

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF PORTLAND
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting, March 29, 2007

Present: Cindy Cumfer (Moderator), Marilyn Scott (2nd Vice Moderator), Kathryn Estey, (Secretary); Trustees at Large Helena Lee, Pat Malone, Teri Martin, Jean Omelchuck, Dave Patterson and Ron Yoder; Tom Disrud, (Associate Minister).

Absent: Randy Russell (1st Vice Moderator), Don Watne (Treasurer), Pierre Provost; Marilyn Sewell (Senior Minister, on Sabbatical)

Staff: Candace Clarke (Church Administrator)

Guests: Bill Michtom, Jim Schorr,

From the Committee on Behavioral Accountability: Dick Adams, Kelly Huggett, Arnie Pickar. Committee member Anne Weber was out of town and unable to attend.

Minutes: Valerie Lyon

Process Observer: Ron Yoder

Time Keeper: Helena Lee, Dave Patterson

Summary of Decisions:

The Board agreed by consensus to the following:

1. Board Moderator, in coordination with Executive Team, will “vet” Sunday Board greeter announcements, and will notify Board greeters of what announcements to include.
2. Board supports the designation of First Church as a UUA Welcoming Congregation and will submit this issue to our members for a vote in the vote-by-mail for this year’s annual meeting.
3. Board accepts the naming recommendations for our new and remodeled spaces proposed by the Committee on Generosity’s Naming Subcommittee.
4. Board renames our Salmon Street Sanctuary to the Thomas Lamb Eliot Chapel.
5. Board will utilize our web site and the Board’s bulletin board in Fuller Hall to get to know our new Board and Nominating Committee candidates in more depth. Candidates will be invited to submit answers to several questions (detailed in “Annual Meeting Issues” further on in these minutes), which will be posted on the web and on the Board’s bulletin Board.
6. Board authorizes the Elections Committee to determine how best to count ballots of the vote-by-mail election of May 20.
7. Board approves proposed budgets for the new fiscal year and will submit them to our members for a vote in this vote-by-mail for this year’s annual meeting.
8. Board approves Behavioral Accountability policy proposed by the Board’s ad hoc Committee on Behavioral Accountability.

To-do List:

- Elections Committee is not fully named. Kathryn will complete it.
- Cindy will prepare information for the Congregation to show they’ve done the necessary steps to vote to become a Welcoming Congregation.

- The Policy Evaluation Committee will design the Board self-evaluation for the 2006-2007 church year.
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The Meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm.
There was a quorum with 9 of 12 Board members present.

Marilyn read *The Task of the Religious Community* from our hymnal.

The February minutes were approved as written.

Announcements:

- A Board member is needed to announce for the 7:30 Easter service. Pat will.
- Bill Sinkford, president of the UUA, will be here for a Saturday meeting with members who are working internationally. He will also be present Saturday afternoon at the reception and Buchan Building tour for large donors. He will preach Sunday, and will be interviewed afterward by Carl Vandervoort for the Break-Through Congregation video.
- The Committee on Generosity needs “sentinels” posted around the Buchan Building to be sure children are safe in the construction zone during Sunday’s self-guided tours for all donors to the capital campaign. Marilyn Scott, Helena Lee, Ron Yoder and Dave Patterson volunteered to join Cindy and Kathryn. Sentinels are to meet at the Buchan building around 12:15 for orientation.
- The Board of Directors of the Pacific Northwest District, along with First Unitarian Church of Portland, invite leaders of all PNWD congregations to attend the district Leadership Council meeting Saturday, May 5, 2007. This will be a workshop on Multiculturalism lead by an excellent presenter, Paula Cole Jones. Board members are encouraged to go. Cindy will be going.
- The Eliot table needs Board members to staff it. Talk with Jean Omelchuck.
- New doors have been ordered for the elevator. In the mean time, it will be operated manually by the attendant riding in it. [NOTE: This announcement was made later in the meeting, just prior to the discussion on the proposed budget.]

No Action Items to review.

Agenda Review:

- A consent agenda item was added to authorize the Elections Committee to determine how best to count ballots for the vote-by-mail election of May 20.

Congregant Comments

Bill Michtom handed out a paper titled, *Is First Unitarian Church too large for a town meeting form of democracy?*

Consent Agenda

1. Sunday Board Announcements.

The Board approved by consensus the proposal that any Board member with items that he or she wants the Board greeter to announce at the Sunday service will send the item to the Board Moderator. The Moderator will check with the Executive Team and determine whether the announcement is appropriate. The Moderator will notify the Board greeters. Tom will talk with Jan Larson to get her into the loop.

2. Vote on Welcoming Congregation.

The Board agreed by consensus to support the designation of First Church as a UUA Welcoming Congregation and that the Board submit this issue to our members for a vote in the vote by mail for this year's annual meeting.

Cindy will prepare information to the Congregation to show they've done the necessary steps.

3. Pre-approval of names for remodeled spaces and Buchan Building.

The Board accepted by consensus the names proposed by the Committee on Generosity's Subcommittee on Naming. Those names appear in this packet, and represent the Subcommittee's top ten choices for spaces not named by donors. The list will then be offered to donors eligible to name a space but who choose not to name it themselves. The list may also be used by the Board if the Board decides to name spaces not named by generous donors.

The first 10 people on the Subcommittee's list are not among the living. Debra Steiner, however, is alive and well in her 90's.

In addition, the Committee on Generosity proposed, and the Board approved by consensus, renaming the Salmon Street Sanctuary to the Thomas Lamb Eliot Chapel.

The rooms are truly multi-purpose, and so the names will not be able to be assigned thematically to spaces. Room numbering will be continued as an aid in navigating our complex space.

4. Annual Meeting Issues.

The Board agreed by consensus to make space available on the Board's webpage and the Fuller Hall Bulletin Board for all Board and Nominating Committee candidates to provide information to the voters. Board and Nominating Committee candidates will be encouraged to submit a biography and Board candidates will be encouraged to answer these questions in a Word document to be submitted to the church: (1) What do you hope to accomplish with your Board service? (2) What is your vision for the church over the next three years? (3) What skills and expertise do you bring to the Board? (4) What does it mean to you to work collaboratively with the Board and ministers?

This new method of getting to know the candidates supplements the Nominating Committee's Meet the Candidates reception that takes place after services on a Sunday prior to the Annual Meeting. Using the web site (with a few copies on the Board's Fuller Hall bulletin board) conserves paper and allows candidates to write as much as they wish on these four topics.

5. Budget Approval.

[NOTE: Agenda item moved: addressed after the discussion on Behavioral Accountability Policy.]

After a brief discussion, the Board approved by consensus the budget submitted by the Finance Committee. The annual anonymous \$100,000 gift designated to pay for an additional minister and support staff is carried in the restricted funds budget, not in the operating fund. Board members offered comments on the layout of the financial information.

6. Vote Counting.

The Board by consensus authorized the Elections Committee to have ballots for the May 20th election counted in the most expedient manner whether by staff or volunteers.

Discussion Questions on Behavioral Accountability Policy

Cindy read First Unitarian Church's 1868 Covenant's exclusion statement to those present.

BACKGROUND. Over two-thirds of the members who voted in First Unitarian Church's May 2005 election approved Article II, §5 on member expulsion or denial of membership. The bylaw provides: "Any person for [sic] whom the Board intends to expel from membership or deny membership shall be given thirty days advance written notice by certified mail and the reasons for the proposed action together with an opportunity to be heard by the Board orally or in writing not less than five days before the effective date of the expulsion or denial. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the Board members then in office shall, for cause as defined in the Governing Policies, expel any member or deny any person membership. The decision of the Board shall be written, final and not reviewable by any court."

The current Governing Policies III.K. provides: "Cause for Member Expulsion or Denial of Membership. Members may be expelled and potential members may be denied membership if they engage in continuing behavior which the Board deems dangerous or disruptive."

The Board felt it was important to develop a more thoughtful policy on this matter; and in September 2006, the Board established a Committee on Behavioral Accountability consisting of two Board members and four non-Board congregants to recommend a policy on behavioral accountability. The Committee was charged to investigate models for a process that holds members accountable for irresponsible or dangerous behavior up to and including a policy for exclusion of members, to hold forums to solicit member input on the process, and to make recommendations to the Board by March for a policy, giving consideration to the need for boundaries on irresponsible or dangerous behavior and for protection of responsible dissent.

The Committee has accomplished its charge and its recommendations are in this Board packet. After discussion -- main points recapped below -- the Board accepted these recommendations by consensus. In order to incorporate this new policy into our existing governing policies, some formatting and language changes may occur. The Board will confer with committee members in this process to be sure no meanings have been changed.

Outline for discussion on the draft Behavioral Accountability Policy:

1. Are we satisfied with the definitions of behavior and the factors considered in determining a response in the draft policy?

- Danger to property is different than danger to people.
- There is a question of severity.
- These steps could take a period of time.
- Congregant: Bill

A number of people have serious questions in regard to the word "disrespect" because of its inherent vagueness, and feel that this concern is not reflected in the draft. He gave several examples in which he felt the church leadership was "disrespectful" of congregants.

2. Are we satisfied with Step 1 of the procedure?

- Very well done.
- Where does the track lie after the person persists in acting dangerously?
- What is dangerous? Toward property?
- If behavior hasn't been changed, then we go on to the next level in the process.

3. Discussion about the Ombuds group.

- a. Should we have an Ombuds group?
- b. How should the group be chosen?
- c. Should the group be trained?
- d. Should Board members sit on the Ombuds group?

- The perception of fairness is critical.
- Dick: A group who are peers and members of the congregation to provide resource and guidance out of the hierarchical structures of the church.
- Congregant: Jim: There are advantages of a group unblemished by anything but facts. Tualatin Library District has a trained Contact Team that works well. Ombuds group from the congregation, and leader from the Contact Team?
- Permanent group: could be trained, and there would be no charge of unfairness. But, because their names would be public, and they could be lobbied from beginning with phone calls, email, etc. by people who don't want this policy. Can be confusion about what their job may be.
- Kelly: A standing larger group creates more perceived fairness. This isn't a reflection of the level of trust in the Board. It's all about perception. An ad-hoc group would be easier to deal with administratively.
- Ad-hoc group could be chosen for skills in the area needed, e.g. if a person has gone off their meds, an expert in that field would be useful.
- Cindy: Re: underlying assumptions. At the church meeting on this, 15 people voiced feeling unfairness, not trusting the Board. The Board was elected by the members. So, it doesn't seem distrust of Board is widespread. If Board members are attacked personally, they shouldn't be involved.
- The group would be selected for the situation. Put in place procedural safeguards.
- It needs to be perceived as a resource group. The group is expected to bring facts together, along with their understanding of the situation, e.g. predicting dangerousness, to the Board.
- The Board makes the decision. The ombuds group would make recommendations.

4. Are we satisfied with Steps 3 and 4 of the procedure?

- Exclusion is a very divisive issue.
- The confidentiality of the issue needs to be respected by everyone.
- This process could take place even if the person has gone to prison, or we might make the decision not to exclude them.
- Dick: Preferred the previous language: before there is exclusion from membership, an ombuds group will happen.
- A Board member can be in the Ombuds group, as in any church group.
- Cindy had a conversation with Trish Knoll about 'radical love.'. While the phrase may not be in Board language, our attitude needs to reflect concern for the individual and the congregation. We're about preventing exclusion. Early intervention is good, communicating caring, and being clear about expectations.
- What about the 41% of church attendees in the Survey who are not church members?
- These are not steps to terminate behavior. They could result in a re-covenant between congregant and Congregation/Board/Ministers.
- Email Board considerations to Cindy.

Final Statements by Committee Members:

Dick: Urges the Board to go back to the issue of exclusion. Consider thinking about the principal of inclusion and a sense of fairness. There is a way to talk about responsible behavior that doesn't name it as exclusion. It is helpful and healing to reflect on words and try to frame the issue in a different way.

Cindy asked for more developed thoughts in this direction be emailed to her.

Kelly: If there is a way, the means by which a person is notified should be in the packet. She hopes that this is never used and will be happy if this work has been "a waste of her time!"

Arnie: This issue creates divisiveness and a fear that exclusion will be arbitrary. This is a set of guidelines, not perfect, and a step in the process.

Process Observation:

Time together before the Board meeting facilitates the members working together being candid in agreement or disagreement.

Closing:

Marilyn read from the Lenten Easter service in our Hymnal.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50.

The Board then went into Executive Session.