First Parish is about 3 ½ weeks into the Stewardship campaign. At the time of the present meeting, First Parish is at 87% to our goal of pledge drive for 2023-2024. We are at 70% of our participation goal.
- There is excitement and people seem to be pledging more generously.
- The Stewardship Committee is currently focusing on First Parish members who have not pledged this year and people who had contributed at least \$500 in the past. Visiting stewards are not only building connections with current members but also discovering some folks have decided to leave First Parish. Newer members have been good at coming in and participating. More reminder calls are needed overall.
- Activities have included an in-person lunch, sermons to get people warmed up, freshly trained stewards to make visits and phone calls; 80-100 people attended the in person lunch; 60-70 people attended the breakfast for families; there was great discussion at the evening pizza party.
- Communication has been strong. Education around "pledge" versus "give" has helped along with the re-design of the website to include side-by-side buttons of pledging and giving.
- Stewardship is about engagement. It is a short campaign from Feb. 26 to March 31.
- Testimonials and the Youth Service are coming up on the church calendar, which is bursting with fullness: lots of food, participation, and T-shirts!

Discussion with highlights:

- Feedback from stewards is coming in through a Google Form which the visiting stewards fill out and can submit for as many households as they have been assigned. Thirty-eight forms have been submitted so far.
- A Parish Committee member suggested First Parish continue to pay attention to online participants/worshippers.
- There is excitement among Religious Education participants as numbers go up.
- There are quite a few people who have pledged more than in the past and many are pledging at the \$3,000 level mark. So far there are 28 households who have given over \$1,000.
- The Parish Committee expressed gratitude for the Stewardship Committee, in particular Marie Mateer and Amy Speare. [Applause.]
- With sermons given by Rev. Marta, Rev. Erica, and Jonathan Colby, worship services have been terrific. Testimonials have been phenomenal.
- The communication, publicity, and reminders have helped enormously.
- It was acknowledged that all members of the Parish Committee have pledged.

#### Appointing Music Committee members

- There was a request to appoint a new member to the Music Committee: Carol Seitz.

Discussion: Acknowledgement that Carol's spouse, Ken, is a member of personnel.

**(Vote 2, discussion): I move that we appoint Carol Seitz to the Music Committee. (Al T.) Seconded (Anne Q). 9 of 9 unanimous.**

#### RE update (Tina Schultz, DRE)

- The Religious Education program is becoming more robust. There were 44 children in the program this past Sunday.
- The pancake breakfast was well attended (60-70 people), as was the pizza party for the older Youth on Sunday evening (3/19).

**MOTION: I move that we go into Executive session and invite Rev. Marta, Rev. Erica, and Tina Schultz. (Anne Q.) Seconded (Carolyn) 9 of 9 in favor. None opposed.**

**MOTION: I move to invite Ellen Robie and Anthony Fernandez into Executive session (Tom E.) Seconded (Al T.) 9 of 9 in favor. None opposed.**

Ellen Robie and Anthony Fernandez (Religious Education Committee) joined the Parish Committee meeting.

#### Staffing and compensation (Executive session)

Presentation by Marta and Executive Committee

**MOTION: I move to end the Executive session. (Joanna) Seconded (Tom E.)**

**Annual meeting update (Joanna)**

- Joanna P. and Celia W. will be coordinators of the Annual Meeting 2023, tentatively scheduled for May 21, 2023.
- David Whitford has agreed to serve as Moderator for the Annual Meeting for this year, and his appointment will be put to a congregational vote at the beginning of the Annual Meeting.

**MOTION: I move to adjourn the meeting. (Joanna) Seconded (Celia W.)**

9:21PM Adjourn

Attachments: Last month's Minutes, Financial Documents, Ministers' reports

**MOTIONS** (proposed wording that will be adjusted based on the discussion of the Parish Committee)

MOTION 1: I move that we adopt the consent agenda. (Anne Q.) Seconded (Celia W.) 9 of 9 in favor. None opposed.

MOTION 2: I move that we appoint Carol Seitz to the Music Committee. (Al) Seconded (Anne) 9 of 9 in favor. None opposed.

MOTION 3a: I move that we go into Executive session and invite Rev. Marta, Rev. Erica, and Tina Schultz. (Anne Q.) Seconded (Carolyn) 9 of 9 in favor. None opposed.

MOTION 3b: I move to invite Ellen Robie and Anthony Fernandez into Executive session (Tom E.) Seconded (Al T.) 9 of 9 in favor. None opposed.

MOTION 4: I move to end the Executive session. (Joanna) Seconded (Tom E.) 9 of 9 in favor. None opposed.

MOTION 5: I move to adjourn the meeting. (Joanna) Seconded (Celia W.) 9 of 9 in favor. None opposed.

Minutes prepared by Joanna Pushee, clerk.