

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF PORTLAND
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes, November 15, 2007

Present: Randy Russell (Moderator), Marilyn Scott (1st Vice Moderator), Cindy Cumfer (2nd Vice Moderator), Pat Malone (Secretary), Don Watne (Treasurer), Allison Frost, Helena Lee, Teri Martin, Jim Shorr; Dale Wright, Tom Disrud, (Associate Minister)

Absent: Marilyn Sewell (Senior Minister)

Staff: Jan Larson (Administrative Assistant)

Guests: Barbara Dow, Bill Michtom

Process Observer: Pat Malone

Time Keeper: Cindy Cumfer

Minutes: Jan Larson

Summary of Decisions:

Board was not asked to make any decisions at this time.

To-do List:

- Board members will write a 2 paragraph summary of their ideas/feedback about the meeting's discussion re: role of the Board, oversight responsibilities and governance policy. Summaries go to Randy by next week and he will compile them and send on to members,
- Continue with conversations with congregants and report back.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m.
There was a quorum of 12 Board members.
Marilyn Scott read the Opening.

The October minutes were approved.

Announcements:

- PNWD Leadership Council meeting in Spokane Nov. 16.
- Large Church Conference, Louisville, March 13-16, 2008
- Tom reported on the AFD: the average pledge is about 1400\$; we are currently just under \$900K in pledges, which is 69 percent of goal, up slightly from where we were at this time last year.

Action Items:

- There were none reviewed.

Agenda Review:

- Open Mic added.

Open Mic: Bill Michtom offered several suggestions: the 13th Avenue entrance to Buchan Building has an easy-to-miss step and should have some kind of marker so people don't trip; an intercom system in all the rooms would be helpful so people needing to enter could "buzz" certain meeting rooms to be let in; when Board has a monthly meeting that is "Executive Session" state the reason why; Bill offered to volunteer on a congregant committee dealing with budget planning. Barbara Dow suggested also that "Executive Sessions" should have a stated explanation why.

Board Agenda:

1. Stewardship Policy:

PROPOSED STEWARDSHIP POLICIES By the Committee on Generosity

II. Executive Team Limitations.

E. Stewardship

Recognizing that stewardship of First Unitarian Church's financial and human resources is a significant priority, the E/T shall not fail to provide a stewardship effort that:

1. encourages congregants' deep gratitude for the rich blessings in their lives;
2. nurtures a sense of generosity as a spiritual practice that encourages congregants to share their resources, time and talents with the Church and other worthy causes;
3. expresses the Church's appreciation for the many gifts from congregants that support the work of the Church towards fulfilling our mission in the world.

III. Governance Process

C. Stewardship.

The Board of Trustees plays a role in ensuring that First Unitarian Church has adequate capacity to do its work towards fulfilling the Church's Mission and our Ends. Each Board member shall model generosity by contributing to all operating and capital campaigns and to the Foundation's endowment funds to the best of his or her means, at a level he or she considers generous. The Board is responsible for:

1. advancing a message about generosity;
2. exercising broad oversight of annual and capital giving;
3. enhancing stewardship of our congregation's donors and participants.

Cindy reviewed the policy and the board had a brief discussion. It is viewed as encouraging deeper spirituality with our giving, rather than giving as a "transaction." Board liked the focus on "resources, time and talents." There was discussion about language usage "shall not fail" and why that is stated in the negative. This sets boundaries – which part of is governance policy language. Any further discussion regarding language usage was tabled.

2. Board shared insights from conversations they had with church members recently: newcomer was going to Orientation; new members were enjoying the worship and the music but were not interested in any governance issues; new members were "plunging" right in to activities; someone had attended church but had never joined nor pledged; interest in Social Justice programs and Adult Education; someone asked for a "bridge" into things and board member suggested Good Times and Membership dept; wife comfortable at church, but husband not really wanting to be involved; no complaints.

Board members enjoyed their chats and willing to do more. Randy asked those who had not specifically engaged, to do so before the next meeting.

3. Board discussion on oversight role within policy-based governance: tools on hand are the various reports - from the Executive Team (ET), the Finance Committee, the Board Policy Evaluation Committee (PEC), as well as the Board's annual planning calendar and yearly goals.

The ET report is now done quarterly to provide a more in-depth picture; this report helps the Board track on progress towards the Ends. It is helpful for the work on the PEC. It helps to remember the church's strengths, but should it be used to bring any areas of concern to the Board? All of these reports are public documents, so there is concern about how they are used. When do ET and staff questions bubble up to a policy regard for the Board? Could the ET quarterly report be reviewed at meetings by the minister, with minister pointing out the highlights?

The Finance report – the “dashboard” format is found to be very helpful; financial statements are historical documents (policy review) but the “dashboard” can help Board to look forward. Finance reports provide data as indicators of a healthy congregation – which indicators are key to look at? Might Pat or Don point out highlights to the Board? A Board needs to focus on 3 to 5 years out, even longer, particularly with Finances. Qualitative and quantitative review is necessary.

The level of oversight deals with **significant** managerial or financial situations; the Board also needs time for the “visioning” process; with the ET, the Board evaluates the use of resources to meet our Ends – the Board must ask the right questions. Leadership involves the asking of right questions. If there are deficiencies, this can involve Board oversight. Example: church has a pattern of not fulfilling its annual budget needs. There is a contingency plan for immediate concerns (such as replace the boiler). Long term plans are needed for such things as maintaining the church's reserves so they are not depleted. Meeting the annual budget also involves the culture of generosity and the minister's prophetic voice.

Randy asked for Board to send him 2 paragraphs on their summary thoughts regarding this discussion.

Process Observation:

Pat reported Board went off track on the Stewardship Policy discussion but did well with oversight role discussion – found it to be a good start, very productive.

Closing:

Marilyn Scott.

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