

**FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF PORTLAND**  
**Meeting of the Board of Trustees**  
**Regular Meeting, April 26, 2007**

**Present:** Cindy Cumfer (Moderator), Randy Russell (1<sup>st</sup> Vice Moderator), Marilyn Scott (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Moderator), Kathryn Estey (Secretary), Don Watne (Treasurer), Helena Lee, Pat Malone, Teri Martin, Pierre Provost, Ron Yoder, Tom Disrud (Associate Minister)

**Absent:** Dave Patterson, Marilyn Sewell (Senior Minister is on sabbatical)

**Staff:** Candace Clarke (Church Administrator), Jan Larson (Administrative Assistant)

**Guests:** Barbara Dow, Bill Michtom; Finance Committee members Lee Fawcett and Camille Wright

**Minutes:** Jan Larson

**Process Observer:** Randy Russell

**Time Keeper:** Pat Malone

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**Summary of decisions**

The Board agreed by consensus to the following:

1. Cindy ,Teri and Dick Adams will work on a redraft of the behavioral policy.
2. Board members will continue to work as Capital Campaign advocates with key donors regarding extension of pledges.
3. A candidate website will not be produced this year.
4. Further discussion regarding elimination of a minimum pledge will be taken up by the Committee on Generosity.

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**To do list:**

1. Decide if topic “Board’s role in calling forth generosity” will be on the Board retreat agenda.
2. Board members are to email Cindy or Kathryn and fill out required form if they are able to increase their own Capital Campaign pledge.
3. Board members will “map” the soon-to-be-distributed corrected list of donors and turn it in to staff, so that Advocate assignments can be made.

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The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

There was a quorum with 11 of 12 Board members present. Dave Patterson was absent.

The March 2007 minutes were accepted by consensus after corrections.

**Announcements:**

- Reminder: The PNWD Leadership Council is on Sat., May 5<sup>th</sup> in Fuller Hall.
- Jean Omelchuck is attending a workshop April 26 on “membership hospitality.”

**Agenda Review:**

1. Added “elimination of plan for candidate website” item to board consent agenda item list.

**Open Mic for Congregants:** Bill Michtom shared some thoughts on the meaning of generosity.

**Action Items Reviewed:**

1. Kathryn Estey, Jean Omelchuck, Ruth Lewellen-Dix met to discuss elections committee procedures and needs for the upcoming May election. Staff member Jan Larson attended.
2. Policy Evaluation Committee: plans still in progress for this year’s work.

**Report on Executive Session:**

The Board held an Executive Session after last month’s Board meeting and discussed the following:

1. Board members crafted a Capital Campaign message to share with the congregation.
2. The slate from the Nominating Committee was reviewed. The Board endorsed the slate and has noted so on the voting ballot. The Board will continue to liaison with the Nominating Committee in order to keep improving on communication.
3. The Board agreed with the Finance Committee’s recommendations on Rev. Sewell’s salary: salary at \$126,740 (the UUA’s 2006 salary recommendations are a minimum of \$88,100; a mid-range of \$118,900, and a maximum of \$149,700); life insurance at \$130; medical at \$5,045; pension at \$15,208. Total package at \$156,819. Also noted were professional expenses budget of \$7,000. IRS regulations do not require churches to contribute to ministers’ social security taxes, as they are required to do for regular employees. However, the UUA recommends that churches reimburse ministers for that share of social security taxes that would normally be paid by the employer, and the Board has approved this reimbursement for Rev. Sewell.

**Consent Agenda Items:**

1. Cindy, Teri and Dick Adams will work on a redraft of the behavioral policy to include more of the idea of love and inclusion. The Board agreed by consensus.
2. The Board agreed by consensus to work as advocates with some key donors regarding the Capital Campaign’s extension of pledges for one more year; and to “map” a list of donors provided by staff, so that Advocate assignments could be made. [NOTE: the original list of donors distributed to Board members doesn’t include the correct parameters. Staff will produce a new list for mapping.] Board members agreed to email Cindy or Kathryn (and fill out the required form) if they are able to increase their own Capital Campaign pledge.
3. The Board agreed by consensus that a candidate website will not be implemented this year.

**Discussion on Generosity:**

The following outline for the discussion on generosity was used:

What, if any, is the Board’s role in calling forth generosity from the congregation?

1. Where are we now on our efforts to nurture generosity? [Brief summary from chairs of Committee on Generosity and Finance Committee]
2. Should we eliminate or change the minimum pledge for voting membership? Should we seek congregant input on this? If so, how?

3. What should be the Board's continuing role, if any, in promoting generosity?
  - a. Should we continue the Committee on Generosity? Should we make it a standing committee?
  - b. Should we bring in a consultant on generosity?
  - c. Should we look for new Board members with fundraising or development experience?
  - d. Should we expect Board members to give generously within their means? To act as advocates?

### OUTCOMES FOR DISCUSSION

1. Next step or decision on minimum pledge issue.
2. Next step or decision on whether to continue Board's focus on generosity.

#### Discussion Notes:

1. Kathryn shared some thoughts from the Committee on Generosity: generosity is not only giving of one's time, money and efforts, but also it is one's spiritual connection to our shared values; how we spend our money reflects our values; the COG wants to keep looking at the broader implications and also how to give thanks and acknowledgement.

2. Don Watne, Finance Committee, reported on some finance facts: during the 2004 and 2005 church years the modal pledge (what most members pledged) was \$600; during church year 2006 the modal pledge was \$1200. In 2001 the median pledge was \$600, and during 2006 it was \$750. For new members: in 2004 the modal was \$180, in 2005 it was \$600, and in 2006 it was \$1,000. There will be no merit raises for staff this year. There will be a COLA. There are increases in benefit costs (medical insurance). The church is committed to paying a living wage, and with the new building coming on line, we must hire more sextons. We are currently not meeting these financial needs with our current pledges.

Don gave some important background information: the current voting member minimum pledge is \$120 dollars for the year – this goes back at least 12 years. The church pays dues to the UUA and to the northwest district – a total of 75\$ per voting member. If a person pays \$120 dollars for the year, \$75 dollars of that does not stay with the church. 550 people who have signed the membership book do not pay the current minimum pledge to be classified as voting members.

3. Minimum pledge discussion raised many questions. Do we need to raise the minimum pledge? Do we need to eliminate the minimum pledge? Some churches have experienced an increase in giving levels when there is no stated minimum for voting members. If the minimum was eliminated and all church-goers were then voting members, the church would have an even larger payment for UUA and district dues. Where would that money come from? What steps would be necessary to eliminate a minimum? What else does the Board need to know before making this decision? What would the timing of this decision be?

Further thoughts from Board members: If a minimum pledge “sets the bar too low,” giving guidelines and a call for a “generous culture” would be necessary. Nurturing a culture of generosity is an important on-going discussion for the Committee on Generosity. Conversations with the congregation will be necessary. How do members define generosity for themselves? Might this discussion fit in with covenant discussions? Eliminating the minimum will require

opportunities for educating the congregation on how much money it takes to support the church and its endeavors. And for those members who cannot give as much, or at all, how does the church community then share that cost?

A “fair share giving guide” might be helpful for some, but intimidating for others. How might a “giving guide” be useful for our church?

4. Conclusion of discussion: the Board agreed by consensus to refer for further discussion the option of eliminating the minimum pledge of \$120 to the Committee on Generosity. The Board will consider for the June Board retreat the topic of what is the Board’s role in calling forth generosity from the congregation.

**Process Observation** Randy reported that the Board tends “to discuss” consent agenda items. If discussion is necessary then items need to be added to the full agenda. The discussion on generosity went well.

**Closing Words** – Pierre Provost

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.